

## **COURSE GUIDE**

### **POL 215 HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT I**

**Course Team**      Dr. Nnaemeka Okeke (Course Developer/Writer) -  
ACSR/SNDC Abuja  
Dr. Udeoji Ebele (Course Editor) - NOUN



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

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National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
University Village  
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone  
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway  
Jabi, Abuja

Lagos Office  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island, Lagos  
E-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)

e-mail: [centralinfo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@noun.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.noun.edu.ng](http://www.noun.edu.ng)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

POL 215: History of Political Thoughts I is a one-semester course for 200 level students of B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in Political Science. It is a 3-credit unit course designed to enable the students to have a vivid knowledge of the contributions made by outstanding individuals and scholars in the development of politics.

## **COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims include: to help you to understand the nature and changing theories of the state in historical context. This requires an examination of major orientations and contentions about the origin, nature and reason of the state in political history. This broad aim will be achieved through:

- i. The examination of the ideas expressed by major political philosophers across different epochs;
- ii. Identifying the predominant orientation and contentions about the state in each epoch;
- iii. Exposing the student to critical thinking on the nature and reason of state.

The specific objectives of each study unit can be found at the beginning and you can make references to it while studying. It is necessary and helpful for you to check at the end of the unit, if your progress is consistent with the stated objectives and if you can conveniently answer the self-assessment exercises. The overall objectives of the course will be achieved if you diligently study and complete all the units in this course.

## **WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE**

The wider objectives of the course are outlined below. It is anticipated that you should be able to meet these objectives on the successful completion of the course. Consequently, the student is expected to achieve the following:

1. Understand the meaning and concerns of political thought.
2. Understand the trend in the History of Political Thought.
3. Identify the contentions and predominant ideas in each epoch.
4. Understand the major ideas of each philosopher in each epoch.
5. Reflect on the impact of the ideas on contemporary politics.
6. Think critically with regard to unfolding political realities of his time.
7. Proffer informed ideas and strategies on the political challenges.

## THE COURSE MATERIALS

In this course, as in all other courses, the major components you will find are as follows:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments

## STUDY UNITS

There are 24 study units in this course. They are:

### **MODULE 1            Origin and Focus of Political Thought and Related Concepts**

- Unit 1            Political Thought
- Unit 2            Concept of Political Theory.
- Unit 3            Distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science.
- Unit 4            Major Schools of Thoughts on Political Theory
- Unit 5            Origin of the State

### **MODULE 2            Classical Political Thinkers**

- Unit 1    The Life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC)
- Unit 2    Plato (427-347 BC)
- Unit 3    Aristotle Philosophy (322 – 384BC)
- Unit 4    Marcus Tullius Cicero (43 – 106 Bc)
- Unit 5    Baron De Montesquieu (1689-1755)

### **MODULE 3            The Empirical Political Thinkers**

- Unit 1    John Locke
- Unit 2    Thomas Hobbes
- Unit 3    Jeremy Bentham
- Unit 4    Edmund Burke
- Unit 5    Karl Marx

### **MODULE 4            Contemporary African Political Thinkers**

- Unit 1            The life and struggle of Frantz Fanon
- Unit 2            Julius Kambarage Nyerere
- Unit 3            Kwame Nkrumah
- Unit 4            Amilca Cabral

**MODULE 5                      Spirituality (Religion), Governance and the State**

Unit 1	Spirituality (Religion) and Governance
Unit 2	St Augustine Philosophy on Church and the State
Unit 3	Usman Dan Fodio on State and Violence
Unit 4	saiah Berlin and Natural Rights
Unit 5	Ibn Khaldun on the Metamorphosis of State

As you can observe, the course begins with the basics and expands into a more elaborate, complex and detailed form. All you need to do is to follow the instructions as provided in each unit. In addition, some self-assessment exercises have been provided with which you can test your progress with the text and determine if your study is fulfilling the stated objectives. Tutor- marked assignments have also been provided to aid your study. All these will assist you to be able to fully grasp the knowledge of Development Administration from the global perspective to Nigeria's viewpoint.

**TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES**

At the end of each unit, you will find a list of relevant reference materials which you may yourself wish to consult as the need arises, even though I have made efforts to provide you with the most important information you need to pass this course. However, I would encourage you, as a fourth-year student to cultivate the habit of consulting as many relevant materials as you can within the time available to you. In particular, be sure to consult whatever material you are advised to consult before attempting any exercise.

**ASSESSMENT**

Two types of assessment are involved in the course: the Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs), and the Tutor-Marked Assessment (TMA) questions. Your answers to the SAEs are not meant to be submitted, but they are also important since they allow you to assess your own understanding of the course content. Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) on the other hand are to be carefully answered and kept in your assignment file for submission and marking. This will count for 30% of your total score in the course.

**TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

At the end of each unit, you will find tutor-marked assignments. There is an average of two tutor-marked assignments per unit. This will allow you to engage the course as robustly as possible. You need to submit at least four assignments of which the three with the highest marks will be

recorded as part of your total course grade. This will account for 10 per cent each, making a total of 30 per cent. When you complete your assignments, send them including your form to your tutor for formal assessment on or before the deadline.

Self-assessment exercises are also provided in each unit. The exercises should help you to evaluate your understanding of the material so far. These are not to be submitted. You will find all answers to these within the units they are intended for.

## FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

There will be a final examination at the end of the course. The examination carries a total of 70 per cent of the total course grade. The examination will reflect the contents of what you have learnt and the self-assessments and tutor-marked assignments. You, therefore, need to revise your course materials beforehand.

## COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The following table sets out how the actual course marking is broken down.

ASSESSMENT	MARKS
Four assignments (the best four of all the	Four assignments, each marked out of 10%, but
Final Examination	70% of overall course score
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% of course score</b>

## COURSE OVERVIEW PRESENTATION SCHEME

Units	Title of Work	Week Activity	Assignment (End-of-Unit)
<b>Course Guide</b>	<b>History of Political Thought I</b>		
<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Origin and Focus of Political Thought and Related Concepts</b>		
Unit 1	Political Thought	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Concept of Political Theory	Week 2	Assignment 1
Unit 3	The distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science.	Week 3	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Major Schools of Thoughts on Political Theory	Week 4	Assignment 1

Unit 5	Origin of the State	Week 5	Assignment 1
<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Classical Political Thinkers</b>		
Unit 1	The Life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC)	Week 6	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Plato (427-347 BC)	Week 7	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Aristotle Philosophy (322 – 384BC)	Week 8	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Marcus Tullius Cicero (43 – 106 Bc)	Week 9	Assignment 1
Unit 5	Baron De Montesquieu (1689-1755)	Week 10	Assignment 1
<b>Module 3</b>	<b>The Empirical Political Thinkers</b>		
Unit 1	John Locke	Week 11	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Thomas Hobbes	Week 12	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Jeremy Bentham	Week 13	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Edmund Burke	Week 14	Assignment 1
Unit 5	Karl Marx	Week 15	Assignment 1
<b>Module 4</b>	<b>Contemporary African Political Thinkers</b>		
Unit 1	The life and struggle of Frantz Fanon	Week 16	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Julius Kambarage Nyerere	Week 17	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Kwame Nkrumah	Week 18	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Amilca Cabral	Week 19	Assignment 1
<b>Module 5</b>	<b>Spirituality (Religion), Governance and the State</b>		
Unit 1	Spirituality (Religion) and Governance	Week 20	Assignment 1
Unit 2	St Augustine philosophy on church and the state	Week 21	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Usman Dan Fodio on State and Violence	Week 22	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Isaiah Berlin and Natural Rights	Week 23	Assignment 1
Unit 5	Ibn Khaldun on the Metamorphosis of State	Week 24	Assignment 1



## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THE COURSE**

This course builds on what you have learnt in the 100 Levels. It will be helpful if you try to review what you studied earlier. Second, you may need to purchase one or two texts recommended as important for your mastery of the course content. You need quality time in a study friendly environment every week. If you are computer-literate (which ideally you should be), you should be prepared to visit the recommended websites. You should also cultivate the habit of visiting reputable physical libraries accessible to you.

## **TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

There are 15 hours of tutorials provided in support of the course. You will be notified of the dates and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, and keep a close watch on your progress. Be sure to send in your tutor-marked assignments promptly, and feel free to contact your tutor in case of any difficulty with your self- assessment exercise, tutor-marked assignment or the grading of an assignment. In any case, you are advised to attend the tutorials regularly and punctually. Always take a list of such prepared questions to the tutorials and participate actively in the discussions.

## **ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

There are two aspects to the assessment of this course. First is the Tutor-Marked Assignments; second is a written examination. In handling these assignments, you are expected to apply the information, knowledge and experience acquired during the course. The tutor-marked assignments are now being done online. Ensure that you register all your courses so that you can have easy access to the online assignments. Your score in the online assignments will account for 30 per cent of your total coursework. At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final examination. This examination will account for the other 70 per cent of your total course mark.

## **TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

Usually, there are four online tutor-marked assignments in this course. Each assignment will be marked over ten per cent. The best three (that is the highest three of the 10 marks) will be counted. This implies that the total mark for the best three assignments will constitute 30% of your total course work. You will be able to complete your online assignments

successfully from the information and materials contained in your references, reading and study units.

## FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination for POL215: History of Political Thought will be of two-hour duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-gaps questions which will reflect the practice exercises and tutor-marked assignments you have previously encountered. All areas of the course will be assessed. You must use the adequate time to revise the entire course. You may find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignments before the examination. The final examination covers information from all aspects of the course.

## REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

1. There are 24 units in this course. You are to spend one week in each unit. In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way, a lecturer might give you some reading to do. The study units tell you when to read and which are your text materials or recommended books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you in a class exercise.
2. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do, by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chance of passing the course.

3. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources.  
This will usually be either from your reference or from a reading section.
4. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor or visit the study centre nearest to you. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.
5. Read this course guide thoroughly. It is your first assignment.
6. Organise a study schedule – Design a 'Course Overview' to guide you through the course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units.
7. Important information; e.g. details of your tutorials and the date of the first day of the semester is available at the study centre.
8. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
9. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it.
10. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind in their coursework. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor or course coordinator know before it is too late for help.
11. Turn to Unit 1, and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
12. Assemble the study materials. You will need your references for the unit you are studying at any point in time.
13. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
14. Visit your study centre whenever you need up-to-date information.
15. Well before the relevant online TMA due dates, visit your study centre for relevant information and updates. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination.
16. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to space your study so that you can keep yourself on schedule.
17. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved

the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the course guide).

## **CONCLUSION**

This is a historical as well as an experienced course but you will get the best out of it if you cultivate the habit of relating it to political happenings that characterized the relationship that exists between the state and the governed particularly in the area of rights, justice and politics to achieve a good life.

## **SUMMARY**

The Course Guide gives you an overview of what to expect in the course of this study. The course exposes you to the history of political thought. It specifically acquaints you with the changing theories of the state and the works of various philosophers on the origin and nature of the state as well as issues about the reason of the state and limits of state power.

# **MAIN COURSE**

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## **MODULE 1      ORIGIN AND FOCUS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT AND RELATED CONCEPTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Module 1 is to provide the student with a vivid understanding of what political thought is all about in regard to the origin and focus of political thought. The unit also looks at divergent views of philosophers on concepts such as the state, right, law and justice taking into account the philosophers in each era and the nature of their thoughts. These terms and concepts covered five units which are appropriate to guide the student. The module comprises what political thought is all about, the concept of political theory, the significance of political theory, the distinction between political theory and political thought, political philosophy and political science, approaches to political theory, major schools of thoughts on political theory, debate on the decline of political theory, the origin of the state: the meaning of state, purpose and elements of state and study the theories of the origin of the state.

Unit 1	Political Thought
Unit 2	Concept of Political Theory
Unit 3	Distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science
Unit 4	Major Schools of Thoughts on Political Theory
Unit 5	Origin of the State

## **UNIT 1      POLITICAL THOUGHT**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Discussion on Political Thought
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The major task of this unit is to bring to fore the focus and direction of political thought taking into the idiosyncrasies of philosophers since the time of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle to our contemporary time in the field of



knowledge particularly regarding politics, state, law, rights justice and other concepts linked to attainment of the good life.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain what political thought is all about
- identify the origin and focus of political thought
- discuss the divergent views of philosophers on concepts such as the state, right, law and justice
- identify the philosophers in each era and the nature of their thoughts.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Discussion on Political Thought**

Political thought can be used loosely to cover any abstract thought about politics, law or society – philosophy being, in general terms, the search for wisdom and understanding. However, philosophy has also been seen more specifically as a second-order discipline, in contrast to the first order disciplines which deal with empirical subjects. In other words, political thought is not so much concerned with revealing the truth in the manner of science, as with asking secondary questions about how knowledge is acquired and about how understanding is expressed (Williams, 1985).

Political thought is the study of questions concerning power, justice, rights, law, and other issues pertaining to governance. Whereas political science assumes that these concepts are what they are, political thought asks how they have come about and to what effect. Just as Socrates' simple question 'How should we be governed?' led to his execution, the question 'What makes a government legitimate?' leads to political turmoil when posed at critical times.

Political thought asks what form government should take and why; what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any; and when it may be legitimately overthrown, if ever. Generally speaking, political thoughts, political philosophy, and political theory are terms often used interchangeably to mean the study of philosophical texts related to politics (Bochenski, 1972).

For instance, whereas a political scientist may examine the democratic processes at work within a particular system, a political philosopher will be interested in clarifying what is meant by 'democracy'. Political thoughts, therefore, addresses itself to two main tasks. First, it is

concerned with the critical evaluation of political beliefs, paying attention to both inductive and deductive forms of reasoning.

Secondly, it attempts to clarify and refine the concepts employed in political discourse. What this means is that, despite the best efforts of political philosophers to remain impartial and objective, they are inevitably concerned with justifying certain political viewpoints at the expense of others and with upholding a particular understanding of a concept rather than alternative ones (Charles, 1979).

Furthermore, political thought has been described as man's attempt to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organisation. Sabine and Thorson (1973: 3) described it as an intellectual tradition whose history consists of the evolution of men's thoughts about political problems over time. It is the disciplined investigation of political problems which has over the centuries attracted inquiries from political philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, Machiavelli, Karl Marx and many others.

Consequently, the focus of any study on the history of political thought is to understand and interpret the various perspectives on the collection of writings on the changing theories of the state. Such an inquiry will explore the reason of the state, the nature of the state and the place of the individuals within the framework of the state. It seeks to establish yardsticks upon which the state and its machinery can be objectively assessed.

Specifically, the thrust of political thought has often raised questions on the limits of state power, the relationship between the church and the state, the so-called political obligation and polemics on the contract and relationship between the citizens and the state. In line with this, philosophers in time and space have often sought to explore not only the objective realities of a political system but also what should constitute the ideal reality.

These endeavours have over the centuries revealed consensus ideals and sometimes conflicting perspectives on what is and what ought to be the nature of reality in a political society. Significantly, there exists a remarkable distinction between the prevailing orientation and thrust of political thought in the classical era as represented by the views of Plato and Aristotle when compared to the prevailing ideas in the medieval era. Similarly, the nature of political thought between the Renaissance period, the era of Reason and Enlightenment and anti-colonial period also reveals widespread departure with what obtained in either the Classical or medieval ages.

The origin of western political thought has often been traced to the fifth century BC and is often associated with Greece. This is because the Golden Age of Athens or Pericles is often assumed to be the beginning of western political civilization. Historically, Greece is the place where Europeans contacted the civilisation of the ancient Middle East and where they crossed the threshold of science, philosophy and political theory.

The history of western political philosophy begins with ancient Greece. Greek politics was characterized by the existence of city-states or polis. Aristotle and Plato wrote of the polis as an ideal form of association or organised society of men dwelling in walled towns (the heart and home of political society) in which the whole community's intellectual, religious, cultural, political and economic needs could be satisfied. The polis, characterised primarily by its self-sufficiency, was seen by Aristotle as the means of developing morality in the human character. It is significant to observe here that the Greek polis corresponds appropriately to the modern concept of nation, a population of a fixed area that shares a common language, history and culture.

In the classical era, man was conceived as a fraction of the polis or self-governing city-state that had no other existence outside the framework of the polis. The city-state was on its part conceived as the only genuine platform through which political values could be realised. The polis was conceived as fundamentally self-sufficient and the only ethically sound foundation for the higher forms of civilisation. It was however not a perfect structure but one which needed to be either improved or superseded. There was no premium attached to the notion of individualism. Specifically, a good life was perceived only in terms of participation in the life or activities of the polis. It is in line with this that Plato described the state as the bottom of the division of labour in which men of differing capacity satisfy their needs by mutual exchange. Participation in the affairs of the polis was ethically conceived as more important than either duties or rights.

As Aristotle put it, happiness is activity and he who does nothing cannot do well. The city-state or polis, in which political activities revolved, was of necessity small and further characterized by the love for independence and the all-inclusiveness of its activities. Aristotle observed that the polis was self-sufficing as being not too large as to prevent the unity of interests and feelings among its members. Furthermore, he maintains that the citizens of the polis must be capable of ruling and being ruled. Thus, the evolution of democratic thoughts was evident in the Greek city-states. Within the polis, citizenship was perceived in terms of sharing of the common life and stands at the summit of human goods. Consequently, to advocate or assert that for an individual to seek for a good life outside the frontiers of the polis, or to be in it and not be of it was not only alien but

also perceived as a sacrilege. This explains why Aristotle strongly asserts that the man who can live outside the polis is either a beast or a god.

In these presumptions lies the genius of ethics and politics of the polis in the classical era. It is significant to note that this concept of the nature of the state is fundamentally faulty. For one, the complete acceptance of the polis as a moral institution by its advocates reveals the limits of their political horizon. Little premium is attached to the role which foreign affairs play in the economy of the polis. During the centuries that followed the collapse of Rome, the political organisation of the Western world was extremely pluralistic.

Theoretically, the medieval political system was based on the idea that the Pope and Emperor, as Vicars of Christ were jointly responsible for the governance of Christendom. Under this condition, no territorial Prince had the power or authority to maintain an effective rule of law since the secular realm was broken down into a complex network of overlapping jurisdictions. Writing in this epoch, St Aurelius Augustine (354-438 AD) the political existentialist, makes a distinction between a universal order of justice and the order of the state. For him, men as individuals should ultimately honour the universal society than the state.

In his contribution to political ideas of this era, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) supports the church supremacy over the state. He argued that since the true end of man is to attain virtue, and through that qualify for the eternal enjoyment of God, the organization through which this is attained must be superior. Consequently, he advocated that the secular government should be subordinate to the church because the latter is concerned with an ultimate purpose that is the salvation of souls.

In the centuries between St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, feudalism emerged as the dominant socio-economic and political characteristic of the Middle-Ages. The feudal era, which lasted for about ten centuries, is a socio-economic system of land ownership wherein the lords, release out the land (manor) to serfs who owe loyalty to the lords. They work on the land and must return a good portion of the produce to the lord.

Under the feudal system, man's socio-economic and political relevance was dependent on his relationship to the land. It is these features that characterized the trend in the Middle-Ages. Attempts are made below to highlight the dominant philosophies of the epoch. Practical exigencies of the state reached a point in the emergence of Reformation and Renaissance. The arrival of Protestantism raised serious questions of political obligation in the evolution of political thought. Practising Lutherans and The Calvinist began to rethink their continued loyalty to Catholic Princes and even Catholic subjects thought the same way about

Protestant Princes. The consequence of this was the crystallization and codification of natural laws and doctrines of state sovereignty. Here, royal authority increased with a decline of papal authority even in Catholic states.

The end product was the emergence of absolute monarchy which overturned feudal constitutionalism on which the medieval politics depended. The reformation supported the absolutism of Monarchs and placed all ecclesiastical authority to civil predominance. Reformation scholars such as Hobbes supported absolutism in his *Leviathan*, which contained his social contract theory. Hobbes doctrine found a complement in the divine right of kings, which gave credence to royal absolutism. Machiavelli on his part freed kings from the limitation imposed by public morality. He argues that the state is an end in itself, with its own life aimed at its own preservation and advantage and as such was not bound by obligations. For him, the prince should aim at conquering and maintaining state and the end will be judged honourably and praised by everyone.

It was from the writings of Nicollo Machiavelli and Jean Bodin that the modern concept of state as the centralising force for stability emerged. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli gave prime import to the durability of government, sweeping aside all moral consideration and focusing instead on the strength, the vitality, courage and independence of the ruler. For Bodin, power was not sufficient in itself to create a sovereign. Rules must comply with morality to be durable, and it must have continuity i.e. a means or establishing succession. Reflecting on the role of state sovereignty in the prevention of anarchy, Bodin cautions that for monarchical power to remain unquestioned it must be in conformity with natural laws and to reflect divine authorisation.

The era of reformation and renaissance was succeeded by the era of reason and enlightenment. This era was characterised by intense scepticism of religious revelations, the increasing spread of literacy and consequential growth in the size of politically conscious, curious and ambitious communities. Specifically, the intense challenge was placed on all established dogma and this ignited a changing condition of political and social speculations, the proliferation of political thoughts and conflicts of rival explanation or models of social and individual life within the state.

Descartes, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau who contributed to French encyclopedia believed in the power of reason and knowledge to liberate man from restrictive political and religious systems. The influence of English empiricist on the philosophical traditions stemming from Descartes led to the great intellectual development referred to as Enlightenment. Montesquieu writing on liberty emphasized that political freedom is to be found in moderate governments where power is not

abused. He argued that when the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body, there can be no liberty and if the judicial power is not separated from the legislative and executive, the life and liberty of subjects would be exposed to arbitrary control. Consequently, he proposed that the nature of governmental constitution should be such that power be a check to power. A significant feature and prevailing belief of the Enlightenment is the Principle of liberty as contained in Code Napoleon which emphasized that the state should not encroach on an individual's freedom. This code was exported from France to Europe and the rest of the world. Utopian thinkers looked forward to the emergence of politics not characterised by inequalities and injustice.

Jeremy Bentham in his work, *A Fragment of Government* (1776) and *Principle* (1789) advocated for utilitarianism, which emphasized that the happiness of the majority of individuals was the greatest good. This he argues will be achieved through the calculus of pleasure and pain. Rousseau extends the dominant notion of the era by advocating that the state should owe its authority to the general will of the governed because the law is none other than the will of the people as a whole and an environment for the moral development of humanity. This era featured two prominent revolutions one in France (1789) and the other in the USA (1776).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you understand by political thought?
- ii. Discuss the origin and focus of Aristotle and Plato political thought.
- iii. Discuss the divergent views of philosophers on concepts such as the state, right, law and justice.
- iv. Enumerate the views of some philosophers in each era and the nature of their thoughts.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit explored the meaning and concern of political thought. Some of the findings are that political thought is the product of philosophical inquiries on the nature of the state and the search for the form of government that will ensure ordered society and attainment of the good of life. Deliberate efforts were made to identify the prevailing notion of state in each era as well as the political thinkers in each era. In line with this, the following epochs in the evolution of political theory were identified- the era of city-states in Greek-Roman period, the medieval political philosophies which were characterised by the controversy between the church and state, the era of the national state in reformation and renaissance and the era of reason and enlightenment.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The unit explained political thought as man's attempt to understand and solve the problem of group life and organisation. It also interpreted the perspectives of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Karl Marx on the changing theories of the state.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you understand by political thought?
2. Discuss the origin and focus of Aristotle and Plato political thought.
3. Discuss the divergent views of philosophers on concepts such as the state, right, law and justice.
4. Enumerate the views of some philosophers in each era and the nature of their thoughts.

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## **UNIT 2     POLITICAL THEORY**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Concept of Political Theory
  - 3.2 Significance of Political Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

Political theory is not the product of any particular period or the by-product of any single person or a few persons. It is an interdisciplinary endeavour which centre of significance lies at the heart of political science as an academic discipline. Its traditions, approaches, and styles vary, but the concept is united by a commitment to theorize, critique, and identify the norms, practices, and organization of political action in the past and present all around the world. Most often people use the term to mean the same thing as a political philosophy and political science, however, this is not true as there are few differences between these concepts. This unit is set to examine political theory to understand its meaning and its relationship with other terms like political philosophy, political thought and political science.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss political theory as a concept
- identify its significance.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Concept of Political Theory**

The concept of political theory has been variously defined by different scholars as some view it as a systematic body of knowledge that deals with political phenomena and to some, it is an individual view about political concepts. At the most general level, political theory is a body of



knowledge related to the phenomenon of the state. While ‘theory’ refers to systematic knowledge, ‘political’ refers to matters of public concern.

Mukherejee and Ramaswamy (2011) posits that it is a personal endeavour to understand and experience the present political reality and also to evolve a mechanism to transcend the present imperfect society leading to a perfect and more just order. This includes a study of the evolution, nature, composition, need and purpose of the governmental apparatus and also an understanding of human perception and nature, and its relationship with the larger community. For instance, Plato’s view on the philosopher-king, Thomas Hobbes’ on state of nature and Aristotle on revolution.

We also have certain values and principles that have inspired people and guided policies for years. Ideals like democracy, freedom or equality that different countries may try to protect by enshrining such values into their constitutions as in the case with the United States of America, Nigeria and Germany constitutions. Such documents did not just emerge overnight; its contents emerge from the ideas and principles debated almost since the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to Jean Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Gandhi and others.

As far back as fifth century BC, Plato and Aristotle discussed with their students whether monarchy or democracy was better. In modern times, Rousseau first argued for freedom as a fundamental right of humankind and Karl Marx argued that equality was as crucial as freedom.

Therefore, political theory deals with the ideas and principles that shape constitutions, governments and social life systematically. It clarifies the meaning of concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, democracy, secularism and so on. It probes the significance of principles such as rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, etc. This is done by examining the arguments advanced by different thinkers in defence of these concepts.

Though Rousseau or Marx or Gandhi did not become politicians, their ideas influenced generations of politicians everywhere. Some contemporary thinkers draw upon them to defend freedom or democracy in our own time. Besides examining arguments, political theorists also reflect upon our current political experiences and point out trends and possibilities for the future (Das, 2011).

Political theory is a network of concepts and generalizations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society, and about the political capabilities of human beings. It is a combination of a disinterested search for the principles of good state and good society on

the one hand, and a disinterested search for knowledge of political and social reality on the other (Heywood, 2004).

Gaub (2007) states that political theory is concerned with three types of statements which is an empirical statement that is based on observation through sense and experience alone, a logical statement based on reasoning (scientific in nature) and an evaluative statement which is based on value judgment, e.g. the statement, man are born free. The above definition, therefore, implies that political theory is all-encompassing because it involves an experience that is based on science and evaluation base on value judgment. It is a combination of political science and political philosophy (Goodin, 2006).

However, Gould and Kolb (1964) defined it differently by saying that it is a sub-field of political science which includes; political philosophy; a moral theory of politics and a historical study of political ideas, a scientific criterion, a linguistic analysis of political ideas, the discovery and systematic development of generalisations about political behaviour.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that political theory is concerned with the study of the phenomena of the state both in philosophical as well as empirical terms. It does not only involve explanation, description and prescription regarding the state and political institutions but also evaluation of their moral philosophical purpose. It is not only concerned with what the state is but also what it ought to be.

### **3.2 Significance of Political Theory**

Human beings are unique in two respects: they possess reason and the ability to reflect on their actions. They also have the capacity to use language and communicate with each other. Unlike other species, they can express their innermost thoughts and desires; they can share their ideas and discuss what they consider to be good and desirable. Political theory has its roots in these twin aspects of the human self. Systematic reflection on politics, the nature and purpose of government and political institutions, involving both to understand them and if necessary, how to change them, is quite old. Political activity is an activity concerned with the management of man's collective life through the state (Hoffman & Grahman, 2009).

From classical period onwards, political speculation has been about how fundamental political activity is, how it provides the groundwork for human civilization which distinguishes man from all other living creatures and to inquire into the basic problem of 'how to live together' in a community because living together is necessitated by human nature and forms the core of individual life.

Political theory seeks to understand, explain and analyze the political phenomena and prescribe ways and means to rectify the shortcomings. Political theory examines certain basic questions such as how society should be organised? Why do we need government? What is the best form of government? Does law limit our freedom? What does the state owe its citizens? What do we owe each other as citizens? It systematically thinks about the values that inform political life, values such as freedom, equality and justice. It explains the meanings and significance of these and other related concepts. It clarifies the existing definitions of these concepts by focusing on some major political thinkers of the past and present.

It also examines the extent to which freedom or equality are actually present in the institutions that we participate in every day such as schools, shops, buses or trains or government offices. At an advanced level, it looks at whether existing definitions are adequate and how existing institutions and policy practices must be modified to become more democratic. The objective of political theory is to train citizens to think rationally about political questions and assess correctly the political events of our time (Das, 2006).

Political theory is a complex subject. This is because, in the Western tradition, it is at least as old as the times of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others and has been attended to by philosophers, theologians, kings, economists, sociologists and others. The number of political theorists is very large, and the interests and commitments of those engaged in this field have been so different that we are faced with the difficult task of answering a simple question, moreover, because of the diversity and changes in the socio-economic circumstances, there have been substantial changes both in the subject matter of political theory and the methods of studying it.

Political theory is divided into distinct streams such as classical, modern, empirical etc. While the classical political theory was dominated by philosophy and dealt with the description, explanation, prescription and evaluation of the political phenomena; empirical political theory claimed to be a science and has been primarily concerned with the description and explanation of the political reality. Of late, contemporary political theory has tried to blend the theoretical and practical aspects (Mukherejee & Ramaswamy, 2011).

Political science and political philosopher play complementary roles in the realm of political theory, therefore, the significance of political theory may be sought in both of these areas and these include; control of social life, social criticism and reconstruction and the clarification of concepts.

**Control of Social Life:** The scientific analysis of political life enables us to understand and solve the problems of our social lives. Just as the knowledge of geology, helps us to understand the causes of the earthquake and gives us insight for preventing the havoc caused by it, so political science enables us to understand the causes of conflicts and violence in society and gives us insight for preventing their outburst.

**Social Criticisms and Reconstruction:** Political philosophy is primarily concerned with right and wrong, good and evil in social life. Political theory, therefore, gives us ample insight into the possible ills of social life and their remedies.

**Clarification of Concepts:** It helps us a lot in the clarification of the concept used in the analysis of social and political life which is essential for the development of knowledge.

**Formal Model Building:** Political theory helps in devising formal models of political processes similar to the ones in theoretical economies. These models are explanatory in nature which offers systematically the factors on which political processes are based and they are also normative because they try to show the consequences that will accrue from following a certain rule (Varma, 2006).

**Encourages Mutual Respect and Tolerance:** The tradition of political theory encourages a dignified debate between scholars of a different point of view. When we follow the tradition of these political philosophers, it inspires us to understand each other's viewpoint, allows us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our thoughts, and helps us to resolve our differences peacefully (Sabine & Thorson, 1973).

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. What do you understand by political theory?
- ii. List some significance of political theory.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Political theorists share a concern with the demands of justice and how to fulfil them, the presuppositions and promise of democracy, the divide between secular and religious ways of life, and the nature and identity of public goods, among many other topics.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Our discourse in this unit has focused on various dialogue of political theory which is a continuous process, the speculation on politics will

continue because it relates to the life and values by which men live and die. Political Theory is a separate area within the discipline of political science; it is an outline of what the political order is about. It is a symbolic representation of the word 'politics'. It is a formal, logical and systematic analysis of the processes and consequences of political activity. It is analytical, expository and descriptive. It seeks to give order, coherence, and meaning to what is described as political.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you understand by political theory?
2. List some significance of political theory.

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## **UNIT 3      DISTINCTION      BETWEEN      POLITICAL THEORY      AND      POLITICAL      THOUGHT, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science
  - 3.2    Approaches to Study of Political Theory
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Political theory is largely an attempt to seek the truth as the thinker sees it and it is usually expressed through a treatise such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics, Hobbes' Leviathan, or Rawls' Theory of Justice. Political theory contains an explanation of man, society and history, focusing on the sources of conflict in the society and how they can be resolved.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the distinction between political theory and political thought, political philosophy and political science
- identify approaches to the study of political theory.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science**

##### **Political Theory and Political Thought**

Political theory is sometimes synonymously regarded with political thought but it is important to understand they don't necessarily mean the same thing. Political thought is a generalized term which comprises all thoughts, theories and values of a person or a group of persons or a community who think and write on the day-to-day activities, policies and decisions of the state, and which has a bearing on our present living. These persons can be philosophers, writers, journalists, poets, political commentators etc.

Political thought has no 'fixed' form and can be in the form of a treatise, speeches, political commentaries etc. What is important about political thought is that it is time-bound since the policies and programs of the governments change from time to time. Thus there exists the Greek thought or Roman thought of ancient period or the political thought of the medieval ages. While political thought is the immanent philosophy of a whole age, political theory is the speculation of a particular thinker. While political thought is implicit and immersed in the stream of vital action, political theory is explicit and may be detached from the political reality of a particular period (Mukhi, 2010).

##### **Political Theory and Political Philosophy**

Philosophy is all thinking really on anything and everything in search of the truth and wisdom. It is called the science of wisdom; wisdom about this world, man or God. This wisdom is all-inclusive and tries to explain everything. When this wisdom is applied to the study of political phenomena or the state, it is called political philosophy. Political philosophy belongs to the category of normative political theory. It is concerned with not only explaining what is but also what ought to be. When this search is on political topics, we call it political philosophy. Hence it may not necessarily have a theory to propose (Adam, 2002).

Though political theory deals with the same issues as political philosophy, it can explain them both from philosophical as well as empirical points of view. In other words, while political philosophy is abstract or speculative, political theory can be both normative and empirical. However, we must not forget that though we can analytically distinguish between philosophy and theory, yet if political theory is separated from political philosophy, its meaning will appear distorted and it will prove barren and irrelevant. Theory must be supplemented by philosophy (Das, 2006).

### **Political Theory and Political Science**

As a discipline, political science is much more comprehensive and includes different forms of speculation in politics such as political thought, political theory, political philosophy, political ideology, institutional or structural framework, comparative politics, public administration, international law and organizations etc. Political theory was made one of the subfields of political science. While Political theory is not only concerned about the behavioural study of the political phenomena from an empirical point of view but also prescribing the goals which states, governments, societies and citizens ought to pursue. Political theory also aims to generalize about the right conduct in political life and about the legitimate use of power.

Thus, political theory is neither pure thought, nor philosophy, nor science. While it draws heavily from all of them, yet it is distinct from them. Contemporary political theory is trying to attempt a fusion between political philosophy and political science (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011).

### **3.2 Approaches to Political Theory**

When we talk about the approaches to analysing political theory, we are simply referring to the method of analyzing a text in political theory. There are many methods of analysing of political theory, but the two basic methods are; the Textualist approach and Contextualist approach.

The textualist approach has been dominant since 1945. The main thrust of this approach is that political theory text can be studied without reference to their historical context. It is considered as a sub-category of philosophy with its central concern on the clarification of concepts used in political discourse and debate and also to critically examine and evaluate political beliefs and principles. The textualists think that though, historical understanding of the milieu in which these texts have originated may give us some insights; they do not play a central role in interpreting them (Heywood, 1999).

The contextualists, on the other hand, posit that a mere textual approach is inherently weak as it overlooks the historical background, the purpose, motivation and intention of writing the text. The approach emphasizes that political theory itself has a history. That every text is the result of the conscious effort of the authors, therefore, to ignore the historical context could lead to an error in interpreting and understanding the text (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011).

The contextualists also point out that the writers of the past intended to communicate with particular audiences, only when the writers' intention



is comprehended and their use of language and the words that prevailed at that point of time understood, then understanding the text becomes possible. They further argued that since political theory is by and large descriptive, a historical approach is important for that would help us to see how political theory varies according to time and circumstances.

In interpreting a context, one must keep the time and period of the text in mind as it enables us to see the way a word has been defined, the different meanings that it gives rise to and the author's intentions and relate it to the immediate social and political environment, the aim and purpose of writing the text, how well the author tackled the problems in relation with his contemporaries and then the meaning of the text today (Ramaswamy, 2015).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Explain in brief the distinction between political theory and political thought, political philosophy and political science.
- ii. Discuss the approaches to the study of political theory.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Political theory is discipline-based, thus we are confronted by a variety of political theories, each distinguished by a discipline on which it is based and the task of political theory is not only to understand and explain but also to devise ways and means to change the society. Thus political theory recommends groups of action as well as means of reform, revolution or conservation.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, political theory is associated with the explanation and evaluation of the political phenomena and this phenomenon can be examined as a statement of ideas, as an agent of socio-economic change, and as an ideology which has a link with political thought, political philosophy and political science.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain in brief the distinction between Political Theory and Political Thought, Political Philosophy and Political Science.
2. Discuss the approaches to the study of political theory.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 4 MAJOR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS ON POLITICAL THEORY**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Major Schools of Thoughts on Political Theory
  - 3.2 Debate on the Decline of Political Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As discussed earlier in the previous unit, there is considerable diversity in political theory discussion. Political theory in the western world is a continuous dialogue extended over time. Broadly speaking, although there is more or less a continuity regarding the subject matter of political theory, yet the approaches to its study have been changing during the past 2000 years. However, the Classical Political Theory, Liberal Political Theory, Marxist Political Theory, Empirical/Scientific Political Theory and Contemporary Political Theory has been followed in this unit for clarity of thought and convenience of analysis. The unit also follow-up the debate on the decline of political theory.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the views and perceptions of different major schools of thoughts on political theory
- elaborate the debate on the decline of political theory.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Major Schools of Thoughts on Political Theory**

##### **Classical Political Theory**

Classical political theory starts from 6th century B.C. and covers the political ideas of a large number of Greek, Roman and Christian thinkers and philosophers. Plato and Aristotle are the two great giants of the classical period who had enormous influence in their own times and on later thinking. The classical political theory includes; politics, the idea of

theory and the practice of philosophy. Thus political theory was a systematic inquiry to acquire reliable knowledge about matters concerning public affairs. Classical political theory was dominated by philosophy and its dimensions included description, explanation, prescription and evaluation, there was no clear distinction between philosophical, theological and political issues, it was not an autonomous subject as it is today and it was concerned with probing into issues, asking important questions and serving as a sort of conscience keeper of politics. The quest for an absolute best form of government was also an important preoccupation of classical political theory and the search for an ideal state (Arora, 2010).

### **Liberal Political Theory**

The long spell of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Cicero and other thinkers of classical age was broken in a variety of ways after the twin revolutions of Renaissance and Reformation in Europe from 15th century onwards, coupled with the industrial revolution later on. Renaissance produced a new intellectual climate which gave birth to modern science and modern philosophy and a new political theory known as liberalism. Whereas classical political theory considered the moral development of individual and the evolution of the community as co-terminus, the liberal political theory developed the concept of the sovereign individual.

The central theme of this political theory was Individualism. It started with the belief in the absolute value of human personality and spiritual equality of all individuals and in the autonomy of individual will, it believed in individual freedom in all spheres of life and brought in the concept of individual rights emphasizing that man is endowed by his creator with the natural rights of life, liberty and property and since man and his rights exist before the establishment of state, these cannot be bargained away when the state is established.

The new theory declared that state is not a natural institution but comes into existence by mutual consent for the sole purpose of preserving and protecting the individual rights, the relation between state and the individual is contractual and when the terms of the contract are violated, individuals not only the right but the responsibility to revolt and establish a new government. Political theory during this period was not searching for an Ideal State but was preoccupied with freeing the individual from the social and economic restraints and from the tyrannical and non-representative governments (Ramaswamy, 2015).

### **Marxist Political Theory**

Liberal-individualistic political theory was challenged by Marx, Engels and their subsequent followers in the latter half of the 19th century by their scientific socialists. While socialism extends back far beyond

Marx's time, it was he who brought together many ideas about the ills of society and gave them a great sense of urgency and relevancy. No political theory can ignore the study of Marxist history, politics, society and economics. The knowledge of Marxism has put us in a better position to analyze the socio, economic developments. Marxism introduced a new concept of philosophy conceived as a way to the liberation of mankind.

The task of knowledge, according to Marx, is not only to understand the world but also to change the material conditions of human life. He insisted that the salvation is to be found by man in this world itself and it laid in the revolutionary reconstitution of the present society and the establishment of a socialist society.

Marxist political theory is a theory of social change and revolutionary reconstitution of society; it consists of three inter-related elements which are the examination and critique of the present and past societies known as Dialectical materialism and historical materialism, the notion of an alternative model against a society based upon exploitation and divided among classes which the new society is based on the common ownership of the means of production in which human potential will be allowed to freely develop its manifold facets. Such a society will be classless and stateless (Das, 2010).

### **Empirical-Scientific Political Theory**

The study of political theory through scientific method instead of philosophical and based upon facts rather than on values was significantly developed by the American social scientists. In the early twentieth century, Max Weber, Graham Wallas and Bentley gave an empirical dimension to the study of political theory and advocated that its study should be based upon facts only. The scientific theory believes that the political theory is to order, explain and predict the phenomena and not to evaluate it, the study should be value-free, political theory is not only concerned with the study of the state but also with the political process.

However, the new theory was developed during the inter-war period and after the Second World War by the political scientists of Chicago University known as the Chicago School such as Charles Merriam, Harold Lasswell, Gosnell, and others like David Easton, Stuart Rice, V.O. Key and David Apter.

Political theory, therefore, shifted emphasis from the study of political ideals, values and institutions to the examination of politics in the context of individual and group behaviour. The task of political theory is to formulate and systematise the concept of science of political behaviour in which emphasis is placed on empirical research than on political philosophy (Das, 2010).

### **Contemporary Political Theory**

Since the 1970s, there has been a revival of interest in political theory in the USA, Europe and other parts of the world. At the heart of this renaissance has been the emerging clash of values on the one hand and the changes in the humanities and social sciences, on the other. Moreover, the passing away of the shadows of the Second World War, the reemergence of Europe, and crisis in the ideologies of socialism and Marxism brought about a new fluidity in political ideologies. Whether it is Marxism or socialism, liberalism or democracy; all stand challenged and new powerful social movements are seeking to redraw the issues in political theory.

During the era of domination of behaviouralism, political theory was overpowered by political science. The theory was denied the status of a legitimate form of knowledge and inquiry. Though the hold of empiricism did not last long, yet it left an enduring legacy in the development of political and social sciences particularly in North America in the form of scientism.

The encouragement for the regeneration of political theory came from many sources. While several thinkers such as Thomas Kuhn, challenged the whole model of what is science, others felt that there are distinctive problems of understanding the social sciences and social issues which could not be grasped by the model of unified science. This is because of two factors: Firstly, the object of social sciences is the self-interpreting social being and different thinkers interpret the social issues differently.

Secondly, political theory cannot be limited to a systematic account of politics; it must also perform its critical role, i.e., its capacity to offer an account of politics which transcends those of laymen. As a result of the great debates, several important innovations in the study of political theory followed (Arora, 2010).

In other words, political theorists concentrate more on theoretical claims instead of empirical claims about the nature of politics. However, there are different approaches which explain the political system which includes modern and traditional approaches. In the behaviour approach, the scientific method is emphasised because behaviours of several actors in the political situation are capable of scientific study. Normative approach is linked to philosophical method because norms and values can be determined philosophically. Another classification of political approach is an empirical analysis of political events. Political theory cannot be based purely either on philosophy or science. All issues raised by philosophy must be examined within modes of inquiry at the empirical

level. Conversely, the normative issues raised by political science cannot be avoided.

### **3.2 Debate on the Decline of Political Theory**

Political theory is as old as man itself because it deals with the systematic knowledge of the goals and methods of politics, but in the mid-20th century, the exponents of new political science began to question the continued relevance of the traditional theory. Many observers were ready to write an obituary to political theory, some spoke of its decline and to others, it is dead already because the classical political theory was full of value judgments without any empirical testing. The criticisms of normative theory came from the logical positivist in the 1930s and subsequently from behaviouralists.

Easton asserted that the traditional political theory was based on speculation since it is concerned with some kind of historical form; it has lost its constructive role because it was devoid of acute observation of political reality, that it was the product of the turmoil that characterized the past ages (Berlin, 1978).

It particularly flourished in Greece in pre-Plato days, Italy in the fifteen century, England in the sixteenth and seventh centuries or France in the eighteenth century which were days of widespread social and political upheaval and had no relevance in contemporary society, therefore, there is a need to rescue the study of politics from the study of classics and history of political ideas to lay a scientific foundation for it (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011).

Das (2006) contends that apart from history, “hyper-factualism” which generally means excessive dependence upon facts and the failure to relate facts to theory is another factor responsible for the decline of political theory. This is because there has been a series of research conducted in the field of political science but the contribution of this research in the articulation of a political theory is not significant. He further maintained that according to Easton, political theory was dominated by moral theory based on western civilisation which no research has been launched to verify the validity and acceptability of mere moral values and concept. Ideological reductionism, cotemporary conditions like the emergence of communism and collectivism in several parts of Europe and the absence of man vision have also played a great role in the decline of political theory (Varma, 2006).

However, despite all arguments levelled against political theory, Mahajan (1998) concludes that political theory is not dead, rather it has undergone a transformation and it still play a significant role in our contemporary

world as it helps us to determine our ends since political science enables us to strengthen our means.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. List and discuss views of different major schools of thoughts on political theory.
- ii. What is your take regarding the debate on the decline of political theory?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

While political scientists produce a more comprehensive explanation of how and why things happen in the world of politics, the task of a political philosopher is to relate this knowledge with the big problems of mankind and to inquire into how these can help in enhancing liberty, equality, justice and fraternity in the society and among the peoples to create conditions to achieve a good life.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Discussion in this unit borders on the different approaches to the understanding of political theory which spanned over the past 2000 years. These approaches include among others the classical political theory, liberal political theory, marxist political theory, empirical/scientific political theory and contemporary political theory. The unit also contained a follow-up debate on the decline of political theory as opined by many scholars.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List and discuss views of different major schools of thoughts on political theory.
2. What is your take regarding the debate on the decline of political theory?

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 5      ORIGIN OF THE STATE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Meaning of the State
  - 3.2 Elements of the State
  - 3.3 Purpose of the State
  - 3.4 Theories of Origin of the State
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The state originated in the bare needs of life and continues in existence for the good life of man. But it is surrounded in mystery when the law in the state came into existence. Many political thinkers have attempted to explain the origin of the state in various ways. Therefore, political thinkers adopted various hypothesis, many of which are still debated in the light of modern knowledge. This unit takes into account the meaning of state, purpose and elements of state and study the theories of the origin of the state.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of the state
- discuss the purpose of establishing the state
- identify with elements of the state
- examine the various theories of the origin of the state.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Meaning of State**

The state is the most universal and powerful of all social institution. Wherever human beings have lived together for any length of time, there we find organisation and authority. And where we find organisation and authority, there we have the nucleus of the state. The origin of the state is a matter of speculation and controversial discussion. Ever since political

philosophers began to philosophize in respect to the existence of the state, there has been a different opinion among them (Heywood, 2005).

As per the perception of the Greek, the state is both a natural and necessary institution. The state is natural in the sense that it has arisen out of the primary instinct of man through a gradual growth. Aristotle declares that man by nature is a political being, hence, to live in the state and to be a man were identical, for whoever was not a member of the state or was unfit to be one, was either a God or a beast; he was neither above the state nor below it. Modern writers sometimes speak of the political instinct of man. By that, they mean that the state has its roots in the natural impulses of man and that it cannot be easily eradicated (Kelly, 2011).

To this effect, there are a great number and variety definitions of state, among them, are:

According to Aristotle, the state is an association of families and villages for the sake of attaining a perfect and self-sufficient existence and to Cicero, the commonwealth is the coming together of a considerable number of men who are united by a common agreement about law and rights and the desire to participate in mutual advantages.

To Woodrow Wilson, the state is an association which, acting through laws as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive powers, maintains within a community territorially demarcated by the universal external conditions of social order.

Garner says, the state, as a concept of political science and public law, is 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.

To Laski, a state is a people permanently occupying a fixed territory, bound together by common laws, habits and customs into one body of politic, exercising through the medium of an organized government with independent sovereignty and control over all persons and things within its boundaries capable of making war and peace and of entering into all international relations with the communities of the globe.

### **3.2 Elements of the State**

The following are essential elements of a state: population, territory, government and sovereignty. Sometimes and in some books independence and a sense of nationalism or national identity are added.

**Territory:** There can be little doubt that without fixed territory there can be no state. Yet not all political thinkers absolutely agreed on this. The modern state undoubtedly requires a definite portion of earth's territory over which it can have undisputed authority. It symbolizes the sphere of the sovereignty of the state. It also provides for natural resources for the sustenance of the population of the state. Territory provides for a sense of security and immense opportunities for life for its residents. It is an object of sentimental attachment, people love and worship their motherland and are prepared to make supreme sacrifices for the protection and maintenance of the territorial integrity of their state (Asirvatham and Misra, 2013).

The territory is usually a geographical phenomenon, dividing different states by sea, mountains or other natural barriers. Although opinion has differed on the political utility of a small and big state. Plato drew a close analogy between the state stature of a well-formed man and the size of a normal state. Aristotle was favourably inclined toward the state of moderate size. Rousseau took his cue from Plato's analogy and set definite limits to the size of a well-governed state. He maintained that in general, a small state is proportionately stronger than a large one. Montesquieu said that there is a necessary relation between the size of the state and the term of government best adapted to it (Kapur, 2016).

**Population:** The state is a human institution and hence population is, therefore, an essential element of the state. However, the population can constitute a state only when it is united by the condition of interdependence, the consciousness of common interest and general regard for a set of common rules of behaviour and institutions. The size of the population for constituting a state cannot be fixed, yet it is always better that such a population is self-sufficient to meet us all the needs of life. If it is required to procure any goods or services from other states, it should usually be able to pay for them. The population of a state need not belong to a single race, religion, language or culture. A homogenous population is no longer considered an essential feature of the modern state. The modern state claims to reconcile the various interest of its citizens (Gaubu, 2005).

**Government:** The purpose for which people live together cannot be realized unless they are properly organised and accept certain rules of conduct. The agency created to enforce such rules of conduct and to ensure obedience is called government. Government is the focus of the common purpose of the people occupying a definite territory and it is through this medium that common policies are determined, common affairs are regulated and common interests are promoted. Without government, the people will be disorganised with no cohesion and means of collective action. They would divide themselves into groups, parties

and even warring associations and thus creating conditions of serious chaos and even civil war.

It is, therefore, imperative that there should be a common authority and a consequent order wherever people live. It is the prerequisite of human life and as such, the government is an essential element of the state. The state cannot and does not exist without a government. The form of government depends upon the nature of the state which in turn depends largely upon the political thought and character of people (Kapur, 2016).

**Sovereignty:** Sovereignty of the state is its most essential and distinguishable feature. People inhabiting a definite portion of territory and having a government do not constitute a state. They must be internally supreme and free from external control. The sovereignty of the state has two aspects, internal sovereignty and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty is the state's monopoly of authority inside its boundaries. This authority cannot be shared with any other state and none of its members within its territory can owe obedience to any other state. If the state admits no rival within, it logically follows that it has no authority outside its own territory. Each state is independent of other states. It will be its own territory. Each state is independent of other states and its will is its own, unaffected by the will of any other external which clarifies the meaning of external sovereignty (Kapur, 2017).

Every state, therefore, must have its population, a definite territory, a duly established government and sovereignty. Absence of any of these elements denies to it the status of statehood.

### 3.3 Purpose of the State

Asirvatham and Misra (2013) noted that the justification of the state is incomplete without a consideration of the end or purpose for which the state exists. In discussing this theme it is usual to distinguish between the immediate end, and the final or ultimate end. To the Greeks the purpose of the state was self-sufficiency. The state they said, should provide for its citizens all that was necessary for their highest development and happiness.

Plato regarded the state as a macrocosm in which the individual could find his proper place and perform the duties for which he was best fitted. The rulers and warriors should give their undivided attention to the highest well-being of the state. To the mind of Plato, the state was a well-developed organism in which each individual and each class had a particular place to fill and were happy in so doing.

However, Aristotle believed that the purpose of the state was to secure the development of virtue in the citizens, but he too believed in the self-sufficiency of the Greek city-state, which was to produce the greatest happiness in the individual. Hence, the state exists not for the sake of wealth or security or society, but for the sake of a good life, if life were the only object of the state, slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life of free choice. Political society, therefore, exists for the sake of noble actions, and not for mere companionship and those who contribute most to such a society have the greatest claim to power.

According to Hobbes, the purpose of the state was to maintain order and the right of property. Hobbes took such a view of the state of nature preceding the establishment of civil society that leads to the belief that any state was better than no state. Locke, on the other hand, claimed that the purpose of the state was to maintain life, and property, using a known law and a common judge. When we come to Rousseau, we find a revival of the idea that the state exists to make a good life possible for the individual. He argued that the state is not a mere matter of convenience for the gaining of utilitarian ends, but the highest expression of the best in man. The end is general happiness, the end is the maintenance of order, the end is social service, and the end is justice.

### **3.4 Theories of Origin of the State**

Various theories concerning the primary or pre-historical origin of the state have been propounded by many political thinkers. These theories are:

#### **Divine Origin Theory**

This is the oldest or the earliest theory on the subject of the origin of the state as well as the nature of political authority. It treats authority as a creation of God and as such, it found its expression in the scriptures of the religion of the Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and all other faiths (Johari, 2012).

According to it, the state is established and governed by God himself or by some superhuman power. God may rule the state directly or indirectly through some ruler who is regarded as the agent of God or vicar of God. Such a state is known as a theocratic or God ruled the state. The divine origin or the theoretic conception is almost as old as the state itself and is found universally among early peoples. It is a well-authenticated fact that early forms of political authority were believed to be connected with the unseen powers. The earliest rulers were a combination of priest and king of the magic. According to MacIver, the magic man in early society was the priest and king all combined into one (Asirvatham and Misra 2013).

Asirvatham and Misra (2012) went on to say that, the theory of divine origin found some of its most earnest supporters among the early church leaders and the chief exponents of the divine origin theory in the early times were the Jews. The teaching of the Old Testament and the church profoundly influenced the mediaeval writers in the controversy between the church and the empire. Some of these writers used the divine origin theory to establish the supremacy of the church over the state and others to establish to the supremacy of the state over the church. According to the Jews, “the king is treated as owing responsibility to God alone for his acts” (Mahajan, 2014).

Thus, as it was held in the Bible, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisted the power resisted the ordinance of God and they that result shall receive to themselves damnation” (Appadorai, 2006).

The theory of divine origin was used to support the theory of the divine right of kings. According to Prof. G.P Gooch, there were certain features of the theory of the divine right of kings. Those were; monarchy is divinely ordained; hereditary right is indefensible; kings are accountable to God alone and resistance to the lawful king is a crime (Gaubu, 2005).

The theory of divine origin was popular for a long time but later on, it began to decline on account of many factors. The theory of social contract, with its emphasis on consent, was a great setback to the theory of divine origin. It was maintained that the state was created by an individual by means of contract and not by means of God. The separation of church from the state was also partly responsible for the decline of the theory. Religion began to lose its hold on the people and consequently, the people refuse to believe that everything was to be attributed to God and the state was also created by God. The ideas of evolution which became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century also discredited altogether the theory of divine origin. The growth of democratic ideas setback to the theory because the theory of divine supported the ideas of absolute monarchy (Mahajan, 2014).

The theory is dangerous because it pinpoints the unlimited and arbitrary power of the kings. The theory of the divine origin of the state advocates an only monarchical form of government. The theory emphasise revolution and not reason. In modern times, we attribute everything to reason and hence it is not accepted today.

Although the theory has many defects and is no longer accepted today, the theory did a lot to strengthen the respect of man for person, property and government. It indirectly emphasises the moral basis of political

order. Even an absolute ruler owes a moral responsibility to God for whatever he does. According to Gilchrist, to regard the state as the work of God is to give it a high moral status, to make it something which the citizen may revere and support, something which he may regard as the perfection of human life.

### **Social Contract Theory**

The theory of the social contract presents a typical version of the origin of the state from the liberal point of view. This theory treats the state as a product of the mutual agreement of men, created with a definite purpose, to serve certain social needs. (Gaub, 2005). The substance of this theory is that the state is the result of an agreement entered into by men who originally had no government organisation.

The advocates of this theory divided the history of the world into two periods. In the first period, there was no government and no law. The people lived in a state of nature which was brutish and barbaric and after some time, they decided to set up a state. That they did that using a contract. Thus the state was born and the state of nature was ended (Mahajan, 2012).

However, there are three essential elements in the theory of social contract, first is the state of nature wherein man had not organised himself in bonds of political cohesion and therefore, in a political society, he was independent and free and subject to no obligations and man-made laws. He simply obeyed the law of nature. What the law of nature precisely meant, was his own interpretation and determination, such a condition in the state of nature created conditions of uncertainty for all as none felt secure both in this person and property. No man could forever endure such conditions of life and ultimately decided to quit the state of nature. This he did by common consent or contract or covenant with his fellow men who lived with him in the state of nature which is the second element of social contract theory. The third is that as a result of common consent or contract, civil society was established where laws of the state and civil rights prevailed in place of natural law and natural rights (Kapur, 2016). The proponents of this theory are: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jaques Rousseau. Others include Hugo Grotius, Immanuel Kant, Herbert Spenser, John Rawls, and Robert Nozick etc.

As pointed out by Mahajan (2012), here are some of the criticism of social contract theory. Garner says that the social contract theory fails to explain the origin of the state. As an explanation of the origin of the state, it is now entirely discredited like various other political doctrines and no reputable philosopher of political writer could be found to defend it. The theory employs too much deductive and too little inductive reasoning.



The social contract theory is unhistorical, it is merely a fiction. History does not give us any examples of persons who had absolutely no idea of a state and one day created a state by means of a contract. The social contract theory is also attacked on legal grounds. It is contended that a legally sound contract implies the prior existence of some authority and its sanction before the contract is entered into. In the case of social contract theory, there was neither the authority nor the sanction before the contract was concluded it was the social contract which created the authority.

The state is not an artificial creation of man and its membership is not voluntary. If the state were a voluntary organisation like a company then individuals would be at liberty to join it or leave it at will. The entire concept of the state of nature and the laws of nature is unsound. It assumes that whatever preceded the institution of the state is natural and whatever followed it is artificial. There is no warrant for dividing history into two parts. Civilisation is as natural today as barbarism was in the past. Man is a part of nature and the state is the highest expression of his nature.

### **Force Theory**

From ancient times, the tradition has been that strong has dominated the weak. Nearly every dispute is settled by the use of force that makes one victor, the other vanquished. The state is neither a creation of God, not a result of the irresistible social development, it is primarily the consequence of the forcible subjugation (Johari, 2012).

This theory treats force as the foundation of the state. Consent reason, rationality and such other factors are not needed. What is required is a mere brutal force. It is an old dictum of “might is right” physical strength or brutal force is the foundation on which state rests and expands. The theory speculates a situation of wandering tribes. The tribes would be constantly wandering in search of foods. Then there would be a fight with other tribes. The stronger tribes would defeat the weaker tribes and the state emerges. The vanquished tribes are subjugated. The victorious tribe will establish its authority. Once victorious, the tribe would strive to conquer as many small tribes as possible and firmly establish its role. So a large state with fixed territory came into being (Akeke, 2008).

History shows that great empires were created by General and War Lords. A state was founded when a great leader, with the help of soldiers, was able to establish his authority over a certain territory. Later on, he extended his authority over the neighbouring areas. It was in this way that the state came into existence (Mahajan, 2012).

The theory found its exponents in the term of Hume, Oppenheim Edward Jenks and Treitslike, they supported the theory through their writings.

Hume said that “the first ascendant of one man over multitudes began during a state of war, where the superiority of courage and of genius discovers itself most visibly, where unanimity and conceit are most sensibly felt. The long continuance of that state, on incident common among savage tribes, forced the people to submission (Appadoria, 2004).

Oppenheimer has traced the origin of the state through various stages and has advocated the theory of force as the origin of the state. According to him with the increase of population and the consequent pressure on the means of subsistence the methods of warfare were improved and fighting became the work of a specialist and in that process, state come into existence (Mahajan, 2012).

The theory of force has been advocated from time to time by different institutions and individuals to serve their own ends. It was advocated by the church during the Middle Ages to proving its own superiority over the state. Their view was that the state was evil, although necessary one and hence it was but proper that the state should leave the individual alone. The individualist relied upon the principle of the survival of the fittest and argued that it is only the strong who survive and the weak will go to the wall. Also, Karl Marx’s view was that the state was based on forced and when the classless society was established, it will wither away (Mahajan, 2012).

Some of the merits of the force theory are; In so far as this theory explains the origin and development of the state, it contains a considerable amount of truth because war and conquest have gone a long way in the building of states in all ages. And also that, the theory brings to the forefront the fact that might or force is indispensable to the state and without it a state can neither exist nor function.

According to Mahajan (2012), the theory of force as the origin of the state is criticized on many grounds. It was pointed out that the theory is anti-democratic as it ignores the general will of the people. Again, might without right at best be temporary; might with right is a permanent basis for the state. It was undeniable to say that force must have played its part in the creation of the state. However, it is too much to say that force was the only factor which created the state. The theory does not put the right emphasis on the part played by co-operation in society. The fact is that people are social by nature and it is this fact that brings them together and helps them to create a state.

The theory of force is considered to be against the principles of international law which aim at maintaining peace and security in the world and eliminating both force and war. The theory justifies despotism. It is opposed to the idea of freedom. It is too much to believe that the state

is created and maintained by sheer force and the spiritual and moral values have absolutely no place in life.

### **Natural or Evolutionary Theory**

The generally accepted theory is known as the historical or evolutionary theory. It considers the state neither as a divine institution nor as deliberate human connivance, it sees the state coming into existence as the result of natural evolution. It is a continuous development, it cannot be referred back to any single point of time (Appadorai, 2006).

According to Garner, the state was never the handiwork of God nor the result of superior physical force, nor the creation of convention or contract, nor a mere expansion of the family. It is an institution of natural growth and it is a growth and evolution and not an artificial product. It originated in the bare needs of life of man and continues in existence for the sake of good life. The main proponents of the theory are J.W Burgess, MacIver, Garner and Gettell. (Mahajan, 2014). The theory has five (5) important factors that contribute to the development and these are kinship, religion, property and defense, force and political consciousness.

### **Genetic Origin Theory of State**

The genetic theory believed that the state is originated from the family. The family is held to be the simplest and earliest link in the evolution of the state and the control exercised by a father over the members of his family is supposed to represent the origin of human government. The genetic theory is divided into two: matriarchal and patriarchal theory.

**Matriarchal Theory:** McLennan, Morgan and Jenks are the notable exponents of this theory. The matriarchal system was prior to the patriarchal system and tribe. There was no permanent institution of marriage. A woman had more than one husband and because of the uncertainty of male parentage, kinship was reckoned through woman that is from mother to daughters. First, there was a tribe and it was the oldest and primarily social group. Over time, a tribe breaks into clans, clans in their turn give place to households and at last, comes the modern family. The matriarchal theory is more sociological than political. It seeks to explain the origin of the family and not that of state.

**Patriarchal Theory:** According to the patriarchal theory, the state is the enlargement of the family. To begin with, the family consisted of a man, his wife, and their children. The father was the head of the family and he exercised complete control over all the members of the family. With the marriage of the children, the new family emerged or came into existence. However, the authority of the father continued over all the members of the families. Thus, came into existence a patriarchal family. With time, the patriarchal family developed into a clan. When the clan expanded, a

tribe came into existence which culminated to the origin of how the state came into being (Mahajan, 2012).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you understand about the state?
- ii. What do you think are the purpose of establishing the state?
- iii. Discuss in brief elements of the state.
- iv. State and explain three theories of the origin of the state.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, theories of the origin of the state as argued by different philosophers and thinkers are discussed. The evolutionary theory of origin states that states emerged naturally. The force theory is also applicable in many states today and it relies on the use of aggression to conquer power. It is one of the most common forms of state origin in countries that were colonized and which subsequently become independent after a struggle. The theory of divine origin states that the leaders of a state came about as a result of ordination from God. This is not a common method of state origin these days, though it was one of the most popular in the past. The crusades and conquests of various parts of the world by Islamic leaders are prime examples of this. Also, the genetic theory states that the state evolved from the family. All these theories tried to aid the student in comprehending what the origin of the state could be and regarding its importance.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit takes into account the meaning of state, purpose and elements of state and study the theories of the origin of the state. Among the many theories which are concerned with the origin of the state are theory of divine origin, social contract theory force theory, evolutionary or natural theory and the genetic theory.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is the meaning of the state?
2. What do you think are the purpose of establishing the state?
3. Discuss in brief elements of the state.
4. State and explain three theories of the origin of the state.

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## **MODULE 2      CLASSICAL POLITICAL THINKERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Module 2 is designed toward giving a vivid biography of some of the classical political thinkers and their political thoughts. The module contains 5 units with each discussing individual political thinkers. The first unit discusses the life of Socrates, his teachings, political ideas, Socrates view on law and the state. The third unit examines Aristotle's philosophy, his view of politics, the theory of constitutions and citizenship, Aristotle study of specific constitutions and his view of the law. The next unit discusses Marcus Cicero life and his work on political thought, his contribution to the concept of law and perception of what constitutes the state. The fifth unit talked about Montesquieu ideas on Separation of Power and to relate Montesquieu work on the working of democracy in our modern time.

Unit 1	The Life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC)
Unit 2	Plato (427-347 BC)
Unit 3	Aristotle Philosophy (322 – 384BC)
Unit 4	Marcus Tullius Cicero (43 – 106 Bc)
Unit 5	Baron De Montesquieu (1689-1755)

### **UNIT 1      THE LIFE OF SOCRATES (469 - 399 BC)**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC)
  - 3.2 The Teachings of Socrates
  - 3.3 Political Ideas of Socrates
  - 3.4 Socrates on Law
- 3.5 Socrates on State
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The ideas of Socrates, particularly his emphasis on the state and law as the criterion for classification of the forms of government, the contrast between monarchy and tyranny, and others exerted a considerable influence on the subsequent political theories of ancient thinkers, above all Plato, Aristotle and Polybius and through them various politico-legal doctrines of the Middle Ages and modern times. This unit is dedicated to discussing the life of Socrates.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- appraise the teachings of Socrates.
- examine the political ideas of Socrates.
- explain the views of Socrates on Law.
- appraise the perception of Socrates on State
- discuss the life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC).

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Life of Socrates (469 - 399 BC)**

**Socrates** (469 BC – 399 BC) was one of the greatest Greek philosophers. He did not propose any specific knowledge or policy. He showed how argument, debate, and discussion could help men to understand difficult issues. Most of the issues he dealt with were only political on the surface. Underneath, they were moral questions about how life should be lived. Such is the influence of Socrates that philosophers before him are called the Presocratic philosophers (Guthrie, 1962).

Most of what we know about Socrates comes from the works of Plato, who was his pupil. Socrates lived in the Greek city of Athens. His method of teaching was to have a dialogue with individual students. They would propose some point of view, and Socrates would question them, asking what they meant. He would pretend "I don't know anything; I'm just trying to understand what it is you are saying" or words to that effect. This is now called the Socratic method of teaching (Guthrie, 1962). He is sometimes called the 'father of Western philosophy'. This is because in the discussions he uncovered some of the most basic questions in philosophy, questions

which are still discussed today. Some of the people he taught came to be important and successful, like Plato and Alcibiades (Benson, 1992).

Socrates was an Athenian citizen, born in 469 B.C. and left this mortal world on 399 B.C. and worked as a sculptor. He served his city bravely in the Peloponnesian War but did not seek an active role in politics. Nevertheless, he was briefly forced into prominence after the battle of Arginusae when, as one of the presidents of the Assembly, he resisted the clamour to try the generals en masse, which he saw as illegal. During the rule of the Thirty Tyrants (404 – 403 B.C.) he refused an order to take part in arresting Leon of Salamis. After the restoration of democracy, he was put on trial in 399 for introducing strange gods and corrupting the young (Benson, 1992).

He refused to save himself by opting for exile or by using any of the devices by which defendants usually sought to arouse the sympathy of Athenian juries. As a result, he was condemned and put to death by poisoning. It is clear that Socrates was an exceptional individual for his intelligence and for his moral character and integrity. He was interested less in questions about the nature of the universe than in what we could call moral questions, above all the question “What sort of life should we lead?”

Although he wrote nothing and did not call himself a teacher, he acquired an extensive circle of admirers. These included the notorious Alcibiades, as well as Critias and Charmides, relatives of Plato who both took part in the tyranny of the Thirty. Several of his followers wrote “Socratic” dialogues, but only those by Plato (427– 347 B.C.) and Xenophon (ca. 430–355 B.C.) survive in more than a fragmentary form. After Socrates’ death, most philosophers traced their intellectual ancestry to Socrates. All these authors were immensely impressed by Socrates’ moral character and mode of argument, but they interpreted these in very different ways (Mukherjee and Ranaswamy, 2007).

### **3.2 The Teachings of Socrates**

Socrates was the most celebrated philosopher and intellectual giant of pre-Plato Greece. His philosophical, political and legal thoughts earned him great fame. Even Karl Marx highly spoke of him. He came from a family of Athenian sculptors or stonemasons. Since his father was a sculptor, he devoted to the craft. But in his later life, he seriously studied philosophy. His devotion to philosophy, historians say, was not abrupt. Socrates first studied, with all seriousness, physical sciences and this could not satisfy his urge for knowledge, because the physical sciences, in his opinion, contained only



mechanical explanation about matter and phenomena (Mukherjee and Ranaswamy, 2007).

He ardently desired to enter into the deep of everything and this urge led him to study philosophy. He found that physical sciences says Barker, only gave a mechanical explanation of how things were made, and what he wanted was a teleological explanation, showing why they are and what is their *raison d'être*. Socrates spent his entire life in the study of philosophical and political problems and related issues.

He discussed these problems with the ordinary members of society and tried to convince them of the inner meaning of various social and philosophical issues. Socrates was chiefly a philosopher. But at the same time, he showed keen interest in the affairs of state, politics and law. He was a man of great courage and never hesitated to defy the order of the tyrannical ruler. The then rulers of Athens thought his lessons harmful and he was prevented from preaching further and his lessons were banned (Benson, 1992).

Socrates was against the acceptance of financial remuneration in exchange for giving lessons. We know that the Sophists introduced this system. He thought that taking of fees for lessons was tantamount to prostitution. This indicates how selfless Socrates was. Socrates scrupulously adhered to this principle though his family was in great financial crisis. Socrates was severely penalised for preaching and upholding progressive ideas.

He was charged with “corrupting the youth” and impious. The indictment against him was “Socrates is guilty of refusing to recognise the gods recognised by the state, and of introducing the other, new divinities. He is also guilty of corrupting the youth. The penalty demanded his death. The Athenian Court of 501 judges sentenced him to death by a majority of 80 votes” (Levinson, 2007).

As many other Greek philosophers, the views of Socrates are not available in written form. He talked with his pupils, friends and opponents. Which were later on noted by them in the form of notes, yet the best sources of Socrates's ideas are Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle.

### **3.3 Political Ideas of Socrates**

Socrates, in his analysis of political and philosophical problems and issues, applied the method of dialectic, and in this respect, he departed from the Sophists who systematically arranged the different topics and then discussed

them. Socrates, on the other hand, adopted the question-answer method. Needless to say, his disciple Plato also followed him (Benson, 1992).

In the view of Socrates ethics and politics are closely connected with each other. Without politics, ethics carries no value, and without ethics politics becomes harmful. “The highest of all virtues is political art which includes statecraft and makes men good politicians and public officials.” An almost similar opinion was made by Aristotle. In other words, Socrates thought that the purpose of politics was not to capture power, nor it was an art how to remain in power. Political ethics make good and proper citizens. Both public and private persons must learn the art of political ethics (Taylor, Hare & Barnes, 1998).

### **3.4 Socrates on Law**

Socrates also discussed the concept of law. He divided law into unwritten divine law and written human law. He cautioned us by pointing out that there was no discrepancy between these two sets of laws. Justice was the root of all the laws. If a law is not justified by justice, it is useless. If anything is not approved by justice it cannot be legal. To be precise, Socrates gave priority to justice in his thought system and in this respect, Socrates followed his predecessors (James, 1985).

Socrates dealt with a popular and at the same time important concept of politics popularly known as allegiance to law. He devised the theory of concord which means the citizens must show allegiance and obedience to the law. Interpreting Socrates’s allegiance to the law, Xenophon, the most reliable interpreter of Socrates’s view, says “A Republic that is obedient to laws is happy in peace and invincible in war (Mukherjee & Ranaswamy, 2007).

Moreover, you know that concord is great happiness in a state.” Socrates admitted the diversities among the citizens and differences of opinion. But notwithstanding they must unanimously obey the laws. He thought that without unqualified ‘obedience to the law there could not be unity and integrity in the Republic. His exaltation of law-abidingness did not rule out the importance and necessity of criticism. Laws, not in conformity with justice, might invite criticism.

Socrates’s understanding of legal obligation rests a lot on analogies with personal morality. He holds that there are two reasons why we are obliged to obey the laws.

1. Gratitude: the laws play a role for us as the role played by people to whom we are obliged to be grateful.
2. Contract: Socrates agreed to obey the laws (James, 1985).

### **3.5 Socrates on State**

Socrates held the view that the State should always be obeyed, even if it made decisions that the individual may disagree with. He argued that while people may not explicitly sign any contract to obey the laws of the State they live in, their consent to follow the law is assumed. Socrates believed that if you choose to live under sovereign power, for the benefits that this brings to the individual, then the individual must also completely submit to the law of that State, for the benefit of society.

Socrates was a great supporter of philosopher-king. He did not like democracy, oligarchy, hereditary aristocracy and tyranny. Only a philosopher-king, he thought, could serve the purpose of the polis. Socrates gave a brief classification of government which runs as follows. Rule of men over the unwilling mass was to him a tyranny. Property qualification for office was for him a plutocracy (Benson, 1992).

It was democracy when all people were allowed to participate in the government. Socrates recommended only the rule of the wise. All other forms of government, in his opinion, were unsuitable. Socrates had viewed the concept of rule from a different angle. The purpose of the ruler should not be to acquire pleasure or to satisfy personal whims and wishes, but to ensure the welfare of the common people. The ruler must keep a watch upon the needs of the people and he should never try to fulfil his own needs (Vlastos, 1991).

If a ruler pays more attention to the furtherance of his own interests he should be punished. Ascendency to power, in the opinion of Socrates, is not automatic at all. The above-noted qualifications must be satisfied. Related with the concept of justice is equality and Socrates greatly emphasized it. Equality is a political virtue and it is the utmost duty of the wise ruler to ensure it. A polis must be based on equality.

Violation of equality would result in disorder, chaos and disruption of normal activities of the polis. Socrates's equality is geometrical equality. "By geometrical equality, Socrates means political justice and equity or right judgment in terms of political virtue as distinct from simple numerical or arithmetical equality".

He further emphasised that as common people have no ability to participate in the state affairs, therefore, advocated the concept of Philosopher-King. Socrates also introduced a new concept which may be called ethical politics which he said without ethics politics is bound to contaminate the whole society. For an ideal or good and well-ordered state, both ethics and politics must travel hand in hand. It may be ethical politics or political ethics. Consequently, the very foundation of their ideal state was ethics as Socrates believed that officials of public services must be moral and ethical persons in order to rule the state because, without good and ideal politicians, citizens cannot be good and moral (Benson, 1992).

Socrates's argument proceeds from the statement of a perfectly general moral principle to its application in his particular case:

- One ought never to do wrong (even in response to the evil committed by another).
  - But it is always wrong to disobey the state.
  - Hence, one ought never to disobey the state.
- Socrates suggests that 'Law is the correct judgment of the state' thus only those judgments of the state that are correct count as genuine laws.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What are the political ideas of Socrates you are familiar with?
- ii. Give a brief account of Socrates views on the law.
- iii. Elaborate on Socrates perception of the state.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The ideas of Socrates, particularly his emphasis on the state and law as the criterion for classification of the forms of government, the contrast between monarchy and tyranny, and others exerted a considerable influence on the subsequent political theories of ancient thinkers, above all Plato, Aristotle and Polybius and through them various politico-legal doctrines of the Middle Ages and modern times. Accordingly, the state is a community that is marketed with some political or religious attributes. If one does not abide by the attributes, then an individual is pronounced to be an enemy of the government. Socrates happens not to abide by the laws, thus regarded as an enemy to the Athenian state. He manipulated the young/youth to develop a sense of their wellbeing by thinking on their own; this was possible following his position of being a teacher. On the same note, the state then was against

democracy and by the fact that he was in the forefront to address the same; he was regarded as the enemy of the state.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Generally, the philosophy of Socrates helped people to see what was wrong with their ideas. Socrates is known as one of the most important philosophers in history. He is often described as the father of Western philosophy. He did not start Western philosophy, but he had a big influence on it. Before Socrates, philosophy was mainly about mathematics and answering questions about our natural world. Socrates expanded on that and added questions about law and the state.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the political ideas of Socrates you are familiar with?
2. Give a brief account of Socrates views on Law.
3. Elaborate on Socrates perception of the State.

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## **UNIT 2 PLATO AND THE IDEAL STATE (427-347 BC)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Plato: His Life And Times
  - 3.2 Political Thought before Plato
  - 3.3 Plato's Ideal State and Best Form of Government
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit examines the political thoughts of Plato. Specifically, it begins with an exploration of the life and times of Plato as a background to understanding the prevailing orientations and influence on him. It is also important to note that attempts are made to examine the nature of political thought before Plato with particular reference to Aristophanes and Socrates. The influences which Socrates had on Plato are also highlighted. The focus on Plato examines his treatment of the forms of government, nature of education, his thesis of the philosopher-king and other classes in society. It is remarkable to state that Plato falls within the scope of what is described as idealist political thinkers.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the life and times of Plato and its influence on his political thoughts
- examine the main thesis of Plato's political writings
- identify the influence of other political thinkers on Plato and his influence on other political philosophers
- discuss the life of Plato (469 - 399 BC).

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Plato: His Life and Times (427-347 BC)**

Plato was the son of a wealthy and influential Athenian parent. He began his philosophical life as a student of Socrates. Following the death of his master, Plato travelled to Egypt and Italy where he studied with students of Pythagoras. He remained an adviser to the ruling family of Syracuse for several years before returning to Athens to establish his school of philosophy called The Academy, where he sought to transmit the philosophical heritage of Socrates to his students through mathematical learning, to the achievement of abstract philosophical truth. It is this platform that constitutes the written dialogues on which his enduring reputation rests.

At inception, Plato sought to convey the spirit of Socrates' teaching by presenting accurate reports of the master's conversational interaction through series of dialogue which later became the major source of information on the thoughts of Socrates. Such early dialogues were typically devoted to the investigation of single issues, about which a conclusive result is rarely achieved. For instance, the Euthyphro raised significant doubts about whether morally right action can be defined in terms of divine approval by pointing out a significant dilemma about any appeal to authority in defence of moral judgments.

The Apology offers a description of the philosophical life as Socrates presented it in his own defence before the jury in Athens. The Crito utilized the circumstances of Socrates imprisonment to ask whether an individual citizen is ever justified for refusing to obey the state. The middle dialogues of Plato continued to utilize Socrates as a fictional character to develop, express, and defend his own, more firmly established, conclusions about central philosophical issues. For instance, Plato utilized the Meno, to introduce the doctrine of recollection in an attempt to discover whether or not virtue can be taught. He also utilized it to report the logics of Socrates that no one knowingly does wrong.

The Phaedo was useful in the development of Plato's philosophy by presenting the doctrine of the Forms in support of a series of argument that demonstrates the immortality of the human soul. Among the other dialogues of this period are Plato's treatments of human emotion in general and of love in particular in the Phaedrus and Symposium. The masterpiece in the series of Plato's middle dialogues is revealed in The Republic.

It adopted as its point of departure, the conversations of Socrates about the nature of justice and proceeds directly to an extended discussion on the virtue (Gk: arete) of justice (Gk: dikaiosune), wisdom (Gk: sophia), courage (Gk: andreia) and moderation (Gk: sophrosune) as they appear both in individual human beings and in society as a whole. This plan for the ideal society or person requires detailed accounts of human knowledge of the kind of educational programme by which it may be achieved by men and women alike, captured in a powerful image of the possibilities for human life in the allegory of the cave.

The dialogue concludes with a review of various forms of government, an explicit description of the ideal state, in which only the philosopher king are fit to rule, and an attempt to show that justice is better than injustice. Plato's later writings often modify or completely abandon the formal structure of dialogue. They include a critical examination of the theory of forms in *Parmenides*, an extended discussion of the problem of knowledge in *Theaetetus*, cosmological speculations in *Timaeus*, and an interminable treatment of government in the unfinished *Laws*.

### **3.2 Political Thought before Plato**

Sabine and Thorson observed that while the Great Age of Athenian public life fell in the third quarter of the fifth century, the Great Age of political philosophy came only after the downfall of Athens in her struggle with Sparta. Prior to this era, the Athenians were not much engaged in either reading or writing. As such, scarcely anything was preserved on prevailing political theories. There however exist indications that during the fifth century, active political debates on issues of public concerns and the conduct of government were commonplace.

Political questions of various dimensions were actively asked and discussed and the Greek even conceptualized what exists today as comparative government. Herodotus' treatise on *History* exposed the curiosity in Greeks of the fifth century to the laws, customs and institutions of other parts of the world. It became obvious that some behaviour which was upheld and praised in one place may be condemned and ridiculed in another.

Individuals sought to live within the standard of their various countries as such customs and laws formed the basis of regulation and social control. The book contained dialogues on issues relating to such forms of government as monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Such contending issues as the virtues of monarchy, or the rule of one-best man and subsequent degeneration to



tyranny, the desirability of the so-called equality in democracy and nature of mob rule which is a corrupt form of democracy were widely discussed.

At a point, political debates in Athens centred on economic issues and the polemics between proponents of the aristocracy of the old and well-born families of landowners, and democracy dominated by new interests of foreign trade to develop Athenian power on the sea. Meanwhile, while contention and debates on the best form of government were prevalent in Athens, conservatism and political stability dominated the trends in Sparta. In view of the dynamics of Athenian politics and democracy, the political system in Athens was described in terms of progress especially with the eventual triumph of democracy during the political career of Pericles.

Generally, Athenian political history and that of other Greek city-states remained characterized by active party struggle and rapid constitutional change. The relevance of economic factors in Athenian politics is revealed by the triumph of democracy over aristocracy in the city-state. In the supposed Xenophon work, *Constitution of Athens*, the author conceives the constitution as a perfect instrument of government and a perverted form of government. The author conceives democracy as a device for exploiting the rich and putting wealth in the hands of the poor. He observed that with democracy, one cannot even identify a slave out there on the street.

For him, the popular court was simply a clever way of distributing pay to six thousand jurymen and compelling Athens allies to spend money in Athens while waiting to transact their judicial business. (Sabine and Thorson 1973: 38). The principal ideas presented by the Sophist are that nature should not be conceived as setting a rule of ideal justice and right. They repudiated the impression that slavery or nobility of birth is both natural phenomena. Specifically, Sophist Antiphon argued that there was no difference between a Greek and a Barbarian.

In his book, *On Truth*, he equivocally affirmed that all laws are merely conventional and therefore contrary to nature. Justice may be thought of as a convention having no other basis but the law of the state itself while nature is considered non-moral. Consequently, most of what is just according to the law is against nature and men who are not self-assertive usually lose more than they gain. Nature assumed the image as simply egoism or self-interest and a rule of strength. This stimulated contention and attempts to establish the true nature of nature.

One dominant perspective conceived nature as a law of justice and rights inherent in human being and the world. The other conceived nature non-

morally as self-assertion and egoism manifesting in the desire for pleasure and power. Socrates exhibited the rational tradition of raw philosophy based on the belief that virtue is knowledge which can be learned and taught. He was engaged in the quest for a valid general rule of action and imparting through education.

Furthermore, he was concerned with generating precise definition of issues with the belief that if ethical concepts can be defined, a scientific application of them in specific cases can be attained. The ensuing science in his view can be used to sustain a society of demonstrable excellence. This was indeed the vision philosophers like Plato were concerned within their search for the best state.

Socrates remained an outspoken critic of the Athenian democracy based on the assumption that any man can assume an office. He was accused of corrupting innocent mind and later executed. The work of Socrates greatly influenced Plato.

### **3.3 Plato's Ideal State and Best Form of Government**

Writing on the ideal state or polis, Plato describes it as a just state based on justice which is the earthly manifestation of the human soul. He identified two basic principles that underlie the polis as the mutual needs of the individuals that make up the polis and secondly, the various aptitudes to be realized. From this, he describes the polis as a natural growth with its modes and mores and based on the needs and aptitudes of its members.

Plato shares the view that to establish or govern a state is labour to which the human hero shows himself most godlike while the life of political service is the crown of human blessedness. Plato further identified three major social classes in the ideal state as the rulers, the soldiers and the producer or workers which corresponds to the soul's three operative elements and corresponds respectively to the Nous, Thumos and Soma. The Nous or Reason refers to the Philosopher Kings or rulers who with the aptitude of wisdom govern and legislate for the polis.

They are the lovers of wisdom, truth and knowledge. This category of officials should neither marry nor own property. The Thumos or Spirit refers to the soldiers or auxiliaries and guardians of the rulers. They are primarily concerned with the defence of the polis. This class must be sustained by courage and fortitude to keep order and control of workers. They must be subject to the Philosopher Kings and must possess neither property nor

wealth. The Soma or body refers to the producers, that is, the workers in the society.

Members of this class are guided by the desire for satisfaction of senses and with their desire and temperance provide the polis with material subsistence. They are subject to the Nous and Thumos and have no significant political responsibility. Members of this class can get married and own property. Plato contends that in an ideal state the harmony of these classes are safeguarded by justice especially as it concerns their duties and rights. Plato extols “Aristocracy” as the best form of government where only the best rule for general interests.

To this form of government, he describes others as inferior. He subsequently identified and describes other forms of government as degeneration from the ideal state. Specifically, he described Timocracy as a government of honour and ambition; degeneration from the ideal state where dissension exists between two elements of the governing class; the rule and the guardian no longer experience cordial relations with their subjects.

The violence of their opposition is resolved in compromise under which they distribute land and houses to private ownership, while the subjects (producers) whom they once guarded as freemen are reduced to menials and constantly held in subjection. Another deviation from the ideal state is Oligarchy. Here, the few rule in their narrow and selfish interests.

Under oligarchy, it is wealth or property qualification that counts and political power is in the hands of the rich and the poor have no share of it. In oligarchy, the process of accumulation is in private hands and this heightens the possibility of perversion of the law. Here, the state suffers as the majority of its citizens are poor and beggarly and often lack proper education.

Plato further classified democracy as another deviation from the ideal state. He conceived democracy as originating from the conflict of the minority rich and majority poor wherein the poor emerged victorious. He described it as a society where there is equality of political opportunity and freedom for every individual member to do as he likes. Such a society for Plato lacks high principles and ideals and has a little restriction in desires as the law is underrated. The last degeneration from the ideal state in the views of Plato is Tyranny. This society is characterised by the oppressive government either by an absolute ruler or group of rulers which administer with cruelty and without due regards for the rule of law.

Plato attributes it to the excessive emphasis of liberty under democracy. In his view, tyranny is the worst form of government. In a nutshell, Plato's ideal state is based on reason and controlled by the Philosopher King. It pursues the attainment of the best objective of the state which he classified as happiness. He proposed that the Philosopher King must emerge through a rigorous process of education which involves both theoretical and practical orientations and that this education will continue until they are at least fifty years.

It is expected that the curriculum must cut across disciplines such as mathematics, physical education, politics, psychology and philosophy. Only persons who have successfully completed this curriculum and emerged outstanding will take their turn to steer the turbulent ship of statecraft. It is on this background that Plato is classified as an idealist or utopian political philosopher.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What are the fundamental aspects of Plato's ideal state?
- ii. Briefly describe the life and times of Plato.
- iii. What is the dominant trend in the philosophies of the Classical era?
- iv. Identify the central idea advocated by the Sophists.
- v. What are the major ideas of Aristophanes and Socrates?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Plato did not believe in money because he understood its power to corrupt. He believed that a society would be happier without it. When questioned how the city would defend itself without money, the philosopher replied in *The Republic* that neighbouring cities would come to their aid when promised the spoils of war. In Plato's ideal state, leaders not motivated by justice will find ways to rationalize immoral actions, or inactions, using the ends (increased wealth or control) to justify the means. Plato's ideal state proposed the view that morality outweighs rationality. If money and wealth are not at the forefront of society's value system, morality dictates that all societies will be on an equal footing. In consequence, a society will have fewer wars since there would not be financial gains to be desired and mutual respect across nations would forbid war being used as a means of control of other nations.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Plato's ideal state as discussed in the *Republic* was arguably Plato's most influential work. It portrays several dialogues between the philosopher and

several observers in which they discuss a philosophical theory for an ideal state. The central belief is that “justice and happiness stand and fall together. Not because good consequences...follow from being just, but because justice itself is so great that nothing gained by injustice could be greater. Therefore, this unit explored the political thought of Plato as well as the orientations and influences that shaped his views as it relates to forms of government, nature of education and thesis on philosopher kings.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What are the fundamental aspects of Plato’s ideal state?
2. Briefly describe the life and times of Plato.
3. What is the dominant trend in the philosophies of the Classical era?
4. Identify the central idea advocated by the Sophists.
5. What are the major ideas of Aristophanes and Socrates?

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 3     ARISTOTLE BIOGRAPHY**

### **CONTENTS**

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- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.1 Aristotle Philosophy
  - 3.2 Aristotle's View of Politics
  - 3.3 Aristotle Theory of Constitutions and Citizenship
  - 3.4 Aristotle Study of Specific Constitutions
  - 3.5 Aristotle's View of Law
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit discusses the life and time of Aristotle. It examines his political view of politics and the law, his theory of constitutions and citizenship.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss Aristotle's view of politics
- examine Aristotle theory of constitutions and citizenship
- highlight Aristotle study of specific constitutions
- elucidate on Aristotle's views of the law.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Aristotle Philosophy**

Aristotle (322 – 384BC), was a Greek philosopher, logician, and scientist. Along with his teacher Plato, Aristotle is generally regarded as one of the most influential ancient thinkers in several philosophical fields, including political theory. Aristotle was born in Stagira in northern Greece, and his father was a court physician to the king of Macedon. As a young man, he studied at Plato's Academy in Athens. After Plato's death, he left Athens to conduct philosophical and biological research in Asia Minor and Lesbos, and

he was then invited by King Philip II of Macedon to tutor his young son, Alexander the Great. Soon after Alexander succeeded his father, consolidated the conquest of the Greek city-states, and launched the invasion of the Persian Empire. Aristotle returned as a resident alien to Athens and was a close friend of Antipater, the Macedonian viceroy (Jowett, 1984).

At this time (335–323 BC) he wrote, or at least worked on, some of his major treatises, including the *Politics*. When Alexander died suddenly, Aristotle had to flee from Athens because of his Macedonian connections, and he died soon after. (Kraut, 2002).

### 3.2 Aristotle's View of Politics

Political science studies the tasks of the politician or statesman, in much the way that medical science concerns the work of the physician. It is, in fact, the body of knowledge that such practitioners, if truly expert, will also wield in pursuing their tasks. The most important task for the politician is, in the role of the lawgiver, to frame the appropriate constitution for the city-state. This involves enduring laws, customs, and institutions (including a system of moral education) for the citizens.

Once the constitution is in place, the politician needs to take the appropriate measures to maintain it, to introduce reforms when he finds them necessary, and to prevent developments which might subvert the political system. This is the province of legislative science, which Aristotle regards as more important than politics as exercised in everyday political activity such as the passing of decrees (Kraut, 2002).

Aristotle frequently compares the politician to a craftsman. The analogy is imprecise because politics, in the strict sense of legislative science, is a form of practical knowledge, while a craft like architecture or medicine is a form of productive knowledge. However, the comparison is valid to the extent that the politician produces, operates and maintain a legal system according to universal principles.

In order to appreciate this analogy, it is helpful to observe that Aristotle explains the production of an artefact in terms of four causes: the material, formal, efficient, and final causes. For example, clay (material cause) is moulded into a vase shape (formal cause) by a potter (efficient or moving cause) so that it can contain liquid (final cause). One can also explain the existence of the city-state in terms of the four causes. It is a kind of community, that is, a collection of parts having some functions and interests in common. Hence, it is made up of parts, which Aristotle describes in

various ways in different contexts: as households, or economic classes (e.g., the rich and the poor), or demes (i.e., local political units). But, ultimately, the city-state is composed of individual citizens, who, along with natural resources, are the “material” or “equipment” out of which the city-state is fashioned (Jowett, 1984).

The formal cause of the city-state is its constitution. Aristotle defines the constitution as “a certain ordering of the inhabitants of the city-state”. He also speaks of the constitution of a community as “the form of the compound” and argues that whether the community is the same over time depends on whether it has the same constitution. The constitution is not a written document, but an immanent organizing principle, analogous to the soul of an organism. Hence, the constitution is also “the way of life” of the citizens. Here the citizens are that minority of the resident population who possess full political rights (Miller, 1995).

The existence of the city-state also requires an efficient cause, namely, its ruler. On Aristotle's view, a community of any sort can possess order only if it has a ruling element of authority. This ruling principle is defined by the constitution, which sets criteria for political offices, particularly the sovereign office. However, on a deeper level, there must be an efficient cause to explain why a city-state acquires its constitution in the first place. Aristotle states that “the person who first established [the city-state] is the cause of very great benefits”. This person was evidently the lawgiver, someone like Solon of Athens or Lycurgus of Sparta, who founded the constitution. Aristotle compares the lawgiver, or the politician more generally, to a craftsman such as a weaver or shipbuilder, who fashions material into a finished product.

To sum up, the city-state is a matter-form compound of a particular population (i.e., citizen-body) in a given territory (material cause) and a constitution (formal cause). The constitution itself is fashioned by the lawgiver and is governed by politicians, who are like craftsmen (efficient cause), and the constitution defines the aim of the city-state.

### **3.3 Aristotle Theory of Constitutions and Citizenship**

Aristotle states that “the politician and lawgiver are wholly occupied with the city-state, and the constitution is a certain way of organising those who inhabit the city-state”. His general theory of constitutions is set forth in *Politics III*. He begins with a definition of the citizen since the city-state is by nature a collective entity, a multitude of citizens. Citizens are distinguished from other inhabitants, such as resident aliens and slaves; and



even children and seniors are not unqualified citizens (nor are most ordinary workers).

After further analysis, he defines the citizen as a person who has the right to participate in deliberative or judicial office. In Athens, for example, citizens had the right to attend the assembly, the council, and other bodies, or to sit on juries. The Athenian system differed from a modern representative democracy in that the citizens were more directly involved in governing. Although full citizenship tended to be restricted in the Greek city-states (with women, slaves, foreigners, and some others excluded), the citizens were more deeply enfranchised than in modern representative democracies because they were more directly involved in governing. This is reflected in Aristotle's definition of the citizen (without qualification). Further, he defines the city-state (in the unqualified sense) as a multitude of such citizens which is adequate for a self-sufficient life (Roberts, 2009).

Aristotle defines the constitution as a way of organizing the offices of the city-state, particularly the sovereign office. The constitution thus defines the governing body, which takes different forms: for example, in a democracy, it is the people, and in an oligarchy, it is a select few (the wealthy or well-born). Before attempting to distinguish and evaluate various constitutions Aristotle considers two questions. First, why does a city-state come into being?

He recalls the thesis, defended in *Politic* that human beings are by nature political animals, who naturally want to live together. This sets the stage for the fundamental claim of Aristotle's constitutional theory: “constitutions which aim at the common advantage are correct and just without qualification, whereas those which aim only at the advantage of the rulers are deviant and unjust because they involve despotic rule which is inappropriate for a community of free persons”.

The distinction between correct and deviant constitutions is combined with the observation that government may consist of one person, a few, or a multitude. Hence, there are six possible constitutional forms:

Style	Term	Concept
One Ruler	Kingship	Tyranny
Few Rulers	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many Rulers	Polity	Democracy

This six-fold classification (which is adapted from Plato's *Statesman* 302c-d) sets the stage for Aristotle's inquiry into the best constitution, although it is modified in various ways throughout the *Politics*. For example, he observes that the dominant class in oligarchy (literally rule of the oligoi, i.e., few) is typically the wealthy, whereas in democracy (literally rule of the dêmos, i.e., people) it is the poor, so that these economic classes should be included in the definition of these forms. Also, polity is later characterised as a kind of “mixed” constitution typified by the rule of the “middle” group of citizens, a moderately wealthy class between the rich and poor (Yack, 1993).

Aristotle's constitutional theory is based on his theory of justice, which is expounded in *Nicomachean Ethics* book V. Aristotle distinguishes two different but related senses of “justice” universal and particular both of which play an important role in his constitutional theory. Firstly, in the universal sense “justice” means “lawfulness” and is concerned with the common advantage and happiness of the political community. The conception of universal justice undergirds the distinction between correct (just) and deviant (unjust) constitutions. But what exactly the “common advantage” entails is a matter of scholarly controversy (Yack, 1993).

Some passages imply that justice involves the advantage of all the citizens; for example, every citizen of the best constitution has a just claim to private property and education. But Aristotle also allows that it might be “in a way” just to ostracise powerful citizens even when they have not been convicted of any crimes. Whether Aristotle understands the common advantage as safeguarding the interests of each and every citizen has a bearing on whether he anticipates what moderns would understand as a theory of individual rights. Secondly, in the particular sense “justice” means “equality” or “fairness” and this includes distributive justice, according to which different individuals have a just claims to shares of some common asset such as property.

Aristotle analyses arguments for and against the different constitutions as different applications of the principle of distributive justice. He says, that justice involves treating equal persons equally and treating unequal persons unequally. But most do not agree on the standard by which individuals are deemed to be equally (or unequally) meritorious or deserving. He assumes his own analysis of distributive justice set forth in *Nicomachean Ethics*: Justice requires that benefits be distributed to individuals in proportion to their merit or desert (Nichols, 1992).

The oligarchs mistakenly think that those who are superior in wealth should also have superior political rights, whereas the democrats hold that those who are equal in free birth should also have equal political rights. Both of these conceptions of political justice are mistaken in Aristotle's view because they assume a false conception of the ultimate end of the city-state. The city-state is neither a business enterprise to maximize wealth (as the oligarchs suppose) nor an association to promote liberty and equality (as the democrats maintain). Instead, Aristotle argues, "the good life is the end of the city-state," that is, a life consisting of noble actions (Depew, 2009).

### 3.4 Aristotle Study of Specific Constitutions

Regarding the ideal constitution, Aristotle criticises the views of his predecessors in *Politics* and then offers a rather sketchy blueprint of his own in *Politics VII and VIII*. Although his own political views were influenced by his teacher Plato, Aristotle is highly critical of the ideal constitution set forth in Plato's *Republic* because it overvalues political unity, it embraces a system of communism that is impractical and inimical to human nature, and it neglects the happiness of the individual citizens.

In contrast, in Aristotle's *Best Constitution*, each and every citizen will possess moral virtue and the equipment to carry it out in practice, and thereby attain a life of excellence and complete happiness. All of the citizens will hold political office and possess private property because "one should call the city-state happy not by looking at a part of it but at all the citizens". Moreover, there will be a common system of education for all the citizens, because they share the same end (Depew, 2009).

If as is the case with most existing city-states, the population lacks the capacities and resources for complete happiness, however, the lawgiver must be content with fashioning a suitable constitution. The second-best system typically takes the form of a polity (in which citizens possess an inferior, more common grade of virtue) or mixed constitution combining features of democracy, oligarchy, and, where possible, aristocracy, so that no group of citizens is in a position to abuse its rights.

Aristotle argues that for city-states that fall short of the ideal, the best constitution is one controlled by a numerous middle class which stands between the rich and the poor. For those who possess the goods of fortune in moderation find it easiest to obey the rule of reason. They are accordingly less apt than the rich or poor to act unjustly toward their fellow citizens.

A constitution based on the middle class is the mean between the extremes of oligarchy (rule by the rich) and democracy (rule by the poor). That the middle [constitution] is best is evident, for it is the freest from faction: where the middle class is numerous, there least occur factions and divisions among citizens. The middle constitution is, therefore, both more stable and more just than oligarchy and democracy (Depew, 2009).

Although Aristotle classifies democracy as a deviant constitution (albeit the best of a bad lot), he argues that a case might be made for the popular rule in *Politics III*. A discussion which has attracted the attention of modern democratic theorists. The central claim is that the many may turn out to be better than the virtuous few when they come together, even though the many may be inferior when considered individually. For if each individual has a portion of virtue and practical wisdom, they may pool these assets and turn out to be better rulers than even a very wise individual. This argument seems to anticipate modern arguments for “the wisdom of the multitude” (Aquinas, 2007).

In addition, the political scientist must attend to existing constitutions even when they are bad. Aristotle notes that “to reform a constitution is no less a task [of politics] than it is to establish one from the beginning,” and in this way “the politician should also help existing constitutions”. The political scientist should also be cognizant of forces of political change which can undermine an existing regime. Aristotle criticizes his predecessors for excessive utopianism and neglect of the practical duties of a political theorist. However, he is no Machiavellian. The best constitution still serves as a regulative ideal by which to evaluate existing systems (Irwin, 1985).

### **3.5 Aristotle’s View of Law**

Aristotle champions the rule of law against power because he recognizes the dangers of overreaching of all kinds: whether on behalf of those who rule, the people, or the polity itself. Accordingly, he distinguishes categorically between political or rotational rule, on the one hand, and mastery, on the other, calling mastery (or absolute rule) inimical to political life. He is on the whole hostile to rule by the people, and particularly hostile to the kind of freedom as license he takes most forms of democracy to encourage. Indeed, Aristotle treats the rule of law as a constituent feature of any regime worthy of being called a regime.

In Aristotle’s view, however, law too must be moderated, for laws also, and all too often, aim at domination. It is for this reason that he insists, following in the footsteps of Socrates, that unjust law must be disobeyed. Insofar as he

takes the justice of laws to depend on the individual practice of good judgment, Aristotle sees the rule of men, via their good judgment, as moderating excesses in the sovereignty of law (Aquinas, 2007).

Aristotle, in other words, holds both that the rule of law and especially as we will see, the constitution, moderates the rule of men, and also that the rule of men moderates the rule of law, including the constitution. Aristotle understands a constitution as both a rule of recognition and as a rule of reason. And he takes a constitution to be binding because it is a product of citizen acquiescence and reason and also because of its intentional design.

In these ways, Aristotle's constitutionalism brings together the three disjunctive ontological and normative answers offered by contemporary theorists. Through Aristotle's treatment of the figure of Theramenes in his *Constitution of the Athenians*, Aristotle understands social acceptance of, or citizen acquiescence to a constitution not as a fact, but as an active and everyday practice on the part of citizens, informed by reason. And, naming the reason proper to politics practical wisdom, he takes reason to be regulative and indeed, imperative not because it is transcendent or apolitical but because it is situation sensitive and responsive to context (Barker, 1959).

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give a brief account of Aristotle's view on politics.
- ii. Discuss in brief Aristotle philosophy on constitutions and citizenship.
- iii. Enumerate Aristotle's Specific Constitutions.
- iv. Elaborate on Aristotle's view on Law.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The work of Aristotle toward the development of political thought is highly acknowledgeable. According to Aristotle, the correct conception of justice is aristocratic, assigning political rights to those who make a full contribution to the political community, that is, to those with virtue as well as property and freedom. This is what Aristotle understands by an "aristocratic" constitution: literally, the rule of the aristo, i.e., best persons. Aristotle explores the implications of this argument in the remainder of his treatise *Politics III*, considering the rival claims of the rule of law and the rule of a supremely virtuous individual. He described absolute kingship as a limited case of aristocracy. Again, in his work, Aristotle describes the ideal constitution in which the citizens are fully virtuous.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Aristotle's life seems to have influenced his political thought in various ways: his interest in biology seems to be expressed in the naturalism of his politics; his interest in comparative politics and his sympathies for democracy as well as monarchy may have been encouraged by his travels and experience of diverse political systems; he criticises harshly while borrowing extensively, from Plato's *Republic*, *Statesman*, and *Laws*; and his own *Politics* is intended to guide rulers and statesmen, reflecting the high political circles in which he moved.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief account of Aristotle's view on politics.
2. Discuss in brief Aristotle philosophy on constitutions and citizenship.
3. Enumerate Aristotle's Specific Constitutions.
4. Elaborate on Aristotle's view on Law.

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## **UNIT 4     MARCUS TULIUS CICERO (43 – 106 BC)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Life of Cicero
  - 3.2    Cicero's View of Law
  - 3.3    Cicero's View of State
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The focus of this unit is on the political thoughts of Marcus Cicero. It is remarkable to note that the writings of this philosopher had a remarkable impact on the political ideals of his era. While it is accepted that Cicero apparently lacked originality in much of his work, it is noteworthy to credit him with the fact that his ideas were open to public consumption and debate.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss Marcus Cicero life and his work on political thought
- examine Cicero's contribution to the concept of law
- explain Cicero's perception of what constitutes state.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Life of Cicero**

Marcus Cicero is one of the outstanding statesmen and orators of the Roman empire. He was born in Arpinum under Rome and got influenced by the works of Plato and Aristotle. He defended the Roman constitution against the autocracy of his time. Consequently, his works, which represented a form of Stoicism, were preserved for the reading public at all future times. One remarkable fact about the work of Cicero is that they were merely



compilations of previous works and as such had little originality. However, the merit of his writings is based on the fact that they were widely read.

It is also significant to note that the wide acceptability of Cicero's works to the political authority in his time made it possible for accessibility to even future generations. Essentially, his political writings formed the main source of information on the form of Stoicism which Panaetius introduced to the Roman public. His outstanding political works include such political treatises like *De Re Publica*- The Republic 51 BC and *De Legibus*- The Law represents credible indexes of the political thoughts of Rome especially in conservative and aristocratic circles during the last days of the Republic.

Sabine and Thorson posit the ideas and significance of Cicero's works are better appreciated through an understanding of the immediate purpose and the long-time influence that he exerted. They described the moral purpose for which Cicero wrote his treatises was to commend the traditional Roman virtue of public service and the preeminence of the statesman's career, enlightening and harmonising these with a tincture of Greek philosophy. Politically, his works were designed to restore the Republican constitution in the form it was before the revolutionary tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus.

### **3.2 Cicero's View of Law**

Cicero contends that the natural law of reason is the basis of all other laws and that its source is divine wisdom and reason that directs the entire universe. The state and its laws are always subject to the law of God, or the moral and natural law, that is, the higher rule of right which transcends human choice and human institutions. It is from this source that even the rules of nations which demands righteousness and deter from doing evil, and also other particular laws written and unwritten draw their power.

The primal law for Cicero is the divine right reason of Supreme Jupiter (Roman god), powerful to establish right and wrong. Consequently, he argued that good and truth must be eternal since they originate from a divine source. Cicero emphasised the existence of a universal law of nature which has its origin in God's providential government of the world as well as the rational and social nature of man which make them akin to God. In this law lies the constitution of the universal-state.

The universal law in the views of Cicero is the same everywhere and is unchangeably binding on all men irrespective of nationality. He insists that any legislation that contravenes the universal law is not entitled to be

described as law because no ruler or people can invalidate it. This is the true law which in his view is the right reason. In his words:

There is in fact a true law- namely, right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions, it restrains them from doing wrong. Its commands and prohibitions always influence good men but are without effect upon the bad. To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation, and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the senate nor the people can absolve us from our obligation to obey this law, and it requires no Sextus Aelius to expound and interpret it. It will not lay down one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all peoples; and there will be as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor. The man who will not obey it will abandon his better self, and in denying the true nature of man, will thereby suffer the severest of penalties though he has escaped all the other consequences which men call punishment. (Republic III, 22 translated by Sabine and Smith).

Cicero further contends that by definition, laws have the inherent quality of truth and justice. As such the laws of the state must also be just and true to deserve being termed as law and that such law must protect the citizens and the state as well as safeguard the tranquillity of human life. He further described true law as right reason in agreement with nature. This law is of unchanging, everlasting and of universal application. The true law applies a command to summon duty and often averts wrongdoing by its prohibitions.

Cicero further contends that it will be a sin to seek to alter this law or even to repeal any part of it and is impossible to attempt to abolish it entirely. There exist no interpreter of this law but there is no way one can even be freed from it by the legislature. The universality of this law implies that there will be no different law in Rome and Athens now and in the future.

Rather what is in existence is one eternal and unchangeable law that will be valid for all nations and at all times and one God for us all who is the originator, promulgator and enforcing judge of this law. He further maintained that we cannot consider the oppressive rules of some nations as true laws since they are based on the selfish principles of human nature and lack the basic qualities of divine wisdom. This is because all particular laws and rules draw their qualities from the primal law of nature else they do not oblige. Cicero further maintained that a state without laws cannot be

considered a true state because the law is the greatest good of the state. He further contends in the most unequivocal terms, that in the light of the eternal law, that all men are equal.

This for him does not imply that they are equal in learning and does not suggest that the state should seek to equalise their property, rather it implies that they are equal in the possession of reason, their underlying psychological make-up and in the general attitude towards what they believe to be honourable or base. It is his position that inequality in the society is nothing but error and the product of bad habit and false opinion.

Consequently, he argued that all men and all races of men possess the same capacity for experience and for the same kind of experience, and are equally capable of discriminating between right and wrong. Furthermore, he insists that since all men are subject to one law, they are equal. This in his view is because equality is a moral requirement which suggests that some measure of human dignity and respect be accorded to every individual since we all are members of the great human brotherhood. This logic suggests that even the slave shares in this doctrine of equality since he is not just a living tool of the master rather a wage earner hired for life. Kant clarified this when he asserted that the individual should be treated as an end not just as a means.

Law for Cicero is, therefore, the natural force, that is, the mind and reason with which the intelligent man measures justice and injustice. This presupposes that justice has its roots in nature which is governed because of the immortal gods. Cicero also contends that man share of right reason, which is the law, is common with the divine. It is his opinion that sharing law also implies sharing justice in common. Force to him is therefore merely an accident in the nature of the state and it is justified only because it is required to give effect to the principles of justice and right. From this, he posits that all possessing these three qualities and obeying the same system of law, in common, gods and men, belong to a single Commonwealth.

### **3.3 Cicero's View of State**

Cicero associated the origin of the state with man's natural gift of the social spirit which draws him always to partnership. A state in his view cannot exist permanently or in any form except a crippled condition unless it depends upon or acknowledges the consciousness of mutual obligation and the mutual recognition of rights that bind its citizens together. It is therefore seen as a moral community, a group of persons who in common possess the state and its laws. Such a community represents an association of a good number of people based on justice and partnership to secure the common good. It is

based on this that he described political governance as *res populi* or the *res publica*, meaning “the affairs of the state” or “Commonwealth.”

He extended this logic further by insisting that unless a state retains its nature as a community for ethical purposes held together by common ties, it is nothing but what was later described by St. Augustine as “highway robbery on a large scale.” It is on this basis that he observed that the Commonwealth is the people’s affair; and the people are not every group of men, associated in any manner, but it’s the coming together of a considerable number of men who are united by a common agreement about law and rights and by the desire to participate in mutual advantages.

The state he therefore argued is a corporate body whose membership is in the possession of all citizens and supplies its members with the advantages of mutual aid and just government. As such, its authority arises from the collective power of the people and political power when rightly exercised, is nothing but the corporate power of the people. From this, he argued that the state cannot exist permanently except it depends upon, acknowledges or gives effects to the consciousness of mutual obligations and recognition of rights that bind its citizens together. It flows from the above that the state and its law in the purest sense is always subject to the moral and natural law which flows from God. This law transcends human choice and institutions (Sabine and Thorson 1973).

Writing on the best form of government, Cicero exhibited faith in the Polybian Cycle that is a belief in the excellence of a mixed constitution evolved from the historical cycle of constitutions as expressed by Polybius. The Polybian cycle was a representation of the orderly alternation of good and bad constitutions, from monarchy to tyranny, from tyranny to aristocracy, from aristocracy to oligarchy, from oligarchy to moderate democracy and from democracy to mob rule.

Cicero’s thesis revolved on the emergence of a perfect state based on mixed constitutions whose principle will evolve from the historical development of Roman constitutions. His logic is drawn from the fact that this constitution was contributed by many minds working under diverse circumstances and embodying piecemeal solutions of various political problems as they emerged. From this, he maintained that the Roman constitution was the stable and perfect form of government that has ever evolved.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Give a brief account of Aristotle's view on politics.
- ii. Discuss in brief Aristotle philosophy on constitutions and citizenship.
- iii. Enumerate Aristotle's Specific Constitutions.
- iv. Elaborate on Aristotle's view on Law.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

Marcus Cicero had a remarkable influence on the nature of law in Romans society. His ideas on the Polybian Cycle explained the various forms of governments and how they alternate to evolve a desirable pattern for political governance in the society.

**5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has examined Cicero's political theory especially the views on law and forms of government.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss in brief the life of Marcus Cicero life and his work on political thought.
2. Analyze law according to Cicero's perception.
3. Discuss in brief what constitutes state according to Cicero's view.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 5     BARON DE MONTESQUIEU (1689-1755)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1   Montesquieu Ideas on Separation of Power
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

This unit aims to examine the concept of separation of power in the modern states as advocated by the prominent proponent of the principle of the separation of powers Baron De Montesquieu, an eighteen century French Lawyer and political philosopher who is still regarded as the front runner in the concept of separation of power. His work led to the separation of power in modern states at a different level; that is in function and structure as stipulated by the individual state system and constitutional provision. The constitution serves as the only source of political power in democratic states in order to establish liberty and avoid tyrant rule.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss Montesquieu ideas on separation of power
- relate Montesquieu work on the working of democracy in our modern time.

### **2.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Montesquieu Ideas on Separation of Power**

Baron De Montesquieu (1689-1755) lived in the time of Louis XIV, the author of the famous dictum “*I am the state*”. The monarch combined in his person all the three powers. His word was law and his authority was unquestionable. There was no liberty for the people under such an aggressive and despotic government. Montesquieu happened to visit Great Britain and

was tremendously impressed by the spirit of freedom prevailing there. He tried to find out the cause of the liberty of the British people. He compared the independence of the judges and the strength of the parliament there with the subordination of the judiciary to the French Monarch and the virtual extension of Estate General.

Not foreseeing the rise of the cabinet system of government and keenly desiring to substitute political liberty for royal absolutism in France. Montesquieu advocated the separation of power as a device to make the government safe for the governed. The division of power he envisaged was the same as that of John Locke, except that renaming Locke's executive power and calling it judicial powers.

The executive function, as described by Locke, has been to execute the laws in any case. He also changed Locke's terminology and named his federative power as the executive power but in his insistence that they must be entrusted separately to different personnel, he went considerably ahead of his predecessor. His most famous statement state thus:

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or in the same body of magistrate, there can be no liberty because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws and execute them in a tyrannical manner. Again, there is no liberty if the judicial power be not separated from the legislature and executive. Were it joined with legislative, the life and liberty of the subject should be exposed to arbitrary control, for the judge will be legislature. Were it joined to executive power, the judge might behave with violence and oppression. There would be an end of everything, where the same man or the same body to exercise those three powers, that of enacting laws, that of executing the public resolutions and that of trying the cases of individuals (Kapur, 2016).

For Montesquieu, the executive convenes the legislative, fixes its duration and vote legislation. The legislature has the right of impeachment. The essence of the theory of separation of power is that it imposes on each organ of government the obligation to explain itself and to see that it acted within the law and not beyond it. If the authority exercised is more than that permitted by law, it should be checked by the other to restrain it encroachment. This is the correct meaning of *le pouvoir arrête le pouvoir*.

There has been some controversy among students of political thought whether Montesquieu contemplated an absolute or only limited separation of the three powers. One school believes that he desired absolute separation so that each department remains independent and supreme within its own

sphere. Others believe that he never thought to separate the power completely. He rather suggested modification of the concentration of powers. Montesquieu was searching for the means to limit the power of the crown; to build canals through which, but not over which, power should stream; to create intermediary bodies to check and balance probable despotism and yet he did not wish to fly to the extreme of democracy (Kapur, 2016).

The practical effect of Montesquieu's principle of separation of power is that it had a great democratic appeal and it soon became a political dogma. The teachings of Montesquieu gave a fillip to the French revolution and nearly all government of the revolutionary period were organized on the principle of separation of powers. The famous declaration of Rights issued after the revolution laid down that "every society in which separation of power is not determined has no constitution".

The constitution of 1791 made the executive and the legislature independent of each other and judges elective and independent. For a short period, during the regime of Napoleon, it was defied but the doctrine was constantly in the mind of the people. As a constitutional maxim, it is jealously cherished even today (Kapur, 2016).

The idea contained in the theory of separation of power was not entirely unknown before Montesquieu. Its origin can be traced back to Aristotle if indeed to earlier writers. Aristotle argument is that in the polity found an analysis of three parts or branches of government; the deliberative, executives and the judiciary. He did not go into details; he confined himself to a description of their personnel, organization and functions (Kapur, 2016).

Aristotle proposed two bases of classifications such classification that remained good for a long period of time; Number of people wielding the power; The purpose for which power was to be used. On the first, he says that if power is wielding by one person, it is a monarchy, if the power is in the hands of few persons, it is aristocracy and if power is with many or all, it is polity.

Based on purpose, Aristotle said, the purpose could be pure (when power is exercised in the interest of all) and perverted (when it is exercised for the interest of those who rule). In the first case, when power is in the hands of one person and the purpose is pure, it is monarchy and if the purpose is perverted, it is tyranny; when the power is in the hands of the few people and the purpose is pure, it is aristocracy and if the purpose is perverted, it is oligarchy; when the power is in the hands of many or all and purpose is pure, it is polity and if the purpose is perverted, it is democracy (Arora, 2012).



John Locke also distinguished between three powers that existed in every commonwealth. These he called legislature, executive and federative. The federative power related to the conduct of foreign affairs. He argued that he will not permit the union of executive power with the legislative. Since the administration and enforcement of the law is a continuous task a power distinct from the legislative must remain “always in being” (Kapur, 2016).

In practice, the legislative and executive powers can often be separated. In principle too, Locke argued that they should be separated because it may be too great a temptation to human, apt to grasp at power, for the same person who have the power of making laws to have also in their hands the power to execute them. This division of authority and the separation of executive and legislative power is justified and explained by Locke on the ground that it is necessary for the maintenance of liberty. Liberty suffers when the same human beings make the law and apply them (Kapur, 2016).

Contemporary, the work of Montesquieu has played a major role in the formation of modern liberal democratic states. This has led to the separation of powers as the leading constitutional role. The constitution, as the only source of power in the state, distribute the power among the organs of government i.e. the legislatures, the executives and the judiciary. It is from this separation of power that the bases of the forms of government were formed e.g. presidential, parliamentary as well as the semi-presidential. It also classifies the structure of the state into either federalism or unitary.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you understand by Montesquieu ideas on Separation of Power?
- ii. How can one relate Montesquieu work on the working of democracy in our modern time?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The principle of separation of power, as advocated by Montesquieu, has been a fundamental organ of democracy as well as its development. It clearly opened the door demarcation for functional and structural separation of powers. This two are not substitute for each other but rather exist hand-in-hand. Separation of power among the three arms of government in all forms of democratic system is not absolute but each organ operates independently and related under the principle of check and balance. The main reason for the

pursuance of the concept of separation of powers is solely to establish liberty to the people and arrest the tendency of a tyrant and arbitrary rule.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Baron de Montesquieu was a celebrated French lawyer and political philosopher who lived in an era where the powers of the organs of government were merged in one person. This led to the absence of liberty and the presence of high arbitrariness of the law. Montesquieu advocated for the separation of these institutions as well as their function. He believed that one person should not exercise the functions of two organs of government, no organ of government should claim superiority over other organs of government and also no organ of government should perform the function of any of the other organs of government. This separation of power is of two categories: the functional and structural. Under the functional, we have the presidential as a system of government as well as the parliamentary and the semi-presidential. The structural separation brought about the federal system of government as well as the unitary system.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you understand by Montesquieu ideas on Separation of Power?
2. How can one relate Montesquieu work on the working of democracy in our modern time?

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## MODULE 3 THE EMPIRICAL POLITICAL THINKERS

In this Module, provisions are made for students to rich knowledge on the work of political thinkers from the medieval era to the 19th century who offered their immense contribution to the development of political thought. The first unit discusses John Locke work on social contract theory which captured the biography of John Locke and his political philosophy, the concept of human and state of nature, the social contract (need for civil society), nature of political authority and consent, evaluation and criticism levelled against Locke social contract theory. The second unit discusses the biography of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), his political philosophy, Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man, Hobbes' social contract and absolute government and criticism levelled against his philosophy. The third unit elaborates on the biography of Jeremy Bentham, his analysis on human nature, his moral and political philosophy, his perception on Law, Liberty and Government, his views on rights and humanist stance. The fourth unit borders on the biography of Edmund Burke, his critical views on natural rights & contracts, his philosophical and historical writings. The fifth unit elaborates on the biography of Karl Heinrich Marx and what lead to the postulations of Marxism, his analysis of capitalism and divergent opinion regarding Karl Marx philosophy.

Unit 1	John Locke
Unit 2	Thomas Hobbes
Unit 3	Jeremy Bentham
Unit 4	Edmund Burke
Unit 5	Karl Marx

### UNIT 1 JOHN LOCKE

#### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
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- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of John Locke
  - 3.2 Locke Political Philosophy
  - 3.3 Concept of Human and State of Nature
  - 3.4 Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)
  - 3.5 Nature of Political Authority and Consent
  - 3.6 Evaluation of Locke's Theory
  - 3.7 Criticism against Locke Social Contract Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary

- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Scholarly discussion in this unit bordered on the work of John Locke who emphasised that sovereignty belongs to the community and people and Locke supported limited monarchy or constitutional monarchy. Locke's state exists for the people who form it. They do not exist for the state. The state is based on the consent of the people. It is a constitutional state where there is a rule of law. It is limited and not absolute. The dissolution of the government does not mean the dissolution of civil society. It is a tolerant state. It tolerates differences of opinion. It is a negative state which does not interfere in the lives of the people. It transforms selfish interest into the public good.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of John Locke and his political philosophy
- explain the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke
- examine Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)
- discuss the nature of political authority and consent
- highlight criticisms against Locke Social Contract Theory.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Biography of John Locke**

According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2011). John Locke was born in Somerest village in England in the year 1632. His parents came from Puritan trading and land owning families and were sympathetic to the Parliamentarians and the Whigs during the civil war. Locke went to Westminster School in 1647 and then enrolled himself in Christchurch College as a student in 1652 for 15 years till 1667. He continued to retain his links with Christchurch, until 1684.

After graduation, Locke developed an interest in medicine. He completed MA in 1658, became a lecturer in Greek in 1661, and a lecturer in Rhetoric in 1663. In 1664, he became a censor of any moral philosophy. He also learnt under Boyle, Thomas, Lower, Wills, and Sydenham. From then, Locke learnt a lot, including the important fact that for discovering the secrets of nature, sustained and discipline observation coupled with humility and hard work.

Mukherjee and Ramaswamy went on to say that, Locke's first works were written at Oxford, namely the two treatises on government in 1660-1662, and the essays on the law of nature in Latin in 1664. In both these writings, he argued against religious toleration and denied consent as the basis of legitimate government. As a political theorist and an English philosopher, Locke through his employment with the earl of Shaftsbury became involved in Whig politics and the opposition of James II of England. Locke's opposition to James forced him into exile in Holland where he wrote the two treatises of the civil government.

Locke wrote as many as 35 books touching all walks of life. His whole philosophy is based on the ideas which he expressed in essays concerning Human understanding. His last publication, however, was "Fundamental Constitution, Concerning California" which was brought out two years after his death. His important works are: (i) His letters on Toleration (1689, 1690, 1692 and 1702). (ii) Treatise on Government (iii) Essays Concerning California (1706).

Throughout his political career, Locke basically differed from the political idea of Hobbes. He could not be convinced that men had no ability and that they should be always be ruled and subjected to a superior authority. He was convinced about the abilities and capacities of the people. His theory of social contract was essentially based on the basic idea. He also believed that man always enjoyed natural rights and the state had no justification to snatch them from the people otherwise the basic idea of creating a commonwealth was bound to be defeated. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of absolute monarchy. In fact, he believed that a society bound by common bonds of mutual understanding was bound to raise and prosper. Absolute sovereignty was neither desirable nor practicable (Mukhi, 2010).

### **3.2 Locke Political Philosophy**

Locke deals with two contracts social and government. Social contract as the first contract leads to the formation of civil society and the government contract, on the other hand, leads to the establishment of the government. The social contract put an end to the primitive state of nature. Society is organized for protecting human life and safeguarding its property and freedom and man give up some of his to be ruled by a sovereign.

The second was a government contract when society in its corporate capacity established a government and selected a ruler and remove inconveniences or ill condition which necessitated the formation of the civil society or the state. The governmental contract was subordinated to

the first in as much as the government was only a fiduciary power to act for a certain end, and its authority was confined to securing those ends.

It was limited, moreover, to the condition that it was to be used in the exercise of the established known laws. If the government failed to secure the ends for which it was created and which it had agreed or did not exercise its authority according to the established known laws, the community might dismiss it and appoint another government in its place. Here Locke establishes the inherent right of the people to revolt against the authority of the monarch if he ever abuses the terms of the contract to which he is a party and ruled arbitrarily, ignoring the established known laws, made by the representatives of the people (Mahajan, 2012).

### **3.3 Concept of Human and State of Nature**

Locke considered human beings as decent fellows, far removed from quarrelsome, competitive and selfish creatures of Hobbes. Locke believed desire is the main string of all human, acts and a feeling of pleasure comes when desire is satisfied. The object of all human action is the acquisition of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Locke believed in the goodness of human nature. According to him, men are basically decent orderly and society –loving, capable of ruling themselves. They are rational and social. Rationality is a pervasive characteristic of man (Mahajan, 2012).

Locke believed that if all were given proper opportunities, they were bound to have equal mental development. According to him, it is mental and not physical development which always counts. He also believed that nature itself had blessed mankind with sparks of reason which motivates actions of people in their hour of darkness. In pre-state civil society, it was goodwill, mutual understanding and sense of co-operation which prevailed and governed their social relations (Mukhi, 2010).

According to Locke, he held man to be essentially rational and social-rational, in that they could live together by the law of nature which is reason, or which at least (though not imprinted on the mind) is knowable by reason, without the help of revelation in that they could live by the laws of nature without the imposition of rules by a sovereign (Kapur, 2016).

He stressed on the point that all human beings are born equal, if not physical then morally. Every individual has the right to life, liberty and property. The human beings enjoy these simply because they are human beings and not because of their strength, wealth or position. He stressed that these rights should be respected, but these are not enjoyed by the children because they have no developed mind (Mukhi, 2010).

For Locke, rights are a creation of law. To have a right is to benefit from others having duties. For one to have a right to life, he/she must be under a duty not to kill him/her and vice versa. Rights and duties go together, but rights are inferred from duties. Duties, in turn, are derived from the law, as it is the law that distributes the duties, which in turn shape our rights. These duties follow from the first law of nature, which requires that we both preserve our self and all others, as long as so doing will not conflict with our self-preservation. Self-preservation, for Locke, is not merely an empirical generalisation from people's fear of violent death (Kelly, 2011).

While the state of nature of Hobbes was both pre-social and pre-political, that Locke was only pre-political. According to Locke people lived in a society in the state of nature. They were social and had right and liberties. The state of nature was not one of universal war but one of inconvenience. The reason was that there was the standing want of an established and known law. The law of nature was given an individual interpretation by every individual. There was a lack of a "known and indifferent judge" who could give an authoritative interpretation of the law of nature. Life was inconvenient because each individual had to interpret the law of nature for himself and had also to enforce it without the help of any other authority (Mahajan, 2012).

In his view, it is not a state of constant warfare; on the contrary, it is a state of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and preservation. It is a state of liberty, not a state of hence. But in the absence of any established authority in the state of nature. It becomes very difficult to deal with such offenders and man becomes judges of their own cases. In order to rectify this defect, man abandoned the state of nature and enter into civil or political society by means of a contract (Gaubu, 2005).

Locke observed that when men enter into political society, they surrender their rights to be judges in case of branches of law. This power is now vested in the community instead of in individuals. But they still retain their natural rights to life, liberty and property. Such a state of nature in which men enjoyed rights and acknowledged their duties was both moral and social not obeying the law of nature (Kapur, 2016).

### **3.4 Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)**

As Kapur (2016) pointed out that, unfortunately, peace was not secure in the state of nature. It was constantly inspected by the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men. This ill condition, Locke said, was due to three important wants which remained unsatisfied in the state of nature:

- 1) The want of an established, settled known law.



2) The want of a known and indifferent judge.

3) The want of an executing power to enforce just decision

In order to escape from all this and to gain certainty and security men made a contract to enter into civil society or the state.

This contract was of all with all and Locke named it a social contract. The social contract put an end to the state of nature and substituted it with civil society or the state. Each individual contracted with each to give up some of the rights he possessed in the state of nature. All he agreed to was to give up his single power of punishing to be exercised by such (authority) alone as shall be appointed to it amongst them. The social contract was accordingly no more than a transfer of certain rights and powers so that man's remaining rights would be protected and preserved. In this way, Locke recognized and established the sovereignty of the people, and that the state existed for the people who formed it: they did not exist for it.

According to Agarwal (2008), social contract put the primitive state to an end. In the words of John Locke, "the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law which teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions."

Thus, "Locke's state of nature with its sequence of recognised rights, is already a political society". Society is organised for protecting human life and safeguarding his property and freedom. Man has authorised and given up not all of his rights to society but only the rights of health, liberty or possession. Anybody who disobeys is liable to be punished by the society. Society transfer some of his to a selected few persons who form the government such type of government is established through a government contract. The ruler and the people entered into this contract.

### **3.5 Nature of Political Authority and Consent**

Political authority for Locke was not mere power, but power with a right. A right could only originate from an already existing right, and because an individual had no right to give away their duty to preserve themselves, they could not therefore morally or logically grant rightful power to absolute authority. Locke viewed absolute political power as illegitimate. The compulsion to constitute a civil society was to protect and preserve freedom and to enlarge it. The state of nature was one of the liberty equalities, but it was also one where peace was not secured being constantly upset by the "corruption and viciousness of degenerate men.

It lacked free important wants: The Want of an established, settled, known law; the wants of a known and indifferent judge; and the wants of

executive power to enforce just decisions. Through the state of nature, Locke tried to tell us the meaning and importance of authority, namely that human beings came together to ensure the observance of the laws of nature, to guarantee the greater possibility of impartiality, in the implementation and execution of rules that governed common life, and thereby increase the chance a peace that impartiality entailed.

Through a contract, individuals consented to submit to majority rules and organize themselves as a community or cool society they surrendered their powers partially, namely the three specific rights that constituted the natural right to enforce the law of nature. Once a city was established, the individuals established a government to act as a judge in the nature of a judiciary power of for promoting certain ends (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011).

The community's decision was by majority rule unless they specifically agreed to a number greater than the majority, which Locke realised would be more difficult to muster. Through the community appointed a legislature power. It continued to retain supreme power meaning that the people had the right to assess and evaluate the performance of the legislature. The legislature was the supreme power with a sacred duty to preserve the society. If the people found the performance unsatisfactory, they could take a step to change or alter the existing body.

Within the government, the legislative power was supreme it was the representative of the people, having the power to make laws. Besides the legislature there was an executive, usually are persons with the power to enforce the law. The executives, which include the judicial power had be separated. The third wing of the government was the federative power, the power to make treaties and conduct external relations. With Locke came the eclipse of the political and the identification of the political in a narrow sense with the government. Society became distinct from political arrangements and come to symbolize the whole gamut of human activities (Agarwal, 2008).

Locke thus advocated a limited sovereign state, for reason and experience established political absolutism as untenable. Describing the characteristics of a good state, Locke said it existed for the people who formed it, and not the vice versa. It had to be based on the consent of the people to the subject to the constitution and the rule of law. It would be limited since its powers were derived from the people and were held in trust. It was also limited by natural laws and individual rights.

Locke argued that the state dealt with matters strictly political in nature and had no warrant to interfere in domains strictly outside the political, nor could it demand more powers on the pretext of the public safety and

welfare. Locke categorically asserted that supreme power resided in the people as a community had the inalienable right to institute and dismiss a government. If a government was dismissed, this did not signify a return to the state of nature, as it was in the case of Hobbes theory.

Moreover, people choose to specify the powers of the government. Locke observed that people at any given time would not surrender all their powers to an outside body, including their own government. Once the government was instituted, it would be assessed periodically and its actions scrutinised meticulously (Cohen, 2001). Though people granted the legislative power to make law, they always retained a residual right to judge whether its performance was satisfactory and in accordance with the natural laws and take remedial steps if necessary.

The second treaties also tried to explain the basis of legitimate government and the reason why free individuals acquiesced to be subject to an external authority because free individuals expressed their consent willingly and voluntarily through a contract agreed freely to. As to why they agreed to enter into civil society and establish a government Locke explained it with reference to the state of nature.

For Locke, men were by nature free, politically equal creature of God subject to the laws of nature and possessors of executive power of the laws of nature, they became subjects of political authority only by their consent, without consent there was no political community. Locke spoke of how kinds of consent, express or direct, and tacit consent. Express consent was an explicit commitment given at the time when the commonwealth was instituted in case there was no provision for explicit consent, people's obligation could be judged by their tacit consent.

Express consent is straightforward and involves explicit agreements such as promises and oaths of allegiance but of course, not all individuals take such oaths. Locke then introduces the idea of tacit consent, this does not have to be given in a conscious agreement, and indeed it can be inferred from such familiar acts as enjoying the benefits of a political society or walking along the highway. All men have the opportunity to tacitly consent; therefore, the law of the land will be consistent with one's freedom (Kelly, 2011).

The obligation to obey the government would depend on the fact that public power was used for peace, safety and public good of the people. Moreover, individuals would not yield to the government more power than what they actually possess in the state of nature, which meant that there cannot be an absolute arbitrary power over their lives and fortunes which are as much possible to be preserved. There was a rational and limited agreement which assured obedience for the preservation and

enhancement of life, liberty and property. The validity of the contract would depend on the continuation of these benefits (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011).

Locke also asserted categorically that governments could be altered, amended, changed or dissolved legitimately and listed five occasions when this was possible. These are as follows:

Whenever such a prince or single person establish his own arbitrary will in place of laws.

When the prince hindered the legislature from assembling in its due time or from acting freely, pursuant to those ends for which it was constituted. When by the arbitrary power of the prince, the elections and the ways of elections were altered without the consent, and contrary to the common interest of the people.

The delivery of the people into the subjection of foreign power either by the prince or by the legislature.

The person who had the supreme executive power neglected laws already enacted, and could not be executed.

### **3.6 Evaluation of Locke's Theory**

The most distinctive of Locke to political theory is his doctrine of natural rights, life, liberty and property, he holds as inalienable rights to every individual. The end for which civil or political society is constituted is to secure these natural rights, and the attainment of these rights is possible through the agency of the government. Locke, accordingly, makes a clear distinction between the state and the government and introduces the theory of consent. According to Locke, the government holds power on condition of, and derives its authority from, the consent of the people whom he ultimately holds sovereign. He emphasises that the sovereignty of the state is not the sovereignty of the ruler and the will of the state may limit the will and action of the ruler. Government, for Locke, trust and authority of the government must be exercised for fulfilling the needs which necessitated the formation of the civil society. If the government fails to function properly and in accordance with the wishes of the people then, the community has the power to dissolve it and substitute another government in this place. The happiness and security of individuals is the end for which alone government is ever called into existence (Gaub, 2005).

Locke according to Maxey is among the few political thinkers whose work will never die. Locke was the first authoritarian and he was essentially an individualist. Sabine and Thorson (1937) say that "Locke's sincerity, his preformed moral conviction, his genuine belief in liberty and

in the dignity of human nature united with his moderation and good sense, made him the ideal spokesman of the middle-class revolution. As a force in propagating the ideas of liberal but non-violent reform.

Locke probably stands before all other writers whosoever. Even his more doubtful ideas such as separation of powers and the inevitable wisdom of majority decisions remained a part of the democratic creed." Again, "The mark of his genius was neither learning nor logic but an incomparable common sense by which he gathered together the chief convictions, in philosophy, politics, morals and education, that the experience of the part had generated in the enlightened mind of his generation".

### **3.7 Criticism against Locke Social Contract Theory**

Mahajan (2012) wrote that, according to Willoughby, the basic defect in writings of Locke is that he did not sufficiently distinguish between the communities as simply a social aggregate and as a political body and sovereignty in its true legal sense reside in the latter and the former. The view of the Barker is that Locke's had no clear view of the nature and residence of sovereignty. He spoke of the supreme power of the people and yet he attributed supreme power to the legislature.

Sabine and Thorson (1937) say that "the greatest weakness of Locke's philosophy in all its branches was that he never gets back to first principles. His commonsense saved him perhaps from many dialectical quibbles, but in the end, it meant that he looks much for granted an inadequate analysis and combined propositions that analysis showed to be incompatible.

Locke's description of the state of nature is unreal and unhistorical. History does not give an example where the state of nature was the state of equality and freedom. He said that people have certain rights in the state of nature but in the absence of the state: they could not have any rights: Locke might emphasize on the physical aspect of the state and not its moral aspect. The view that the consent of the people forms the basis of the state is only practically true because the force has also played a decisive role in the origin and development of the state. Locke recognizes the force of political sovereignty but does not give adequate recognition to legal sovereignty.

The sovereignty of Locke is divisible. It is divided between the people and the king, but in fact it not so Locke tried to save the people from the tyranny of the state but overlook the fact that if the people revolted against the state, no punishment could be given to them. And while protecting the people from the tyranny of the state, he did not provide for the protection of the state. Even a minority of the people could denounce the laws of the

state on the pretext that they were against the natural law which could be gander to the state.

Critics maintain Locke's theory is ambiguous, confused and hindered. His explanation of human nature is unreal and one-sided because many are not always rational. The state of nature as depicted by him is so hazy. It is not clear whether it was pre-social or pre-political.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Give a vivid account of John Locke political philosophy.
- ii. Analyse the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke.
- iii. Dissect what Social Contract is all about.
- iv. Justify criticisms levelled against Locke Social Contract Theory.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

To sum up this unit, Locke's model consists of the civil state, built upon the natural rights common to a people who need and welcome an executive power to protect their property and liberties; the government exists for the people's benefit and can be replaced or overthrown if it ceases to function toward that primary end. Also, he links his abstract ideas to a deductive theory of unlimited personal property wholly protected from government intervention. The joining of ideas is consensual, limited government based upon natural human rights and dignity, and unlimited personal property, based on those same rights, makes the second treatise a perfectly constructed argument against absolutism and unjust governments. It appeals both to abstract moral nations and to a more grounded view of the self-interest that leads people to form societies and government.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In his treatise of government, John Locke discusses men's move from the state of nature characterised by perfect freedom and governed by reason to a civil government in which the authority is vested in a legislative and executive power. The major ideas developed includes human and state of nature, social contract, popular sovereignty and the consent of the governed, the protection and limitations of property, the problems inherent in an absolute monarchy, and the ability of a people to dissolve their government if it does not adhere to the bond of trust established between the governed and governor.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a vivid account of John Locke political philosophy.
2. Analyse the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke.
3. Dissect what Social Contract is all about.
4. Justify criticisms levelled against Locke Social Contract Theory.

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## **UNIT 2      THOMAS HOBBS' SOCIAL CONTRACT AND ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT**

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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Thomas Hobbes's thesis of the necessity of an absolute sovereign put forward in *Leviathan*, rests upon the argument that the condition of anarchy is a condition of violent conflict. In Hobbes's view, human beings were naturally cruel, selfish, and greedy. In *Leviathan*, he wrote that people are driven by a restless desire for power. Without laws or other social controls, people would always be in conflict. In such a "state of nature," life would be "nasty, brutish and short." Therefore, governments according to Hobbes, were created to protect people from their own selfishness. Because people were selfish by nature, they could not be trusted to make decisions that were good for society as a whole. Only a government that has a ruler with absolute authority (preferably monarchy) could maintain an orderly society. This was not only rational but necessary in order to keep man from abusing privacy and property. This is what this unit discusses.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy
- explain Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man
- examine Hobbes' social contract and absolute government
- highlight criticisms levelled against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.



### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Biography: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

Hobbes was born in Westport, a parish of the town of Amesbury in Wiltshire, England. His mother came from a yeoman family; his father was a poorly educated vicar who seems to have left his parish in disgrace, deserting his family after having come to blows with another clergyman early in Hobbes' childhood. Hobbes' uncle subsequently supported the family, and it was he who paid for Hobbes' university education. Hobbes was lucky to receive good schooling locally, and he showed an early talent for the classical languages. In 1602 or 1603, Hobbes began his study towards an arts degree at Magdalen Hall, Oxford.

From his criticisms of the universities in his published writings, it is sometimes inferred that he disliked his college days, or at least that he disliked the scholasticism of Oxford at that time. (Scholasticism – the fusion of Christian with ancient Greek thought, especially the thought of Aristotle – dominated the curricula of the schools and universities of Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Certainly, he disliked the university curriculum in retrospect, as chapter 46 of *Leviathan* (1651) makes clear. Hobbes completed his degree in 1608 (Sorell, 1996).

In 1628 Hobbes chose history as the medium for a political message. Later, in writings like *Leviathan*, he thought science or philosophy was the better vehicle. In writing history, it is possible for the conventions of the genre to interfere with the communication of wisdom; in writing science, he came to believe, the communication of wisdom is assured if the audience is prepared to pay attention and able to follow a demonstration. He struggled throughout his intellectual life with the problem of combining political rhetoric with political science, and some of his best writings are experimental solutions to this problem. The translation of Thucydides is important as the first of many such experiments (Tuck, 1989).

Hobbes' first political treatise, *The Elements of Law* (1640), was not intended for publication but

was meant as a sort of long briefing paper that royalists in parliament could use to justify actions by the king. *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes attempted to derive from his now well-worked-out political principles the right relation of Church to state, was written at the end of the 1640s, when church government in England began to run on lines of which he approved and at a time when the influence of bishops in the English royal court-in-exile in Paris was, in Hobbes' eyes, too great.

In any case, the fact that the theory in the book vindicated Cromwell's policy on church government does not mean that it was a partisan work in favour of Cromwell, calculated to ease Hobbes' return to England. If that had been so, Hobbes would not have made a special presentation copy for the future Charles II. Instead, it seems that the doctrine in *Leviathan* favoured the concentration of all authority in any de facto sovereign power, whether republican or royal. To the Paris royalists, mostly strong Anglicans in favour of political powers for bishops, the new book was highly offensive (Sorell, 1996).

Among the figures who were conscious of developing a new science in the seventeenth century, the Englishman Hobbes stands out as an innovator in ethics, politics and psychology. He was active in several other fields, notably geometry, ballistics and optics, and seems to have shown considerable acumen as a theorist of light. His contemporaries, especially in Continental Europe, regarded him as a major intellectual figure. Yet he did not earn a living as a scientist or a writer on politics.

The behaviour required of the public in order to maintain a commonwealth is absolute submission to sovereign power. In practice, this means abiding by whatever a sovereign declares as law, even if those laws appear to be exacting. Law-abiding behaviour is required so long as, in return, subjects can reasonably expect effective action from the sovereign to secure their safety and wellbeing. With minor variations, this is the theme of all three of Hobbes' political treatises – *The Elements of Law*, *De cive* and *Leviathan* (Skinner, 1996).

### 3.2 Hobbes Political Philosophy

Hobbes was one of the social contract theorists that explained the nature of public power as a special kind of institution. His theory of the state deserves careful consideration since it is one of the modern political theories. However, his political theory is set to achieve at least two purposes. One is to explain the origin of the state, and the other is to justify absolute and unlimited power of the government (Held, 1984).

Hobbes uses the state of nature as a device for demonstrating the necessity of political society. By defining the state of nature, Hobbes concluded that human beings cannot live together in peace or avoid civil conflict without government intervention. He believed that without government, everyone is selfish, or living in the state of nature.

Furthermore, by showing that the pre-political condition is an intolerable state of permanent conflict, he hopes to demonstrate the necessity of a specific kind of political society, namely that which is governed by an undivided and absolute sovereign. He argues that the worst that can

happen to man is a reversal to the state of nature, which is essentially what happens when society gets torn apart by civil war – a situation that Hobbes himself witnessed in his lifetime. A sovereign with absolute power, he claims, is the best security against this ever happening. Whatever evils such unlimited power itself might bring, it is a necessary risk because the evils arising from the lack of such power are far greater (Rawls, 1971).

Hobbes believed in absolutism but his idea of absolutism was different from what was commonly believed. He did not believe that the ruler's power was derived from God. Hobbes believed in the commonwealth system. This is a system like absolutism, in which there is one absolute ruler. The ruler does not get his power from God, but he gets it more from the people (Partel, 2006).

Hobbes' political philosophy, however, is viewed by some scholars as liberal and some as non-liberal. It is said to be liberal on one hand because he derives or explains the existence of society and the state by reference to "free and equal" individuals. He uncovered the best circumstances for human nature, which he sees as naturally selfish, egoistic and self-interested. Also, he emphasizes the importance of consent in the making of a contract or bargain, not only to regulate human affairs and secure a measure of independence and choice in society but also to legitimise, such regulation.

Yet, on the other hand, Hobbes' position is said to be non-liberal since his political conclusions emphasize the necessity of a practically all-powerful state to create laws and secure the conditions of social and political life (Held, 1984). This paper is, therefore, an attempt to assess the views of Thomas Hobbes regarding absolutism and the state in his famous work *Leviathan*.

**Absolutism:** It is a political doctrine and practice of unlimited, centralised authority and absolute sovereignty, vested especially in a monarch or dictator. The essence of an absolute system is that the ruling power is not subject to regularised challenge or check by any other agency, be it judicial, legislative, religious, economic, or electoral. King Louis XIV (1643-1715) of France furnished the most familiar assertion of absolutism when he said: "L'etat, c'est moi" ("I am the state). Absolutism has existed in various forms in all parts of the world, including in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)).

**State:** A state is a political unit that has ultimate sovereignty-that is, a political unit that has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of its own affairs, (Shively, 2008). While Johari (2006) puts it that "in political theory, a state has technical expression implying a human association

having four essential elements-population, territory, government and sovereignty”.

**Leviathan:** *Leviathan* is a word derived from the Hebrew for “sea monster” and the name of a monstrous sea creature appearing in the Bible. It is the famous work of Thomas Hobbes which is concerned with the structure of society and legitimate government and is regarded as one of the earliest and most influential examples of social contract theory. *Leviathan* ranks as a classic western work on statecraft comparable to Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and argues for a social contract and rule by an absolute sovereign.

### 3.3 Hobbes’ State of Nature and Nature of Man

Hobbes begins his political theory from the description of human nature in the state of nature. Having been influenced by Galileo whose scientific principles indicates that mechanical laws are determined and that everything within the universe is in motion; these thus, influenced his analysis of man’s nature. Hobbes holds that appetite and aversion are parts of men’s abnormal nature, which cause each man to seek his own goal, his self- preservation in whatever he engages in and these goals are determined by the will, appetite, and aversion (Hobbes, 1651).

Hobbes contends that happiness or felicity consists in continual progress of the desire from one object to another and since this is so, what men seek constantly is some means of securing the way to their future desires. Men seek not only to procure but also to be ensured of a contented life for themselves. He, therefore, expressed it thus “in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death” (Strauss & Cropsey, 1987).

Man, according to Hobbes seeks power for security and self-preservation and men are bound to conflict since they are individualistic in their selfish quests to acquire more power and scarce material bounties of nature than others. Hobbes says that while “men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such a way is of every man against every man. In this state of war, all men are each other’s enemy, and the ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice do not apply, because there is no governing body”.

Hence, men go to war because of their desire for power. Two men want something, which they cannot both have, Hobbes maintained, they become enemies and endeavour to subdue and destroy one another. Given this, Hobbes identified three great natural causes of quarrels among men in the state of nature. These are competition, distrust and glory. These

make the state really a state of war “and such a war, as is of every man, against every man” (Macpherson, 1968).

Furthermore, the state of nature was characterized with injustice there is no appeal to justice and nothing there can be unjust since the concept of justice and injustice can only be meaningful within a society and when there is a common power. The absence of a common power, therefore, implies the absence of law; and where there is no law, there is no injustice.

The two cardinal virtues, according to Hobbes, are “force” and “fraud”, deceit and falsehood are also among the virtues recognised in the state of nature. Hobbes having held unto Thrasymachian model of the positivist theory of justice insisted that justice is what the ruler shall determine it to be and in the pre-social state there is no ruler. So also, in the natural state according to Hobbes, “there is no property, no dominion, no mine and thine; but only that to be everyman’s that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it” (Molesworth, 1962).

The picture of man as portrayed by Hobbes depicts him as a being that is only being governed by instincts, drives by passions, egoistic and self-centred, thus, he is always in the state of conflict with his fellows. Now, looking at the other side in the state of nature, man is said to be a rational being and therefore can reason and this is what distinguishes him from other animals.

His passion and reasoning ability in the natural state was the only thing he possesses that can make him get out of the bad condition, the departures which will be a lasting benefit to everyone. Hobbes finds it convenient to ascribe the ability of reason to men while in fact in his human nature; he says that man is an animal guided by passions “The passion that inclines men to peace, are fear of death; the desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement” (Molesworth, 1962).

Hobbes defines the law of nature as a “general rule found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life...”. An essential component of Hobbes theory of human nature is his belief in human equality. The ability to reason and problem solve is determined by the 3 laws of nature: 1) To pursue peace, 2) to achieve peace, and 3) to keep one’s agreements. Basically, these laws of nature say that we should not treat others how we would not like to be treated ourselves. However, these laws are unenforceable constraints, and man will only keep them “when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely”.

Unfortunately, the laws of nature run contrary to man's nature, and without a strong power, men will not reliably choose to follow them. Hobbes says that "in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel: firstly competition, secondly dependence, and thirdly glory". And he then lists primary aims to be gain, safety and reputation. Therefore, "men are continually in competition for honour, and dignity and consequently amongst men there ariseth, on that ground, envy and hatred and finally war" (Hobbes, 1651).

According to Hobbes, the only way to achieve this is for everyone to submit their power to the sovereign authority. When everyone mutually submits their power to a sovereign, they are promising their obedience in exchange for protection- and only when the government fails to protect the people is when their political obligation ends. It is to be noted that Hobbes does not establish that an actual state of nature ever existed. He used the notion as a philosophical premise for his formulations.

### **3.4 Hobbes' Social Contract and Absolute Government**

Hobbes is a renowned social contract theorist not only because of the efficacy of his thought but because of the civil war in the 1640s. He was of the view that the state should be seen as a contract between a group of people to guarantee their mutual security and prosperity. The natural condition of man (state of nature) was a severely unpleasant one. In such condition, there was neither wrong nor right, justice nor injustice.

Therefore, the state came about in a form of contact between the individual on one hand and the government on the other hand to improve this condition. For selfish reasons, the individual decided to give up some of his individual liberties in exchange for the protection offered by the state (Appadorai, 2006). The transitional stage from the Hobbesian state of nature to the emergence of an all-powerful Leviathan or commonwealth is what is known as the social contract. And it is from this transfer of power and rights of the individual by consent to a Leviathan that political power evolves.

Although, according to Hobbes the requisite sovereign power might come into existence in either of two ways: by some man or body or men conquering and subduing the inhabitants (Sovereignty by acquisition) or by men agreeing by consent with each other to transfer all their natural powers to some man or body of men (Sovereignty by institution) (Macpherson, 1968).

Hobbes cites the covenant in the following words: "I authorise and give up my right of governing myself, to the man or to this assembly of men, on this condition that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his

actions in the like manner”. According to Hobbes, the fear of death leads men to seek peace. Through reason, it is discovered that peace would be secured by each man adhering to the principle of not doing to another what he would not wish others to do to him.

Hobbes notes, however, that man’s desire for power and glory may tempt him to break his pledge. A superior authority is therefore needed to restrain men. Through a social contract entered into by all, power is transferred to an absolute authority. Its central duty and major justification is to ensure peace and security. The sovereign is to be obeyed without complaint since he is not a party to the contract but its product. However, in the event that the absolute sovereign fails to maintain order and peace, the people reserve the right to change the system of government (Francis, 2008).

Hobbes explains that individuals in the state of nature are in a state of war and so see the need to escape that turbulent state by forming some kind of central power or government. They decide to “confer all their power and strength upon one man or upon one assembly” and so make that person or group the authority to act for each person of the society.

However, this agreement need not be unanimous but only a majority decision. If some refuse to consent to the contract, they would be destroyed since they would then be in a state of nature concerning the others. This agreement creates a “sovereign,” a common political power, and what Hobbes calls a “commonwealth” which he also calls the “leviathan.” A sovereign created by agreement Hobbes calls sovereignty by “institution”.

However, a sovereign can also be created by conquest where one commonwealth overpowers another. For Hobbes, a contract is nothing without the power of enforcement or “covenants without the sword are but words. Words cannot keep a contract effective but two ways are effective, the fear of the consequences of breaking the contract and the “glory” of not breaking it or needing to break it. Hence, the sovereign must have all the necessary power to enforce the contract and the people keep their contract strictly out of fear of punishment and death (Molesworth, 1966).

The *Leviathan’s* creation through covenant is voluntary, rational and necessary. Hobbes believes because it is the only way to guarantee man’s peace and security and the only way to escape the dreaded state of nature. Hobbes outlines three types of possible sovereigns based on how many individuals rule. Monarchy is a rule by one, aristocracy is a rule by several and democracy is the rule of many or all. Continuing along this line,

Hobbes decides that the most powerful government is the best, which can keep peace and prevent the state of war of all against all.

Hobbes argues in chapter 19 of *Leviathan* that he prefers the monarchical form of rule with an unlimited right, for the following reasons:

- i. The monarch's interests are the same as the people.
- ii. The monarch receives better advice and counsel since he maintains experts and receives secret advice.
- iii. The monarch is more consistent than democracy because he possesses one mind.
- iv. Civil war is less likely because the monarch cannot disagree with himself.
- v. Monarchy is more stable because the monarch can set up arrangements for the succession of power.

Hobbes also argued that the sovereign cannot be divided into different powers as some political philosophers such as Aristotle had suggested. A division into the judiciary, legislative and executive power was impossible for Hobbes since, for Hobbes, any dispute between them requires a supreme power to resolve hence wherever the power resided had the real power and was the sovereign. The logic of Hobbes' theory clearly entails that the individual has no inalienable rights, except the right to self-preservation, while the sovereign has the right to tax and take any and all goods of the people, make laws, appoint judges, make war and peace, reward and punish, or, in other words, do anything at all.

The law is simply the will or whim of the sovereign nor is the sovereign subject to it nor can the sovereign be punished in any way. In short, the sovereign Hobbes describes is that of a totalitarian form of government where political power is absolute and wields total power. In a commonwealth, liberty of the subjects only exists as allowed by the sovereign. Law is a command of the sovereign but the sovereign is not himself subject to the law. Where the sovereign has made no law, the subjects are free to do as they will (Molesworth, 1966).

The sovereign according to Hobbes has twelve principal rights:

Because a successive covenant cannot override a prior one, the subjects cannot (lawfully) change the form of government. Because the covenant forming the commonwealth results from subjects giving to the sovereign the right to act for them, the sovereign cannot possibly breach the covenant; and therefore, the subjects can never argue to be freed from the covenant because of the actions of the sovereign. The sovereign exists because the majority has consented to his rule; the minority have agreed to abide by this arrangement and must then assent to the sovereign's



actions. Every subject is author of the acts of the sovereign: hence the sovereign cannot injure any of his subjects and cannot be accused of injustice.

Following this, the sovereign cannot justly be put to death by the subjects.

Because the purpose of the commonwealth is peace, and the sovereign has the right to do whatever he thinks necessary for the preserving of peace and security and prevention of discord. Therefore, the sovereign may judge what opinions and doctrines are averse, who shall be allowed to speak to multitudes, and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they are published.

To prescribe the rules of civil war and property.

To be a judge in all cases.

To make war and peace as he sees fit and to command the army.

To choose counsellors, ministers, magistrates and officers.

To reward the rich and honour or to punish with corporal or pecuniary punishment or ignominy.

To establish laws about honour and a scale of worth.

As for aristocracy or democracy, Hobbes holds that since there is by definition no common power above them, the individuals will be in a state of nature with respect to each other and so be unable to keep the peace in the community. Given his understanding of human nature, a plural sovereign of the aristocracy will self-destruct due to the endless desire for more power on the part of each member. And given that there is no universally binding moral system, no appeal to common values is also possible. The same problems apply to democracies as well in which in addition, there will also be more corruption because it is easier to conceal these activities in governments where many are involved (Molesworth, 1966).

Total and absolute obedience is expected of the subjects after the social contract. Hence there is no right to dissent; the minority must join the majority's opinion. Resistance to the sovereign authority by a citizen is illogical to Hobbes. In the first instance, it would amount to resistance to himself and secondly to resist is to revert to independent judgment, which is the experience in the state of nature. Therefore, the power of the sovereign according to Hobbes must be absolute in order to secure the conditions of the order, peace and law which are the major aim of instituting the commonwealth.

### 3.5 Criticism Levelled against the Hobbes

Shortly after Hobbes writings appeared, theologically-minded critics attacked Hobbes for eliminating God role in mandating morality and establishing political authority. Accusations of atheism and irreligion were common and severe. Many critics have noted that Hobbes' contract merely recreates a state of nature at another level, that between the sovereign and the people, thus putting the populace in an even worse condition than before. Given Hobbes' description of the state of nature, the only reason people have to obey their contracts is the fear of punishment. Hobbes' contract is also in conflict with his idea of natural law. Natural law, as understood by Hobbes, are norms of self-preservation and the promotion of rational self-interest.

To make a contract as Hobbes describes wherein the sovereign is not a party to the contract and is in fact not, limited in any way, places the society and the individual in a state of nature and hence a state of war with respect to the sovereign, would be contrary to self-preservation since the sovereign has greater power than any individual in the state of nature. Consequently, the relationship that fundamentally undetermined would be unpredictable and consequently unreliable in protecting one's life (Sorell, 1996).

Many commentators believe that by placing all faith in the sovereign to enforce the social contract, Hobbes' theory fails to reach the standard of ultimate and convincing proof in a strictly legal sense. Hobbes' main weakness is that he is never able to explain why one should not break the social contract and disobey the sovereign, which seems to be little more than a moral responsibility (Brown, 1996).

Again, Hobbes did not believe that there was an actual point in history when people got together and signed a social contract. So, if the social contract is not a specific historical agreement, then a series of questions are raised about what kind of agreement it actually is, and how it forms the basis of morality and governance? (Partel, 2006).

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give a brief account of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy.
- ii. Dissect Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man.
- iii. Linked Hobbes' social contract and absolute government to today most nation-state.
- iv Construct a valid criticism against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In spite of the harsh criticism against Hobbes theory, the general notion of the social contract captured the imagination of philosophers after him, and for nearly two centuries, social contract theory was a dominant theme among political philosophers. He was one of the first thinkers to apply the tools of the Scientific Revolution to problems of politics. His philosophy may sound harsh, but he believed it was based on objective observation and sound reasoning.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The key point for Hobbes is that the authority of the state is justified; this is because the citizens have consented or agreed to accept the authority. In virtue of this agreement, citizens are therefore bound to obey. The sovereign's right of command and the subject's duty of obedience is the result of consent. Although, there are some things about Hobbes' conception of state which today we would find useful, yet his position is in support of those who argue for the importance of government by consent and reject the claims of the "divine right of kings" and more generally, the authority of tradition.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief account of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy.
2. Dissect Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man.
3. Linked Hobbes' social contract and absolute government to today most nation-state.
4. Construct a valid criticism against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.

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## **UNIT 3      JEREMY BENTHAM**

### **CONTENTS**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Jeremy Bentham, a leading theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law and one of the founders of utilitarianism. The Industrial Revolution with the massive economic and social shifts that it brought in its wake, the rise of the middle class, and revolutions in France and America all were reflected in Bentham's reflections on existing institutions and how it shapes his focus on the philosophy of life and politics.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss about Jeremy Bentham and his focus on human nature
- examine Bentham's moral and political philosophy
- analyse Bentham's perception of law, liberty, government and rights
- expantiate more on Bentham's humanist stance in the field of philosophy.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Biography of Jeremy Bentham**

Jeremy Bentham was born in Houndsditch, London on February 15, 1748. He was the son and grandson of attorneys, and his early family life was coloured by a mix of pious superstition (on his mother's side) and

Enlightenment rationalism (from his father). Bentham lived during a time of major social, political and economic change.

In 1760, Bentham entered Queen's College, Oxford and, upon graduation in 1764, studied law at Lincoln's Inn. Though qualified to practice law, he never did so. Instead, he devoted most of his life to writing on matters of legal reform though, curiously, he made little effort to publish much of what he wrote (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

While most of his best-known work deals with theoretical questions in law, Bentham was an active polemicist and was engaged for some time in developing projects that proposed various practical ideas for the reform of social institutions. Although his work came to have an important influence on political philosophy, Bentham did not write any single text giving the essential principles of his views on this topic. His most important theoretical work is the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in which much of his moral theory which he said reflected 'the greatest happiness principle' is described and developed (Manning, 1968).

By the late 1790s, Bentham's theoretical work came to have a more significant place in political reform. Still, his influence was, arguably, still greater on the continent. Bentham was made an honorary citizen of the fledgeling French Republic in 1792, and his *The Theory of Legislation* was published first, in French, by his Swiss disciple, Etienne Dumont, in 1802 (Harrison, 1983).

The impact of Bentham's ideas goes further still as contemporary philosophical and economic vocabulary for example, international, maximize, minimize, and codification is indebted to Bentham's proclivity for inventing terms, and among his other disciples were James Mill and his son, John who was responsible for an early edition of some of Bentham's manuscripts, as well as the legal theorist, John Austin (Harrison, 1983).

At his death in London, on June 6, 1832, Bentham left literally tens of thousands of manuscript pages some of which was work only sketched out, but all of which he hoped would be prepared for publication. He also left a large estate, which was used to finance the newly-established University College, London and his cadaver, *per* his instructions, was dissected, embalmed, dressed, and placed in a chair, and to this day resides in a cabinet in a corridor of the main building of University College. The Bentham Project, set up in the early 1960s at University College, has as its aim the publishing of a definitive, scholarly edition of Bentham's works and correspondence (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

### 3.2 Bentham on Human Nature

For Bentham, morals and legislation can be described scientifically, but such a description requires an account of human nature. Just as nature is explained through reference to the laws of physics, so human behaviour can be explained by reference to the two primary motives of Pleasure and Pain; this is the theory of psychological hedonism.

There is, Bentham admits, no direct proof of such an analysis of human motivation though he holds that it is clear that, in acting, all people implicitly refer to it. At the beginning of the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham writes:

*Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it* (Bentham, 1978: Ch. 1).

From this, we see that for Bentham, pleasure and pain serve not only as explanations for action, but they also define one's good. It is, in short, based on pleasures and pains, which can exist only in individuals, that Bentham thought one could construct a calculus of value. Related to this fundamental hedonism is a view of the individual as exhibiting a natural, rational self-interest a form of psychological egoism.

In his 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy' (1833), Mill cites Bentham's *The Book of Fallacies* (London: Hunt, 1824, pp. 392-3) that 'in every human breast... self-regarding interest is predominant over social interest; each person's own individual interest over the interests of all other persons taken together.' Fundamental to the nature and activity of individuals, then, is their own well-being, and reason as a natural capability of the person is considered to be subservient to this end (Iain, 1992).

Bentham believed that the nature of the human person can be adequately described without mention of social relationships. To begin with, the idea of 'relation' is but a 'fictitious entity,' though necessary for 'convenience of discourse'. And, more specifically, he remarks that 'the community is a fictitious body,' and it is but 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.'

Thus, the extension of the term 'individual' is, in the main, no greater and no less than the biological entity. Bentham's view, then, is that the

individual, the basic unit of the social sphere is an ‘atom’ and there is no ‘self’ or ‘individual’ greater than the human individual. A person’s relations with others even if important are not essential and describe nothing that is, strictly speaking, necessary to its being what it is (Bentham, 1978).

The picture of the human person presented by Bentham is based on psychological associationism indebted to David Hartley and Hume; Bentham’s analysis of ‘habit’ (which is essential to his understanding of society and especially political society) particularly reflects associationist’s presuppositions.

On this view, pleasure and pain are objective states and can be measured in terms of their intensity, duration, certainty, proximity, fecundity and purity. This allows both for an objective determination of an activity or state and for a comparison with others. Bentham’s understanding of human nature reveals, in short, a psychological, ontological, and also moral individualism were, to extend the critique of utilitarianism made by Graeme Duncan and John Gray (1979), ‘the individual human being is conceived as the source of values and as himself the supreme value’.

### 3.3 Bentham’s Moral Philosophy

As Elie Halévy (1904) notes, there are three principal characteristics of which constitute the basis of Bentham's moral and political philosophy: (i) the greatest happiness principle, (ii) universal egoism and (iii) the artificial identification of one’s interests with those of others. Though these characteristics are present throughout his work, they are particularly evident in the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, where Bentham is concerned with articulating rational principles that would provide a basis and guide for legal, social and moral reform (Iain, 1992).

To begin with, Bentham's moral philosophy reflects what he calls at different times the greatest happiness principle or the principle of utility a term which he borrows from Hume. In adverting to this principle, however, he was not referring to just the usefulness of things or actions, but to the extent to which these things or actions promote the general happiness.

Specifically, then, what is morally obligatory is that which produces the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people, happiness being determined by reference to the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain. Thus, Bentham writes:



By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.

And Bentham emphasises that this applies to 'every action whatsoever' (Bentham, 1978).

That which does not maximise the greatest happiness (such as an act of pure ascetic sacrifice) is, therefore, morally wrong. Unlike some of the previous attempts at articulating a universal hedonism, Bentham's approach is thoroughly naturalistic. Bentham's moral philosophy, then, clearly reflects his psychological view that the primary motivators in human beings are pleasure and pain.

Bentham admits that his version of the principle of utility is something that does not admit of direct proof, but he notes that this is not a problem as some explanatory principles do not admit of any such proof and all explanation must start somewhere. But this, by itself, does not explain why another's happiness or the general happiness should count. And, in fact, he provides a number of suggestions that could serve as answers to the question of why we should be concerned with the happiness of others (John and Paul, 2006).

First, Bentham says, the principle of utility is something to which individuals, in acting, refer either explicitly or implicitly, and this is something that can be ascertained and confirmed by simple observation. Indeed, Bentham held that all existing systems of morality can be reduced to the principles of sympathy and antipathy, which is precisely that which defines utility. A second argument found in Bentham is that, if pleasure is good, then it is good irrespective of whose pleasure it is.

Thus, a moral injunction to pursue or maximise pleasure has force independently of the specific interests of the person acting. Bentham also suggests that individuals would reasonably seek the general happiness simply because the interests of others are inextricably bound up with their own, though he recognised that this is easy for individuals to ignore. Nevertheless, Bentham envisages a solution to this as well. Specifically, he proposes that making this identification of interests obvious and, when necessary, bringing diverse interests together would be the responsibility of the legislator (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

Bentham held that there are advantages to a moral philosophy based on a principle of utility. To begin with, the principle of utility is clear (compared to other moral principles), allows for objective and

disinterested public discussion, and enables decisions to be made where there seem to be conflicts of (*prima facie*) legitimate interests. Moreover, in calculating the pleasures and pains involved in carrying out a course of action (the hedonic calculus) there is a fundamental commitment to human equality.

The principle of utility presupposes that “one man is worth just the same as another man” and so there is a guarantee that in calculating the greatest happiness “each person is to count for one and no one for more than one”. For Bentham, then, there is no inconsistency between the greatest happiness principle and his psychological hedonism and egoism. Thus, he writes that moral philosophy or ethics can be simply described as “the art of directing men's action to the production of the greatest possible quantity of happiness, on the part of those whose interest is in view” (John and Paul, 2006).

### 3.4 Bentham's Political Philosophy

Bentham was regarded as the central figure of a group of intellectuals called, by Elie Halévy (1904), “the philosophic radicals”, of which both Mill and Herbert Spencer can be counted among the “spiritual descendants”. While it would be too strong to claim that the ideas of the philosophic radicals reflected a common political theory, it is nevertheless correct to say that they agreed that many of the social problems of late eighteenth and early 19th century England were due to an antiquated legal system and to the control of the economy by a hereditary landed gentry opposed to modern capitalist institutions.

For Bentham, the principles that govern morals also govern politics and law, and political reform requires a clear understanding of human nature. While he develops several principles already present in Anglo-Saxon political philosophy, he breaks with that tradition in significant ways (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

In his earliest work, *A Fragment on Government* (1776), which is an excerpt from a longer work published only in 1928 as *Comment on Blackstone's Commentaries*, Bentham attacked the legal theory of Sir William Blackstone. Bentham's target was, primarily, Blackstone's defence of tradition in law. Bentham advocated the rational revision of the legal system, a restructuring of the process of determining responsibility and of punishment, and more extensive freedom of contract. This, he believed, would favour not only the development of the community but the personal development of the individual.

Bentham's attack on Blackstone targeted more than the latter's use of tradition, however. Against Blackstone and many earlier thinkers

(including Locke), Bentham repudiated many of the concepts underlying their political philosophies, such as natural right, state of nature, and the social contract. Bentham then attempted to outline positive alternatives to the preceding 'traditionalisms. Not only did he work to reform and restructure existing institutions, but he promoted broader suffrage and self (that is, representative) government (Bentham, 1978).

### 3.5 Bentham's Perception of Law, Liberty and Government

The notion of liberty present in Bentham's account is what is now generally referred to as 'negative' liberty, freedom from external restraint or compulsion. Bentham says that "liberty is the absence of restraint" and so, to the extent that one is not hindered by others, one has liberty and is 'free'. Bentham denies that liberty is natural (in the sense of existing before social life and thereby imposing limits on the state) or that there is an *a priori* sphere of liberty in which the individual is sovereign.

In fact, Bentham holds that people have always lived in society, and so there can be no state of nature (though he does distinguish between political society and natural society) and no social contract. Nevertheless, he does note that there is an important distinction between one's public and private life that has morally significant consequences, and he holds that liberty is good that, even though it is not something that is a fundamental value, it reflects the greatest happiness principle (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

Correlative with this account of liberty, Bentham (as Thomas Hobbes before him) viewed the law as negative. Given that pleasure and pain are fundamental to indeed, provide the standard of value for Bentham, liberty is a good (because it is pleasant) and the restriction of liberty is evil (because it is painful). Law, which is by its very nature a restriction of liberty and painful to those whose freedom is restricted, is a *prima facie* evil. It is only so far as control by the state is limited that the individual is free.

Law is, Bentham recognised, necessary to social order and good laws are clearly essential to good government. Indeed, perhaps more than Locke, Bentham saw the positive role to be played by law and government, particularly in achieving community well-being. To the extent that law advances and protects one's economic and personal goods and that what government exists is self-government, the law reflects the interests of the individual.

Unlike many earlier thinkers, Bentham held that law is not rooted in natural law but is simply a command expressing the will of the sovereign. (This account of law, later developed by Austin, is characteristic of legal

positivism.) Thus, a law that commands morally questionable or morally evil actions, or that is not based on consent, is still law (John and Paul, 2006).

### 3.6 Bentham Views on Rights

Bentham's views on rights are, perhaps, best known through the attacks on the concept of natural rights that appear throughout his work. These criticisms are specially developed in his *Anarchical Fallacies* (a polemical attack on the declarations of rights issued in France during the French Revolution), written between 1791 and 1795 but not published until 1816, in French. Bentham's criticisms here are rooted in his understanding of the nature of law. Rights are created by the law, and law is simply a command of the sovereign. The existence of law and rights, therefore, requires government.

Rights are also usually (though not necessarily) correlative with duties determined by the law and, as in Hobbes, are either those which the law explicitly gives us or those within a legal system where the law is silent. The view that there could be rights not based on sovereign command and which pre-exist the establishment of government is rejected (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

According to Bentham, then, the term 'natural right' is a perversion of language. It is ambiguous, sentimental and figurative and it has anarchical consequences. At best, such a right may tell us what we ought to do; it cannot serve as a legal restriction on what we can or cannot do. The term 'natural right' is ambiguous, Bentham says because it suggests that there are general rights that are, rights over no specific object so that one would have a claim on whatever one chooses.

The effect of exercising such a universal, natural right would be to extinguish the right altogether since what is every man's right is no man's right. No legal system could function with such a broad conception of rights. Thus, there cannot be any general rights in the sense suggested by the French declarations (John and Paul, 2006).

Moreover, the notion of natural rights is figurative. Properly speaking, there are no rights when related to government. The assumption of the existence of such rights, Bentham says, seems to be derived from the theory of the social contract. Here, individuals form a society and choose a government through the alienation of certain of their rights. But such a doctrine is not only unhistorical, according to Bentham, it also does not even serve as a useful fiction to explain the origin of political authority. Governments arise by habit or by force, and for contracts (and,

specifically, some original contract) to bind, there must already be a government in place to enforce them (Mack, 1962).

Consequently, the idea of a natural right is anarchical. Such a right, Bentham claims, entails freedom from all restraint and, in particular, from all legal restraint. Since a natural right would be anterior to law, it could not be limited by law, and (since human beings are motivated by self-interest) if everyone had such freedom, the result would be pure anarchy. To have a right in any meaningful sense entails that others cannot legitimately interfere with one's rights, and this implies that rights must be capable of enforcement. Such restriction, as noted earlier, is the province of the law (Hart, 1973).

Bentham concludes, therefore, that the term 'natural rights' is simple nonsense: natural and imprescriptible rights, rhetorical nonsense, nonsense upon stilts. What Bentham calls real rights are fundamentally legal rights. All rights must be legal and specific that is, having both a specific object and subject. They ought to be made because of their conduciveness to the general mass of felicity, and correlatively, when their abolition would be to the advantage of society, rights ought to be abolished. So far as rights exist in law, they are protected; outside of the law, they are at best reasons for wishing there were such things as rights. While Bentham's essays against natural rights are largely polemical, many of his objections continue to be influential in contemporary political philosophy (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Nevertheless, Bentham did not dismiss talk of rights altogether. Some services are essential to the happiness of human beings and that cannot be left to others to fulfil as they see fit, and so these individuals must be compelled, on pain of punishment, to fulfil them. They must, in other words, respect the rights of others. Thus, although Bentham was generally suspicious of the concept of rights, he does allow that the term is useful, and in such work as *A General View of a Complete Code of Laws*, he enumerates a large number of rights.

While the meaning he assigns to these rights is largely stipulative rather than descriptive, they clearly reflect principles defended throughout his work. There has been some debate over the extent to which the rights that Bentham defends are based on or reducible to duties or obligations, whether he can consistently maintain that such duties or obligations are based on the principle of utility and whether the existence of what Bentham calls 'permissive rights' rights one has where the law is silent is consistent with his general utilitarian view. This latter point has been discussed at length by Hart (1973) and David Lyons (1969).

### 3.7 Bentham Humanist Stance

As a humanist, Bentham pursued many goals which reflected his humanist views in many endeavours at his time. For instance, Bentham, inspired by the reforms proposals about education, formed a committee and drew up plans to establish a school in London patterned on the ideas suggested by Bell and Lancaster. Bell, training advanced students to teach younger school mates, hit upon an inexpensive method of education. This was the first practicable programme for extending education to the lowest classes and eventually abolishing illiteracy altogether.

Though the idea never concretized, it enthused Bentham to write his *Christomathia*, a minute compendium on education, covering everything from a pupil's diet to an encyclopaedic table embracing all knowledge. In 1825, James Mill established the society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge to distribute cheap or free utilitarian tracts (Eddy and Misra, 2008). Furthermore, Bentham championed humane treatment of slaves and animals, favouring the abolition of slavery. He was against capital punishment. In line with his conviction that happiness was the motive force in human behaviour and action, he sketched an Encyclopedical Tree as a master plan for all the arts and sciences in accordance with their contribution to human happiness.

He contributed towards evolving an international language, by classifying 17 properties that were desirable in a language. He also outlined the principles of universal grammar. He coined new words like *international*, *codify*, *maximize*, *minimize*, *rationale*, *demoralize*, *deontology*, *eulogistic* and *false consciousness*. Despite his dislike for Aristotle, he emphasized, like the ancient master, that mastery of language and the ability to use the right word were essential to serious thinking (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Bentham also suggested, "Dialogues with the Dead" for their educational and theatrical value. He prepared snippets of conversations that could take place between Socrates and himself on the subject of happiness; with Bacon on the philosophical developments of the past 2000 years; with Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717 – 1783) on the Encyclopaedical Tree; with Etienne Dumont and Montesquieu on the law as it ought to be; with Locke on the fiction of the original social contract; with Porphyry, Locke and Bishop Sanderson on logic; and with Euclid, Apollonius, Diophantus, Newton and La Place on mathematics.

He suggested that people should go to pilgrimages to shrines of saints and martyrs. He wanted religion, like political and legal institutions, to serve the public and promote Utilitarian ideals. Bentham was suspicious of secret diplomacy, having enormous faith in the efficacy of public opinion. In his *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace*, he opposed international

treatises, colonies and trade barriers to eliminate war. He was more optimistic than Kant about achieving lasting world peace and happiness if they were built on a personal basis by people rather than through the abrasive relations between governments (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Bentham was against colonialism and argued that it was bad both for the colonizers and the colonies. He wanted England to create a “mass of happiness” by adopting the principle of self-government within the empire. In arguing on behalf of the colonial peoples, he was against the prevailing view in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries which differentiated between “they” (colonized) and “us” (colonisers). He became interested in the Indian Reform movement when James Mill became an official in the English East India Company (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

He inspired Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India in 1827, to support and initiate reforms in India. In 1793, Bentham asked France and other European countries to liberate their colonies (Harrison, 1983). Bentham further emphasis supported Smith’s argument that “profits from colonies were at best illusory, given the expense of protecting them and the cost of the international conflict that they provoked”.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Discuss in brief Jeremy Bentham focus on human nature.
- ii. Elaborate more on Bentham’s moral and political philosophy.
- iii. What do you learn about Bentham’s perception of law, liberty, government and rights?
- iv. How does Bentham’s humanist stance impact humanity in the field of philosophy?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Bentham combined the economic and political arguments to challenge colonialism. His courage and determination to challenge the interests of his own country for the sake of the colonised were highly valued. His commitment was later converted into a “credo for colonial liberation” by the Americans and the French, who adopted it as a “discourse of universal rights”. Equality, liberty, the rights of man and national self-determination eventually enhanced “the justification and very foundation” of the anti-colonialism struggle. It was later endorsed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, shortly after World War II.

## 4.0 SUMMARY

This unit discusses the life and philosophical belief of Jeremy Bentham most outstandingly his humanist stance against the under-privileged such as slaves and others. Among his notable effort was the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, shortly after World War II by United Nations general assembly.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss in brief Jeremy Bentham focus on human nature.
2. Elaborate more on Bentham's moral and political philosophy.
3. What do you learn about Bentham's perception of law, liberty, government and rights?
4. How does Bentham's humanist stance impact humanity in the field of philosophy?

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## UNIT 4 EDMUND BURKE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Edmund Burke
  - 3.2 Burke Critical Views on Natural Rights and Contracts
  - 3.3 Burke Philosophical and Historical Writings
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Edmund Burke, author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, is known in the philosophical world as a classic political thinker. It is well known that his intellectual achievement depended upon his understanding of philosophy and use of it in the practical writings and speeches by which he is clearly known. This unit explores the character and significance of the use of philosophy in Burke's political thought.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. examine Edmund Burke life and works
2. discuss Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts
3. analyse Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Biography of Edmund Burke

Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, Ireland in January 1729, the son of a prosperous attorney, and, after early education at home, became a boarder at the school run by Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, at Ballitore in County Kildare. Burke received his university education at Trinity College, Dublin, a bastion of the Anglican Church of Ireland.

Then he proceeded to the Middle Temple at London, to qualify for the Bar, but the legal practice was less attractive to him than the broader perspective which had captured his attention at university. It was first as a writer, and then as a public figure that he made his career. Burke's

intellectual formation did not suggest that his career would be purely philosophical. Burke married in 1756 and had a son by 1758.

He was a political conservative, it is said that conservatism began with him, although he was termed as a liberal, pluralist and progressive conservative by other scholars. His major work was the reflections on the revolution in France and on proceedings of certain societies in England relating to that event which was published in 1790. Edmund Burke died July 9, 1797, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England.

In 1756 he published anonymously *A Vindication of Natural Society...*, a satirical imitation of the style of Viscount Bolingbroke that was aimed at both the destructive criticism of revealed religion and the contemporary vogue for a “return to Nature.” *A contribution to aesthetic theory, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, which appeared in 1757, gave him a reputation in the world of philosophy and his contribution was acknowledged by Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, and G.E. Lessing among others. Thereafter he was co-author of *An Account of the European Settlements* (1757) and began *An Abridgement of English History* (c.1757–62).

Burke, who was always a prominent figure there and sometimes an effective persuader, gave a great many parliamentary speeches. He published versions of some of these, notably on *American Taxation* (1774), *Conciliation with America* (1775), and *Fox’s East India Bill* (1783). These printed speeches, though anchored to specific occasions, and certainly intended to have a practical effect in British politics, were also meant to embody Burke’s thought in a durable form. In that respect, they parallel his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), and *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), amongst other non-oratorical writings.

He was a British statesman, parliamentary orator, and political thinker prominent in public life from 1765 to about 1795 and important in the history of political theory. He championed conservatism in opposition to Jacobinism in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

### **3.2 Burke Critical views on Natural Rights and Contracts**

The natural rights theory emerged in the seventeen centuries mainly found in the writings of John lock, it was basically built on the freedom of man and was against absolute authority and power. The natural rights advocate that man is born free that is, he is natural free hence no form of conclusion, coercion should be inflicted on man, also no man has a right to take another man’s life, even man himself can’t take his own life because life is a God-given gift. The theory of natural rights also includes natural laws

which advocate for equality, human rights, rights to property, right to land etc.

Burke did not agree with the natural theory of rights nor the social contract. To him they were all chaffs and rags, the State he argued was a complicated process which the efforts of man had helped to shape but the evolution of state cannot be understood by anyone. His own origin of state was more of an organic one, State to him could be seen as an organism rather than an organisation which had an organic growth and old institutions give place to newer ones.

Burke was against the natural rights, to him humans had no natural rights like that in Locke's state of nature. To Burke, human beings started having rights when they joined the state. The only rights recognised was that granted by the state and protected by civil laws. In his view, natural rights are vague and in-understandable. Rights are only secured within the State. All rights exist in the state and none exist outside the state. According to him, there are two types of rights, civil and political rights. The civil rights are to be given to everyone within the state, however political rights are to be given to only those capable of understanding it.

Burke was also against the separation of Church and State. To him the only laws were the laws of God and laws of a civilized society. Burke was against natural rights, absolute liberty, equality, democracy, popular sovereignty and general will. He favoured an elitist leadership in the society.

He also saw natural rights as abstract ideas, which to him were the cause of many troubles, societal problems to him couldn't be solved on by thinking abstractly and making up abstract rights, to Burke societal problems could be solved on expediency, effectiveness and experience.

### **3.3 Burke's Philosophical and Historical Writings**

Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding of 1690 was the first attempt to give a survey of the mind's workings that was both comprehensive and post-Aristotelian. It soon fostered an intense interest in epistemology, psychology and ethics. Burke seems to have worked on the imagination, the faculty of devising and combining ideas and continued to do so into the 1750s.

The result, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) emphasised the activity of the mind in making ideas and the influence of these upon conduct. It was in the first place an exercise in clarifying ideas, intending to refine how the arts affect the passions: in other words, a refinement of complex ideas was taken to

be the precondition of refinement of practice. The roots of human activity, Burke thought, were the passions of curiosity, pleasure and pain. Curiosity stimulated the activity of mind on all matters. Ideas of pain and of pleasure corresponded respectively to self-preservation and society and society involved the passions of sympathy, imitation and ambition.

Imitation tended to establish habit, and ambition to produce change. Sympathy did neither, but it did establish an interest in other people's welfare that extended to mental identification with them. The scope of sympathy could embrace anyone, unlike compassion, which applied only to those in a worse situation than oneself. The passions, understood in Burke's way, suggested at once that society as such answered to natural instincts and that it comprised elements of continuity and improvement alike. Burke then proceeded to show that self-preservation and its cognates suggested the complex idea of the sublime and not least the idea of a God who was both active and terrible. Beauty, on the other hand, comprised a very different set of simple ideas, which originated in pleasure. Sublime and beautiful therefore sprang from very different origins.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you learn about Edmund Burke life and works?
- ii. Analyse Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts.
- iii. Give a brief account of Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The name of Edmund Burke (1730–97) is not one that often figures in the history of philosophy. Besides Burke's writings and some of his speeches contain strongly philosophical elements, philosophical both in our contemporary era and in the 18th century, especially 'philosophical' history. These elements play a fundamental role within his work and help students of political thoughts to learn and understand why Burke is a political philosopher. His writings and speeches, therefore, merit recognition to both ideas and to history, and of the role of his contribution in practical thought. His work is also as we already learned in this unit, was an achievement that challenges assumptions held by many of our contemporaries.

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

In conclusion, we can say that Burke's stance on natural rights and social contracts was based on abstractness and lack of facts. He thus supported a more rational and reasonable mode of looking at rights, the state,

government, and equality. Since thought is of the very first importance for the intellectual history and the conduct of politics, Burke's postulations are the first attempt to examine its philosophical character and to connect the latter with Burke's political activity. In doing so it shows the importance of the philosophical elements in Burke's thought and that these contribute important ways to his political thought.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you learn about Edmund Burke life and works?
2. Analyse Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts.
3. Give a brief account of Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 5      KARL MARX: THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIALIST**

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- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.1 Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883)
  - 3.2 Karl Marx and Marxism
  - 3.3 Karl Marx Analysis of Capitalism
  - 3.4 Critique of Karl Marx Work
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Karl Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His philosophical perception gave birth to a new wave of political thought which captured socio-economic as well as political ramifications of man. Taking this into consideration, this unit discussed Karl Marx as the scientific socialist.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Karl Heinrich Marx and what lead to the postulations of Marxism
- examine Karl Marx Analysis of capitalism
- analyse divergent opinion concerning Karl Marx philosophy.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883)**

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Trier on the river Moselle in Germany on May 5, 1818. At the age of seventeen, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the University of Bonn. The following year Karl Marx's father sent him to the more serious University of Berlin where he remained four years, at which time he abandoned his romanticism for the Hegelianism which ruled in Berlin at the time. He became a member of the Young Hegelian movement.

Finding a university career closed by the Prussian government, Marx moved into journalism and, in October 1842, became editor, in Cologne, of the influential *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper backed by industrialists. Karl Marx's articles, particularly those on economic questions, forced the Prussian government to close the paper. Marx then immigrated to France (Asirvathan & Misra, (2008).

Arriving in Paris at the end of 1843, he rapidly made contact with organised groups of émigré German workers and with various sects of French socialists. He also edited the short-lived *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* which was intended to bridge French socialism and the German radical Hegelians. During his first few months in Paris, Karl Marx became a communist and set down his views in a series of writings known as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), which remained unpublished until the 1930s. In the *Manuscripts*, he outlined a humanist conception of communism, influenced by the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach and based on a contrast between the alienated nature of labour under capitalism and a communist society in which human beings freely developed their nature in cooperative production. It was also in Paris that Marx developed his lifelong partnership with Friedrich Engels (Iain, 1992).

Karl Marx was expelled from Paris at the end of 1844 and with Engels, moved to Brussels where he remained for the next three years, visiting England where Engels' family had cotton spinning interests in Manchester. While in Brussels, he devoted himself to an intensive study of history and elaborated what came to be known as the materialist conception of history. This he developed in a manuscript (published posthumously as 'The German Ideology'), of which the basic thesis was that the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production.

Karl Marx traced the history of the various modes of production and predicted the collapse of the present one 'industrial capitalism' and its replacement by communism (Iain, 1992). At the same time he was composing 'The German Ideology', he also wrote a polemic (*The Poverty of Philosophy*) against the idealistic socialism of P. J. Proudhon (1809-1865). He also joined the Communist League. This was an organisation of German émigré workers with its centre in London of which Marx and Engels became the major theoreticians. At a conference of the League in London at the end of 1847 Marx and Engels were commissioned to write a succinct declaration of their position. Scarcely was 'The Communist Manifesto' published than the 1848 wave of revolutions broke out in Europe (Marx, 1973).



Early in 1848, he moved back to Paris when a revolution first broke out and onto Germany where he founded, again in Cologne, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The paper supported a radical democratic line against the Prussian autocracy and he devoted his main energies to its editorship since the Communist League had been virtually disbanded. Karl Marx's paper was suppressed and he sought refuge in London in May 1849. Settling in London, he was optimistic about the imminence of a new revolutionary outbreak in Europe. He rejoined the Communist League and wrote two lengthy pamphlets on the 1848 revolution in France and its aftermath, 'The Class Struggles in France and the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte'. He was soon convinced that a new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis and then devoted himself to the study of political economy to determine the causes and conditions of this crisis (Subrata & Sushila, 2007).

Karl Marx's major work on the political economy made slow progress. By 1857 he had produced a gigantic 800-page manuscript on capital, landed property, wage labour, the state, foreign trade and the world market. The *Grundrisse* (or *Outlines*) was not published until 1941. In the early 1860s he broke off his work to compose three large volumes, 'Theories of Surplus Value', which discussed the theoreticians of political economy, particularly Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It was not until 1867 that Karl Marx was able to publish the first results of his work in volume 1 of *Capital* (*Das Capital*), a work which analyzed the capitalist process of production.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx elaborated his version of the labour theory value and his conception of surplus value and exploitation which would ultimately lead to a falling rate of profit in the collapse of industrial capitalism. Volumes II and III were finished during the 1860s but Karl Marx worked on the manuscripts for the rest of his life and they were published posthumously by Engels (Subrata & Sushila, 2007). During the last decade of his life, Karl Marx's health declined and he was incapable of sustained effort that had so characterized his previous work. He travelled to European spas and even to Algeria in search of recuperation. The deaths of his eldest daughter and his wife clouded the last years of his life. He died March 14, 1883, and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in North London.

### **3.2 Karl Marx and Marxism**

The contributions to the world body of knowledge made by German theorist Karl Marx are so vast and complex that his theory of socialism has come to be known specifically as Marxism. Karl Marx was well versed in political theory and completed a doctorate in classical Greek philosophy from the University of Berlin in 1841. Karl Marx was greatly

influenced by German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), who believed that historical development takes place through a series of dramatic changes producing increasingly comprehensive systems of knowledge. With each epoch of historical development, new and old ideas clash and compete.

New ways of thinking and conceptualizing reality emerge from the conflict, according to Hegel. One finds in Karl Marx's work many parallels with Hegel, not the least of which is the notion that history moves forward from the push and pull of conflict and that each new period of history is a creative response to what has gone before. As abstract as this sound, these ideas are important in providing glimpses of some of the most concrete dimensions of Marx's theory. For example, Hegelian influences are evidenced in Karl Marx's understanding of class conflict and social change (David, 1979).

Although Karl Marx is known as a socialist, the majority of his writings focus on analyzing capitalism. This is not surprising when one realizes that he lived under a capitalist system and, as a student of politics, wrote primarily about what he could observe. With his friend and collaborator Frederick Engels (1820–1895), he published *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. In other words, Karl Marx analysed many facets of capitalist society. The better one understands capitalism, he contends, the more clearly one sees the rational basis for socialism (Iain, 1992). To this effect, the level of analysis adopted by Karl Marx was that of a global society. His aim was focused on the idea of social realities considered globally. All must be understood from the perspective of historical materialism. Its perspective was dynamic and progressive, providing a theory of social change, that's to say, an ever-changing and constantly evolving society (Marx, 1979).

His book (*Das Capita*) *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* gives an overview of Marxist ideology, by studying the serious contradictions of capitalism and presenting a large number of alternative solutions and also in the *Communist Manifesto* (1948), he emphasised the ideological bases among which his theory stands out (Marx, 1973):

**Historical Materialism:** It is an interpretation of history according to which the evolution of societies is determined by the economic structure. There is a tension between infrastructure (the economic base) and superstructure (institutions, culture ...) that produces changes in the structure of the state. This is how the humanity has gone through several stages: the communal society, the slave, the feudal and the capitalist which is the last one and full of contradictions that must inevitably lead to the socialist stage.

**The Surplus Value and the Law of Accumulation of Capital:** The worker has never received the full value of their work, because otherwise employers would not have been enriched. Thus, the entrepreneur appropriates part of the job of the worker to what is called surplus value. This ownership tends to be higher, which makes the capital increasing concentrated in the hands of a few, this is the law of accumulation of capital which leads to serious contradictions and is the origin of class struggle (Marx, 1969).

**Class Struggle:** is for Marx and Engels, an undeniable premise because there have been always two contrary groups: the oppressors and those who are oppressed. This confrontation becomes the motor of history; this fight will end with capitalism and the bourgeois State. Class plays a key role in Marxist analysis, in contrast to liberalism, Marxists hold that society is systematically prone to class conflict. The main conflict is between the bourgeoisie (the capitalists) and the proletariat (the workers).

**The Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** After having conquered the bourgeois state by a revolutionary movement, it is about to control it and transform the society. Once achieved, the proletariat dictatorship will leave this to create a classless society. In this communist society, all means of production are socialised. The state tends to disappear.

Furthermore, Marx's theory about society, economics, and politics collectively understood as Marxism hold that human societies develop through class struggle; in capitalism, this manifests itself in the conflict between the ruling classes (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and working classes (known as the proletariat) that enable these means by selling their labour for wages. Employing a critical approach known as historical materialism, Marx predicted that, like previous socioeconomic systems, capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system: socialism.

For Karl Marx, class antagonisms under capitalism, owing in part to its instability and crisis-prone nature, would eventuate the working class' development of class consciousness, leading to their conquest of political power and eventually the establishment of a classless, communist society constituted by a free association of producers (Subrata & Sushila, 2007).

### 3.3 Karl Marx Analysis of Capitalism

Karl Marx begins by noting that capitalism is an economic system in which most people come to be members of one of two large classes. This division of people into two basic classes contrasts with the more complex class systems of antiquity and feudalism, in which numerous classes

existed. The two prominent classes under capitalism are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the class that lives primarily by selling its labour-power (labouring ability) for a wage. The bourgeoisie is the class that lives primarily by purchasing the labour-power of others and using this labour to operate the factories and businesses owned by the bourgeoisie (Marx, 1970).

Thus, generally, the proletariat consists of people who work for wages and the bourgeoisie consists of people who own businesses and hire employees. Very importantly, Karl Marx was aware that many members of the bourgeoisie also work; indeed, business owners often have interminable workdays and remain at the office longer than any single employee.

However, if an individual's economic position is premised on the ability to hire workers and run a business through the employees' labor, then this individual is a member of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, a member of the proletariat might supplement his or her income by taking in boarders, growing his or her own food, and so forth. If, however, an individual needs his or her wage to live, then the individual is a member of the proletariat (John, 1989).

According to him, under capitalism, the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. This is the case because both classes are rational. Both pursue what is in their respective interests. Consequently, the bourgeoisie and proletariat clash over the price of wage labour. It is in the interest of the bourgeoisie to lower the price of labour, whereas it is in the interest of the proletariat to raise it. Neither class can afford to abandon its interests, according to Karl Marx. For example, if a capitalist pays a higher wage than that paid by rival capitalists, the generous capitalist will be unable to compete with his or her peers and will be ruined. Thus, the rational capitalist will pay subsistence wages to the employees.

Subsistence wages are defined by Karl Marx as the lowest possible wage for inducing a sufficient number of capable workers to fill job openings. That is, the rational capitalist will pay only so much as he or she must in order to recruit qualified workers to come into the business and do the jobs. All capitalists will be motivated to compete successfully with their peers, so each will be inclined to pay subsistence-level wages. For the proletariat, of course, this means that every possible employer is operating according to an identical logic, one that is not exactly favourable to the proletariat (Hobden & Wyn Jones, 2004).

In addition, Karl Marx emphasized that the state plays an important role in preventing the conflict between the classes from erupting into daily

riots and rebellions. If workers rise up and attempt to take over a factory and demand higher wages, the state's law enforcement officers will suppress their rebellion. The state's judicial officers will prosecute, and the state's legislative officials may even respond by writing new laws to prevent future rebellions.

In short, the state will work to prevent class conflict by enforcing law and order, which, under capitalism, indirectly supports the bourgeoisie's continued pursuit of profit through the payment of subsistence wages to workers. Logically, Karl Marx points out, one can see that the class that benefits most from the status quo also gains most from the state's protection of the status quo (Hobden & Wyn Jones, 2004).

For Karl Marx, however, capitalism is an entire social system. It involves more than states, wages, and profits. Capitalism also includes certain ways of thinking about the world and psychologically responding to it. For example, he believed that life under capitalism became an emotional ordeal for many proletarians/workers. Alienation is a term he used to describe the emotional, cognitive, and psychological damage done to the proletariat by capitalism. Alienation means loss. According to Karl Marx, workers are vulnerable to different kinds of alienation (Jon, 1985).

One type of alienation is alienation from the self. A worker alienated from his or her self has lost a sense of self-awareness and identity. Such a worker may go through the workday "on automatic pilot," barely aware of him- or herself as an individual with a mind, with thoughts, with a history, with feelings. Workers such as this live through the day, but they do not experience the day any more than the machines in the factories experience it.

Proletarians are also likely to suffer alienation from the work process, from other workers, and society, according to Karl Marx. The creative, productive, and collaborative dimensions of working and living are lost to the proletarian, who has become almost as lifeless as the tools he or she uses. Not only has life become joyless, but the alienated worker does not even know any more that it is not supposed to be this way. He actively fought for its implementation, arguing that the working class should carry out organised revolutionary action to topple capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation (David, 1979).

### **3.4 Critique of Karl Marx Work**

On the present political trends especially when one looks at the status of the Third world countries economic structures in the international system and their stagnant developmental projects which as a result of the growing integration of national economies, a growing awareness of ecological

interdependence, the proliferation of Multi-national corporations, social movements and intergovernmental agencies operating on a global scale pointed to as typifying globalization that Karl Marx tried to highlight in terms of struggles and counter-struggles to control economic resources that capitalism engineered. That was why when Karl Marx wrote his books, he was clearly aware not only of the global scope of capitalism but also of its potential for social transformation. As Karl Marx insisted that the only way to discover how significant contemporary developments really are, is to view them in the context of the deeper structural processes at work regarding the economy.

On the other hand, the Marxist approach, while gives importance to the economic factors and issues about developing countries it has its own weaknesses. First of all, its belief that the state is controlled only by the economically dominant class and is an instrument in their hand has not stood the test of time. Many Marxists themselves now view state to be relatively autonomous, partially removed from the immediate control of capital and its vested interests. This alone can explain the persistence of important structural variations between different national formations. The state cannot be simply conceived as a servant of capital. Particularly in developing societies state plays a major role in directing and regulating economic development.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Who is Karl Marx?
- ii. Identify the strands of Marxism.
- iii. Analyse capitalism as seen by Karl Marx.
- iv. Critically examine Karl Marx Marxian approach.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Many intellectuals, labour unions, artists and political parties worldwide have been influenced by Marx's work, with many modifying or adapting his ideas. Karl Marx is typically cited as one of the principal architects of modern social science today which attested to his claim of being the socialist scientist.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Karl Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His work in political science, sociology and economics laid the basis for much of the current understanding of political struggles, labour and its relation to capital, and subsequent economic thought.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who is Karl Marx?
2. Identify the strands of Marxism.
3. Analyse capitalism as seen by Karl Marx.
4. Critically examine Karl Marx Marxian approach.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 3      THE EMPIRICAL POLITICAL THINKERS**

In this Module, provisions are made for students to rich knowledge on the work of political thinkers from the medieval era to the 19th century who offered their immense contribution to the development of political thought. The first unit discusses John Locke work on social contract theory which captured the biography of John Locke and his political philosophy, the concept of human and state of nature, the social contract (need for civil society), nature of political authority and consent, evaluation and criticism levelled against Locke social contract theory. The second unit discusses the biography of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), his political philosophy, Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man, Hobbes' social contract and absolute government and criticism levelled against his philosophy. The third unit elaborates on the biography of Jeremy Bentham, his analysis on human nature, his moral and political philosophy, his perception on Law, Liberty and Government, his views on rights and humanist stance. The fourth unit borders on the biography of Edmund Burke, his critical views on natural rights & contracts, his philosophical and historical writings. The fifth unit elaborates on the biography of Karl Heinrich Marx and what lead to the postulations of Marxism, his analysis of capitalism and divergent opinion regarding Karl Marx philosophy.

Unit 1	John Locke
Unit 2	Thomas Hobbes
Unit 3	Jeremy Bentham
Unit 4	Edmund Burke
Unit 5	Karl Marx

### **UNIT 1      JOHN LOCKE**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of John Locke
  - 3.2 Locke Political Philosophy
  - 3.3 Concept of Human and State of Nature
  - 3.4 Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)
  - 3.5 Nature of Political Authority and Consent
  - 3.6 Evaluation of Locke's Theory
  - 3.7 Criticism against Locke Social Contract Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary

- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Scholarly discussion in this unit bordered on the work of John Locke who emphasised that sovereignty belongs to the community and people and Locke supported limited monarchy or constitutional monarchy. Locke's state exists for the people who form it. They do not exist for the state. The state is based on the consent of the people. It is a constitutional state where there is a rule of law. It is limited and not absolute. The dissolution of the government does not mean the dissolution of civil society. It is a tolerant state. It tolerates differences of opinion. It is a negative state which does not interfere in the lives of the people. It transforms selfish interest into the public good.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of John Locke and his political philosophy
- explain the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke
- examine Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)
- discuss the nature of political authority and consent
- highlight criticisms against Locke Social Contract Theory.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Biography of John Locke**

According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2011). John Locke was born in Somerest village in England in the year 1632. His parents came from Puritan trading and land owning families and were sympathetic to the Parliamentarians and the Whigs during the civil war. Locke went to Westminster School in 1647 and then enrolled himself in Christchurch College as a student in 1652 for 15 years till 1667. He continued to retain his links with Christchurch, until 1684.

After graduation, Locke developed an interest in medicine. He completed MA in 1658, became a lecturer in Greek in 1661, and a lecturer in Rhetoric in 1663. In 1664, he became a censor of any moral philosophy. He also learnt under Boyle, Thomas, Lower, Wills, and Sydenham. From then, Locke learnt a lot, including the important fact that for discovering the secrets of nature, sustained and discipline observation coupled with humility and hard work.

Mukherjee and Ramaswamy went on to say that, Locke's first works were written at Oxford, namely the two treatises on government in 1660-1662, and the essays on the law of nature in Latin in 1664. In both these writings, he argued against religious toleration and denied consent as the basis of legitimate government. As a political theorist and an English philosopher, Locke through his employment with the earl of Shaftsbury became involved in Whig politics and the opposition of James II of England. Locke's opposition to James forced him into exile in Holland where he wrote the two treatises of the civil government.

Locke wrote as many as 35 books touching all walks of life. His whole philosophy is based on the ideas which he expressed in essays concerning Human understanding. His last publication, however, was "Fundamental Constitution, Concerning California" which was brought out two years after his death. His important works are: (i) His letters on Toleration (1689, 1690, 1692 and 1702). (ii) Treatise on Government (iii) Essays Concerning California (1706).

Throughout his political career, Locke basically differed from the political idea of Hobbes. He could not be convinced that men had no ability and that they should be always be ruled and subjected to a superior authority. He was convinced about the abilities and capacities of the people. His theory of social contract was essentially based on the basic idea. He also believed that man always enjoyed natural rights and the state had no justification to snatch them from the people otherwise the basic idea of creating a commonwealth was bound to be defeated. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of absolute monarchy. In fact, he believed that a society bound by common bonds of mutual understanding was bound to raise and prosper. Absolute sovereignty was neither desirable nor practicable (Mukhi, 2010).

### **3.2 Locke Political Philosophy**

Locke deals with two contracts social and government. Social contract as the first contract leads to the formation of civil society and the government contract, on the other hand, leads to the establishment of the government. The social contract put an end to the primitive state of nature. Society is organized for protecting human life and safeguarding its property and freedom and man give up some of his to be ruled by a sovereign.

The second was a government contract when society in its corporate capacity established a government and selected a ruler and remove inconveniences or ill condition which necessitated the formation of the civil society or the state. The governmental contract was subordinated to

the first in as much as the government was only a fiduciary power to act for a certain end, and its authority was confined to securing those ends.

It was limited, moreover, to the condition that it was to be used in the exercise of the established known laws. If the government failed to secure the ends for which it was created and which it had agreed or did not exercise its authority according to the established known laws, the community might dismiss it and appoint another government in its place. Here Locke establishes the inherent right of the people to revolt against the authority of the monarch if he ever abuses the terms of the contract to which he is a party and ruled arbitrarily, ignoring the established known laws, made by the representatives of the people (Mahajan, 2012).

### **3.3 Concept of Human and State of Nature**

Locke considered human beings as decent fellows, far removed from quarrelsome, competitive and selfish creatures of Hobbes. Locke believed desire is the main string of all human, acts and a feeling of pleasure comes when desire is satisfied. The object of all human action is the acquisition of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Locke believed in the goodness of human nature. According to him, men are basically decent orderly and society –loving, capable of ruling themselves. They are rational and social. Rationality is a pervasive characteristic of man (Mahajan, 2012).

Locke believed that if all were given proper opportunities, they were bound to have equal mental development. According to him, it is mental and not physical development which always counts. He also believed that nature itself had blessed mankind with sparks of reason which motivates actions of people in their hour of darkness. In pre-state civil society, it was goodwill, mutual understanding and sense of co-operation which prevailed and governed their social relations (Mukhi, 2010).

According to Locke, he held man to be essentially rational and social-rational, in that they could live together by the law of nature which is reason, or which at least (though not imprinted on the mind) is knowable by reason, without the help of revelation in that they could live by the laws of nature without the imposition of rules by a sovereign (Kapur, 2016).

He stressed on the point that all human beings are born equal, if not physical then morally. Every individual has the right to life, liberty and property. The human beings enjoy these simply because they are human beings and not because of their strength, wealth or position. He stressed that these rights should be respected, but these are not enjoyed by the children because they have no developed mind (Mukhi, 2010).

For Locke, rights are a creation of law. To have a right is to benefit from others having duties. For one to have a right to life, he/she must be under a duty not to kill him/her and vice versa. Rights and duties go together, but rights are inferred from duties. Duties, in turn, are derived from the law, as it is the law that distributes the duties, which in turn shape our rights. These duties follow from the first law of nature, which requires that we both preserve our self and all others, as long as so doing will not conflict with our self-preservation. Self-preservation, for Locke, is not merely an empirical generalisation from people's fear of violent death (Kelly, 2011).

While the state of nature of Hobbes was both pre-social and pre-political, that Locke was only pre-political. According to Locke people lived in a society in the state of nature. They were social and had right and liberties. The state of nature was not one of universal war but one of inconvenience. The reason was that there was the standing want of an established and known law. The law of nature was given an individual interpretation by every individual. There was a lack of a "known and indifferent judge" who could give an authoritative interpretation of the law of nature. Life was inconvenient because each individual had to interpret the law of nature for himself and had also to enforce it without the help of any other authority (Mahajan, 2012).

In his view, it is not a state of constant warfare; on the contrary, it is a state of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and preservation. It is a state of liberty, not a state of hence. But in the absence of any established authority in the state of nature. It becomes very difficult to deal with such offenders and man becomes judges of their own cases. In order to rectify this defect, man abandoned the state of nature and enter into civil or political society by means of a contract (Gaubu, 2005).

Locke observed that when men enter into political society, they surrender their rights to be judges in case of branches of law. This power is now vested in the community instead of in individuals. But they still retain their natural rights to life, liberty and property. Such a state of nature in which men enjoyed rights and acknowledged their duties was both moral and social not obeying the law of nature (Kapur, 2016).

### **3.4 Social Contract (Need for Civil Society)**

As Kapur (2016) pointed out that, unfortunately, peace was not secure in the state of nature. It was constantly inspected by the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men. This ill condition, Locke said, was due to three important wants which remained unsatisfied in the state of nature:

- 1) The want of an established, settled known law.

2) The want of a known and indifferent judge.

3) The want of an executing power to enforce just decision

In order to escape from all this and to gain certainty and security men made a contract to enter into civil society or the state.

This contract was of all with all and Locke named it a social contract. The social contract put an end to the state of nature and substituted it with civil society or the state. Each individual contracted with each to give up some of the rights he possessed in the state of nature. All he agreed to was to give up his single power of punishing to be exercised by such (authority) alone as shall be appointed to it amongst them. The social contract was accordingly no more than a transfer of certain rights and powers so that man's remaining rights would be protected and preserved. In this way, Locke recognized and established the sovereignty of the people, and that the state existed for the people who formed it: they did not exist for it.

According to Agarwal (2008), social contract put the primitive state to an end. In the words of John Locke, "the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law which teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions."

Thus, "Locke's state of nature with its sequence of recognised rights, is already a political society". Society is organised for protecting human life and safeguarding his property and freedom. Man has authorised and given up not all of his rights to society but only the rights of health, liberty or possession. Anybody who disobeys is liable to be punished by the society. Society transfer some of his to a selected few persons who form the government such type of government is established through a government contract. The ruler and the people entered into this contract.

### **3.5 Nature of Political Authority and Consent**

Political authority for Locke was not mere power, but power with a right. A right could only originate from an already existing right, and because an individual had no right to give away their duty to preserve themselves, they could not therefore morally or logically grant rightful power to absolute authority. Locke viewed absolute political power as illegitimate. The compulsion to constitute a civil society was to protect and preserve freedom and to enlarge it. The state of nature was one of the liberty equalities, but it was also one where peace was not secured being constantly upset by the "corruption and viciousness of degenerate men.

It lacked free important wants: The Want of an established, settled, known law; the wants of a known and indifferent judge; and the wants of

executive power to enforce just decisions. Through the state of nature, Locke tried to tell us the meaning and importance of authority, namely that human beings came together to ensure the observance of the laws of nature, to guarantee the greater possibility of impartiality, in the implementation and execution of rules that governed common life, and thereby increase the chance a peace that impartiality entailed.

Through a contract, individuals consented to submit to majority rules and organize themselves as a community or cool society they surrendered their powers partially, namely the three specific rights that constituted the natural right to enforce the law of nature. Once a city was established, the individuals established a government to act as a judge in the nature of a judiciary power of for promoting certain ends (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011).

The community's decision was by majority rule unless they specifically agreed to a number greater than the majority, which Locke realised would be more difficult to muster. Through the community appointed a legislature power. It continued to retain supreme power meaning that the people had the right to assess and evaluate the performance of the legislature. The legislature was the supreme power with a sacred duty to preserve the society. If the people found the performance unsatisfactory, they could take a step to change or alter the existing body.

Within the government, the legislative power was supreme it was the representative of the people, having the power to make laws. Besides the legislature there was an executive, usually are persons with the power to enforce the law. The executives, which include the judicial power had be separated. The third wing of the government was the federative power, the power to make treaties and conduct external relations. With Locke came the eclipse of the political and the identification of the political in a narrow sense with the government. Society became distinct from political arrangements and come to symbolize the whole gamut of human activities (Agarwal, 2008).

Locke thus advocated a limited sovereign state, for reason and experience established political absolutism as untenable. Describing the characteristics of a good state, Locke said it existed for the people who formed it, and not the vice versa. It had to be based on the consent of the people to the subject to the constitution and the rule of law. It would be limited since its powers were derived from the people and were held in trust. It was also limited by natural laws and individual rights.

Locke argued that the state dealt with matters strictly political in nature and had no warrant to interfere in domains strictly outside the political, nor could it demand more powers on the pretext of the public safety and

welfare. Locke categorically asserted that supreme power resided in the people as a community had the inalienable right to institute and dismiss a government. If a government was dismissed, this did not signify a return to the state of nature, as it was in the case of Hobbes theory.

Moreover, people choose to specify the powers of the government. Locke observed that people at any given time would not surrender all their powers to an outside body, including their own government. Once the government was instituted, it would be assessed periodically and its actions scrutinised meticulously (Cohen, 2001). Though people granted the legislative power to make law, they always retained a residual right to judge whether its performance was satisfactory and in accordance with the natural laws and take remedial steps if necessary.

The second treaties also tried to explain the basis of legitimate government and the reason why free individuals acquiesced to be subject to an external authority because free individuals expressed their consent willingly and voluntarily through a contract agreed freely to. As to why they agreed to enter into civil society and establish a government Locke explained it with reference to the state of nature.

For Locke, men were by nature free, politically equal creature of God subject to the laws of nature and possessors of executive power of the laws of nature, they became subjects of political authority only by their consent, without consent there was no political community. Locke spoke of how kinds of consent, express or direct, and tacit consent. Express consent was an explicit commitment given at the time when the commonwealth was instituted in case there was no provision for explicit consent, people's obligation could be judged by their tacit consent.

Express consent is straightforward and involves explicit agreements such as promises and oaths of allegiance but of course, not all individuals take such oaths. Locke then introduces the idea of tacit consent, this does not have to be given in a conscious agreement, and indeed it can be inferred from such familiar acts as enjoying the benefits of a political society or walking along the highway. All men have the opportunity to tacitly consent; therefore, the law of the land will be consistent with one's freedom (Kelly, 2011).

The obligation to obey the government would depend on the fact that public power was used for peace, safety and public good of the people. Moreover, individuals would not yield to the government more power than what they actually possess in the state of nature, which meant that there cannot be an absolute arbitrary power over their lives and fortunes which are as much possible to be preserved. There was a rational and limited agreement which assured obedience for the preservation and



enhancement of life, liberty and property. The validity of the contract would depend on the continuation of these benefits (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011).

Locke also asserted categorically that governments could be altered, amended, changed or dissolved legitimately and listed five occasions when this was possible. These are as follows:

Whenever such a prince or single person establish his own arbitrary will in place of laws.

When the prince hindered the legislature from assembling in its due time or from acting freely, pursuant to those ends for which it was constituted. When by the arbitrary power of the prince, the elections and the ways of elections were altered without the consent, and contrary to the common interest of the people.

The delivery of the people into the subjection of foreign power either by the prince or by the legislature.

The person who had the supreme executive power neglected laws already enacted, and could not be executed.

### **3.6 Evaluation of Locke's Theory**

The most distinctive of Locke to political theory is his doctrine of natural rights, life, liberty and property, he holds as inalienable rights to every individual. The end for which civil or political society is constituted is to secure these natural rights, and the attainment of these rights is possible through the agency of the government. Locke, accordingly, makes a clear distinction between the state and the government and introduces the theory of consent. According to Locke, the government holds power on condition of, and derives its authority from, the consent of the people whom he ultimately holds sovereign. He emphasises that the sovereignty of the state is not the sovereignty of the ruler and the will of the state may limit the will and action of the ruler. Government, for Locke, trust and authority of the government must be exercised for fulfilling the needs which necessitated the formation of the civil society. If the government fails to function properly and in accordance with the wishes of the people then, the community has the power to dissolve it and substitute another government in this place. The happiness and security of individuals is the end for which alone government is ever called into existence (Gaub, 2005).

Locke according to Maxey is among the few political thinkers whose work will never die. Locke was the first authoritarian and he was essentially an individualist. Sabine and Thorson (1937) say that "Locke's sincerity, his preformed moral conviction, his genuine belief in liberty and

in the dignity of human nature united with his moderation and good sense, made him the ideal spokesman of the middle-class revolution. As a force in propagating the ideas of liberal but non-violent reform.

Locke probably stands before all other writers whosoever. Even his more doubtful ideas such as separation of powers and the inevitable wisdom of majority decisions remained a part of the democratic creed.” Again, “The mark of his genius was neither learning nor logic but an incomparable common sense by which he gathered together the chief convictions, in philosophy, politics, morals and education, that the experience of the part had generated in the enlightened mind of his generation”.

### **3.7 Criticism against Locke Social Contract Theory**

Mahajan (2012) wrote that, according to Willoughby, the basic defect in writings of Locke is that he did not sufficiently distinguish between the communities as simply a social aggregate and as a political body and sovereignty in its true legal sense reside in the latter and the former. The view of the Barker is that Locke’s had no clear view of the nature and residence of sovereignty. He spoke of the supreme power of the people and yet he attributed supreme power to the legislature.

Sabine and Thorson (1937) say that “the greatest weakness of Locke’s philosophy in all its branches was that he never gets back to first principles. His commonsense saved him perhaps from many dialectical quibbles, but in the end, it meant that he looks much for granted an inadequate analysis and combined propositions that analysis showed to be incompatible.

Locke’s description of the state of nature is unreal and unhistorical. History does not give an example where the state of nature was the state of equality and freedom. He said that people have certain rights in the state of nature but in the absence of the state: they could not have any rights: Locke might emphasize on the physical aspect of the state and not its moral aspect. The view that the consent of the people forms the basis of the state is only practically true because the force has also played a decisive role in the origin and development of the state. Locke recognizes the force of political sovereignty but does not give adequate recognition to legal sovereignty.

The sovereignty of Locke is divisible. It is divided between the people and the king, but in fact it not so Locke tried to save the people from the tyranny of the state but overlook the fact that if the people revolted against the state, no punishment could be given to them. And while protecting the people from the tyranny of the state, he did not provide for the protection of the state. Even a minority of the people could denounce the laws of the

state on the pretext that they were against the natural law which could be gander to the state.

Critics maintain Locke's theory is ambiguous, confused and hindered. His explanation of human nature is unreal and one-sided because many are not always rational. The state of nature as depicted by him is so hazy. It is not clear whether it was pre-social or pre-political.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Give a vivid account of John Locke political philosophy.
- ii. Analyse the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke.
- iii. Dissect what Social Contract is all about.
- iv. Justify criticisms levelled against Locke Social Contract Theory.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

To sum up this unit, Locke's model consists of the civil state, built upon the natural rights common to a people who need and welcome an executive power to protect their property and liberties; the government exists for the people's benefit and can be replaced or overthrown if it ceases to function toward that primary end. Also, he links his abstract ideas to a deductive theory of unlimited personal property wholly protected from government intervention. The joining of ideas is consensual, limited government based upon natural human rights and dignity, and unlimited personal property, based on those same rights, makes the second treatise a perfectly constructed argument against absolutism and unjust governments. It appeals both to abstract moral nations and to a more grounded view of the self-interest that leads people to form societies and government.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In his treatise of government, John Locke discusses men's move from the state of nature characterised by perfect freedom and governed by reason to a civil government in which the authority is vested in a legislative and executive power. The major ideas developed includes human and state of nature, social contract, popular sovereignty and the consent of the governed, the protection and limitations of property, the problems inherent in an absolute monarchy, and the ability of a people to dissolve their government if it does not adhere to the bond of trust established between the governed and governor.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a vivid account of John Locke political philosophy.
2. Analyse the concept of human and state of nature as postulated by Locke.
3. Dissect what Social Contract is all about.
4. Justify criticisms levelled against Locke Social Contract Theory.

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## **UNIT 2      THOMAS HOBBS' SOCIAL CONTRACT AND ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)
  - 3.2 Hobbes Political Philosophy
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  - 3.4 Hobbes' Social Contract and Absolute Government
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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Thomas Hobbes's thesis of the necessity of an absolute sovereign put forward in *Leviathan*, rests upon the argument that the condition of anarchy is a condition of violent conflict. In Hobbes's view, human beings were naturally cruel, selfish, and greedy. In *Leviathan*, he wrote that people are driven by a restless desire for power. Without laws or other social controls, people would always be in conflict. In such a "state of nature," life would be "nasty, brutish and short." Therefore, governments according to Hobbes, were created to protect people from their own selfishness. Because people were selfish by nature, they could not be trusted to make decisions that were good for society as a whole. Only a government that has a ruler with absolute authority (preferably monarchy) could maintain an orderly society. This was not only rational but necessary in order to keep man from abusing privacy and property. This is what this unit discusses.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy
- explain Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man
- examine Hobbes' social contract and absolute government
- highlight criticisms levelled against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Biography: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

Hobbes was born in Westport, a parish of the town of Amesbury in Wiltshire, England. His mother came from a yeoman family; his father was a poorly educated vicar who seems to have left his parish in disgrace, deserting his family after having come to blows with another clergyman early in Hobbes' childhood. Hobbes' uncle subsequently supported the family, and it was he who paid for Hobbes' university education. Hobbes was lucky to receive good schooling locally, and he showed an early talent for the classical languages. In 1602 or 1603, Hobbes began his study towards an arts degree at Magdalen Hall, Oxford.

From his criticisms of the universities in his published writings, it is sometimes inferred that he disliked his college days, or at least that he disliked the scholasticism of Oxford at that time. (Scholasticism – the fusion of Christian with ancient Greek thought, especially the thought of Aristotle – dominated the curricula of the schools and universities of Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Certainly, he disliked the university curriculum in retrospect, as chapter 46 of *Leviathan* (1651) makes clear. Hobbes completed his degree in 1608 (Sorell, 1996).

In 1628 Hobbes chose history as the medium for a political message. Later, in writings like *Leviathan*, he thought science or philosophy was the better vehicle. In writing history, it is possible for the conventions of the genre to interfere with the communication of wisdom; in writing science, he came to believe, the communication of wisdom is assured if the audience is prepared to pay attention and able to follow a demonstration. He struggled throughout his intellectual life with the problem of combining political rhetoric with political science, and some of his best writings are experimental solutions to this problem. The translation of Thucydides is important as the first of many such experiments (Tuck, 1989).

Hobbes' first political treatise, *The Elements of Law* (1640), was not intended for publication but

was meant as a sort of long briefing paper that royalists in parliament could use to justify actions by the king. *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes attempted to derive from his now well-worked-out political principles the right relation of Church to state, was written at the end of the 1640s, when church government in England began to run on lines of which he approved and at a time when the influence of bishops in the English royal court-in-exile in Paris was, in Hobbes' eyes, too great.

In any case, the fact that the theory in the book vindicated Cromwell's policy on church government does not mean that it was a partisan work in favour of Cromwell, calculated to ease Hobbes' return to England. If that had been so, Hobbes would not have made a special presentation copy for the future Charles II. Instead, it seems that the doctrine in *Leviathan* favoured the concentration of all authority in any de facto sovereign power, whether republican or royal. To the Paris royalists, mostly strong Anglicans in favour of political powers for bishops, the new book was highly offensive (Sorell, 1996).

Among the figures who were conscious of developing a new science in the seventeenth century, the Englishman Hobbes stands out as an innovator in ethics, politics and psychology. He was active in several other fields, notably geometry, ballistics and optics, and seems to have shown considerable acumen as a theorist of light. His contemporaries, especially in Continental Europe, regarded him as a major intellectual figure. Yet he did not earn a living as a scientist or a writer on politics.

The behaviour required of the public in order to maintain a commonwealth is absolute submission to sovereign power. In practice, this means abiding by whatever a sovereign declares as law, even if those laws appear to be exacting. Law-abiding behaviour is required so long as, in return, subjects can reasonably expect effective action from the sovereign to secure their safety and wellbeing. With minor variations, this is the theme of all three of Hobbes' political treatises – *The Elements of Law*, *De cive* and *Leviathan* (Skinner, 1996).

### 3.2 Hobbes Political Philosophy

Hobbes was one of the social contract theorists that explained the nature of public power as a special kind of institution. His theory of the state deserves careful consideration since it is one of the modern political theories. However, his political theory is set to achieve at least two purposes. One is to explain the origin of the state, and the other is to justify absolute and unlimited power of the government (Held, 1984).

Hobbes uses the state of nature as a device for demonstrating the necessity of political society. By defining the state of nature, Hobbes concluded that human beings cannot live together in peace or avoid civil conflict without government intervention. He believed that without government, everyone is selfish, or living in the state of nature.

Furthermore, by showing that the pre-political condition is an intolerable state of permanent conflict, he hopes to demonstrate the necessity of a specific kind of political society, namely that which is governed by an undivided and absolute sovereign. He argues that the worst that can

happen to man is a reversal to the state of nature, which is essentially what happens when society gets torn apart by civil war – a situation that Hobbes himself witnessed in his lifetime. A sovereign with absolute power, he claims, is the best security against this ever happening. Whatever evils such unlimited power itself might bring, it is a necessary risk because the evils arising from the lack of such power are far greater (Rawls, 1971).

Hobbes believed in absolutism but his idea of absolutism was different from what was commonly believed. He did not believe that the ruler's power was derived from God. Hobbes believed in the commonwealth system. This is a system like absolutism, in which there is one absolute ruler. The ruler does not get his power from God, but he gets it more from the people (Partel, 2006).

Hobbes' political philosophy, however, is viewed by some scholars as liberal and some as non-liberal. It is said to be liberal on one hand because he derives or explains the existence of society and the state by reference to "free and equal" individuals. He uncovered the best circumstances for human nature, which he sees as naturally selfish, egoistic and self-interested. Also, he emphasizes the importance of consent in the making of a contract or bargain, not only to regulate human affairs and secure a measure of independence and choice in society but also to legitimise, such regulation.

Yet, on the other hand, Hobbes' position is said to be non-liberal since his political conclusions emphasize the necessity of a practically all-powerful state to create laws and secure the conditions of social and political life (Held, 1984). This paper is, therefore, an attempt to assess the views of Thomas Hobbes regarding absolutism and the state in his famous work *Leviathan*.

**Absolutism:** It is a political doctrine and practice of unlimited, centralised authority and absolute sovereignty, vested especially in a monarch or dictator. The essence of an absolute system is that the ruling power is not subject to regularised challenge or check by any other agency, be it judicial, legislative, religious, economic, or electoral. King Louis XIV (1643-1715) of France furnished the most familiar assertion of absolutism when he said: "L'etat, c'est moi" ("I am the state). Absolutism has existed in various forms in all parts of the world, including in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)).

**State:** A state is a political unit that has ultimate sovereignty-that is, a political unit that has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of its own affairs, (Shively, 2008). While Johari (2006) puts it that "in political theory, a state has technical expression implying a human association



having four essential elements-population, territory, government and sovereignty”.

**Leviathan:** *Leviathan* is a word derived from the Hebrew for “sea monster” and the name of a monstrous sea creature appearing in the Bible. It is the famous work of Thomas Hobbes which is concerned with the structure of society and legitimate government and is regarded as one of the earliest and most influential examples of social contract theory. *Leviathan* ranks as a classic western work on statecraft comparable to Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and argues for a social contract and rule by an absolute sovereign.

### 3.3 Hobbes’ State of Nature and Nature of Man

Hobbes begins his political theory from the description of human nature in the state of nature. Having been influenced by Galileo whose scientific principles indicates that mechanical laws are determined and that everything within the universe is in motion; these thus, influenced his analysis of man’s nature. Hobbes holds that appetite and aversion are parts of men’s abnormal nature, which cause each man to seek his own goal, his self- preservation in whatever he engages in and these goals are determined by the will, appetite, and aversion (Hobbes, 1651).

Hobbes contends that happiness or felicity consists in continual progress of the desire from one object to another and since this is so, what men seek constantly is some means of securing the way to their future desires. Men seek not only to procure but also to be ensured of a contented life for themselves. He, therefore, expressed it thus “in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death” (Strauss & Cropsey, 1987).

Man, according to Hobbes seeks power for security and self-preservation and men are bound to conflict since they are individualistic in their selfish quests to acquire more power and scarce material bounties of nature than others. Hobbes says that while “men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such a way is of every man against every man. In this state of war, all men are each other’s enemy, and the ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice do not apply, because there is no governing body”.

Hence, men go to war because of their desire for power. Two men want something, which they cannot both have, Hobbes maintained, they become enemies and endeavour to subdue and destroy one another. Given this, Hobbes identified three great natural causes of quarrels among men in the state of nature. These are competition, distrust and glory. These

make the state really a state of war “and such a war, as is of every man, against every man” (Macpherson, 1968).

Furthermore, the state of nature was characterized with injustice there is no appeal to justice and nothing there can be unjust since the concept of justice and injustice can only be meaningful within a society and when there is a common power. The absence of a common power, therefore, implies the absence of law; and where there is no law, there is no injustice.

The two cardinal virtues, according to Hobbes, are “force” and “fraud”, deceit and falsehood are also among the virtues recognised in the state of nature. Hobbes having held unto Thrasymachian model of the positivist theory of justice insisted that justice is what the ruler shall determine it to be and in the pre-social state there is no ruler. So also, in the natural state according to Hobbes, “there is no property, no dominion, no mine and thine; but only that to be everyman’s that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it” (Molesworth, 1962).

The picture of man as portrayed by Hobbes depicts him as a being that is only being governed by instincts, drives by passions, egoistic and self-centred, thus, he is always in the state of conflict with his fellows. Now, looking at the other side in the state of nature, man is said to be a rational being and therefore can reason and this is what distinguishes him from other animals.

His passion and reasoning ability in the natural state was the only thing he possesses that can make him get out of the bad condition, the departures which will be a lasting benefit to everyone. Hobbes finds it convenient to ascribe the ability of reason to men while in fact in his human nature; he says that man is an animal guided by passions “The passion that inclines men to peace, are fear of death; the desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement” (Molesworth, 1962).

Hobbes defines the law of nature as a “general rule found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life...”. An essential component of Hobbes theory of human nature is his belief in human equality. The ability to reason and problem solve is determined by the 3 laws of nature: 1) To pursue peace, 2) to achieve peace, and 3) to keep one’s agreements. Basically, these laws of nature say that we should not treat others how we would not like to be treated ourselves. However, these laws are unenforceable constraints, and man will only keep them “when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely”.

Unfortunately, the laws of nature run contrary to man's nature, and without a strong power, men will not reliably choose to follow them. Hobbes says that "in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel: firstly competition, secondly dependence, and thirdly glory". And he then lists primary aims to be gain, safety and reputation. Therefore, "men are continually in competition for honour, and dignity and consequently amongst men there ariseth, on that ground, envy and hatred and finally war" (Hobbes, 1651).

According to Hobbes, the only way to achieve this is for everyone to submit their power to the sovereign authority. When everyone mutually submits their power to a sovereign, they are promising their obedience in exchange for protection- and only when the government fails to protect the people is when their political obligation ends. It is to be noted that Hobbes does not establish that an actual state of nature ever existed. He used the notion as a philosophical premise for his formulations.

### **3.4 Hobbes' Social Contract and Absolute Government**

Hobbes is a renowned social contract theorist not only because of the efficacy of his thought but because of the civil war in the 1640s. He was of the view that the state should be seen as a contract between a group of people to guarantee their mutual security and prosperity. The natural condition of man (state of nature) was a severely unpleasant one. In such condition, there was neither wrong nor right, justice nor injustice.

Therefore, the state came about in a form of contact between the individual on one hand and the government on the other hand to improve this condition. For selfish reasons, the individual decided to give up some of his individual liberties in exchange for the protection offered by the state (Appadorai, 2006). The transitional stage from the Hobbesian state of nature to the emergence of an all-powerful Leviathan or commonwealth is what is known as the social contract. And it is from this transfer of power and rights of the individual by consent to a Leviathan that political power evolves.

Although, according to Hobbes the requisite sovereign power might come into existence in either of two ways: by some man or body or men conquering and subduing the inhabitants (Sovereignty by acquisition) or by men agreeing by consent with each other to transfer all their natural powers to some man or body of men (Sovereignty by institution) (Macpherson, 1968).

Hobbes cites the covenant in the following words: "I authorise and give up my right of governing myself, to the man or to this assembly of men, on this condition that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his

actions in the like manner”. According to Hobbes, the fear of death leads men to seek peace. Through reason, it is discovered that peace would be secured by each man adhering to the principle of not doing to another what he would not wish others to do to him.

Hobbes notes, however, that man’s desire for power and glory may tempt him to break his pledge. A superior authority is therefore needed to restrain men. Through a social contract entered into by all, power is transferred to an absolute authority. Its central duty and major justification is to ensure peace and security. The sovereign is to be obeyed without complaint since he is not a party to the contract but its product. However, in the event that the absolute sovereign fails to maintain order and peace, the people reserve the right to change the system of government (Francis, 2008).

Hobbes explains that individuals in the state of nature are in a state of war and so see the need to escape that turbulent state by forming some kind of central power or government. They decide to “confer all their power and strength upon one man or upon one assembly” and so make that person or group the authority to act for each person of the society.

However, this agreement need not be unanimous but only a majority decision. If some refuse to consent to the contract, they would be destroyed since they would then be in a state of nature concerning the others. This agreement creates a “sovereign,” a common political power, and what Hobbes calls a “commonwealth” which he also calls the “leviathan.” A sovereign created by agreement Hobbes calls sovereignty by “institution”.

However, a sovereign can also be created by conquest where one commonwealth overpowers another. For Hobbes, a contract is nothing without the power of enforcement or “covenants without the sword are but words. Words cannot keep a contract effective but two ways are effective, the fear of the consequences of breaking the contract and the “glory” of not breaking it or needing to break it. Hence, the sovereign must have all the necessary power to enforce the contract and the people keep their contract strictly out of fear of punishment and death (Molesworth, 1966).

The *Leviathan’s* creation through covenant is voluntary, rational and necessary. Hobbes believes because it is the only way to guarantee man’s peace and security and the only way to escape the dreaded state of nature. Hobbes outlines three types of possible sovereigns based on how many individuals rule. Monarchy is a rule by one, aristocracy is a rule by several and democracy is the rule of many or all. Continuing along this line,

Hobbes decides that the most powerful government is the best, which can keep peace and prevent the state of war of all against all.

Hobbes argues in chapter 19 of *Leviathan* that he prefers the monarchical form of rule with an unlimited right, for the following reasons:

- i. The monarch's interests are the same as the people.
- ii. The monarch receives better advice and counsel since he maintains experts and receives secret advice.
- iii. The monarch is more consistent than democracy because he possesses one mind.
- iv. Civil war is less likely because the monarch cannot disagree with himself.
- v. Monarchy is more stable because the monarch can set up arrangements for the succession of power.

Hobbes also argued that the sovereign cannot be divided into different powers as some political philosophers such as Aristotle had suggested. A division into the judiciary, legislative and executive power was impossible for Hobbes since, for Hobbes, any dispute between them requires a supreme power to resolve hence wherever the power resided had the real power and was the sovereign. The logic of Hobbes' theory clearly entails that the individual has no inalienable rights, except the right to self-preservation, while the sovereign has the right to tax and take any and all goods of the people, make laws, appoint judges, make war and peace, reward and punish, or, in other words, do anything at all.

The law is simply the will or whim of the sovereign nor is the sovereign subject to it nor can the sovereign be punished in any way. In short, the sovereign Hobbes describes is that of a totalitarian form of government where political power is absolute and wields total power. In a commonwealth, liberty of the subjects only exists as allowed by the sovereign. Law is a command of the sovereign but the sovereign is not himself subject to the law. Where the sovereign has made no law, the subjects are free to do as they will (Molesworth, 1966).

The sovereign according to Hobbes has twelve principal rights:

Because a successive covenant cannot override a prior one, the subjects cannot (lawfully) change the form of government. Because the covenant forming the commonwealth results from subjects giving to the sovereign the right to act for them, the sovereign cannot possibly breach the covenant; and therefore, the subjects can never argue to be freed from the covenant because of the actions of the sovereign. The sovereign exists because the majority has consented to his rule; the minority have agreed to abide by this arrangement and must then assent to the sovereign's

actions. Every subject is author of the acts of the sovereign: hence the sovereign cannot injure any of his subjects and cannot be accused of injustice.

Following this, the sovereign cannot justly be put to death by the subjects.

Because the purpose of the commonwealth is peace, and the sovereign has the right to do whatever he thinks necessary for the preserving of peace and security and prevention of discord. Therefore, the sovereign may judge what opinions and doctrines are averse, who shall be allowed to speak to multitudes, and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they are published.

To prescribe the rules of civil war and property.

To be a judge in all cases.

To make war and peace as he sees fit and to command the army.

To choose counsellors, ministers, magistrates and officers.

To reward the rich and honour or to punish with corporal or pecuniary punishment or ignominy.

To establish laws about honour and a scale of worth.

As for aristocracy or democracy, Hobbes holds that since there is by definition no common power above them, the individuals will be in a state of nature with respect to each other and so be unable to keep the peace in the community. Given his understanding of human nature, a plural sovereign of the aristocracy will self-destruct due to the endless desire for more power on the part of each member. And given that there is no universally binding moral system, no appeal to common values is also possible. The same problems apply to democracies as well in which in addition, there will also be more corruption because it is easier to conceal these activities in governments where many are involved (Molesworth, 1966).

Total and absolute obedience is expected of the subjects after the social contract. Hence there is no right to dissent; the minority must join the majority's opinion. Resistance to the sovereign authority by a citizen is illogical to Hobbes. In the first instance, it would amount to resistance to himself and secondly to resist is to revert to independent judgment, which is the experience in the state of nature. Therefore, the power of the sovereign according to Hobbes must be absolute in order to secure the conditions of the order, peace and law which are the major aim of instituting the commonwealth.

### 3.5 Criticism Levelled against the Hobbes

Shortly after Hobbes writings appeared, theologically-minded critics attacked Hobbes for eliminating God role in mandating morality and establishing political authority. Accusations of atheism and irreligion were common and severe. Many critics have noted that Hobbes' contract merely recreates a state of nature at another level, that between the sovereign and the people, thus putting the populace in an even worse condition than before. Given Hobbes' description of the state of nature, the only reason people have to obey their contracts is the fear of punishment. Hobbes' contract is also in conflict with his idea of natural law. Natural law, as understood by Hobbes, are norms of self-preservation and the promotion of rational self-interest.

To make a contract as Hobbes describes wherein the sovereign is not a party to the contract and is in fact not, limited in any way, places the society and the individual in a state of nature and hence a state of war with respect to the sovereign, would be contrary to self-preservation since the sovereign has greater power than any individual in the state of nature. Consequently, the relationship that fundamentally undetermined would be unpredictable and consequently unreliable in protecting one's life (Sorell, 1996).

Many commentators believe that by placing all faith in the sovereign to enforce the social contract, Hobbes' theory fails to reach the standard of ultimate and convincing proof in a strictly legal sense. Hobbes' main weakness is that he is never able to explain why one should not break the social contract and disobey the sovereign, which seems to be little more than a moral responsibility (Brown, 1996).

Again, Hobbes did not believe that there was an actual point in history when people got together and signed a social contract. So, if the social contract is not a specific historical agreement, then a series of questions are raised about what kind of agreement it actually is, and how it forms the basis of morality and governance? (Partel, 2006).

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give a brief account of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy.
- ii. Dissect Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man.
- iii. Linked Hobbes' social contract and absolute government to today most nation-state.
- iv Construct a valid criticism against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In spite of the harsh criticism against Hobbes theory, the general notion of the social contract captured the imagination of philosophers after him, and for nearly two centuries, social contract theory was a dominant theme among political philosophers. He was one of the first thinkers to apply the tools of the Scientific Revolution to problems of politics. His philosophy may sound harsh, but he believed it was based on objective observation and sound reasoning.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The key point for Hobbes is that the authority of the state is justified; this is because the citizens have consented or agreed to accept the authority. In virtue of this agreement, citizens are therefore bound to obey. The sovereign's right of command and the subject's duty of obedience is the result of consent. Although, there are some things about Hobbes' conception of state which today we would find useful, yet his position is in support of those who argue for the importance of government by consent and reject the claims of the "divine right of kings" and more generally, the authority of tradition.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief account of Thomas Hobbes and his political philosophy.
2. Dissect Hobbes' state of nature and nature of man.
3. Linked Hobbes' social contract and absolute government to today most nation-state.
4. Construct a valid criticism against Hobbes views on the state of nature and nature of man.

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## **UNIT 3      JEREMY BENTHAM**

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  - 3.4 Bentham's Political Philosophy
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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Jeremy Bentham, a leading theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law and one of the founders of utilitarianism. The Industrial Revolution with the massive economic and social shifts that it brought in its wake, the rise of the middle class, and revolutions in France and America all were reflected in Bentham's reflections on existing institutions and how it shapes his focus on the philosophy of life and politics.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss about Jeremy Bentham and his focus on human nature
- examine Bentham's moral and political philosophy
- analyse Bentham's perception of law, liberty, government and rights
- expantiate more on Bentham's humanist stance in the field of philosophy.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Biography of Jeremy Bentham**

Jeremy Bentham was born in Houndsditch, London on February 15, 1748. He was the son and grandson of attorneys, and his early family life was coloured by a mix of pious superstition (on his mother's side) and

Enlightenment rationalism (from his father). Bentham lived during a time of major social, political and economic change.

In 1760, Bentham entered Queen's College, Oxford and, upon graduation in 1764, studied law at Lincoln's Inn. Though qualified to practice law, he never did so. Instead, he devoted most of his life to writing on matters of legal reform though, curiously, he made little effort to publish much of what he wrote (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

While most of his best-known work deals with theoretical questions in law, Bentham was an active polemicist and was engaged for some time in developing projects that proposed various practical ideas for the reform of social institutions. Although his work came to have an important influence on political philosophy, Bentham did not write any single text giving the essential principles of his views on this topic. His most important theoretical work is the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in which much of his moral theory which he said reflected 'the greatest happiness principle' is described and developed (Manning, 1968).

By the late 1790s, Bentham's theoretical work came to have a more significant place in political reform. Still, his influence was, arguably, still greater on the continent. Bentham was made an honorary citizen of the fledgeling French Republic in 1792, and his *The Theory of Legislation* was published first, in French, by his Swiss disciple, Etienne Dumont, in 1802 (Harrison, 1983).

The impact of Bentham's ideas goes further still as contemporary philosophical and economic vocabulary for example, international, maximize, minimize, and codification is indebted to Bentham's proclivity for inventing terms, and among his other disciples were James Mill and his son, John who was responsible for an early edition of some of Bentham's manuscripts, as well as the legal theorist, John Austin (Harrison, 1983).

At his death in London, on June 6, 1832, Bentham left literally tens of thousands of manuscript pages some of which was work only sketched out, but all of which he hoped would be prepared for publication. He also left a large estate, which was used to finance the newly-established University College, London and his cadaver, *per* his instructions, was dissected, embalmed, dressed, and placed in a chair, and to this day resides in a cabinet in a corridor of the main building of University College. The Bentham Project, set up in the early 1960s at University College, has as its aim the publishing of a definitive, scholarly edition of Bentham's works and correspondence (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

### 3.2 Bentham on Human Nature

For Bentham, morals and legislation can be described scientifically, but such a description requires an account of human nature. Just as nature is explained through reference to the laws of physics, so human behaviour can be explained by reference to the two primary motives of Pleasure and Pain; this is the theory of psychological hedonism.

There is, Bentham admits, no direct proof of such an analysis of human motivation though he holds that it is clear that, in acting, all people implicitly refer to it. At the beginning of the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham writes:

*Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it* (Bentham, 1978: Ch. 1).

From this, we see that for Bentham, pleasure and pain serve not only as explanations for action, but they also define one's good. It is, in short, based on pleasures and pains, which can exist only in individuals, that Bentham thought one could construct a calculus of value. Related to this fundamental hedonism is a view of the individual as exhibiting a natural, rational self-interest a form of psychological egoism.

In his 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy' (1833), Mill cites Bentham's *The Book of Fallacies* (London: Hunt, 1824, pp. 392-3) that 'in every human breast... self-regarding interest is predominant over social interest; each person's own individual interest over the interests of all other persons taken together.' Fundamental to the nature and activity of individuals, then, is their own well-being, and reason as a natural capability of the person is considered to be subservient to this end (Iain, 1992).

Bentham believed that the nature of the human person can be adequately described without mention of social relationships. To begin with, the idea of 'relation' is but a 'fictitious entity,' though necessary for 'convenience of discourse'. And, more specifically, he remarks that 'the community is a fictitious body,' and it is but 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.'

Thus, the extension of the term 'individual' is, in the main, no greater and no less than the biological entity. Bentham's view, then, is that the

individual, the basic unit of the social sphere is an ‘atom’ and there is no ‘self’ or ‘individual’ greater than the human individual. A person’s relations with others even if important are not essential and describe nothing that is, strictly speaking, necessary to its being what it is (Bentham, 1978).

The picture of the human person presented by Bentham is based on psychological associationism indebted to David Hartley and Hume; Bentham’s analysis of ‘habit’ (which is essential to his understanding of society and especially political society) particularly reflects associationist’s presuppositions.

On this view, pleasure and pain are objective states and can be measured in terms of their intensity, duration, certainty, proximity, fecundity and purity. This allows both for an objective determination of an activity or state and for a comparison with others. Bentham’s understanding of human nature reveals, in short, a psychological, ontological, and also moral individualism were, to extend the critique of utilitarianism made by Graeme Duncan and John Gray (1979), ‘the individual human being is conceived as the source of values and as himself the supreme value’.

### 3.3 Bentham’s Moral Philosophy

As Elie Halévy (1904) notes, there are three principal characteristics of which constitute the basis of Bentham's moral and political philosophy: (i) the greatest happiness principle, (ii) universal egoism and (iii) the artificial identification of one’s interests with those of others. Though these characteristics are present throughout his work, they are particularly evident in the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, where Bentham is concerned with articulating rational principles that would provide a basis and guide for legal, social and moral reform (Iain, 1992).

To begin with, Bentham's moral philosophy reflects what he calls at different times the greatest happiness principle or the principle of utility a term which he borrows from Hume. In adverting to this principle, however, he was not referring to just the usefulness of things or actions, but to the extent to which these things or actions promote the general happiness.

Specifically, then, what is morally obligatory is that which produces the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people, happiness being determined by reference to the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain. Thus, Bentham writes:

By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.

And Bentham emphasises that this applies to 'every action whatsoever' (Bentham, 1978).

That which does not maximise the greatest happiness (such as an act of pure ascetic sacrifice) is, therefore, morally wrong. Unlike some of the previous attempts at articulating a universal hedonism, Bentham's approach is thoroughly naturalistic. Bentham's moral philosophy, then, clearly reflects his psychological view that the primary motivators in human beings are pleasure and pain.

Bentham admits that his version of the principle of utility is something that does not admit of direct proof, but he notes that this is not a problem as some explanatory principles do not admit of any such proof and all explanation must start somewhere. But this, by itself, does not explain why another's happiness or the general happiness should count. And, in fact, he provides a number of suggestions that could serve as answers to the question of why we should be concerned with the happiness of others (John and Paul, 2006).

First, Bentham says, the principle of utility is something to which individuals, in acting, refer either explicitly or implicitly, and this is something that can be ascertained and confirmed by simple observation. Indeed, Bentham held that all existing systems of morality can be reduced to the principles of sympathy and antipathy, which is precisely that which defines utility. A second argument found in Bentham is that, if pleasure is good, then it is good irrespective of whose pleasure it is.

Thus, a moral injunction to pursue or maximise pleasure has force independently of the specific interests of the person acting. Bentham also suggests that individuals would reasonably seek the general happiness simply because the interests of others are inextricably bound up with their own, though he recognised that this is easy for individuals to ignore. Nevertheless, Bentham envisages a solution to this as well. Specifically, he proposes that making this identification of interests obvious and, when necessary, bringing diverse interests together would be the responsibility of the legislator (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

Bentham held that there are advantages to a moral philosophy based on a principle of utility. To begin with, the principle of utility is clear (compared to other moral principles), allows for objective and

disinterested public discussion, and enables decisions to be made where there seem to be conflicts of (*prima facie*) legitimate interests. Moreover, in calculating the pleasures and pains involved in carrying out a course of action (the hedonic calculus) there is a fundamental commitment to human equality.

The principle of utility presupposes that “one man is worth just the same as another man” and so there is a guarantee that in calculating the greatest happiness “each person is to count for one and no one for more than one”. For Bentham, then, there is no inconsistency between the greatest happiness principle and his psychological hedonism and egoism. Thus, he writes that moral philosophy or ethics can be simply described as “the art of directing men's action to the production of the greatest possible quantity of happiness, on the part of those whose interest is in view” (John and Paul, 2006).

### 3.4 Bentham's Political Philosophy

Bentham was regarded as the central figure of a group of intellectuals called, by Elie Halévy (1904), “the philosophic radicals”, of which both Mill and Herbert Spencer can be counted among the “spiritual descendants”. While it would be too strong to claim that the ideas of the philosophic radicals reflected a common political theory, it is nevertheless correct to say that they agreed that many of the social problems of late eighteenth and early 19th century England were due to an antiquated legal system and to the control of the economy by a hereditary landed gentry opposed to modern capitalist institutions.

For Bentham, the principles that govern morals also govern politics and law, and political reform requires a clear understanding of human nature. While he develops several principles already present in Anglo-Saxon political philosophy, he breaks with that tradition in significant ways (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

In his earliest work, *A Fragment on Government* (1776), which is an excerpt from a longer work published only in 1928 as *Comment on Blackstone's Commentaries*, Bentham attacked the legal theory of Sir William Blackstone. Bentham's target was, primarily, Blackstone's defence of tradition in law. Bentham advocated the rational revision of the legal system, a restructuring of the process of determining responsibility and of punishment, and more extensive freedom of contract. This, he believed, would favour not only the development of the community but the personal development of the individual.

Bentham's attack on Blackstone targeted more than the latter's use of tradition, however. Against Blackstone and many earlier thinkers

(including Locke), Bentham repudiated many of the concepts underlying their political philosophies, such as natural right, state of nature, and the social contract. Bentham then attempted to outline positive alternatives to the preceding 'traditionalisms. Not only did he work to reform and restructure existing institutions, but he promoted broader suffrage and self (that is, representative) government (Bentham, 1978).

### 3.5 Bentham's Perception of Law, Liberty and Government

The notion of liberty present in Bentham's account is what is now generally referred to as 'negative' liberty, freedom from external restraint or compulsion. Bentham says that "liberty is the absence of restraint" and so, to the extent that one is not hindered by others, one has liberty and is 'free'. Bentham denies that liberty is natural (in the sense of existing before social life and thereby imposing limits on the state) or that there is an *a priori* sphere of liberty in which the individual is sovereign.

In fact, Bentham holds that people have always lived in society, and so there can be no state of nature (though he does distinguish between political society and natural society) and no social contract. Nevertheless, he does note that there is an important distinction between one's public and private life that has morally significant consequences, and he holds that liberty is good that, even though it is not something that is a fundamental value, it reflects the greatest happiness principle (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

Correlative with this account of liberty, Bentham (as Thomas Hobbes before him) viewed the law as negative. Given that pleasure and pain are fundamental to indeed, provide the standard of value for Bentham, liberty is a good (because it is pleasant) and the restriction of liberty is evil (because it is painful). Law, which is by its very nature a restriction of liberty and painful to those whose freedom is restricted, is a *prima facie* evil. It is only so far as control by the state is limited that the individual is free.

Law is, Bentham recognised, necessary to social order and good laws are clearly essential to good government. Indeed, perhaps more than Locke, Bentham saw the positive role to be played by law and government, particularly in achieving community well-being. To the extent that law advances and protects one's economic and personal goods and that what government exists is self-government, the law reflects the interests of the individual.

Unlike many earlier thinkers, Bentham held that law is not rooted in natural law but is simply a command expressing the will of the sovereign. (This account of law, later developed by Austin, is characteristic of legal



positivism.) Thus, a law that commands morally questionable or morally evil actions, or that is not based on consent, is still law (John and Paul, 2006).

### 3.6 Bentham Views on Rights

Bentham's views on rights are, perhaps, best known through the attacks on the concept of natural rights that appear throughout his work. These criticisms are specially developed in his *Anarchical Fallacies* (a polemical attack on the declarations of rights issued in France during the French Revolution), written between 1791 and 1795 but not published until 1816, in French. Bentham's criticisms here are rooted in his understanding of the nature of law. Rights are created by the law, and law is simply a command of the sovereign. The existence of law and rights, therefore, requires government.

Rights are also usually (though not necessarily) correlative with duties determined by the law and, as in Hobbes, are either those which the law explicitly gives us or those within a legal system where the law is silent. The view that there could be rights not based on sovereign command and which pre-exist the establishment of government is rejected (Eddy and Misra, 2008).

According to Bentham, then, the term 'natural right' is a perversion of language. It is ambiguous, sentimental and figurative and it has anarchical consequences. At best, such a right may tell us what we ought to do; it cannot serve as a legal restriction on what we can or cannot do. The term 'natural right' is ambiguous, Bentham says because it suggests that there are general rights that are, rights over no specific object so that one would have a claim on whatever one chooses.

The effect of exercising such a universal, natural right would be to extinguish the right altogether since what is every man's right is no man's right. No legal system could function with such a broad conception of rights. Thus, there cannot be any general rights in the sense suggested by the French declarations (John and Paul, 2006).

Moreover, the notion of natural rights is figurative. Properly speaking, there are no rights when related to government. The assumption of the existence of such rights, Bentham says, seems to be derived from the theory of the social contract. Here, individuals form a society and choose a government through the alienation of certain of their rights. But such a doctrine is not only unhistorical, according to Bentham, it also does not even serve as a useful fiction to explain the origin of political authority. Governments arise by habit or by force, and for contracts (and,

specifically, some original contract) to bind, there must already be a government in place to enforce them (Mack, 1962).

Consequently, the idea of a natural right is anarchical. Such a right, Bentham claims, entails freedom from all restraint and, in particular, from all legal restraint. Since a natural right would be anterior to law, it could not be limited by law, and (since human beings are motivated by self-interest) if everyone had such freedom, the result would be pure anarchy. To have a right in any meaningful sense entails that others cannot legitimately interfere with one's rights, and this implies that rights must be capable of enforcement. Such restriction, as noted earlier, is the province of the law (Hart, 1973).

Bentham concludes, therefore, that the term 'natural rights' is simple nonsense: natural and imprescriptible rights, rhetorical nonsense, nonsense upon stilts. What Bentham calls real rights are fundamentally legal rights. All rights must be legal and specific that is, having both a specific object and subject. They ought to be made because of their conduciveness to the general mass of felicity, and correlatively, when their abolition would be to the advantage of society, rights ought to be abolished. So far as rights exist in law, they are protected; outside of the law, they are at best reasons for wishing there were such things as rights. While Bentham's essays against natural rights are largely polemical, many of his objections continue to be influential in contemporary political philosophy (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Nevertheless, Bentham did not dismiss talk of rights altogether. Some services are essential to the happiness of human beings and that cannot be left to others to fulfil as they see fit, and so these individuals must be compelled, on pain of punishment, to fulfil them. They must, in other words, respect the rights of others. Thus, although Bentham was generally suspicious of the concept of rights, he does allow that the term is useful, and in such work as *A General View of a Complete Code of Laws*, he enumerates a large number of rights.

While the meaning he assigns to these rights is largely stipulative rather than descriptive, they clearly reflect principles defended throughout his work. There has been some debate over the extent to which the rights that Bentham defends are based on or reducible to duties or obligations, whether he can consistently maintain that such duties or obligations are based on the principle of utility and whether the existence of what Bentham calls 'permissive rights' rights one has where the law is silent is consistent with his general utilitarian view. This latter point has been discussed at length by Hart (1973) and David Lyons (1969).

### 3.7 Bentham Humanist Stance

As a humanist, Bentham pursued many goals which reflected his humanist views in many endeavours at his time. For instance, Bentham, inspired by the reforms proposals about education, formed a committee and drew up plans to establish a school in London patterned on the ideas suggested by Bell and Lancaster. Bell, training advanced students to teach younger school mates, hit upon an inexpensive method of education. This was the first practicable programme for extending education to the lowest classes and eventually abolishing illiteracy altogether.

Though the idea never concretized, it enthused Bentham to write his *Christomathia*, a minute compendium on education, covering everything from a pupil's diet to an encyclopaedic table embracing all knowledge. In 1825, James Mill established the society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge to distribute cheap or free utilitarian tracts (Eddy and Misra, 2008). Furthermore, Bentham championed humane treatment of slaves and animals, favouring the abolition of slavery. He was against capital punishment. In line with his conviction that happiness was the motive force in human behaviour and action, he sketched an Encyclopedical Tree as a master plan for all the arts and sciences in accordance with their contribution to human happiness.

He contributed towards evolving an international language, by classifying 17 properties that were desirable in a language. He also outlined the principles of universal grammar. He coined new words like *international*, *codify*, *maximize*, *minimize*, *rationale*, *demoralize*, *deontology*, *eulogistic* and *false consciousness*. Despite his dislike for Aristotle, he emphasized, like the ancient master, that mastery of language and the ability to use the right word were essential to serious thinking (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Bentham also suggested, "Dialogues with the Dead" for their educational and theatrical value. He prepared snippets of conversations that could take place between Socrates and himself on the subject of happiness; with Bacon on the philosophical developments of the past 2000 years; with Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717 – 1783) on the Encyclopaedical Tree; with Etienne Dumont and Montesquieu on the law as it ought to be; with Locke on the fiction of the original social contract; with Porphyry, Locke and Bishop Sanderson on logic; and with Euclid, Apollonius, Diophantus, Newton and La Place on mathematics.

He suggested that people should go to pilgrimages to shrines of saints and martyrs. He wanted religion, like political and legal institutions, to serve the public and promote Utilitarian ideals. Bentham was suspicious of secret diplomacy, having enormous faith in the efficacy of public opinion. In his *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace*, he opposed international

treatises, colonies and trade barriers to eliminate war. He was more optimistic than Kant about achieving lasting world peace and happiness if they were built on a personal basis by people rather than through the abrasive relations between governments (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

Bentham was against colonialism and argued that it was bad both for the colonizers and the colonies. He wanted England to create a “mass of happiness” by adopting the principle of self-government within the empire. In arguing on behalf of the colonial peoples, he was against the prevailing view in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries which differentiated between “they” (colonized) and “us” (colonisers). He became interested in the Indian Reform movement when James Mill became an official in the English East India Company (Subrata and Sushila, 2007).

He inspired Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India in 1827, to support and initiate reforms in India. In 1793, Bentham asked France and other European countries to liberate their colonies (Harrison, 1983). Bentham further emphasis supported Smith’s argument that “profits from colonies were at best illusory, given the expense of protecting them and the cost of the international conflict that they provoked”.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Discuss in brief Jeremy Bentham focus on human nature.
- ii. Elaborate more on Bentham’s moral and political philosophy.
- iii. What do you learn about Bentham’s perception of law, liberty, government and rights?
- iv. How does Bentham’s humanist stance impact humanity in the field of philosophy?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Bentham combined the economic and political arguments to challenge colonialism. His courage and determination to challenge the interests of his own country for the sake of the colonised were highly valued. His commitment was later converted into a “credo for colonial liberation” by the Americans and the French, who adopted it as a “discourse of universal rights”. Equality, liberty, the rights of man and national self-determination eventually enhanced “the justification and very foundation” of the anti-colonialism struggle. It was later endorsed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, shortly after World War II.

## 4.0 SUMMARY

This unit discusses the life and philosophical belief of Jeremy Bentham most outstandingly his humanist stance against the under-privileged such as slaves and others. Among his notable effort was the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, shortly after World War II by United Nations general assembly.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss in brief Jeremy Bentham focus on human nature.
2. Elaborate more on Bentham's moral and political philosophy.
3. What do you learn about Bentham's perception of law, liberty, government and rights?
4. How does Bentham's humanist stance impact humanity in the field of philosophy?

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## UNIT 4 EDMUND BURKE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Edmund Burke
  - 3.2 Burke Critical Views on Natural Rights and Contracts
  - 3.3 Burke Philosophical and Historical Writings
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Edmund Burke, author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, is known in the philosophical world as a classic political thinker. It is well known that his intellectual achievement depended upon his understanding of philosophy and use of it in the practical writings and speeches by which he is clearly known. This unit explores the character and significance of the use of philosophy in Burke's political thought.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- 1. examine Edmund Burke life and works
- 2. discuss Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts
- 3. analyse Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Biography of Edmund Burke

Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, Ireland in January 1729, the son of a prosperous attorney, and, after early education at home, became a boarder at the school run by Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, at Ballitore in County Kildare. Burke received his university education at Trinity College, Dublin, a bastion of the Anglican Church of Ireland.

Then he proceeded to the Middle Temple at London, to qualify for the Bar, but the legal practice was less attractive to him than the broader perspective which had captured his attention at university. It was first as a writer, and then as a public figure that he made his career. Burke's

intellectual formation did not suggest that his career would be purely philosophical. Burke married in 1756 and had a son by 1758.

He was a political conservative, it is said that conservatism began with him, although he was termed as a liberal, pluralist and progressive conservative by other scholars. His major work was the reflections on the revolution in France and on proceedings of certain societies in England relating to that event which was published in 1790. Edmund Burke died July 9, 1797, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England.

In 1756 he published anonymously *A Vindication of Natural Society...*, a satirical imitation of the style of Viscount Bolingbroke that was aimed at both the destructive criticism of revealed religion and the contemporary vogue for a “return to Nature.” *A contribution to aesthetic theory, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, which appeared in 1757, gave him a reputation in the world of philosophy and his contribution was acknowledged by Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, and G.E. Lessing among others. Thereafter he was co-author of *An Account of the European Settlements* (1757) and began *An Abridgement of English History* (c.1757–62).

Burke, who was always a prominent figure there and sometimes an effective persuader, gave a great many parliamentary speeches. He published versions of some of these, notably on *American Taxation* (1774), *Conciliation with America* (1775), and *Fox’s East India Bill* (1783). These printed speeches, though anchored to specific occasions, and certainly intended to have a practical effect in British politics, were also meant to embody Burke’s thought in a durable form. In that respect, they parallel his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), and *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), amongst other non-oratorical writings.

He was a British statesman, parliamentary orator, and political thinker prominent in public life from 1765 to about 1795 and important in the history of political theory. He championed conservatism in opposition to Jacobinism in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

### **3.2 Burke Critical views on Natural Rights and Contracts**

The natural rights theory emerged in the seventeen centuries mainly found in the writings of John lock, it was basically built on the freedom of man and was against absolute authority and power. The natural rights advocate that man is born free that is, he is natural free hence no form of conclusion, coercion should be inflicted on man, also no man has a right to take another man’s life, even man himself can’t take his own life because life is a God-given gift. The theory of natural rights also includes natural laws



which advocate for equality, human rights, rights to property, right to land etc.

Burke did not agree with the natural theory of rights nor the social contract. To him they were all chaffs and rags, the State he argued was a complicated process which the efforts of man had helped to shape but the evolution of state cannot be understood by anyone. His own origin of state was more of an organic one, State to him could be seen as an organism rather than an organisation which had an organic growth and old institutions give place to newer ones.

Burke was against the natural rights, to him humans had no natural rights like that in Locke's state of nature. To Burke, human beings started having rights when they joined the state. The only rights recognised was that granted by the state and protected by civil laws. In his view, natural rights are vague and in-understandable. Rights are only secured within the State. All rights exist in the state and none exist outside the state. According to him, there are two types of rights, civil and political rights. The civil rights are to be given to everyone within the state, however political rights are to be given to only those capable of understanding it.

Burke was also against the separation of Church and State. To him the only laws were the laws of God and laws of a civilized society. Burke was against natural rights, absolute liberty, equality, democracy, popular sovereignty and general will. He favoured an elitist leadership in the society.

He also saw natural rights as abstract ideas, which to him were the cause of many troubles, societal problems to him couldn't be solved on by thinking abstractly and making up abstract rights, to Burke societal problems could be solved on expediency, effectiveness and experience.

### **3.3 Burke's Philosophical and Historical Writings**

Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding of 1690 was the first attempt to give a survey of the mind's workings that was both comprehensive and post-Aristotelian. It soon fostered an intense interest in epistemology, psychology and ethics. Burke seems to have worked on the imagination, the faculty of devising and combining ideas and continued to do so into the 1750s.

The result, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) emphasised the activity of the mind in making ideas and the influence of these upon conduct. It was in the first place an exercise in clarifying ideas, intending to refine how the arts affect the passions: in other words, a refinement of complex ideas was taken to

be the precondition of refinement of practice. The roots of human activity, Burke thought, were the passions of curiosity, pleasure and pain. Curiosity stimulated the activity of mind on all matters. Ideas of pain and of pleasure corresponded respectively to self-preservation and society and society involved the passions of sympathy, imitation and ambition.

Imitation tended to establish habit, and ambition to produce change. Sympathy did neither, but it did establish an interest in other people's welfare that extended to mental identification with them. The scope of sympathy could embrace anyone, unlike compassion, which applied only to those in a worse situation than oneself. The passions, understood in Burke's way, suggested at once that society as such answered to natural instincts and that it comprised elements of continuity and improvement alike. Burke then proceeded to show that self-preservation and its cognates suggested the complex idea of the sublime and not least the idea of a God who was both active and terrible. Beauty, on the other hand, comprised a very different set of simple ideas, which originated in pleasure. Sublime and beautiful therefore sprang from very different origins.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you learn about Edmund Burke life and works?
- ii. Analyse Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts.
- iii. Give a brief account of Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The name of Edmund Burke (1730–97) is not one that often figures in the history of philosophy. Besides Burke's writings and some of his speeches contain strongly philosophical elements, philosophical both in our contemporary era and in the 18th century, especially 'philosophical' history. These elements play a fundamental role within his work and help students of political thoughts to learn and understand why Burke is a political philosopher. His writings and speeches, therefore, merit recognition to both ideas and to history, and of the role of his contribution in practical thought. His work is also as we already learned in this unit, was an achievement that challenges assumptions held by many of our contemporaries.

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

In conclusion, we can say that Burke's stance on natural rights and social contracts was based on abstractness and lack of facts. He thus supported a more rational and reasonable mode of looking at rights, the state,

government, and equality. Since thought is of the very first importance for the intellectual history and the conduct of politics, Burke's postulations are the first attempt to examine its philosophical character and to connect the latter with Burke's political activity. In doing so it shows the importance of the philosophical elements in Burke's thought and that these contribute important ways to his political thought.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you learn about Edmund Burke life and works?
2. Analyse Burke critical views on natural rights and contracts.
3. Give a brief account of Burke philosophical and historical perceptions.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 5      KARL MARX: THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIALIST**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.1 Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883)
  - 3.2 Karl Marx and Marxism
  - 3.3 Karl Marx Analysis of Capitalism
  - 3.4 Critique of Karl Marx Work
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Karl Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His philosophical perception gave birth to a new wave of political thought which captured socio-economic as well as political ramifications of man. Taking this into consideration, this unit discussed Karl Marx as the scientific socialist.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Karl Heinrich Marx and what lead to the postulations of Marxism
- examine Karl Marx Analysis of capitalism
- analyse divergent opinion concerning Karl Marx philosophy.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883)**

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Trier on the river Moselle in Germany on May 5, 1818. At the age of seventeen, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the University of Bonn. The following year Karl Marx's father sent him to the more serious University of Berlin where he remained four years, at which time he abandoned his romanticism for the Hegelianism which ruled in Berlin at the time. He became a member of the Young Hegelian movement.

Finding a university career closed by the Prussian government, Marx moved into journalism and, in October 1842, became editor, in Cologne, of the influential *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper backed by industrialists. Karl Marx's articles, particularly those on economic questions, forced the Prussian government to close the paper. Marx then immigrated to France (Asirvathan & Misra, (2008).

Arriving in Paris at the end of 1843, he rapidly made contact with organised groups of émigré German workers and with various sects of French socialists. He also edited the short-lived *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* which was intended to bridge French socialism and the German radical Hegelians. During his first few months in Paris, Karl Marx became a communist and set down his views in a series of writings known as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), which remained unpublished until the 1930s. In the *Manuscripts*, he outlined a humanist conception of communism, influenced by the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach and based on a contrast between the alienated nature of labour under capitalism and a communist society in which human beings freely developed their nature in cooperative production. It was also in Paris that Marx developed his lifelong partnership with Friedrich Engels (Iain, 1992).

Karl Marx was expelled from Paris at the end of 1844 and with Engels, moved to Brussels where he remained for the next three years, visiting England where Engels' family had cotton spinning interests in Manchester. While in Brussels, he devoted himself to an intensive study of history and elaborated what came to be known as the materialist conception of history. This he developed in a manuscript (published posthumously as 'The German Ideology'), of which the basic thesis was that the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production.

Karl Marx traced the history of the various modes of production and predicted the collapse of the present one 'industrial capitalism' and its replacement by communism (Iain, 1992). At the same time he was composing 'The German Ideology', he also wrote a polemic (*The Poverty of Philosophy*) against the idealistic socialism of P. J. Proudhon (1809-1865). He also joined the Communist League. This was an organisation of German émigré workers with its centre in London of which Marx and Engels became the major theoreticians. At a conference of the League in London at the end of 1847 Marx and Engels were commissioned to write a succinct declaration of their position. Scarcely was 'The Communist Manifesto' published than the 1848 wave of revolutions broke out in Europe (Marx, 1973).

Early in 1848, he moved back to Paris when a revolution first broke out and onto Germany where he founded, again in Cologne, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The paper supported a radical democratic line against the Prussian autocracy and he devoted his main energies to its editorship since the Communist League had been virtually disbanded. Karl Marx's paper was suppressed and he sought refuge in London in May 1849. Settling in London, he was optimistic about the imminence of a new revolutionary outbreak in Europe. He rejoined the Communist League and wrote two lengthy pamphlets on the 1848 revolution in France and its aftermath, 'The Class Struggles in France and the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte'. He was soon convinced that a new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis and then devoted himself to the study of political economy to determine the causes and conditions of this crisis (Subrata & Sushila, 2007).

Karl Marx's major work on the political economy made slow progress. By 1857 he had produced a gigantic 800-page manuscript on capital, landed property, wage labour, the state, foreign trade and the world market. The *Grundrisse* (or *Outlines*) was not published until 1941. In the early 1860s he broke off his work to compose three large volumes, 'Theories of Surplus Value', which discussed the theoreticians of political economy, particularly Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It was not until 1867 that Karl Marx was able to publish the first results of his work in volume 1 of *Capital* (*Das Capital*), a work which analyzed the capitalist process of production.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx elaborated his version of the labour theory value and his conception of surplus value and exploitation which would ultimately lead to a falling rate of profit in the collapse of industrial capitalism. Volumes II and III were finished during the 1860s but Karl Marx worked on the manuscripts for the rest of his life and they were published posthumously by Engels (Subrata & Sushila, 2007). During the last decade of his life, Karl Marx's health declined and he was incapable of sustained effort that had so characterized his previous work. He travelled to European spas and even to Algeria in search of recuperation. The deaths of his eldest daughter and his wife clouded the last years of his life. He died March 14, 1883, and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in North London.

### **3.2 Karl Marx and Marxism**

The contributions to the world body of knowledge made by German theorist Karl Marx are so vast and complex that his theory of socialism has come to be known specifically as Marxism. Karl Marx was well versed in political theory and completed a doctorate in classical Greek philosophy from the University of Berlin in 1841. Karl Marx was greatly

influenced by German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), who believed that historical development takes place through a series of dramatic changes producing increasingly comprehensive systems of knowledge. With each epoch of historical development, new and old ideas clash and compete.

New ways of thinking and conceptualizing reality emerge from the conflict, according to Hegel. One finds in Karl Marx's work many parallels with Hegel, not the least of which is the notion that history moves forward from the push and pull of conflict and that each new period of history is a creative response to what has gone before. As abstract as this sound, these ideas are important in providing glimpses of some of the most concrete dimensions of Marx's theory. For example, Hegelian influences are evidenced in Karl Marx's understanding of class conflict and social change (David, 1979).

Although Karl Marx is known as a socialist, the majority of his writings focus on analyzing capitalism. This is not surprising when one realizes that he lived under a capitalist system and, as a student of politics, wrote primarily about what he could observe. With his friend and collaborator Frederick Engels (1820–1895), he published *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. In other words, Karl Marx analysed many facets of capitalist society. The better one understands capitalism, he contends, the more clearly one sees the rational basis for socialism (Iain, 1992). To this effect, the level of analysis adopted by Karl Marx was that of a global society. His aim was focused on the idea of social realities considered globally. All must be understood from the perspective of historical materialism. Its perspective was dynamic and progressive, providing a theory of social change, that's to say, an ever-changing and constantly evolving society (Marx, 1979).

His book (*Das Capita*) *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* gives an overview of Marxist ideology, by studying the serious contradictions of capitalism and presenting a large number of alternative solutions and also in the *Communist Manifesto* (1948), he emphasised the ideological bases among which his theory stands out (Marx, 1973):

**Historical Materialism:** It is an interpretation of history according to which the evolution of societies is determined by the economic structure. There is a tension between infrastructure (the economic base) and superstructure (institutions, culture ...) that produces changes in the structure of the state. This is how the humanity has gone through several stages: the communal society, the slave, the feudal and the capitalist which is the last one and full of contradictions that must inevitably lead to the socialist stage.

**The Surplus Value and the Law of Accumulation of Capital:** The worker has never received the full value of their work, because otherwise employers would not have been enriched. Thus, the entrepreneur appropriates part of the job of the worker to what is called surplus value. This ownership tends to be higher, which makes the capital increasing concentrated in the hands of a few, this is the law of accumulation of capital which leads to serious contradictions and is the origin of class struggle (Marx, 1969).

**Class Struggle:** is for Marx and Engels, an undeniable premise because there have been always two contrary groups: the oppressors and those who are oppressed. This confrontation becomes the motor of history; this fight will end with capitalism and the bourgeois State. Class plays a key role in Marxist analysis, in contrast to liberalism, Marxists hold that society is systematically prone to class conflict. The main conflict is between the bourgeoisie (the capitalists) and the proletariat (the workers).

**The Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** After having conquered the bourgeois state by a revolutionary movement, it is about to control it and transform the society. Once achieved, the proletariat dictatorship will leave this to create a classless society. In this communist society, all means of production are socialised. The state tends to disappear.

Furthermore, Marx's theory about society, economics, and politics collectively understood as Marxism hold that human societies develop through class struggle; in capitalism, this manifests itself in the conflict between the ruling classes (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and working classes (known as the proletariat) that enable these means by selling their labour for wages. Employing a critical approach known as historical materialism, Marx predicted that, like previous socioeconomic systems, capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system: socialism.

For Karl Marx, class antagonisms under capitalism, owing in part to its instability and crisis-prone nature, would eventuate the working class' development of class consciousness, leading to their conquest of political power and eventually the establishment of a classless, communist society constituted by a free association of producers (Subrata & Sushila, 2007).

### 3.3 Karl Marx Analysis of Capitalism

Karl Marx begins by noting that capitalism is an economic system in which most people come to be members of one of two large classes. This division of people into two basic classes contrasts with the more complex class systems of antiquity and feudalism, in which numerous classes



existed. The two prominent classes under capitalism are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the class that lives primarily by selling its labour-power (labouring ability) for a wage. The bourgeoisie is the class that lives primarily by purchasing the labour-power of others and using this labour to operate the factories and businesses owned by the bourgeoisie (Marx, 1970).

Thus, generally, the proletariat consists of people who work for wages and the bourgeoisie consists of people who own businesses and hire employees. Very importantly, Karl Marx was aware that many members of the bourgeoisie also work; indeed, business owners often have interminable workdays and remain at the office longer than any single employee.

However, if an individual's economic position is premised on the ability to hire workers and run a business through the employees' labor, then this individual is a member of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, a member of the proletariat might supplement his or her income by taking in boarders, growing his or her own food, and so forth. If, however, an individual needs his or her wage to live, then the individual is a member of the proletariat (John, 1989).

According to him, under capitalism, the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. This is the case because both classes are rational. Both pursue what is in their respective interests. Consequently, the bourgeoisie and proletariat clash over the price of wage labour. It is in the interest of the bourgeoisie to lower the price of labour, whereas it is in the interest of the proletariat to raise it. Neither class can afford to abandon its interests, according to Karl Marx. For example, if a capitalist pays a higher wage than that paid by rival capitalists, the generous capitalist will be unable to compete with his or her peers and will be ruined. Thus, the rational capitalist will pay subsistence wages to the employees.

Subsistence wages are defined by Karl Marx as the lowest possible wage for inducing a sufficient number of capable workers to fill job openings. That is, the rational capitalist will pay only so much as he or she must in order to recruit qualified workers to come into the business and do the jobs. All capitalists will be motivated to compete successfully with their peers, so each will be inclined to pay subsistence-level wages. For the proletariat, of course, this means that every possible employer is operating according to an identical logic, one that is not exactly favourable to the proletariat (Hobden & Wyn Jones, 2004).

In addition, Karl Marx emphasized that the state plays an important role in preventing the conflict between the classes from erupting into daily

riots and rebellions. If workers rise up and attempt to take over a factory and demand higher wages, the state's law enforcement officers will suppress their rebellion. The state's judicial officers will prosecute, and the state's legislative officials may even respond by writing new laws to prevent future rebellions.

In short, the state will work to prevent class conflict by enforcing law and order, which, under capitalism, indirectly supports the bourgeoisie's continued pursuit of profit through the payment of subsistence wages to workers. Logically, Karl Marx points out, one can see that the class that benefits most from the status quo also gains most from the state's protection of the status quo (Hobden & Wyn Jones, 2004).

For Karl Marx, however, capitalism is an entire social system. It involves more than states, wages, and profits. Capitalism also includes certain ways of thinking about the world and psychologically responding to it. For example, he believed that life under capitalism became an emotional ordeal for many proletarians/workers. Alienation is a term he used to describe the emotional, cognitive, and psychological damage done to the proletariat by capitalism. Alienation means loss. According to Karl Marx, workers are vulnerable to different kinds of alienation (Jon, 1985).

One type of alienation is alienation from the self. A worker alienated from his or her self has lost a sense of self-awareness and identity. Such a worker may go through the workday "on automatic pilot," barely aware of him- or herself as an individual with a mind, with thoughts, with a history, with feelings. Workers such as this live through the day, but they do not experience the day any more than the machines in the factories experience it.

Proletarians are also likely to suffer alienation from the work process, from other workers, and society, according to Karl Marx. The creative, productive, and collaborative dimensions of working and living are lost to the proletarian, who has become almost as lifeless as the tools he or she uses. Not only has life become joyless, but the alienated worker does not even know any more that it is not supposed to be this way. He actively fought for its implementation, arguing that the working class should carry out organised revolutionary action to topple capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation (David, 1979).

### **3.4 Critique of Karl Marx Work**

On the present political trends especially when one looks at the status of the Third world countries economic structures in the international system and their stagnant developmental projects which as a result of the growing integration of national economies, a growing awareness of ecological

interdependence, the proliferation of Multi-national corporations, social movements and intergovernmental agencies operating on a global scale pointed to as typifying globalization that Karl Marx tried to highlight in terms of struggles and counter-struggles to control economic resources that capitalism engineered. That was why when Karl Marx wrote his books, he was clearly aware not only of the global scope of capitalism but also of its potential for social transformation. As Karl Marx insisted that the only way to discover how significant contemporary developments really are, is to view them in the context of the deeper structural processes at work regarding the economy.

On the other hand, the Marxist approach, while gives importance to the economic factors and issues about developing countries it has its own weaknesses. First of all, its belief that the state is controlled only by the economically dominant class and is an instrument in their hand has not stood the test of time. Many Marxists themselves now view state to be relatively autonomous, partially removed from the immediate control of capital and its vested interests. This alone can explain the persistence of important structural variations between different national formations. The state cannot be simply conceived as a servant of capital. Particularly in developing societies state plays a major role in directing and regulating economic development.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Who is Karl Marx?
- ii. Identify the strands of Marxism.
- iii. Analyse capitalism as seen by Karl Marx.
- iv. Critically examine Karl Marx Marxian approach.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Many intellectuals, labour unions, artists and political parties worldwide have been influenced by Marx's work, with many modifying or adapting his ideas. Karl Marx is typically cited as one of the principal architects of modern social science today which attested to his claim of being the socialist scientist.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Karl Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His work in political science, sociology and economics laid the basis for much of the current understanding of political struggles, labour and its relation to capital, and subsequent economic thought.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who is Karl Marx?
2. Identify the strands of Marxism.
3. Analyse capitalism as seen by Karl Marx.
4. Critically examine Karl Marx Marxian approach.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 4                    CONTEMPORARY    AFRICAN    POLITICAL THINKERS**

Political thought is not restricted nor limited to Western political thinkers rather events marked by European intrusion into Africa for the sake of colonialism has resulted to development of various learned individuals to give their own views on political events as they unfold. African political thought is, therefore, the thinking patterns and systematized write-ups of different African thinkers which was geared at instilling a sense of unity, oneness and solidarity amongst Africans to stir them towards fighting for independence. To this effect, this module contains five units with each discussing the contribution made by African scholars in the field of political thought. The first unit talked about the life and struggle of Franz Fanon, his thought on violence, national liberation struggle and nationalism. The second unit discusses the biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, his socialist perception, philosophy on education for self-reliance. The third unit talked about the biography of Kwame Nkrumah, his Pan Africanism, his views on African socialism and neo-colonialism. The fourth unit highlights the biography of Amilcar Cabral, his idea for independent struggle, his philosophy on colonial independence, culture, violence and anti-colonial struggle.

Unit 1	The Life and Struggle of Frantz Fanon
Unit 2	Julius Kambarage Nyerere
Unit 3	Kwame Nkrumah
Unit 4	Amilcar Cabral

## **UNIT 1            THE LIFE AND STRUGGLE OF FRANZ FANON**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Franz Fanon
  - 3.2 Fanon's Thoughts on Violence
  - 3.3 Fanon on National Liberation Struggle
  - 3.4 Fanon on Nationalism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The major task of this unit is to bring to fore the contribution of Frantz Omar Fanon to political thought. Franz Fanon was a Martinique born Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary and writer, whose work are influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory, and Marxism. As an intellectual, Fanon was a political radical, Pan-Africanist, and Marxist humanist concerned with the psychopathology of colonization, the human, social and cultural consequences of decolonization. This unit looks at Frantz Fanon views on violence, national liberation struggle and nationalism in which his work, “The Wretched of the Earth” emphasized on.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Franz Fanon
- examine Fanon’s thoughts on violence and the national liberation struggle
- explain Fanon’s views on nationalism.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Biography of Franz Fanon

Frantz fanon was born in the French colony of Martinique on July 20, 1925. His family occupied a social position within Martinican society that could reasonably qualify them as part of the black bourgeoisie; Frantz father, Casimir Fanon, was a customs inspector and his mother, owned a hardware store downtown Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique. Members of this social stratum tended to strive for assimilation, and identification, with white French culture.

Fanon was raised in this environment, learning France history as his own, until his high school years when he first encountered the philosophy of negritude taught to him by Aime Cesaire, Martinique’s renowned critic of European colonization. Politicized, and torn between the assimilation of Martinique’s middle class and the preoccupation with a racial identity that negritude promotes, Fanon left the colony in 1943, at the age of 18 to fight with the Free French forces in the waning days of World War II.

After the war, he stayed in France to study psychiatry and medicine at university of Lyons where he encountered anti-black racism so different from the complex, class-permeated distinctions of shades of lightness and darkness one finds in the Caribbean which would so enrage him that he

was inspired to write “An Essay for the Desalination of Blacks”, the piece of writing that would eventually become *Peau Noire, Masques Blanc* (1932). It was here too that he began to explore the Marxist and existentialist ideas that inform the radical departure from the assimilation-negritude dichotomy that *Peau Noire*’s anti-racist humanism inaugurates.

Although he briefly returned to the Caribbean after he finished his studies, he no longer felt at home there and in 1953, after a stint in Paris, he accepted a position as chef de service (chief of staff) for the psychiatric ward of Bilda-Joinville Hospital in Algeria. The following year 1954, marked the eruption of the Algerian war of independence against France, an uprising directed by the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) and brutally repressed by French armed forces.

Working in French hospital, Fanon was increasingly responsible for treating both the psychological distress of the soldiers and officers of the French army who carried out torture to suppress anti-colonial resistance and the trauma suffered by the Algerian torture victims. Already alienated by the homogenising effects of French imperialism, by 1956 Fanon realised he could not continue to aid French effort to put down a decolonisation movement that commanded his political loyalties, and he resigned his position at the hospital.

Fanon devoted himself to the cause of Algerian independence. During this period, he was based primarily in Tunisia where he trained nurses for the FLN, edited newspaper *El Moujahid*, and contributed articles about the movement to sympathetic publications, including *Presence Africaine* and Jean-Paul Sartre’s journal *Les Temps Modernes*. Some of the Fanons writing from this period were published posthumously in 1964 as *pour la revolution Africaine* (Toward the African revolution).

In 1959, Fanon published series of essays, *L’An Cing, dela Revolution Algerienne*, (The Year of the Algerian Revolution) which detail how the oppressed natives of Algeria organized themselves into a revolutionary fighting force. That same year, he took up a diplomatic post in the provisional Algerian government, ambassador to Ghana, and used the influence of this position to help open up supply routes for the Algerian army. It was in Ghana that Fanon was diagnosed with leukaemia, a disease that would be the cause of his death.

Despite his rapidly failing health, Fanon spent 10 months of his last year of life writing the book for which he would be most remembered, *Les Damnes de la Terre*, and incitement of the violence and savagery of colonialism which he ends with a passionate call for a new history of humanity to be initiated by decolonised Third World. He died on



December 6, 1961, reportedly still preoccupied with the cause of liberty and justice for the people of the Third World.

### 3.2 Fanon's Thoughts on Violence

Decolonization, which set out to change the order of the world, is obviously, a programme of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, or a natural shock, or of a friendly understanding. Decolonisation, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content (Fanon, 1963).

Fanon approach to the potentiality of violence derived from the colonial context which the violent act is seeking to uproot. Fanon, using Algeria as his example, notes that; decolonization is the meeting of two forces, oppose to each other by their very nature, their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together, that is to say, the exploitation of the natives by the settler was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons (Fanon, 1963:36).

In other words, the colonial rule is maintained through violence and repression. Fanon strongly emphasises that the colonial rule is the bringer of violence into the home and mind of the natives, fanon even asserts that violence is the 'natural state of colonial rule'. This violence derives from the realised views that the colonizer has about the colonised subject is, therefore 'dehumanised' by colonialism to such an extent that it turns him into an animal. It then becomes natural for the coloniser to deploy violence in the colonial context because the dehumanised colonial subject will not respond to anything else (Fanon, 1963:42).

For the colonial subject to free themselves from colonialism through violence can be a cathartic experience, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon introduces the idea of 'collective catharsis'. Collective catharsis is described as in every society, in every collectivity, must exist a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the forms of aggression can be released (Fanon, 1952:145).

Accordingly, for the Algerians, violence is cathartic insofar as it allows an individual to reclaim their humanity, fanon eloquently describes the effect that this has; Thus, the native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin, and it must be said that this discovery shakes the world in every necessary manner. For if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settlers, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone

(1963:45). The physical act of violence perpetrated by the revolutionary reminds them of the humanity that they share with their colonisers. Sartre's introduction to *Wretched of the Earth* he usefully described the process of colonial revolution as 'man recreating himself' (1963:19). It also provides a sense of physical, mental and metaphysical 'freedom' (Fanon, 1963:86).

Fanon suggests that violence frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inactions; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. So revolutionary violence is not just cathartic, but it also allows the colonial subjects to recreate themselves or restore the way that they were before colonialism, it allows the colonised person to resume a free and self-determining existence. Violence also can rectify mental health problems in the preface to *Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre usefully summarises fanon's analysis of violence and situates it within medicalised discourse by stating that 'the natives cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms. To explain this, Fanon draws upon an example from his psychiatric practice, Fanon notes that the colonial context and the 'systematic negation' of the colonised subject over a sustained period forces them to question their identity by asking themselves in reality, who am I? (1963:252)

Fanon later suggests that Algeria is a 'favourable breeding ground for mental disorder' as a consequence of colonial rule and ideology. For Fanon, revolutionary violence has a therapeutic effect as he sees patients freed from some of these systems following revolutionary violence. In this way, Fanon views violence as a 'cleansing force (Fanon, 1963: 94). The true horror of daily violence was ever-present to Fanon as a psychiatrist in the largest psychiatric hospital in Algeria. The physical violence which pervaded colonialism is exacerbated by the structural violence of the colonial system which sees the 'systematic negation' of the colonial subject's humanity (Fanon, 1963:250). Fanon recalls numerous examples from his practice of physical and mental trauma which was caused by the colonial context.

Thus, Fanon urges that more violence is not enough to construct a positive new reality, the inclusion of all of the people into the creation of new political reality is of the utmost importance to ensure that strong foundations are set for a coherent and sustainable state. In this way, Fanon places conditions on the use of violence to ensure that it is properly able to meet its aims and does not become gratuitous. Creating a new cultural identity after usurping a colonial power is also incredibly difficult; fanon notes that after a prolonged period of colonization there comes about a veritable emaciation of the stock of natural culture (1963:238).

Violence also becomes problematic when it becomes an end unto itself which does not have a political goal. Finally, violence will lead to confusion for people who have the freedom to reclaim an identity that they have longed for but have been unable to ascertain for a long period. Therefore, violence according to Fanon has varied effects on colonial subjects.

### **3.3 Fanon on National Liberation Struggle**

Frantz Fanon joined the Algerian national liberation struggle and became a leader in the struggle against racism and for national liberation. In his speech to the Congress of Black African Writer in

1959, he shows that to achieve national liberation, revolutionaries must start to recreate the national culture that colonialism has systematically destroyed, the speech in his book *Wretched of The Earth*. Colonial domination, because it is total and tends to over-simplify, very soon manages to disrupt spectacularly the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation, and by the systematic enslaving men and women.

Three years ago at their first congress showed that, in the colonial situation, dynamism is replaced fairly quickly by substantiation of the attitudes of the colonising power. The area of culture is then marked off by fences and signpost. These are so many defence mechanisms of the most elementary type, comparable for more than one good reason to the simple instinct for preservation.

The interest of this period for us is that the oppressor does not manage to convince himself of the objective non-existence of the oppressed nation and its culture. Every effort is made to bring the colonised person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognise the unreality of his 'nation', and, in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure.

The common nature of these two reactions lies in the fact that they both lead to an impossible contradiction. Whether a turncoat or a substantialist the native is ineffectual precisely because the analysis of the colonial situation is not carried out on strict lines, the colonial situation calls a halt to national culture in almost every field. Within the framework of colonial domination, there is not and there will never be such phenomena as new cultural departures or changes in the national culture.

As Fanon describes, colonialism systematically destroys nations.....colonialism domination, because it is total and tends to oversimplify, very soon manages to disrupt spectacularly the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power by the banishment of natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation and by systematic enslaving of men and women. This has a powerful psychological effect on the people who have been conquered, dynamism is destroyed. Defence mechanisms are established 'every effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognise the unreality of his nation and in the extreme the confused and imperfect character of his biological structure'.

In summary, a powerful form of racism is instilled into the thinking of the victims as well as the oppressors, the movement for national liberation turns this around, the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people. It is only from that moment that we can speak of national literature. Here there is at the level of literary creation, this taking up and clarification of nationalist themes. This may be properly called a literature of combat, in the sense that it calls on the whole people to fight for their existence as a nation.

Fanon describes from his own experience in Algeria how the change was reflected by the storytellers. From 1952 - 1953 on, the storytellers, who were before that time stereotyped and tedious to listen to, completely overturned their traditional methods of storytelling and the contents of their tales. Their public, which was formally scattered, became compact, the epic, with its typified categories, reappeared; it became an authentic form of entertainment which took on once more a cultural value. Colonialism made no mistake when from 1955 on it proceeded to arrest these storytellers systematically. This cultural transformation cannot be fulfilled under colonial occupation, but only through national liberation. Fanon believes that "national liberation is not necessarily in contradiction in internationalism". It is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows.

Thus, Fanon sees cultural nationalism as a prerequisite to national liberation and the liberation of the nation as necessary for renewal of culture. Indeed, Fanon suggests that the struggle for national liberation is a manifestation of national culture.

### 3.4 Fanon on Nationalism

According to Fanon, history teaches clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism. For a very long time the native devotes his energies to ending certain definite abuses:

Forced labour, corporal punishment, inequality of salaries, limitation of political rights, etc. This fight for democracy against the oppression of mankind will slowly leave the confusion of neo-liberal universalism to emerge, sometimes laboriously, as a claim to nationhood. It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.

National consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallisation of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilisation of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been. This traditional weakness, which is almost congenital to the national consciousness of less developed countries, is not solely the result of the mutilation of the colonized people by the colonial regime. It is also the result of the intellectual laziness of the national middle class, of its spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mould that its mind is set in. The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case, it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace (Fanon, 1963).

In its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country. After independence, this underdeveloped middle class, reduced in numbers and without capital, which refuses to follow the path of revolution, will fall into deplorable stagnation. It is unable to give free rein to its genius, which formerly it was wont to lament, though rather too weakly, was held in check by colonial domination.

From its point of view, which is inevitably a very limited one, a national economy is an economy based on what may be called local products. Long speeches will be made about the artisan class. Since the middle classes find it impossible to set up factories that would be more profit-

earning both for themselves and for the country as a whole, they will surround the artisan class with a chauvinistic tenderness in keeping with the new awareness of national dignity, and which moreover will bring them in quite a lot of money.

This cult of local products and this incapability to seek out new systems of management will be equally manifested by the bogging down of the national middle class in the methods of agricultural production which were characteristic of the colonial period. The national economy of the period of independence is not set on a new footing. It is still concerned with the groundnut harvest, with the cocoa crop and the olive yield. To them, nationalisation quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period. Since the middle class has neither sufficient material nor intellectual resources (by intellectual resources we mean engineers and technicians), it limits its claims to the taking over of business offices and commercial houses formerly occupied by the settlers (Fanon, 1963:153).

Summarily, Fanon re-articulates the inherent conflict between the national middle class and the masses. The former embracing the values and ideologies of the colonial system (as manifested by the acquisition and display of opulent cars and homes) is conceptually incarcerated by the habit patterns established by the mother country. Fanon suggests that this middle class, which assumes power at the end of the colonial regime, is inadequately prepared to replace the colonial system because of a lack of training and resources and must resort to sending “frenzied appeals for help from the mother country”. Thus, instead of independence, the decolonised nation-states remain fiscally dependent and indebted to the colonial power. But more than being inadequately prepared, Fanon condemns the national middle class for creating this dependency by imitating the goals, objectives and methodologies of the traditional bourgeoisie. Indeed, Fanon asserts that this middle class become little more than the “business agent” of the western bourgeoisie (Fanon, 1963:164).

Finally, despite Fanon’s own failure to put forward a detailed ideology of how to go beyond imperialism and orthodox nationalism and achieve liberation and universalism, he surely managed to provide the world of philosophy with crucial resources to learn much on decolonization and national independence.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What do you learn about Franz Fanon?
- ii. What are your take on Fanon’s views of violence and national liberation struggle?
- iii. Discuss in brief Fanon’s perception of nationalism.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Frantz Fanon provides a useful account of both the positive and negative effect of colonial violence on individuals, violence has the potential to be a liberator and cathartic, in the sense that it allows a colonial subject to free themselves and recreate a positive new identity after a long time of enduring colonialism. Violence also harms the physical and mental capacity of individuals and their families. In addition, Fanon's previous diagnosis of the incapability of the nationalist elites in fulfilling their historical mission demonstrates the continuing relevance of his thought today. Frantz Fanon was considered a living legacy of a revolutionary and a great thinker; his works remain relevant and significant to African struggle, liberation and nationalism.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Frantz Fanon was one of a few extraordinary thinkers supporting the decolonization struggles occurring after World War II, and he remains among the most widely read and influential of these voices. His brief life was notable both for his whole-hearted engagement in the independence struggle of the Algerian people that waged against France and for his astute, passionate analyses of the human impulse towards freedom in the colonial context. His written works have become a central text in African thought, tracing the development of his writings helps explain how and why he has become an inspirational figure offering the moral imagination of people who experienced colonialism.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you learn about Franz Fanon?
2. What are your take on Fanon's views of violence and national liberation struggle?
3. Discuss in brief Fanon's perception of nationalism.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2 JULIUS KAMBARAGE NYERERE: THE AFRICAN SOCIALIST**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere
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  - 3.3 Julius Nyerere Philosophy on Education
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  - 3.5 Criticisms Against Nyerere Ujamaa Philosophy
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- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Nyerere was highly critical of the social, political, economic and cultural value system imposed on his country during the period of colonisation, and he worked relentlessly to go back to the traditional African values through the concept he called 'Ujamaa'. He believed that Africans should decolonise their minds in order to accept themselves as Africans. He also believed that the education system introduced by the British in 1900, when they colonised Tanzania, did not address the needs of the Tanzanian people, therefore Nyerere advocated for education that he believed was more culturally relevant. Nyerere's philosophy of education has had a great impact on many African countries. This unit explores his philosophy on socialism and educational self-reliance.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere
- examine Nyerere's socialist perception
- assess Nyerere's philosophy on education
- explain Nyerere' education policy for self-reliance.



### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere

Julius Kambarage Nyerere lived between 1922 to 1999. He was one of 26 children of Nyerere Burito, the chief of the Zanaki people. Burito had been born in 1860 and given the name 'Nyerere' ('caterpillar' in Zanaki) after a plague of worm caterpillars infested the local area at the time of his birth. Burito had been appointed chief in 1915, installed in that position by the German imperial administrators of what was then German East Africa, his position was also endorsed by the incoming British imperial administration. Burito had 22 wives, of whom Julius' mother, Mugaya Nyang'ombe, was the fifth. She had been born in 1892 and had married the chief in 1907, when she was 15 (Smith, 2005).

Julius Nyerere was 12 before he started school. Later, he transferred for his secondary education to the Tabora Government Secondary School. His intelligence was quickly recognized by the Roman Catholic fathers who taught him. He went on, with their help, to train as a teacher at Makerere University in Kampala (Uganda). On gaining his Certificate, he taught for three years and then went on a government scholarship to study history and political economy for his Master of Arts at the University of Edinburgh (he was the first Tanzanian to study at a British university and only the second to gain a university degree outside Africa).

In Edinburgh, partly through his encounter with Fabian thinking, Nyerere began to develop his particular vision of connecting socialism with African communal living. On his return to Tanganyika, Nyerere was forced by the colonial authorities to choose between his political activities and his teaching. He was reported as saying that he was a schoolmaster by choice and a politician by accident. Working to bring several different nationalist factions into one grouping he achieved this in 1954 with the formation of TANU (the Tanganyika African National Union), he entered the Legislative Council in 1958 and became Chief Minister in 1960. A year later Tanganyika was granted internal self-government and Nyerere became premier. Full independence came in December 1961 and he was elected President in 1962 (Smith, 2005).

Nyerere's integrity, ability as a political orator and organizer, and readiness to work with different groupings was a significant factor in independence being achieved without bloodshed. In this, he was helped by the co-operative attitude of the last British Governor Sir Richard Turnbull. In 1964, following a coup in Zanzibar (and an attempted coup in Tanganyika itself) Nyerere negotiated with the new leaders in Zanzibar and agreed to absorb them into the union government. The result was the creation of the Republic of Tanzania (Smith, 2005).

Nyerere was an anti-colonial activist, politician, and political theorist. He governed Tanganyika as its Prime Minister from 1961 to 1963 and then as its President from 1963 to 1964, after which he led its successor state, Tanzania, as its President from 1964 until 1985. He was a founding member of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party and later a member of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi party (Civille, 1976).

### 3.2 Nyerere: An African Socialist

Julius Nyerere ideologically is an African nationalist and African socialist, he promoted a political philosophy known as 'Ujamaa'. Ujamaa is a Swahili word for 'family hood' was the social and economic policy developed by Julius Kambarage Nyerere that centred on collective agriculture, under a process called villagization, ujamaa also called for the nationalisation of banks and industry, and an increased level of self-reliance at both an individual and a national level. Nyerere set out his policy in the Arusha Declaration of 5 February 1967.

The process started slowly and was voluntary, by the end of the 60s there were only 800 collective settlements. In the 70s, Nyerere's reign became more oppressive, and the move to collective settlements, or villages, was enforced, by the end of the 70s, there were over 2,500 of these villages. The idea for collective agriculture was sound and it was possible to provide equipment, facilities, and material for a rural population if they were brought together in 'nucleated' settlements, each of around 250 families. It made the distribution of fertiliser and seed easier, and it was possible to provide a good level of education to the population (Sedleir, 1999).

Nyerere's vision for Ujamaa was to promote social collectivism. He believed that people working together as a family would benefit the rural population more than the settlement schemes that were used during colonisation (Schneider, 2004). Furthermore, Nyerere needed to produce a change in rural development after independence. Rural development has a colonial past and it did not begin with independence in 1961. Between independence and 1966, the Tanzanian government implemented "settlement schemes". These development projects consisted of state-run farms. They were rejected due to high costs and minimal output from crops (Lal, 2010).

In traditional society, Nyerere maintains, the individual and the families were rich or poor according to whether the whole tribe was rich or poor. Nobody starved, either of food or human dignity. Nyerere was against the economic and social ideas that the colonizers introduced in Africa. He believed that the economic system introduced by colonizers was a

capitalist system that encouraged individualism at the expense of the community (Akinpelu, 1981:115).

Capitalism fosters excessive individualism; promotes the competitive rather than the cooperative instinct in man; exploits the weak; divides the society into hostile groups and generally promotes inequality in the society. Also, capitalism regarded some individuals as superior (the rich) and others as inferior (the poor). He further asserted that the major aim of capitalism was the production of goods and profits, not human satisfaction or the interest of the consumer. Capitalism encouraged inequality since each person was allowed to acquire as much as one can (Akinpelu, 1981:115).

According to Nyerere, these capitalist ideas could not be reconciled with African values; therefore, he advocated for Socialism. Nyerere's idea of African Socialism was based on three principles: work by everyone and exploitation by none; fair sharing of resources which are produced by joint efforts; and equality and respect for human dignity (Akinpelu 1981:115). Nyerere advocated for Socialism because he believed in the idea of Ujamaa or family hood. By tradition, Africans are people who work together for the benefit of all members of society (Nyerere 1968b). Many Africans hold the value of sharing and assisting one another, which in Botswana is called *letsema*. Ujamaa was to help restore the cooperative spirit that the African people had before the colonizers introduced the idea of individualism.

Mulenga (2001:17) stated, "Nyerere aimed to transform the colonial value system which had alienated Africans from their past into one group of attitudes based on past African values and attitudes of self-esteem, cooperation, and family." According to Mulenga (2001:15), Unity was one of the principles that Nyerere advocated among Africans. He believed that when society is united, they can help one another. Nyerere believed that people of Tanzania had to live as a family. Nyerere emphasized equality among the society. He believed that social justice could not be achieved if there was no human equality. People were not to be judged by skin colour, material wealth or intellectual ability, but "each individual should be assessed by her or his worth as a person". Each person was to be respected and valued for who he or she was. This idea encouraged respect among members of the society.

### **3.3 Julius Nyerere Philosophy on Education**

Before the introduction of the Western system of education into Africa, the indigenous education aimed to preserve the cultural heritage of the family, the clan, and larger groups. The indigenous education was for every member of the society. Every member of the society had a role to

play in educating the child, thus the proverb “It takes a village to raise a child.” The advent of Western formal education changed the whole education system of Africans. Education became a privilege of the chosen few. It also introduced western values and traditions that were in direct conflict with African values and traditions.

Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003:426) assert that Nyerere believed western education was a way of colonising the mind of the Africans. Therefore, he wanted changes in the education system. Nyerere believed that education is an instrument of the society to reinforce its values and traditions. Education is the process of cultural transmission and renewal, the process whereby adult members of a society carefully guide the development of infants and young children, initiating them into the culture of the society. Nyerere believed that Africans acquire the attitude of the mind from socialization by the extended family. Nyerere believed that the purpose of education should be to liberate a human-being, he concurred with Paulo Freire’s idea that education is a path to permanent liberation and it should make people self-reliant (Mulenga, 2001).

According to Freire (1970:67) “liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transfers of information.” Education should help people to recognize their oppression and then participate in its transformation. People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. For while an outsider can build a man’s house, an outsider cannot give man pride of self-confidence in him as a human being. Those things man has to create in himself by his own actions. He develops himself by what he does, he develops himself by making his own decisions, by increasing his understanding of what he is doing and why; by increasing his own knowledge and ability and by his full participation as an equal in the life of the community he lives in.

The idea of one being able to recognise the condition of oppression and being able to participate in the transformation was highly emphasized by Nyerere who believed that it is only genuine education that can help the people to transform and become better citizens (Akinpelu, 1981). Genuine education, according to Nyerere, is the type of education that helps the individual to think critically. It helps one to apply theory to practice. Nyerere’s educational philosophy can be approached under two main headings: education for self-reliance and adult education, lifelong learning and education for liberation (Kassam, 1995).

### **3.4 Nyerere’ Education for Self-Reliance**

Nyerere advocated that teachers and students should be engaged in productive activities and students should participate in the planning and decision-making process of organising the activities (Kassam, 1995).

Active participation of students has been greatly advocated by many philosophers such as Dewey and Freire. Dewey believed in learning by doing. He asserted “the first principle is that teaching must be child-centred, that is, must take into consideration the present needs, interests and ability of the child, and it must involve the child in the activity: learning by doing” (Akinpelu 1981:151).

Furthermore, Freire also noted that teachers should actively involve the students in the learning process. Freire believed that through dialogue, students become active investigators instead of passive listeners. Active participation encouraged the idea of self-reliance. Self-reliance in education calls for a school curriculum that integrates theory and practice. Nyerere, as cited by Akinpelu (1981:122), stated: “the object of teaching must be the provision of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which will serve the student when he/she lives and works in the changing socialist state, it must not be aimed at university entrance.”

Nyerere wanted an education that students could apply to the real world and he advocated the following changes in the education system of Tanzania:

1. It should be oriented to rural life.
2. Teachers and students should engage together in productive activities and students should participate in the planning and decision-making process of organizing these activities.
3. Productive work should become an integral part of the school curriculum and provide a meaningful learning experience through the integration of theory and practice.
4. The importance of examinations should be downgraded.
5. Children should begin school at age 7 so that they would be old enough and sufficiently mature to engage in self-reliant and productive work when they leave school.
6. Primary education should be complete in itself rather than merely serving as a means to higher education.
7. Students should become self-confident and co-operative, and develop critical and inquiring minds.

Nyerere's ideas of education can be analyzed under three philosophical tools: metaphysics, axiology and epistemology. In his metaphysics, Nyerere believed that it is through Socialism that Africans can get the vision of what is life. He believed that Africans had been exploited by colonizers and they no longer valued themselves as Africans. His idea was to find ways to bring African people back to their original values and traditions. For example, Nyerere (1968b) stated that after independence, Tanzanian schools should teach African history, and children learned

national songs and language. This was to help the young Tanzanians to appreciate their own tradition.

Kassam (1995:253) maintained that Nyerere believed that African minds should be decolonized and that there should be respect for manual as well as academic labour. Africans had always valued manual work, but due to western education, they began to look down on blue-collar jobs. Within the schools, teachers were to encourage the combination of theory and practice. Practical subjects were highly emphasized in the curriculum as Nyerere believed that when students complete their education they should be able to go back and work in the villages. Education was geared towards societal needs as compared to individual needs.

Nyerere valued social justice and communal harmony. His emphasis on these values helped to establish a new sense of community among many tribes in Tanzania. He united 153 tribes by having one common language: Swahili. Nyerere believed that children should be proud of their roots and a unifying language would help accomplish this goal (Kassam, 1995:253). Education was not supposed to alienate children from their traditions but should make children appreciate themselves as Africans. Abosi and Kandjii-Murangi (1996:22) claim that colonial education divorced pupils from their original society as it supposedly prepared them for a new social order. They stated “the school is always separate; it is not part of the society. It is a place for children to go to and which they and their parents hope will make it unnecessary for them to become farmers and continue in the villages.” In effect, he was creating a new brand of Socialism.

Akinpelu (1981) affirmed that Nyerere also valued an egalitarian society and wanted to narrow the gap between the privileged and the non-privileged. He also valued equality and cooperation. In education, working together as a team would have been one of the methods that could foster the idea of cooperation. Even though no documents exist that can unequivocally state what methods of teaching Nyerere advocated, it is widely believed that group work, with an emphasis on team building, was greatly valued in the education system supported by Nyerere.

One example of this is his emphasis on the value of family hood, part of his concept of Ujamaa. Group learning encourages cooperation among learners and it also teaches students to value and respect one another. Students learn best when they are respected by both the teacher and other students. Nyerere wanted the ideas of Socialism to be instilled in the pupil's mind. Respect for one another, equality and cooperation were some of the values of Nyerere's form of Socialism. Nyerere believed that knowledge gained should be linked to economic production and self-reliance.

The curriculum emphasised both theory and practice. The knowledge that students were receiving was to apply to the real world. Because most Africans were agriculturalists, education was supposed to be geared towards agriculture. Students were to learn the content, then go out to do the real hands-on experience. Nyerere stated agricultural progress is indeed the basis of Tanzanian development we need in this country more citizens who know modern productive agriculture and are prepared to undertake hard work which is involved in increasing our agricultural output (Nyerere, 1968a:105).

Nyerere emphasised that when students complete their education, especially in agriculture, it was important for them to go and practice the skills in the villages. The learned should teach the villagers the new methods of farming by applying the knowledge into practice and by being examples. Nyerere's idea of education for self-reliance has been adopted by many countries in Africa.

Other forms of self-reliance were also observable. For example, in the classroom, teachers were expected to be self-reliant and when necessary improvise some teaching aids to make teaching effective. The teachers were supported in these actions by public documents. For example, according to the National Commission on Education, which issued a public report in 1977, "teachers can be inventive in producing their own teaching materials". Students were also encouraged to do self-study. They should be able to find out information from a variety of sources instead of looking at the teacher as the sole provider of knowledge. The idea of self-reliance is still very much in practice in most African countries (Akinpelu, 1981).

Nyerere did not only work to liberate his country Tanzania alone. In the 1970s he assisted many African countries including Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa, and Mozambique to gain their independence from the colonial masters. He was also one of the founders of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) in 1963. The OAU, presently known as the African Union, is an organization of independent African states established to promote unity, coordinate policies, and protect the independence of the continent.

Moreover, he was an instigator and leader of the "Front Line States," which provided uncompromising support for the campaign for Black Majority Rule in South Africa. Nyerere was a Pan-Africanist, he was also involved in the Pan-Africanism movement that emphasised the need for Black people to unite regardless of where they live. The Pan-Africanism movement wanted to empower Black people and to help them overcome racial discrimination and oppression.

### 3.5 Criticisms Against Nyerere Ujamaa Philosophy

According to Sadleir (1999:254), assert that when Nyerere took over as the first president of Tanzania in 1962, he decided to terminate the employment of most of the British people who were holding very high posts during the colonial period. He chose young educated African men to take over positions like head of the civil service, commissioner of police, among others. Within a few months in 1962, as these changes were gradually introduced, the whole provincial administration was turned upside-down.

Even though it seems like a good idea to replace the British people in higher positions with the Tanzanian people, the change was too drastic. Sadleir further asserted that the politicians who were given these posts were not really good commissioners. One may assume that these people were less experienced in these positions. Nyerere could have allowed the Africans to learn the skills and to gain experience by working with the British people who were in these positions. The immediate removal of the British officials in posts of responsibility seems to have had a great impact on the downfall of Nyerere.

Another reason that could have led to the downfall of Nyerere is the powers that he invested in himself. Nyerere had drawn up a new constitution, which gave him powers even more sweeping than those held by the US president. He is both the head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, would have full executive authority and would not even be bound to accept his cabinet's advice. He would rule for seven years. If one looks at the power that Nyerere gave himself, one might suggest that he was "hungry" for power.

It seems as if he wanted to be a dictator. A head of state should have good advisors who will greatly assist him in the ruling of the country well. If Nyerere was not prepared to accept advice from his cabinet, there is a great possibility that his executive authority lost trust in him and this may have led to his downfall (Sadleir, 1999:257).

The Tanzanian elites had adopted the capitalist ideas of individualism and of survival of the fittest. Those in positions of power began to abuse their powers to enrich themselves. They wanted to live the "Western life" like their colonisers. Nyerere was disillusioned by the increasing capitalist tendencies of many of the national leaders who sought to increase their personal wealth by abuse of their positions in a variety of ways. Those in power built big houses, bought expensive cars, etc. and did not welcome Nyerere's idea of Socialism. The gap between the rich and the poor widened. These privileged groups were not interested in sharing their wealth. Nyerere's idea of Socialism thus was unsuccessful because of the



social and economic capital held by the elite in Tanzanian society (Sadleir, 1999:290).

Another problem Nyerere faced involved the teachers themselves. Many did not welcome the emphasis on practical subjects. The teachers had been educated in the colonial system in which the male teacher was to be seen in a tie and jacket and therefore was not prepared to do manual work. It was a common belief among teachers that doing manual labour, such as agricultural work, made them inferior. The teachers, along with other members of society, had been 'indoctrinated' by a functionalist approach to education where different forms of work are valued differently in society.

In addition, the idea of Socialism advocated by Nyerere was an attempt to decolonise the African minds. Nyerere believed that Tanzanian people adopted the capitalist idea of individualism and competition, in part, due to an educational philosophy that wished to keep the vast majority unreflective about their lives he wanted them to regain the idea of cooperation as a society.

In his view, Tanzanians were to be self-reliant, self-reflective citizens able to construct education and economic systems that were compatible and mutually beneficial for all. Villagers were expected to work together and build their own villages. Problems arose because of the unwillingness of the elites (educated) people in Tanzania to adopt his idea of Socialism, and the idea of practical subjects being taught in schools was not welcomed by the teachers. The teachers had been trained to believe that an educated person cannot do manual work; therefore, the teachers were not willing to teach practical subjects.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Give your view of Julius Kambarage Nyerere.
- ii. What makes Nyerere adopt socialist?
- iii. Why do you think Nyerere's philosophy on education failed?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Julius Nyerere political thought captured the social, political, economic and cultural transformation developed to aid his country to achieve rapid development after it emerged from colonialism. Nyerere efforts toward appreciating traditional African values through the concept he called 'Ujamaa' was widely acknowledged. His belief that the Africans should decolonize their minds to accept themselves as Africans is considered a new paradigm shift toward self-development.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In the area of political thought, Julius Nyerere was seen as an influential figure in African politics and philosophy because of his many efforts toward individual and national development. Nyerere was indeed one of the greatest of African political leaders and respected postcolonial thinkers he was a rare intellectual who was open to new ideas and criticism and yet displayed an independent-mindedness that was unique among African thinkers. Nyerere's ideas of adult learning and self-reliance are still relevant to the education system in most African countries.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give your view of Julius Kambarage Nyerere.
2. What makes Nyerere adopt socialist?
3. Why do you think Nyerere's philosophy on education failed?

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## **UNIT 3      KWAME NKRUMAH**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Kwame Nkrumah
  - 3.2 Nkrumah on Pan Africanism
  - 3.3 Nkrumah on African Socialism
  - 3.4 Nkrumah and Neo-colonialism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Kwame Nkrumah was the first President of Ghana and a prominent African nationalist and scholar, his works mainly challenged colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and called for a union of Africans in a strong solidarity tie to liberate Africa. This unit, therefore, studies some of Nkrumah's teachings and explains some of Nkrumah's ideology on Pan Africanism, Neo-colonialism and African Socialism.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write the biography of Kwame Nkrumah
- examine the Nkrumah struggle for on Pan Africanism among African states
- discuss Nkrumah philosophy on African socialism and neo-colonialism.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972)**

Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president was born on September 21, 1909, at Nkroful in the Western Region. He attended Achimota School and also trained as a teacher. He went to the United States in 1935 for advanced studies receiving a B.A. from Lincoln University in 1939. He also received an STB (Bachelor of Sacred Theology) in 1942, a Master of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania in 1942, and a Master of Arts in Philosophy the following year. While lecturing in

political science at Lincoln he was elected President of the African Students Organisation of America and Canada. Dr Nkrumah continued his schooling in England, where he helped to organise the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945.

Then he founded the West African National Secretariat to work for the decolonisation of Africa. Nkrumah also served as Vice-President of the West African Students' Union (WASU). During his lifetime, Nkrumah was awarded honorary doctorates by Lincoln University, Moscow State University, Cairo University, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and Humboldt University in former East Germany. Nkrumah was invited to serve as the General Secretary to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) under Dr Joseph Boakye Danquah. He returned to Ghana in 1947 to take up the position but split from it in 1949 to form the Convention People's Party (CPP).

In February 1948, police fired on ex-servicemen protesting the rising cost of living and the shooting spurred riots in Accra, and Kumasi and elsewhere the colonial government suspected the UGCC was behind the protests and arrested Nkrumah and other party leaders. Realising their error, the British soon released the leaders. After his imprisonment by the colonial government, Nkrumah emerged as the leader of the youth movement in 1948. After his release, Nkrumah went around the country proclaiming that the Gold Coast needed 'self-government now', and built a large power base.

On June 12, 1949, Nkrumah led the formation of the CPP at Arena in Accra before a mammoth crowd. He was made Chairman, with Komla Agbeli Gbedemah as Vice Chairman and Kojo Botsio as Secretary. Other members of the Central Committee included N.A. Welbeck, Kwesi Plange, Krobo Edusei, Dzenkle Dzewu and Ashie Nokoi.

Nkrumah declared "positive action" on January 8, 1950, in front of a large CPP crowd at a public meeting in Accra. He travelled to Sekondi, Cape Coast and Takoradi to repeat it. The colonial government declared a state of emergency effective January 12, 1950, and prohibited the holding of processions, imposed curfews and disconnected public services in certain areas. Nkrumah was arrested on January 21, 1950, tried for inciting an illegal strike and sedition for an article in the Cape Coast Daily Mail and sentenced to three years imprisonment.

The Vice-Chairman Gbedemah kept the party running and was in constant touch with Nkrumah who was held at the James Fort prison from where messages were smuggled out on toilet paper to the party headquarters. While in prison, Nkrumah led the CPP to achieve a stunning victory in

the February 1951 elections. He was freed to form a government, and he led the colony to independence as Ghana in 1957.

In 1960 Ghana became a republic and Nkrumah was elected president. Between 1961 and 1966 Nkrumah put together an ambitious and very expensive hydroelectric project on the Volta River that though highly successful, was laced with economic mismanagement along with several other developmental schemes over the period. Nkrumah did not hesitate to use strong-arm methods in implementing his domestic programs. He remained popular with the masses, yet his tactics made enemies among civil servants, judges, intellectuals, and army officers.

A firm believer in African liberation, Nkrumah pursued a radical pan-African policy, playing a key role in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. At home, he led a massive socio-economic development that saw the springing up of infrastructure across the country. As time passed, he was accused of being a dictator and in 1964 also of forming a one-party state, with himself as president for life as well as actively promoting a cult of his own personality.

While Nkrumah was visiting China in 1966, his government was overthrown by a military coup. Nkrumah lived in exile in Guinea, where Guinean president Sekou Toure appointed him honorary co-president of Guinea. He died in 1972 in Romania while receiving treatment for throat cancer. Kwame Nkrumah's remains were returned to Ghana for burial in his hometown. His legacy and dream of a 'United States of African' remain unachieved.

### **3.2 Nkrumah on Pan Africanism**

Boni (2008) explained that Pan-Africanism is both a philosophy and a movement which seeks to unite every man and woman of African origin irrespective of their location, religious or cultural affiliations. It was only natural for Pan-Africanism to take shape in the early to the mid-20th century in Africa as it was a time when the golden age of colonial rule was beginning to crumble. Fueled by the idea that the unity and solidarity of Africans would help the continent achieve its full potential several African embraced the concept. Some of these influential leaders were Julius Nyerere, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B Du Bois, Haile Selassie, Malcolm X, Muammar Gaddafi and Kwame Nkrumah.

Walton (2016) explained that Nkrumah was influenced by Marxism and Leninism and thus came out with a two-fold idea of Pan Africanism:

- i. That all people of African origin must unite for the continent to maximise its potential.

- ii. That Africa absolutely eliminates all forms of external control by the Western world.

Basically, he believed that the average African has the right to be free and the potential to be great. To achieve the goals of Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah fought against oppression and exploitation which was at the time, the norm among many colonialists in Africa (Kwame, 2012).

Pinkey (2004) further expressed that having experienced racism personally during his time in the United States, Kwame Nkrumah was determined to fight back. Motivated by the struggles of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X against oppression in the US, he decided to return to Ghana and serve as a voice for his people. He organized rallies and events that promoted his Pan-Africanist ideas.

Nkrumah was a founding member of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) which had three main goals:

- i. To Co-ordinate and intensify the co-operation of African states to achieve a better life for the people of Africa.
- ii. To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states.
- iii. To end all forms of colonialism and white minority rule.

Kwame Nkrumah also used his books to promote his Pan-Africanist visions. His Relationship with other Black Emancipator. Even when he was a student at Lincoln College, Kwame Nkrumah participated in activist movements. He attended rallies organized by prominent black leaders such as King, Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. Not satisfied by simply partaking in rallies, Kwame did all he could to unite these Black American activists with Africans back home. He hoped their lives would be positively affected if these activists succeed in the quest for absolute Black emancipation.

Years after his college days, when he had become the president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah invited Martin Luther King Jr. to Ghana. Interestingly, Dr Kings and his wife made it to Ghana to strengthen the budding Pan-Africanist movement and encourage Ghana as she struggled to attain independence. Stokely Carmichael followed suit when he was no longer safe in the United States. Stokely went on to change his name to Kwame Toure in honour of Kwame Nkrumah and then Guinea president, Ahmed Sekou Toure; two African heroes whose ideologies he had always admired (Anthony, 2006).

### 3.3 Nkrumah on African Socialism

Joesph (2011) explained that African socialism is a belief in sharing economic resources in a traditional African way, as distinct from classical socialism. Many African politicians of the 1950s and 1960s professed their support for African socialism, although definitions and interpretations of this term varied considerably. This is because African socialism has not been the product of one single thinker. African socialism is totally against capitalism and doesn't promote capitalist activities in Africa. African socialism sees capitalism as alien to Africa and thus must be expelled because it is the reason for systematized problems in the Black continent (Hazel, 2009).

Welmers (2009) explained that Nkrumah was fighting not just against colonialism but also against capitalism. Independence from Ghana meant independence from the world of capitalism and a new society which provided security and justice for all. He believed socialism was compatible with African culture and attempted to apply Western socialist theory in an African context. In a 1967 essay entitled "*African Socialism Revisited*" he wrote: "We know that the "traditional African society" was founded on principles of egalitarianism...Any meaningful humanism must begin from egalitarianism and must lead to objectively chosen policies for safeguarding and sustaining egalitarianism. Hence, socialism" (Obeng-Odoom, 2009).

His own style of non-aligned Marxism was too much for the leaders of world capitalism – the USA and the United Kingdom, France and others as they believed that a socialist Ghana would provide the spark to fire-up the whole of Africa. Nkrumah's vision that "the independence of Ghana would be meaningless unless it was tied to the total liberation of Africa." has similarity to the Trotskyite concept of 'permanent revolution' (Martins, 2012).

Nkrumah wrote:

Even a system based on a democratic constitution may need backing up in the period following independence by emergency measures of a totalitarian kind. When the 'dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie' is overthrown the new state has to be protected against attack from the old order and their foreign supporters.

In particular, the Deportation Act of 1957, allowed the state to expel people whose presence in the country was deemed not in the interest of the public good. The Preventive Detention Act, passed in 1958, gave power to the prime minister to detain people for up to five years without trial. Ironically, the idea behind this later law is now readily accepted by



the UK and US governments in their 'war on terrorism'. On July 1, 1960, Ghana became a republic, and Nkrumah won the election. Shortly thereafter, Nkrumah was proclaimed president for life, and the CPP became the only party (Anthony, 2006).

Kwame (2002) explained that the colonial plan was to create a dependency culture. According to a delegate to the French Association of Industry and Agriculture in March 1899, the aim of the colonial power must be:

To discourage in advance any signs of industrial development in our colonies, to oblige our overseas possessions to look exclusively to the mother country for manufactured products and to fulfil, by force if necessary, their natural function, that of a market reserved by right to the mother country's industry.

Nkrumah believed in moving Ghana out of the colonial trade system by reducing its dependence on foreign capital, technology, and material goods. He, therefore, believed in the rapid industrialisation of the country, much as the Soviet Union had done (Martin, 2012). Joesph (2011) noted that with the luxury of hindsight we re-evaluate this policy that was widely subscribed to throughout not just the socialist world but the capitalist world also. Urban life is eroding the traditional culture and values of Ghana. Like elsewhere in the world it is impoverishing the people by removing them from the only means of physical, spiritual and emotional well-being – the extended family and community life.

Nkrumah also believed that strikes were a weapon of the opposition in their attempt to destabilise the new society. Unfortunately, socialist concepts of sharing came into conflict with the real aspirations of the people. When the world price of cocoa rose from £150 to £450 per ton in 1954, Nkrumah diverted the additional profit to national development rather than allowing the farmers to benefit directly. The cocoa farmers were furious and Nkrumah fell into disfavour with one of the major constituencies that helped him come to power in the first place (Welmers, 2009)

Walton (2016) suggested that numerous assassinations attempts and "psychological warfare" by America created a siege mentality which made Nkrumah deeply suspicious and less accessible. His advisors were wary of telling him the truth about the situation in the country in case they were seen as opposing his vision. Without the close supervision of Nkrumah, the government and civil service became increasingly corrupt.

On February 21st, 1966, the Ghanaian ambassador to Washington sent an urgent message that Nkrumah should go to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.

For many months Nkrumah had been working on a peace plan although he had suggested that the peace talks be held in Accra. Unknown to Nkrumah the organisation of a coup was well underway and the last part of the plan was to get Nkrumah out of the country, as far away as possible. Lt. General Joseph A. Ankrah took power and books on Nkrumah, socialism and communism were burned at the grounds of the Trades Union Congress in Accra.

### 3.4 Nkrumah and Neo-colonialism

Joesph (2011) explained that in *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah posits his theory concerning an emerging phenomenon he describes as “neo-colonialism.” According to him, the general aim of neo-colonialism is economic domination at the satisfaction of a few. In the case of Africa, this manifests itself as imperialistic power without responsibility. Neo-colonialism in its cruellest form is the continuation of colonial policies under the guise of achieving freedom.

African nations rely on their former imperial power or colonial “mother country” for defence and internal security. Imperialist nations advance their economic neo-colonial aspirations by various aid schemes under the guise of improving living standards and conditions. Meanwhile, such powers have little interest in developing the countries they aid or improving social aspects such as education.

Destructive military aid, rather than helpful multilateral aid, is often given due to competing imperialistic objectives from Western powers according to Nkrumah. The end result is Africa’s mass amounts of natural resources are utilized to develop external Western nations such as the United States, Western European countries, and Japan rather than their own economies. As African countries export and provide cheap raw materials to help imperialist powers industrialise, they simultaneously create spheres of influence while supplying such powers with a market for their expensive finished goods (Pinkney, 2004).

Joesph (2011) explained that to combat this dangerous trend of neo-colonialism on the African continent, Nkrumah delves into several solutions. First and foremost, Nkrumah asserts that the concept of unity must be applied to the economic realm of both individual nations and the continent as a whole. Nkrumah declares, “Quite obviously, therefore, unity is the first requisite for destroying neo-colonialism.” Economic unity specifically requires re-organising African countries to specialize in the production of crops and goods that they are most suited for. It also lays the groundwork for unified agricultural, transportation, and communications policies. From economic unity stems the principle of

non-alignment, or not cooperating solely with capitalist, socialist, or mixed economies.

Instead, Nkrumah argues that careful national planning and investing with the country's interest in mind makes African countries the masters of their own destinies. Secondly, Nkrumah speaks of political unity as a concept that must go hand in hand with economic unity: "When Africa becomes economically free and politically united...a new struggle will arise within which the liquidation and collapse of imperialism will be complete."

Nkrumah also declares, "For economic unity to be effective, it must be accompanied by political unity. The two are inseparable, each necessary for the future greatness of our continent, and the full development of our resources." However, for the most part, large-scale attempts at economic and political unification in Africa have failed in modern times due to an insistence on implementing policies according to Western ideologies and notions of development rather than philosophies that benefit Africa.

However, the strikes had convinced the British authorities to move the colony toward independence. In 1951 Nkrumah, while still in prison, won the central Accra seat by a landslide. The British governor of the Gold Coast released Nkrumah from prison and appointed him the leader of government business. The following year he named him Prime Minister. Reelected in 1954 and 1956, Nkrumah guided the Gold Coast to independence in 1957 under the name Ghana, after an ancient West African empire. Nkrumah built a strong central government and attempted to unify the country politically and to muster all its resources for rapid economic development.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Write a brief biography of Kwame Nkrumah.
- ii. Discuss Nkrumah's struggle for Pan Africanism among African states.
- iii. What do you understand by African socialism and neo-colonialism as postulated by Nkrumah?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Kwame Nkrumah as a proponent of Pan-Africanism sought the liberation of the entire continent from colonial rule, offered generous assistance to other African nationalists, and initially pursued a policy of nonalignment with the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). His goal was never realised, but his efforts helped bring about the Organisation of African Unity, which promotes peace and cooperation between African nations.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The life and works of Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), the most influential agent of African liberation and organisational unity provide a useful ideological foundation and strategic models for the construction of African Centered curriculums. He personally influenced and was impacted by an impressive number of anti-imperialists, some of which were Pan-African nationalists in West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the United States of America.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write a brief biography of Kwame Nkrumah.
2. Discuss Nkrumah struggle for Pan Africanism among African states.
3. What do you understand by African socialism and neo-colonialism as postulated by Nkrumah?

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## **UNIT 4      AMILCAR CABRAL'S IDEA OF LIBERATION STRUGGLE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Amilcar Cabral Biography
  - 3.2    Cabral's Idea for Independent Struggle
  - 3.3    Cabral's Philosophy on Colonial Independence and Culture
  - 3.4    Cabral Philosophy on Violence and Anti-colonial Struggle
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Amilcar Cabral remains a source of inspiration for the progressive forces of meaningful change not only in Guinea-Bissau but also in the rest of Africa. This unit focuses on the colonial situation in Guinea - Bissau that moved Cabral and his like-minded comrades to embark on the road of armed struggle for the liberation of Guineans and Cape Verdeans.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- enumerate Amilca Cabral biography
- discuss Cabral's idea for independent struggle
- examine Cabral's philosophy on colonial independence and culture
- analyse Cabral philosophy on violence and anti-colonial struggle.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Amilcar Cabral Biography**

Cabral was born in Guinea-Bissau in 1924 and was reared primarily in Cape Verde, a small island chain off the Northwest Coast of the African continent formerly ruled by Portugal. He attended university in Portugal and studied to be an agronomist. In the employment of the Portuguese colonial administration in the 1950s, Cabral was able to gain extensive knowledge of the cultures and social conditions of the various peoples of Guinea-Bissau.

In September 1956, along with five other comrades from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Cabral established the Partido Africano da Independencia da Guinea e Cabo Verde or PAIGC (which translated into English means the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), which lead Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde islands to political independence in the 1970s. While living in Angola, also in 1956, Cabral collaborated with Mario de Andrade and Antonio Agostinho Neto to form the Movimento Popular Libertacao de Angola or MPLA (in English this translates into the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), which played a leading role in the liberation of Angola.

In 1957, as part of a conference in solidarity with the Algerian anti-colonial movement in Paris, Cabral again partnered with Mario de Andrade and Antonio Agostinho Neto to form the Movimento Anti-Colonista or MAC (which translated into English means Anti-Colonialist Movement) to discuss strategies to overthrow Portuguese colonial rule.

In 1958, Cabral attended the All-African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana organized by Kwame Nkrumah to coordinate support for the liberation movements from the existing independent nation-states and to unite the liberation movements on a continent-wide basis (Andrade, 1979). In 1960, while in Tunisia, Cabral established the Frente Revolucionaria Africana para a Independencia Nacional das Colonias Portuguesas or FRAIN (which translated into English translates into the Revolutionary Front for the National Independence of the Portuguese Colonies). FRAIN was established to coordinate the strategies and initiatives of the PAIGC and MPLA against Portuguese colonialism.

In 1961, while in Casablanca, Morocco, Cabral helped to establish the Conferencia das Organizacoes Nacionalistas das Colonias Portuguesas or CONCP (which in English translates into Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies) to expand upon and replace FRAIN to include FRELIMO from Mozambique and the MLSTP from Sao Tome and Principe to coordinate resistance to Portuguese colonialism on the African continent. In January 1963, Cabral and the PAIGC initiated the armed phase of the resistance movement in Guinea-Bissau, which led to its formal political independence from Portugal in September 1974 (Andrade, 1979).

As these initiatives illustrate, Cabral was a principal architect in the overthrow of Portuguese colonialism and the weakening of imperialist domination of Southern Africa via the white settler colonial regime in South Africa. As the spokesperson for the PAIGC, MPLA, and CONCP, Cabral was able to travel extensively throughout the African continent (and the world).

Cabral used the knowledge gained on his travels to judiciously assess the many failures of the first wave of national liberation movements and the national-state governments produced by many of these movements. These combined experiences shaped his worldview, theory, and most importantly, his practice as a revolutionary nationalist, socialist, and internationalist. It was Cabral's particular ability to systematically and scientifically summarise these experiences coherently and concretely that made his work applicable to the ongoing struggle for equality of rights of African descent in the United States.

### **3.2 Cabral's Idea for Independent Struggle**

In 1959, Amilcar Cabral abandoned his job as an agronomist in Lisbon and returned to Guinea Bissau to fight for the independence of his country, a fight which he saw as an act of culture. The first challenge and premise which he put forward were that the peasantry was not a revolutionary force in Guinea. In saying this, he differentiated between physical and political force, as the peasantry was actually a great force in Guinea. They were almost the whole population and produced the nation's wealth. However, because there was no history of peasants' revolts, it was difficult to build support among the peasantry for the idea of national liberation (Chabal, 2003).

Cabral's second premise was that some elements of the petite bourgeoisie were revolutionary. By petite bourgeoisie, he meant people working in the colonial state apparatus, the people Abilio Araujo called 'the colonial elites', that is, people who benefited from colonialism but were never fully integrated into the colonial system. According to Cabral, these people were trapped in the contradictions between the colonial culture and the colonized culture, with no clear interests in carrying out a revolution. (Chilcote, 1999).

Acknowledging this weakness, Cabral wrote:

But however high the degree of revolutionary consciousness of the sector of the petite bourgeoisie called to fulfil its historical function, it cannot free itself from one objective reality: the petite bourgeoisie, as a service class (that is to say a class not directly involved in the process of production), does not possess the economic base to guarantee the taking over of power. In fact, history has shown that whatever the role, sometimes importantly played by the individuals coming from the petite bourgeoisie in the process of a revolution, this class has never possessed political control. And it could never possess it, since political control (the state) is based on the economic capacity of the ruling class, and in the conditions of colonial and neocolonial society this capacity is retained by



two entities: imperialist capital and the native working class (Chabal, 2003).

The petite bourgeoisie, according to Cabral, was a new class created by foreign domination and indispensable to the operation of colonial exploitation. But the petite bourgeoisie could never integrate itself into the foreign minority in Guinea and remained a prisoner of the cultural and social contradictions imposed on it by the colonial reality, which defines it as a marginal or marginalized class. But it is on them, the petite bourgeoisie, which the PAIGC revolution should rely on (Chilcote, 1999).

Cabral delivered another speech in Havana in 1966, stating that: “The alternative - to betray the revolution or to commit suicide as a class - constitutes the dilemma of the petite bourgeoisie in the general framework of the national liberation struggle...” (Chabal, 2003). To carry out their historical function for national liberation, the petite bourgeoisie needed to undergo a process of *déclassé* or class suicide, to organise and build alliances with the farmers to fight against colonialism and imperialism (Chilcote, 1999).

### **3.3 Cabral's Philosophy on Colonial Independence and Culture**

In February 1964, eight years after its formation, PAIGC had its first Congress in Cassaca, a liberated zone in Guinea-Bissau, where it lay down the foundation for the state construction of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde. Antonio Tomas describes this period as building *um estado dentro da colonia*, literally a state inside the colony (Tomas, 2007).

The cultural action of state-building in the liberated zones inside Guinea will be further discussed in this study, but I will first address the issue of culture and history, to provide an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of Cabral's strategy.

Amilcar Cabral delivered two important speeches on culture between the early 1970s before he was assassinated on 20 January 1973. In a speech delivered at Syracuse University, New York, on February 20, 1970, entitled *National Liberation and Culture*, Cabral stated that:

A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture. Thus, it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural

oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture (African Information Service, 1973).

Cabral saw culture as:

An essential element of the history of people. Culture is, perhaps, the product of this history just as a flower is the product of a plant. Like history or because it is history, culture has as its material basis the level of the forces of production and the mode of production (African Information Service 1973).

According to Cabral, every society, everywhere, has both culture and history. The colonial and imperialist forces imposed cultural domination on the indigenous people and maintained their domination through organised repression. For example, the Apartheid regime in South Africa was, to Cabral, a form of organised repression. It created a minority white dictatorship over the indigenous people. But culture is also a form of resistance against foreign domination. In a society where there is a strong indigenous cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure of its perpetuation. Cultural resistance could be in the form of political, economic and armed resistance, depending on the internal and external factors, to contest the foreign domination, colonialism and imperialism.

Amilcar Cabral further reasserted his position in his speech entitled *Identity and Dignity in the Context of National Liberation Struggle*, delivered at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania on 15 October 1972. He argued that imperialist domination calls for cultural oppression and attempts either directly or indirectly to do away with the most important elements of the culture of the subject people.

On the other hand, a people could and should keep their culture alive, despite the organized repression of their cultural life, as a basis for their liberation movement; they can still culturally resist even when their politico-military resistance is destroyed. Eventually, he believed, new forms of resistance - political, economic and armed - would eventually return (African Information Service, 1973).

Amilcar Cabral regarded political education as the development of political consciousness, not as indoctrination. Ideologically it avoided endorsing a particular political doctrine such as , Marxism-Leninism. PAIGC instead believed that experience of the nationalist struggle and of the political education in the liberated areas formed the basis for the socialist ideology (Chabal, 2003).

### 3.4 Cabral Philosophy on Violence and Anti-colonial Struggle

Several years before giving the order to attack Tite in 1963 which was the official beginning of the war in Guinea, in August 1959, Cabral discretely tried to mobilize the dockworkers of Pidgiguiti to strike. This overtly pacific demonstration was violently dispersed by the Portuguese who killed tens of people. According to the history of the PAIGC, this was when Cabral ordered his men to abandon the country and look for shelter in neighbouring countries, such as Guinea- Conakry and Senegal.

Cabral never conceived of violence as an end in itself. For him, it was more a method of self-defence, for Cabral knew just how disruptive the effects of violence could be. Consequently, violence turned the party into a war machine, leading many militants to use the authority bestowed by the party to pursue their private ends. Often Cabral reminded his men that the PAIGC was a political force, not a military one.

For Cabral, violence was a means for the attainment of two ends: national independence, and second almost subordinate to the first, the formation of national culture. Armed struggle, in the context of the Portuguese colonies, let alone other Europeans colonies in Africa did not constitute the only path to independence. Yet, the strategy for the liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde was built around Cabral's ideas, namely unity. For Cabral, unity was not only a matter of getting more people together to fight a powerful enemy, it also had dialectical implications.

Among the African political leaders, the efforts of Amilca Cabral have made a profound theoretical and strategic contributions to the advancement of the black liberation movement. As long as capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, patriarchy, imperialism, and neo-colonialism exist as forces that exploit and oppress African (and all) people, Cabral's insights and analysis will always have relevance.

What separates Cabral from the others, however, is that his work provided detailed theoretical and strategic clarity on several fundamental questions that were critical to understanding the transition from 'colonialism' to neo-colonialism following the defeat of colonialism in the early 1960s and 70s. Some of Cabral's particular contributions centred on the following premises (Cabral, 1972):

- i. The limitations of national liberation within the capitalist world-system.
- ii. The internal material basis for neo-colonialism within colonized and oppressed nations and the critical dangers associated with this form of capitalist penetration and imperialist rule.

- iii. The ideological and theoretical weaknesses and shortcomings of the peoples' movements for liberation and the detriments they pose to the success of the movements.
- iv. The centrality of culture to anti-imperialist resistance and the need to create a new culture through a struggle to restore oppressed people into full agents of their own history and identity.
- v. The imperative of class struggle within the oppressed nation and the necessity of class "suicide" amongst critical segments of the nation or nation-class as Cabral himself stated.
- vi. But most particularly the petit bourgeoisie who often constitute the leadership of the movements given their strategic location within the capitalist mode of production and its national/international hierarchies (Cabral, 1972).

Cabral's works not only discerned generalities of the colonial phenomenon that applied to the New Afrikan context, but they also provided critical specificities that can and are still being used by various forces of the anti-colonial and neo-colonialism movement to sustain and advance the struggle for absolute liberation.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Discuss in brief Amilcar Cabral biography.
- ii. To what extent does Cabral's idea aid in the independent struggle of his country?
- iii. Discuss Cabral's philosophy on colonial independence and culture.
- iv. What are your take on Cabral philosophy on violence and anti-colonial struggle?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Amilcar Cabral is one such figure and in the hearts of the people of the small West African country of Guinea (Bissau), he will remain a leader who helped them regain their identity and who was otherwise instrumental in the initial stages of the long and difficult process of national liberation. Cabral is recognised as having been one of the world's outstanding political theoreticians. At the time of his assassination by Portuguese agents, on Jan. 20, 1973-Cabral, as Secretary-General of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), was also an outstanding practitioner of political theories. He could translate abstract theories into the concrete realities of his people, and very often the realities of his people resulted in the formulation of new theories.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Cabral's theoretical insightful works did not spring from thin air. Cabral was the product of a rather unique nexus of historical conjunctures that enabled him to directly experience and engage the various dynamics he wrote about and reflected upon. Cabral developed his theories on the motive forces of history, colonialism, imperialism, questions of national liberation, neo-colonialism.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss in brief Amilcar Cabral biography.
2. To what extent does Cabral's idea aid in the independent struggle of his country?
3. Discuss Cabral's philosophy on colonial independence and culture.
4. What are your take on Cabral philosophy on violence and anti-colonial struggle?

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## **MODULE 5                      SPIRITUALITY                      (RELIGION), GOVERNANCE AND THE STATE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This module is aimed at assessing issues of spiritual significance which relate to politics and the state through their philosophical injunctions as postulated by different philosophers. The first unit discusses spirituality (religion) and governance. The second unit emphasizes the biography of St Augustine and his philosophy, St. Augustine's Two Cities and his perspective on state and justice, his philosophy on church and the state. The third unit contributes to the biography of Usman Dan Fodio, his philosophy on the state and violence. The fourth unit discusses Isaiah Berlin biography, his conception of philosophy, Berlin's two concepts of liberty and Berlin perspective of political theory. The fifth unit talked about Ibn Khaldun's Thesis on the Metamorphosis of State, Ibn Khaldun philosophy on Group Feelings (*Asabiyyah*) and criticism against Ibn Khaldun's Stages of State Metamorphosis.

Unit 1	Spirituality (Religion) and Governance
Unit 2	St Augustine Philosophy on Church and the State
Unit 3	Usman Dan Fodio on State and Violence
Unit 4	Isaiah Berlin and Natural Rights
Unit 5	Ibn Khaldun on the Metamorphosis of State

### **UNIT 1                      SPIRITUALITY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Spirituality (Religion) and Governance
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit aims to justify the linkage between spirituality (religion) governance in our modern era. And validate why it is necessary to conjure the two concepts for the state to deliver the good life to its citizens.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning of spirituality and governance
- explain why it is important to linked spirituality and governance in running the affairs of the state.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Spirituality (Religion) and Governance

Although there may be disagreement on what ‘spirituality’ means, its reality is acknowledged and experienced in every human community that seeks deeper meaning and purpose to the challenges of life. Spirituality, therefore, refers to the interior meaning of our humanity (Swidler, 2013). All religious and ideological systems sustain their identity, vocation and witness through an embedded spirituality that is not a fixed concept, but dynamic in that it is always transforming reality by embracing and relinquishing people’s allegiance from time to time. It has to do with how we are being grasped by reality when we are in a transitional space.

Spirituality is an innate and intangible life-sustaining reality that communicates the quality, condition or uniqueness of one’s identity. It is an indispensable resource that ultimately transforms the individual from being possessed with selfish agendas to focusing on the common good of the entire community (Sheerattan-Bisnauth, 2009). Within the Christian religion, spirituality is focused on lifestyles that demonstrate sacredness or holiness, mysticism and devoutness to achieve a specific purpose. Within the Islamic perspective, spirituality is conceived as submitting oneself totally to the will of Allah through the guidance of his last prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Spirituality (Religion) and governance were inseparably linked for centuries, even millennia of human history. Religion provided the basis and justification, the mandate and limits of just and peaceful governance. Governance turned to religion for its legitimacy and authority. And since religions claimed to establish peace on earth and between men, there was a natural and legitimate role for religions in establishing the foundations of sound governance and just peace. Sovereigns were imbued with divine authority in cultures across the diverse continents for a reason.

Yet, today, although 87% of the world’s population still claim to have a religious affiliation, religion and governance have long since been torn asunder. The erstwhile aptitude of religions to unite and dissolve disputes has been overpowered by the capacity of religious institutions of various

faiths and denominations to divide, oppress and conquer (Usman & Shettima, 2010). One of the classical debates in political philosophy is whether spirituality through religion impact governance. The idea that the fusion of spirituality and governance is inevitable has been settled in the advanced democracies of the world. “The notion of separating religion (spirituality) from politics is a novel concept, particularly in Africa and the global south where there are clashes between tradition and modernity and heterogeneity and pluralism have defined social relations” (Usman & Shettima, 2010).

Generally, there are three ways in which spirituality (religion) can influence (politics) governance, namely, by the direct involvement of religious men in politics, by fusing the two (religion and politics) as one, and by subjecting politics or government to the doctrine or laws of religion, thereby carrying out politics or governance along the line of religious doctrine, ideals or laws (Omoregbe, 2003). The third that is, the application of religious principles, ideals by individual leadership in the governance process.

Indeed, it implies that, as a result of historical conditioning, Western nations in particular as having a sacred character toward states’ institutions. If for instance, democracy is meant to be the best engine that drives national governance towards agreed common objectives, then spirituality is the engine oil that lubricates and cleans to ensure that the journey is not compromised because of engine failure. Therefore, spirituality has an important role to play in equipping its adherents to hold the democratic system and process accountable to the people and their needs.

Democracy is sometimes presented as a kind of system that demands worship from all citizens for them to experience justice and peace. The episode of crisis a few years back and the travails that brought the present US President Donald Trump to power called into question the spirituality of governance that underpins the practice of democracy coupled with the global display within the USA in 2013 when the leaders within the legislature failed to agree on their budget, and it resulted in the closure of the Federal Government for two weeks.

The inability of the legislature to find consensus on what constituted the common good of the nation serves as a potent signpost that there can be rogue spirituality that informs different models of governance. The dysfunctional behaviour almost brought the country to default on its debt. The leadership, in this case, created a crisis in governance as they represented an extreme version of Christian conservatism allied with an extreme and irresponsible political conservatism of the Tea Party movement and the Republican Party. Their actions communicated a



negative view of conservative religion, suggesting that it is addicted to a dysfunctional form of spirituality that results in bad governance and deepening dysfunction in pluralistic societies. Other examples include the way and manner the previous political leadership ruled their country by mismanaging the endowed resources the countries have which exhibit a high level of political immorality and selfishness while claiming to be spiritually affiliated to either Islam or Christianity.

For good governance to produce the desired results, spirituality is necessary and essential. Only spirituality can provide, bring about the desired commitment, care and confidence required for good governance. People with spiritual values live such manifestations, as these qualities are required absolutely and very essential for those in governance. A leader has to be a someone who sees everyone as being equal; someone, who transports, transmits and go along with the truth; someone, who is transparent in all his actions and deeds; someone who is broad-minded and a visionary; and above all an embodiment of love and compassion. Also, should be a person who abounds with empathy. However, whenever a society is seen as chaotic and lacks spiritual values it becomes apparently difficult to govern. People who possess a degree of spirituality are honest and committed, as it is a necessary tool to create a crime-free society. It can be argued that ‘Religion’ has created conflict, but irreligious societies have created worse chaos and corruption in human history.

Did not millions suffer in Russia, China and Cambodia in the name of freeing society of religious beliefs? Therefore, when spirituality and politics fail to coexist, then you have corrupt politicians and pseudo-religious leaders. Finally, we must all acknowledge that the import of “Governance” is about caring for people primarily, and providing for their welfare. Whilst “Spirituality” gives one a broader vision of life, instructing in all that it share, care and nurture each other selflessly and with self-control, as its ultimate purpose.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. What is the meaning of spirituality and governance?
- ii. Why it is important to linked spirituality and governance in running the affairs of the state?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The state is designed to provide the citizens with the avenue to enjoy a good life. However, the state can only achieve this feat if the political leadership embrace the fear of God in its conduct which is what this unit discusses.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

For any reason, spirituality is meant to be the best engine that drives governance towards achieving a good life, then spirituality is the bedrock upon which inclination good governance is not compromised. Therefore, spirituality has an important role to play in equipping its adherents to hold government accountable to the people and their needs.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is the meaning of spirituality and governance?
2. Why it is important to linked spirituality and governance in running the affairs of the state?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2      ST. AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY ON CHURCH AND THE STATE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Biography of St Augustine
  - 3.2    St Augustine Philosophy
  - 3.3    St. Augustine's Two Cities
  - 3.4    St. Augustine Perspective on State and Justice
  - 3.5    St. Augustine Philosophy on Church and the State
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

This unit examines the life and political ideas of St. Aurelius Augustine. Specifically, attempt is made here to identify the main contents of his teaching as expressed in the doctrine of two cities. Other issues which are treated in this unit focus on the limits of political obligation and the contention on the spheres of supremacy between the church and the state.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write the biography of St Augustine
- discuss St Augustine philosophy and his concept of two cities
- examine St. Augustine perspective on state and justice
- analyse St. Augustine philosophy on church and the state.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Biography of St Augustine**

St. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), originally named Aurelius Augustinus, was the Catholic Bishop of Hippo in northern Africa was born in Tagaste in Algeria, North Africa to a Christian mother, St. Monica and a father who remained steadfast to his traditional religion till later years in life. He resented his mother's plea to convert to Christianity and rather preferred to romanticize with the many seductions of his era, particularly the Great

Philosophies of men, the licentiousness of other students, the theatres, the intoxication of his literary success, and a proud desire to be always first, even in evil.

He, however, converted to Christianity in 387 AD. By 391 AD he was ordained a priest and later Bishop of Hippo in 396 AD, a position he occupied until his death. He was a skilled Roman-trained rhetorician, a prolific writer (who produced more than 110 works over 30 years), and by wide acclamation, the first Christian philosopher.

Aurelius Augustine studied Rhetoric at Carthage and eventually worked as a teacher with it while in Carthage, Milan and Rome. He also read the works of Cicero, the Manichaeans, Skeptics and later the neo-Platonists. These experiences exposed him to questions of philosophy and trained his mind in curiosity. He was a very prolific writer and some of his works include *Confessions* and *De Civitas Dei* (On the City of God), On the Trinity; On Faith, and Love and On Christian Doctrine. His other writings include his polemic attacks on various heresies such as Against Faustus, the Manichean; On Baptism; Against the Donatists.

Writing from a unique background and vantage point as a keen observer of society before the fall of the Roman Empire, Augustine's views on political and social philosophy constitute an important intellectual bridge between late antiquity and the emerging medieval world. Because of the scope and quantity of his work, many scholars consider him to have been the most influential Western philosopher. Although Augustine certainly would not have thought of himself as a political or social philosopher per se, the record of his thoughts on such themes as the Nature of Human Society, Justice, the Nature and Role of the State, the Relationship between Church and State, Just and Unjust War, and Peace all have played their part in the shaping of Western civilization. There is much in his work that anticipates major themes in the writings of modern philosophers such as Machiavelli, Luther, Calvin and, in particular Hobbes (Gilson, 1960).

### **3.2 St Augustine Philosophy**

Augustine's political and social views flow directly from his theology. The historical context is essential to understanding his purposes. Augustine, more than any other figure of late antiquity, stands at the intellectual intersection of Christianity, philosophy, and politics. As a Christian cleric, he takes it as his task to defend his flock against the unremitting assault by heresies spawned in an era uninformed by the immediate, divine revelations which had characterized the apostolic age.

As a philosopher, he situates his arguments against the backdrop of Greek philosophy in the Platonic tradition, particularly as formulated by the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria. As a prominent Roman citizen, he understands the Roman Empire to be the divinely-ordained medium through which the truths of Christianity are to be both spread and safeguarded. Augustine died reciting the Penitential Psalms as the Vandals besieged the city of Hippo on the coast of northern Africa (now the city of Annaba, in Algeria). This occurred two decades after the sacking of Rome by Alaric (Gilson, 1960).

Augustine's willingness to grapple with substantive political and social issues does not mean, however, that the presentation of his ideas comes pre-packaged as a simple system or even as a system at all. Quite the contrary, his political arguments are scattered throughout his voluminous writings, which include autobiography, sermons, expositions, commentaries, letters, and Christian apologetics. Moreover, the contexts in which political and social issues are addressed are equally varied (Deane, 1963).

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suggest that his arguments are not informed by a cogent theory. Taken together, his political and social views constitute a remarkable tapestry. Indeed, the consistency evident in the expression of his varied but related ideas leads both fairly and directly to the assumption that Augustine's political-philosophical statements arise from a consistent set of premises which guide him to his conclusions; in other words, they reveal the presence of an underlying theory.

Because Augustine considers the Christian scriptures to constitute the touchstone against which philosophy including political philosophy must be essayed, his world view necessarily includes the Christian tenets of the *Creation*, the *Fall of Man*, and the *Redemption*. In stark contrast to the pagan philosophers who preceded him who viewed the unfolding of history as a cyclical phenomenon, Augustine conceives history in strictly linear terms, with a beginning and an end. According to Augustine, the earth was brought into existence by a perfectly good and just God, who created man. The earth is not eternal; the earth, as well as time, has both a beginning and an end (Deane, 1963).

Man, on the other hand, was brought into existence to endure eternally. Damnation is the just desert of all men because of the Fall of Adam, who, having been created with free will, chose to disrupt the perfectly good order established by God. As the result of Adam's Fall, all human beings are heirs to the effects of Adam's original sin, and all are vessels of pride, avarice, greed and self-interest. For reasons known only to God, He has predestined some fixed number of men for salvation (as a display of His

unmerited mercy, a purely gratuitous act altogether independent even of God's foreknowledge of any good deeds those men might do while on earth), while most He has predestined for damnation as a just consequence of the Fall. The onward march of human history, then, constitutes the unfolding of the divine plan which will culminate in one or the other outcome for every member of the human family (Gilson, 1960).

Within this framework of political and legal systems, the state is a divinely ordained punishment for fallen man, with its armies, its power to command, coerce, punish, and even put to death, as well as its institutions such as slavery and private property. God shapes the ultimate ends of man's existence through it. The state simultaneously serves the divine purposes of chastening the wicked and refining the righteous. Also simultaneously, the state constitutes a sort of remedy for the effects of the Fall, in that it serves to maintain such modicum of peace and order as it is possible for fallen man to enjoy in the present world (Mattox, 2006).

While it is not clear that God predestines every event during man's sojourn on earth, nothing happens in contravention of His designs. In any case, predestination fixes the ultimate destination of every human being as well as the political states to which they belong. Hence, predestination for Augustine is the proverbial elephant in the room. Whether predestination was divinely contemplated prior or incidental to the Fall, a point which Augustine never clearly articulates, the following problem arises: If one is to be saved or damned by divine fiat, what difference does it make whether the world possesses the social order of a state? For those who are predestined for damnation, what is the point of their being "chastened" (or a means to encourage their reformation) by the state? For those predestined for salvation, what is the point of their being refined by the vicissitudes of life in a political state?

To prevent the collapse of such a systematic account of the human condition as Augustine provides, the question simply must be set aside as a matter unknowable to finite man. However, this means that the best Augustine can hope to accomplish is to describe political life on earth, but not a prescription for how to obtain membership in the perfect society of heaven; for, even strict obedience to Christian precepts will not compensate for one's not being gratuitously elected for salvation.

As the social fabric of the world around him unravels in the twilight years of the Roman Empire, Augustine attempts to elucidate the relationship between the eternal, invisible verities of his faith and the stark realities of the present, observable political and social conditions of humanity. At the intersection of these two concerns, Augustine finds what for him is the central question of politics: How do the faithful operate successfully but justly in an unjust world, where selfish interests dominate, where the

general welfare is rarely sought, and where good and evil men are inextricably and, to human eyes, often unidentifiably intermingled, yet search for a heavenly reward in the world hereafter?

### **3.3 St. Augustine's Two Cities**

Even though those elected for salvation and those elected for damnation are thoroughly intermingled, the distinction arising from their respective destinies gives rise to two classes of persons, to whom Augustine refers collectively and allegorically as cities; the City of God and the earthly city.

Citizens of the earthly city are the unregenerate progeny of Adam and Eve, who are justifiably damned because of Adam's Fall. These persons, according to Augustine, are aliens to God's love not because God refuses to love them, but because they refuse to love God as evidenced by their rebellious disposition inherited from the Fall. Indeed, the object of their love whatever it may be is something other than God. In particular, citizens of the "earthly city" are distinguished by their lust for material goods and domination over others.

On the other hand, citizens of the City of God are "pilgrims and foreigners" who because God, the object of their love, is not immediately available for their present enjoyment and hence, are very much out of place in a world without an earthly institution sufficiently similar to the City of God. No political state, nor even the institutional church, can be equated with the City of God. Moreover, there is no such thing as "dual citizenship" in the two cities; every member of the human family belongs to one and only one (Mattox, 2006).

### **3.4 St. Augustine Perspective on State and Justice**

The Augustinian notion of justice includes what by his day was a well-established definition of justice of "giving every man his due." However, Augustine grounds his application of the definition in distinctively Christian philosophical commitments: "justice," says Augustine, "is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else." Accordingly, justice becomes the crucial distinction between ideal political states, none of which actually exist on earth and non-ideal political states the status of every political state on earth.

For example, the Roman Empire could not be synonymous with the City of God precisely because it lacked true justice as defined above; and since "where there is no justice there is no commonwealth," Rome could not truly be a commonwealth, that is, an ideal state. "Remove justice," Augustine asks rhetorically, "and what are kingdoms but gangs of

criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms?” No earthly state can claim to possess true justice, but only some relative justice by which one state is more just than another. Likewise, the legitimacy of any earthly political regime can be understood only in relative terms: “The emperor and the pirate have equally legitimate domains if they are equally just” (Mattox, 2006).

Nevertheless, political states, imperfect as they are, serve a divine purpose. At the very least, they serve as vehicles for maintaining order and for preventing what Hobbes will later call the “war of all against all.” In that respect, the state is a divine gift and an expression of divine mercy especially if the state is righteously ruled. The state maintains order by keeping wicked men in check through the fear of punishment. Although God will eventually punish the sins of all those elected for damnation, He uses the state to levy more immediate punishments against both the damned and the saved (or against the wicked and the righteous, the former dichotomy not necessarily synonymous with the latter). Rulers, as God’s ministers, punish the guilty and always are justified in punishing sins “against nature,” and circumstantially justified in punishing sins “against custom” or “against the laws.” The latter two categories of sins change from time to time.

In this regard, the institution of the state marks a relative return to order from the chaos of the Fall. Rulers have the right to establish any law that does not conflict with the law of God. Citizens have to obey their political leaders regardless of whether the leader is wicked or righteous. There is no right of civil disobedience. Citizens are always duty-bound to obey God; and when the imperatives of obedience to God and obedience to civil authority conflict, citizens must choose to obey God and willingly accept the punishment of disobedience. Nevertheless, those empowered to levy punishment should take no delight in the task. For example, the prayer of the judge who condemns a man to death should be, as Augustine’s urges, “From my necessities of imposing judgment to a person deliver thou me” (Battenhouse, 1963).

### **3.5 St. Augustine Philosophy on Church and the State**

Even though the ostensible reason for the state’s divinely appointed existence is to assist and bless humankind, there is no just state, says Augustine, because men reject the thing that best could bring justice to an imperfect world, namely, the teachings of Christ. Augustine does not suggest that the current rejection of Christ’s teachings means that all hope for future amendment and reformation is lost.

However, Augustine’s whole tenor is that there is no reason to expect that the political jurisdictions of this world ever will be anything different than



what they now are if the past is any predictor of the future. Hence, Augustine concludes that Christ's servants, whether they are kings, or princes, or judges, or soldiers . . . are bidden, if need be, to endure the wickedness of an utterly corrupt state, and by that endurance to win for themselves a place of glory . . . in the Heavenly Commonwealth, whose law is the will of God (Mattox, 2006).

Augustine clearly holds that the establishment and success of the Roman Empire, along with its embracing of Christianity as its official religion, was part of the divine plan of the true God. Indeed, he holds that the influence of Christianity upon the empire could be only salutary in its effect: "Were our religion listened to as it deserves," says Augustine, "it would establish, consecrate, strengthen, and enlarge the commonwealth in a way beyond all that Romulus, Numa, Brutus, and all the other men of renown in Roman history achieved".

More so, while Augustine doubtless holds that Rome should be Christian than not, he recognises that officially embracing Christianity does not automatically transform an earthly state into the City of God. Indeed, he regards Rome as "a kind of second Babylon." Even if the Roman Emperor and the Roman Pontiff were the same, even if the structures of state and church merged to become institutionally the same, they would not thereby become the City of God, because citizenship in the City of God is determined at the individual and not the institutional level (Mukherjee & Ranaswamy, 2007).

It is on the note that Augustine does not wish ill for Rome. Quite the contrary, he supplicates God for Rome's welfare, since he belongs to it, in temporal terms at least. He sees Rome as the last bastion against the advances of the pagan barbarians, who surely must not be allowed to overrun the mortal embodiment of Christendom that Rome represents.

Nevertheless, Augustine cannot be overly optimistic about the future of the Roman state as such not because it is Rome, but because it is a state; for any society of men other than the City of God is part and parcel of the earthly city, which is doomed to inevitable demise. Even so, states like Rome can perform the useful purpose of championing the cause of the Church, protecting it from assault and compelling those who have fallen away from fellowship with it to return to the fold. Indeed, it is entirely within the provinces of the state to punish heretics and schismatics (Battenhouse, 1963).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Discuss St Augustine philosophy and his concept of two cities.
- ii. Analyse St. Augustine perspective on state and justice.

- iii. Elucidate on St. Augustine philosophy on church and the state.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Based on St. Augustine views on spirituality, state lacking religion (Christianity) is grossly polluted with corruption, cronyism and sycophancy. It produces and creates an unethical atmosphere of schemed situations of circumstances against the people. Hence, a state without ethics and human values would result in untrustworthiness, crime and corruption. The goal of religion (Christianity) is to bring good to the subjects and increase material, emotional and physical well-being and comfort of people as envisaged by St. Augustine. Furthermore, as mentioned by St. Augustine, the purpose of religion (Christianity) is to raise and encourage morality and human values. Consequently, state and religion (Christianity) are inseparable terms for which men should obey as they go hand in hand.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit addresses the ideas and the teachings of St Aurelius Augustine.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss St Augustine philosophy and his concept of two cities.
2. Analyse St. Augustine perspective on state and justice.
3. Elucidate on St. Augustine philosophy on church and the state.

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## **UNIT 3 USMAN DAN FODIO ON VIOLENCE AND THE STATE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Biography of Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817)
  - 3.2 Dan Fodio Philosophy on State
  - 3.3 Dan Fodio Views on Violence
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The wheel of socio-political unrest was set in motion in Hausa land. The man who masterminded the jihad to its successful completion was a Fulani scholar Usman Dan Fodio. In fact, Dan Fodio was the patron and inspirer of the 19th-century Islamic revolution that swept through Sudan. He combined in himself both courage and devotion to the cause of Islam and erudition. He was a highly vocal preacher and a prolific writer, Islamic preacher, reformer, philosopher and statesman. This unit discusses Usman Dan Fodio philosophy toward religion and the state.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write the biography of Usman Dan Fodio
- discuss Usman Dan Fodio philosophy on state and violence.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Biography of Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817)**

Usman dan Fodio was born on December 15, 1754, in the village of Maratta to a Fulani tribe in the Hausa city-state of Gobir, in what is today northern Nigeria whose scattered members provided most of the Muslim reformers. His own ancestors had migrated from Futa Toro, possibly in the 15th century and were a scholarly clan devoted to Islamic learning, teaching and the manufacture of Koranic amulets. Shortly after Usman's

birth, his family moved to Degel in Northern Gobir where he grew up (Mervyn, 1973).

He was taught to read the Koran by his father, and later studied under different scholars among whom were Mallam Jubril at Agades and Mallam Usman Binduri, thus he became an expert in Arabic grammar; Islamic theology, history and learnt the techniques of explanation and public speaking and the writing of poetry. During this period, he wrote many religious books, booklets and pamphlets in both the Arabic and Hausa languages. Many of these books contained wisdom and knowledge which attracted the attention of many people. Many admirers began to flock to him to benefit from his fountain of knowledge (Ibraheem, 1987).

Dan Fodio became famous as a scholar and a teacher, many young men flocked to Degel to study under him and receive his spiritual guidance. During the 1780s, Dan Fodio was employed by the ruler of Gobir Nafata as a teacher to the royal court, among his pupils was Prince Yunfa who later became the King in 1802. This was the result of his popularity which came because of his teaching and intellect. Dan Fodio gained followership from among his Fulani tribesmen, Bororoje, Hausa masses and generally the downtrodden in the society as he engaged in his career from one community to another (Bugaje, 1995).

### **3.2 Dan Fodio Philosophy on the State**

Dan Fodio's teaching was not just restricted to theological matters; he also concerned himself with issues of social justice, women education, corruption, public administration and above all the establishment of a virile Islamic State. Usman Dan Fodio's preaching was aimed, first at converting the common people to a puritanical form of Islam and only later at compelling the rulers of Gobir to set up an Islamic state. He enlightened people on Islamic doctrine and pointed out how wicked it was to make a sacrifice to other gods and to be careless in observing prayer times (Christopher and David, 1999).

He preached against the treatment of women as tools only to be used and dumped. He condemned the consumption of alcohol and encouraged the giving of alms. Dan Fodio strongly preached against the ostentatious life led by the aristocrats and demanded rulers to rule in accordance with Islamic injunctions. The government should conform to the requirement of the shari h: Law courts should follow Islamic law and apply Islamic remedies (Bugaje, 1995).

Dan Fodio also preached against the un-Islamic nature of the fiscal system of the society. Taxes were levied indiscriminately and heavily on the masses which generated tension and sharp contradictions in the society.

Corruption was very prevalent in the society at all levels. Government officials demanded bribes for everything that had to be done. The Judicial system was not only corrupt but manned and organised in un-Islamic manners thus, criminals got away with their crimes.

Dan Fodio's teachings challenged the entire administrative system and social order of Gobir and by extension Hausa land in the late 15th century and for that reason, he won a large body of followers. Nominal Muslims (both settled Fulani and Hausa) responded to his calls to reform their personal lives. Settled Fulanis discontented at their exclusion from the higher levels of government, saw the religious movement as a means of establishing their political power over the Hausa people (John, 1995).

As mentioned earlier, Dan Fodio was a great teacher who preached against injustice and un-Islamic attitude in the society. Therefore more followers were attracted to him. He started his preaching career in Degel, his home town and as he became more popular, Sarki Bawa of Gobir (1776-1796) tried to win him over by flattery, through consulting him on doctrines of Islam but failed, the King used other means including a present of 500 Mitkals of gold but all in vain. All these increased his popularity. Thus, the King banned his activities and decreed that Muslim men should not wear a turban while women must also not wear a veil, to all these, Dan Fodio objected.

During the reign of Yunfa confrontation against the Dan Fodio continued to the extent of attempting his life. This forced Dan Fodio to fled to Gudu from Degel. With this, he claimed to have performed Hijra. It was amid all these antagonisms, the Fulanis decided to take arms against their Hausa overlords which led to the Jihad (Kevin, 2004).

The cause of the jihad was however captured thus:

**Religious Aspect of the Jihad:** The chief intention of the Sokoto jihad headed by Usman Dan Fodio was to restore the fading fame and glory of Islam. In other words, Dan Fodio was bent in his irrevocable task to purify Islam with the worship of images and idols. He found it against the laws of Islam to worship Allah and idols at the same time. In Hausa land, the leaders valued the worship of idols, they offered sacrifices to idols to safeguard their throne and protect their land against calamity.

**Political Aspect of the Jihad:** The Fulanis intended to seize power from the primitive Hausa lords. They could not imagine a group of primitive and irreligious people dictating to them. Added to this fact was the point that they wanted to seize the political power to enable them to establish an Islamic community free from paganism.

**Social Aspect of the Jihad:** Under the Hausa regimes, the conditions of women, as well as those of children, were deplorable. Women during this time were ranked, second class citizens. They were denied education as well as other social amenities. As if these were not bad enough, they were, for the sake of religion, turned to purdahs through which they were imprisoned perpetually. To Dan Fodio, these were very unfair and irreligious. In his view, therefore, everything humanly possible must be done to ameliorate these deplorable conditions.

**Economic Aspect of the Jihad:** The Fulanis aimed to become economically independent. They failed completely to see why they should pay heavily for the lands in which their cattle grazed. The Fulanis were unnecessarily taxed by the Hausa kingdoms, not only the Fulanis even the Hausas were taxed heavily on the land they farm for each member of the families which created the harsh condition to migrate to another land just because they could not afford to pay their taxes (Isam, 1975).

### 3.3 Dan Fodio Views on Violence

Usman Dan Fodio settled at Degel in the last decades of the 18th century and from there, his fame continued to spread and attract students and scholars. He demanded complete acceptance of the spiritual and moral values of Islam and condemned the corrupt and unjust government which, against the teachings of the Qur' n oppressed the poor and the weak. He attacked those Mallams who supported oppressive governments and sultans, and it is reported that over a thousand scholars gathered at one time to hear him speak.

Dan Fodio always preferred conversion and reform to violence and bloodshed in achieving Muslim aims. Dan Fodio's prestige further increased when he successfully negotiated an agreement with Sultan Bawa of Gobir which granted Muslims freedom of religion and guaranteed respect for the turban (Nehemia and Randall, 2000). However, the pagan aristocracy disapproved of such and would have preferred a policy of reducing Muslim activity. After Bawa's death, they persuaded Sultan Nafata, 1796-1802, reluctantly to issue a proclamation which withdrew the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Muslim. In addition, Nafata ordered all converts to return to paganism.

On Nafata's death, his son Yunfa became sultan. To prevent the development of a separate Muslim group in his Kingdom, he attempted the life of Dan Fodio in Alkalawa, the capital of Gobir. Dan Fodio and his companions withdrew from Degel to Gudu on the western frontier of Gobir. This was the Hijra (Flight). Supporters began to arrive in the following months both from Gobir and from all over western Sudan (Nikki, 1994).

Dan Fodio tried to assert the religious and social aims of jihad, and thus to win popular support, by issuing two manifestos, *Wathiquat Ahl al Sudan* and later, *Kit b al-farq*. In this, he pointed out the duty of Muslims to resist paganism and evils of pagan government. The jihad began with the defeat of Yunfa's army at Tabkin Kwatto (Lake Kwatto) in 1804. In 1808, Sultan Yunfa was killed at the fall of Alkalawa, hence the serious resistance collapsed. The Gobir army and aristocracy withdrew to the North, while Kebbi forces reorganized in the country to the West around Argungu, the major parts of Gobir, Kebbi and Zamfara were occupied by Dan Fodio's army (Nehemia and Randall, 2000).

The success of the jihad had profound effects on the nineteenth century western Sudan. Dan Fodio's teaching and his successful jihad inspired the creation of large political units in place of numerous small competing units as Islam spread throughout western Sudan and led to an increase in education and learning, which in turn led to expanded trade and prosperity. Islam, for whose sake the jihad was fought, spread to major parts of western Sudan. In places where it could not be introduced, force was generally resorted to. The result was that the religion which was in 1800, a religion of a small minority as from that time became the official religion of the majority (Hiskett, 1984).

The worship of Allah combines with idols, by the rulers in Hausa land were replaced with leaders who are faithful and worship Allah alone. In addition, the same religion helped to destroy the tribalism, which had been a cankerworm in the flesh of the Hausas and replaced it with loyalties to the brotherhood. In the field of education, Dan Fodio blamed those who treated their wives and daughters like household implements by denying them education. He believed strongly in the education of women, and some of the women of his own family were scholars. In an attempt to promote education, many treatises were written and circulated throughout Sudan, to educate administrators about the kind of society they should aim at creating as well as to explain Qur'anic laws to the judges. Civil servants and government officials were encouraged to learn. Many libraries, schools and colleges grew up in many places. The Arabic language became the official language of literature and correspondence in the empire (Usman, 1979).

In the area of trade, a great expansion was made possible, because of the establishment of the new Fulani Empire to replace the numerous competing Hausa states. The considerable peace which was the result of this creation enabled all the citizens of the empire to go about their business without the slightest molestation. Farmers could farm freely, the herdsmen rear their cattle, and traders carry out their trade with the North

African Berbers who exchanged their articles for the Sudanese products like gold, salt, diamond and slaves (Last, 1967).

Politically, the new administrative system of the new caliphate was a 'federal' system based on the Emirate structure. The bureaucracies in the Emirate and at Sokoto were both responsive and accountable. Though many of pre-jihad titles were retained the pattern and criteria of office acquisition were radically different. The state officials are given specific departmental or territorial functions for which they are accountable. The new emirate and caliphate bureaucracies were based on specific laws, duties and public accountability; hence a systematized and rationalized public role, radically different from the unsystematic title-system of pre-jihad states was introduced.

Protection and peace between Muslim and non-Muslim communities and protection for foreigners living in Muslim communities were instituted. A major constitutional innovation was in the method of selecting the ruler. For a new ruler to have his legitimacy confirmed, he must receive *Bay'a* (pledge) from the electors and members of the public; this paying of allegiance is a practical demonstration to the ruler of his duties to the people and their right to sanction his policies or even his rule (Boahen & Webster, (1967).

Before the death of Dan Fodio in 1817 the Caliphate had been well established. In 1809 Dan Fodio retired from political life and devoted the rest of his life to religion and scholarship. Before retiring, however, he left his permanent imprint on the organizational structure of the caliphate. He divided the caliphate into two parts in 1812, the eastern section with Sokoto as its capital and the western section with Gwandu as its headquarters (Isichei, 1983). The Eastern part comprised the emirates of Sokoto, Gobir, Katsina, Kano, Daura, Zaria, Keffi, Nassarawa, Katagun, Bauchi and Adamawa. The Western section comprised the emirates of Kebbi (Gwandu), Yauri, Nupe, Borgu and Ilorin. Dan Fodio appointed his son Mohammed Bello to be in charge of the administration of the Eastern part and appointed his brother Abdullahi to be at the head of the Western part.

Usman dan Fodio's jihad inspired a series of wars throughout Western Sudan and made Islam the dominant faith among the mass of people from Senegal to Chad. His movements also led to a poetic and literary explosion in Gobir, Kano, Katsina, and other Hausa city-states. The surviving Arabic writings of the Sokoto Caliphate far outnumber the whole literary production of the central and western Sudan from 1000 AD, when Islam first appeared in West Africa, up to 1802 as Arabic was widely used for diplomacy and correspondence throughout the region then.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give an account of Usman Dan Fodio struggles to transform the Hausa land.
- ii. Examine Dan Fodio philosophy regarding the issue of state and violence.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The Usman Danfodio was a revolutionary leader within a traditional Muslim society. His philosophy was revolutionary in ideology, in an organisation and in intellectual and emotional appeal. Dan Fodio transformed the Hausa states in different perspectives, from pagan practice to true practice of Islam, from lack of a systematised and exploitative system of administration to a systemized, sincere and accountable system of governance.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Usman Dan Fodio was a man of great intellect and scholarship nature. He was very concerned with how to address the ills of his society. Having grown up in Hausa land saw the injustices perpetrated by the rulers of the state, most of whose actions were un-Islamic, he dreamt of a theocratic state built on the foundations of Islamic laws which prompted him to achieve this with the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate through Jihad and propagation of Islam.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give an account of Usman Dan Fodio struggles to transform the Hausa land.
2. Examine Dan Fodio philosophy regarding the issue of state and violence.

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## **UNIT 4    ISAIAH    BERLIN    CONCEPTION    OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Isaiah Berlin Biography
  - 3.2 Berlin's Conception of Philosophy
  - 3.3 Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty
  - 3.4 Isaiah Berlin Perspective of Political Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit set to discuss the life and work of Isaiah Berlin particularly his political philosophy and his controversial posture on political theory.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write about the life and work of Isaiah Berlin
- discuss Isaiah Berlin political philosophy and his controversial posture on political theory.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Isaiah Berlin Biography**

Isaiah Berlin was born in 1909 in Riga (then in the Russian Empire, now the capital of Latvia), the son of Mendel Berlin, a prosperous timber merchant, and his wife Marie, née Volshonok. In 1915 the family moved to Andreapol, in Russia, and in 1917 to Petrograd (now St Petersburg), where they remained through both the Russian Revolutions of 1917. Isaiah attended St Paul's School and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he studied Greats (classical languages, ancient history, and philosophy) and PPE (politics, philosophy and economics).

In 1932, he was appointed a lecturer at New College; the same year he became the first Jew to be elected to a Prize Fellowship at All Souls, considered one of the highest accolades in British academic life.

Throughout the 1930s Berlin was deeply involved in the development of philosophy at Oxford. However, he also developed an early interest in a more historical approach to philosophy, and in social and political theory, as reflected in his intellectual biography of Karl Marx (1939), still in print over 75 years later (Gray, 1996).

During the Second World War Berlin served in the British Information Services in New York City (1940-2) and at the British Embassy in Washington, DC (1942-6), where he was responsible for drafting weekly reports on the American political scene. In 1945-6 Berlin visited the Soviet Union and formed his future intellectual agenda. After the war Berlin returned to Oxford, his interests had shifted to the history of ideas, particularly Russian intellectual history, the history of Marxist and socialist theories, and the Enlightenment and its critics. He also began to publish widely-read articles on contemporary political and cultural trends, political ideology, and the internal workings of the Soviet Union.

In 1950, election to a Research Fellowship at All Souls allowed him to devote himself to his historical, political and literary interests, which lay well outside the mainstream of philosophy as it was then practised at Oxford. He was, however, one of the first of the founding generation of Oxford philosophers to make regular visits to American universities, and played an important part in spreading 'Oxford philosophy' to the USA (Ignatieff, 1998).

In 1957, a year after he had married Aline Halban (née de Gunzbourg), Berlin was elected Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford; his inaugural lecture, delivered in 1958, was *Two Concepts of Liberty*. He resigned his chair in 1967, the year after becoming founding President of Wolfson College, Oxford, which he essentially created, retiring in 1975. Berlin was knighted in 1957 and was appointed to the Order of Merit in 1971. Collections of his writings, edited by Henry Hardy and others, began appearing in 1978; there are, to date, fourteen such volumes (plus new editions of two works published previously by Berlin), as well as an anthology, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, and a four-volume edition of his letters. Berlin received the Agnelli, Erasmus and Lippincott Prizes for his work on the history of ideas, and the Jerusalem Prize for his lifelong defence of civil liberties, as well as numerous honorary degrees. He died in 1997 (Hanley, (2007).

### **3.2 Berlin's Conception of Philosophy**

Berlin's conception of philosophy was shaped by his early exposure to, and rejection of, both Idealism and logical positivism. With the former, he associated an excessively exalted view of philosophy as the 'queen of the sciences', capable of establishing fundamental, necessary, absolute

and abstract truths. With the latter, he associated the reductionist and deflationary view of philosophy as, at best, a handmaiden to the natural sciences, and at worst a sign of intellectual immaturity bred of confusion and credulity.

Berlin's approach insisted on the fundamental difference between the natural and human sciences.

He classed philosophy among the human sciences, but even there its status was unique. If earlier thinkers had regarded philosophy as a *scientia scientiarum*, Berlin regarded it as *ascientia nescientiarum*, the form of enquiry concerning those things which cannot be objects of empirical knowledge (Berlin, 1978a).

In the case of non-philosophical questions, even if the answer is unknown, the means for discovering the answer is known, or accepted, by most people. Thus questions of empirical fact can be answered by observation. Other questions can be answered deductively, by referring to established rules; this is the case, for example, with mathematics, grammar and formal logic. For example, even if we do not know the solution to a particularly difficult mathematical problem, we do know the rules and techniques that should lead us to the answer (Berlin, 1978a).

According to Berlin, philosophy concerns itself with questions of a special, distinctive character. To such questions not only are the answers not known, but neither are the means for arriving at answers or the standards of judgment by which to evaluate whether a suggested answer is plausible or implausible. Thus, the questions 'How long does it take to drive from x to y?' or 'What is the cube root of 729?' are not philosophical; while 'What is time?' or 'What is a number?' are. 'What is the purpose of human life?' or 'Are all men brothers?' are philosophical questions, while 'Do most of the such-and-such a group of men think of one another as brothers?' or 'What did Luther believe was the purpose of life?' are not.

Philosophy involves the study of these 'thought-spectacles' through which we view the world; and since at least some of these categories change over time, at least some philosophy is necessarily historical. Because these categories are so important to every aspect of our experience, philosophy, even if it is always tentative and often seems abstract and esoteric is a crucially important activity, which response to the vital, in-eradicable human need to describe and explain the world of experience. Berlin insisted on philosophy's social usefulness, however indirect and unobtrusive. By bringing to light often subconscious presuppositions and models, and scrutinizing their validity, philosophy identifies errors and confusions that lead to misunderstanding, distort experience, and thus do real harm.

Because philosophy calls commonly accepted assumptions into question, it is inherently subversive, opposed to all orthodoxy, and often troubling; but this is inseparable from what makes philosophy valuable, and indeed indispensable, as well as liberating. Philosophy's goal, Berlin concluded, was 'to assist men to understand themselves and thus operate in the open, and not wildly, in the dark' (Berlin, 1978b).

### 3.3 Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty

Judged from today's literature in political philosophy, what Berlin's critics have taken most seriously is the conceptual distinction Berlin's negative and positive liberty. Negative liberty is defined by Berlin as the area one 'should be left to do or be what he can do or be, without interference by other persons', while positive liberty as consisting in 'being one's own master', that is to say, not as an instrument of another men's acts of will (Adam, 2002).

These two concepts are understood by Berlin to be logically distinct: for while the 'negative' sense of liberty is concerned with the question 'How far does government interfere with me?' the 'positive' one is with 'Who governs me?' or 'Who is to say what I am, and what I am not, to be or to do?'. What is more, the negative account of liberty for Berlin is more 'fundamental' than the positive one, for 'no doubt every interpretation of the word liberty, however unusual, must include a minimum of "negative" liberty,' and his defence for negative liberty against the historically 'more dangerous' positive liberty is unequivocal (Berlin, 1969).

Since the essay's publication, political philosophers have argued vigorously over the desirability and validity of Berlin's distinction between negative and positive liberty, as well as their relative merits as a form of political freedom. For instance, Gerald C. MacCallum (1972) contends that Berlin's binary analysis of liberty is not sound, for when one speaks of freedom what is actually referred to is not a dyadic relation that is, 'freedom from' or 'freedom to' as implied in negative and positive accounts of liberty respectively - as he suggests; rather, it is a triadic relation in the form of 'X is free from Y to do or be Z'.

On the other hand, in disagreeing with Berlin's claim that negative liberty is the basis of all conceptions of liberty, Charles Taylor argues that a concept of liberty should be properly understood as an 'exercise-concept' and not solely an 'opportunity-concept' indicated by Berlin's negative liberty. It follows that, as an exercise-concept, liberty must presuppose a measure of autonomy, for without which choosing between ends is inconceivable - for this reason, the element, that is, autonomy, consigned

by Berlin to positive liberty is actually basic to all conceptions of liberty (Charles, 1979).

However, what really inspires today's political theorists seems to be the claim Berlin makes at the very end of 'Two Concepts of Liberty,' according to which:

The ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict - and of tragedy - can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition (Isaiah, 1969).\

'In the pursuit of the ideal', Berlin states that:

*There is a world of objective values. By this, I mean those ends that men pursue their own sakes, to which other things are means. Forms of life differ. Ends, moral principles, are many. But not infinitely many: they must be within the human horizon. If they are not, then they are outside the human sphere. What is clear is that values can clash - that is why civilisations are incompatible. They can be incompatible between cultures or groups in the same culture, or between you and me. Values may easily clash within the breast of a single individual; and it does not follow that, if they do, some must be true and others false (Isaiah, 1969).*

### **3.4 Isaiah Berlin Perspective of Political Theory**

Berlin published an essay in which he argued that political theory would never become a science because of the character of the questions with which it is concerned. Normative questions are among those "that remain obstinately philosophical." And what is "characteristic of specifically philosophical questions is that they do not satisfy conditions required by independent science, the principal among which is that the path to their solution must be implicit in their very formulation." According to Berlin, both formal and empirical sciences satisfy these conditions, whereas political theory does not (Berlin, 1978a).

Berlin argument in 'Does Political Theory Still Exist?' discussed the scientific ambitions of an even earlier age, the ambitions of those who, in the wake of Newton, had believed that the "pace" of social and political doctrines could be cleared away "by the strong new broom of scientific method" (Berlin 1999: 162).



Berlin's estimation of that project is captured thus:

Nevertheless, attempts made by the philosophies of the eighteenth century to turn philosophy, and particularly moral and political philosophy, into an empirical science, into individual and social psychology which they did not succeed. They failed over politics because our political notions are part of our conception of what is to be human, and this is not solely a question of fact, as facts are conceived by the natural sciences; nor the product of conscious reflection upon the specific discoveries of anthropology or sociology or psychology, although all these are relevant and indeed indispensable to an adequate notion of the nature of man in general, or of particular groups of men in particular circumstances. Our conscious idea of man – of how men differ from other entities, of what is human and what is not human or inhuman – involves the use of some among the basic categories in terms of which we perceive and order and interpret data. To analyze the concept of man is to recognize these categories for what they are. To do this is to realize that they are categories, that is, that they are not themselves subjects for a scientific hypothesis about the data which they order (Berlin 1999: 162-63).

The first part of this paragraph may simply express the thought that there are inevitably normative questions that can never be 'solved' by greater scientific knowledge in social and political matters. The second part, however, has more far-reaching consequences. For these concepts and categories, these models and presupposition of which Berlin speaks, are not simply something that we use to make sense of our experience, they form that experience (Williams 1999: xv). And since these models determine the actions and beliefs of individuals, there is a case to be made that an understanding of the social world depends on understanding such models and modes of thinking. "No amount of careful empirical observation and bold and fruitful hypothesis will explain to us what those men see who see the state as a divine institution" (Berlin 1999: 167-68).

What Berlin said could perhaps be understood as the claim that one task of political theorists is actually to conduct sociology of knowledge about the field of political science. And, secondly, that the nature of political science is such that the discipline would fare less well as a science did it not make room for intellectual work of that kind. In his youth, Berlin's intellectual development followed that of English-language philosophy, and he was at one point deeply involved in the advance of analytic philosophy; yet he drifted away from this, and his later writings and concerns are a world away from most Anglo-American philosophy of their time. For both the views he had formed while working as a professional philosopher and his tendency to connect political, historical and cultural issues to deeper moral and epistemological questions, set his

work apart from that of other historians and ‘public intellectuals’ of his day (to whom he otherwise bore a certain resemblance).

Berlin’s concern with the problem of culture anticipated the centrality in the political theory of questions of identity and membership that began in the 1990s; his sympathy for the sentiments and needs underlying nationalism, which set him apart from many liberal theorists of his own time, presaged the revival of ‘liberal nationalism’ in the works of younger thinkers. Berlin’s place in the history of political thought is, therefore, at present, paradoxical and unsettled. He appears as an important, and indeed emblematic, exponent of liberalism. This question has come to preoccupy many readers of Berlin’s work, and predominate in discussions of his legacy, to the extent of threatening to overshadow other aspects of his thought.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Discuss in brief the life and work of Isaiah Berlin.
- ii. Dissect Berlin’s controversial posture on political theory.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Berlin’s life and work continue to be the subject of considerable scholarly attention. Berlin’s work not only evokes strong personal reactions, attracting admiration and affection as a liberalist but also inspired hostility from critics on both the right and left.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Given the complexity of Berlin’s philosophy, his aversion to systematic exposition or theorizing, the multifaceted nature of his work, and the uniqueness of his position in the intellectual life of his times. These qualities make it possible to situate him in the history of political ideas of which this unit undertook.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss in brief the life and work of Isaiah Berlin.
2. Dissect Berlin’s controversial posture on political theory.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 5    IBN    KHALDUN'S    THESIS    ON    THE METAMORPHOSIS OF STATE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
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- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Ibn Khaldun's Thesis
  - 3.2    bn Khaldun Philosophy on Group Feelings (*Asabiyyah*)
  - 3.3    Ibn Khaldun's Views on Political Authority
  - 3.4    Ibn Khaldun's Stages of State Metamorphosis
  - 3.5    Criticism against Ibn Khaldun's Stages of State Metamorphosis
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
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### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The major task of this unit is to discuss Ibn Khaldun's thesis on the metamorphosis of state using the theory of the divine origin of the state.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i.      discuss Ibn Khaldun philosophy on Group Feelings (*Asabiyyah*).
- ii.     write about Ibn Khaldun's views on political authority
- iii.    examine Ibn Khaldun's stages of state metamorphosis.
- iv.    analyse criticisms of Ibn Khaldun's stages of state metamorphosis.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Ibn Khaldun's Thesis**

Abu Zayd AbdulRahman Bin Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, an Islamic-Arabian political thinker, has come up with a concept of *Asabiyyah* which played a major role in state creation as well as the political authorities and the five stages which a state passed through as its life span and gave room for another state to ensue. To him, it was a system and the whole of his argument are based on his background and the area he studied.

## Conceptual Clarification

*Asabiyyah*: it is the innate nature of man for showing blind and bias support to his people with no recourse to justice and oppression on others toward achieving group success.

*Mulkul Tabi'i*: It is a form of political authority or act of governance based on natural solidarity alone i.e. pure concept *Asabiyyah*.

*Siyasatul 'Aqlíyah*: it is a form of state governance base on the natural solidarity and the mindset of the ruler towards achieving the mundane life.

*Siyasatul Diníyah*: it is a form of governance base on the natural solidarity and religious divine injunctions.

*Khilafah*: it was the Islamic political period immediately after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which reigned for almost three decades.

*Khulafa'ul Rashidín*: they are the first four rightly guided caliphs of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who reigned throughout the period of *Khilafah*.

### 3.2 Ibn Khaldun Philosophy on Group Feelings (*Asabiyyah*)

One of the most controversial but also the most original concept of Ibn Khaldun is *Asabiyyah*. Several different usages of *Asabiyyah* in *Muqaddimah* complicate identifying what exactly it is. Arabic origin of *Asabiyyah* '*Asabe*' means paternal relatives of a person and paternal ancestry. It had been in use in Arab history to define people's sense of support to the other in their own tribe or clan. It is such a strong sense that the crucial point is not righteousness or unrighteousness of the person, but rather only coming from the same lineage. Since there is no boundary to back up one's own ancestry, it would not be wrong to define the concept of *Asabiyyah* as the fight for your own blood in any case. Although some hadith pundits claim that Prophet Muhammad prohibited the *Asabiyyah*, a concept unique to Arabic culture, Ibn Khaldun is so radical as to state that *Asabiyyah* is a key factor behind the achievement of Islamic cause (Yücekaya, 2014).

Meanwhile, Rosenthal in his translation of *The Muqaddimah* explains that the term *Asabiyyah* traditionally meant 'bias', or precisely, ...blind support of one's group without regard for the justice of its cause. It is recognized as a primitive and pre-Islamic way for people to survive when beset by hardship, but this kind of *Asabiyyah* is condemned by Islam. However, Rosenthal confirms that Ibn Khaldun was fully aware of the common usage of this term. He clarifies that Ibn Khaldun distinguishes

between “...an objectionable pagan *Asabiyyah* and “the natural *Asabiyyah* that is inseparable from (human beings).

Of these two kinds of *Asabiyyah*, the latter means “...the affection a man feels for a brother or a neighbour when one of them is treated unjustly or killed”, which is not forbidden in Islam, but rather required and useful, in particular in propagating Islamic teachings. Thus, to Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldūn used the term in a very positive sense throughout his treatise *The Muqaddimah*. He elucidates further that *Asabiyyah* is based primarily on common descent, i.e. among relatives, where people feel intimately allied. Still, it can also be shared with those who do not have a blood relationship ...by long and close contact as members of a group.

Thus, those who possess stronger *Asabiyyah* will prevail over other groups and at the same time gain leadership within their own group. Subsequently, the group may succeed in establishing a dynasty and ‘winning mulk’ ‘royal authority’, which is claimed by Ibn Khaldūn as the aim of *Asabiyyah*. Generally, Rosenthal’s explanations of the theory are restricted to his introduction, as a translator, to *The Muqaddimah*, this being the purpose of his writing. However, the theory of *Asabiyyah* is explained in full and comprehensive details that readers can understand the theory. The rest of the introduction focuses on the life of Ibn Khaldūn and the textual history and translation of *The Muqaddimah* (Halim, 2012).

Ibn Khaldun firstly uses the term of *Asabiyyah* as all kind of solidarity among the paternal relatives. Secondly, *Asabiyyah* means solidarity feeling among people in Badawa. Badawa has very tough environmental conditions, and therefore people need to stay together to defend themselves from all kind of threats. *Asabiyyah* is the main sense behind this togetherness. And thirdly, *Asabiyyah* is the motor to handle the *Mulk*. As understood from these definitions, Ibn Khaldun took the *Asabiyyah* as a social phenomenon from family to a state structure (Yücekaya, 2014).

Group feeling gives protection and makes possible mutual defence, the pressing of claims, and every other kind of social activity. According to their nature, human beings need someone to act as a restraining influence and mediator in every social organisation, to keep the members from fighting with each other. That person must, by necessity, have superiority over the others in the matter of group feeling. If not, his power to exercise a restraining influence could not materialize. Such superiority is the royal authority (*Mulk*). It is more than leadership. Leadership means being a chieftain, and the leader is obeyed, but he has no power to force others to accept his rulings. Royal authority means superiority and the power to rule by force (Ibn Khaldun).

When a person sharing in the group feeling has reached the rank of the chieftain and commands obedience, and when he then finds the way open toward superiority and (the use of) force, he follows that way, because it is something desirable. He cannot completely achieve his goal except with the help of the group feeling, which causes the others to obey him. Thus, royal superiority is a goal to which group feeling leads, as one can see (Ibn Khaldun).

Even if an individual tribe has different houses and many diverse group feelings, still, there must exist a group feeling that is stronger than all the other group feelings combined, that is superior to them all and makes them subservient, and in which all the diverse group feelings coalesce, as it were, to become one greater group feeling. Otherwise, splits would occur and lead to dissension and strife. If God did not keep human beings apart, the earth would perish (Ibn Khaldun).

Once a group feeling has established superiority over the people who share (in that particular group feeling), it will, by its very nature, seek superiority over people of other group feelings unrelated to the first. If the one (group feeling) is the equal of the other or can stave off (its challenge), the (competing people) are even with and equal to each other. (In this case,) each group feeling maintains its sway over its own domain and people, as is the case with tribes and nations all over the earth.

However, if the one group feeling overpowers the other and makes it subservient to itself, the two group feelings enter into close contact, and the (defeated) group feeling gives added power to the (victorious) group feeling, which, as a result, sets its goal of superiority and domination higher than before. In this way, it goes on until the power of that particular group feeling equals the power of the ruling dynasty. Then, when the ruling dynasty grows senile and no defender arises from among its friends who share in its group feeling, the (new group feeling) takes over and deprives the ruling dynasty of its power, and, thus, obtains complete royal authority (Ibn Khaldun).

The power of a given group feeling may also reach its peak when the ruling dynasty has not yet reached senility. This stage may coincide with the stage at which the ruling dynasty needs to have recourse to the people who represent the various group feelings in order to master the situation. In such a case, the ruling dynasty incorporates the people who enjoy the powerful group feeling among its clients whom it uses for the execution of its various projects (Ibn Khaldun).



### 3.3 Ibn Khaldun's Views on Political Authority

Ibn Khaldun, in the course of explaining the rise and fall of the state, classified the political authority into three: (1) *Mulkul Tabi'i*, the rule based on natural solidarity alone, (2) the two types of *Siyasatul Aqliyah*, the rule based on reason in addition to natural solidarity, and (3) *Siyasatul Diniyah*, the rule based on religious law in addition to natural solidarity. Natural solidarity that is a result of *Asabiyyah* is of course present in all three types of rule (*Mulk*). What differentiates the three types is the addition (or lack thereof) of a second means, whether it is the human reason or revealed religious law. Though it is important to note that to Ibn Khaldun, it is not these additional factors that the regime is based on, the original basis is always natural solidarity which is a result of *Asabiyyah*.

*Mulkul Tabi'i*, which is natural rule or governance, is based on natural solidarity alone that is employed by the ruler to further his own desires and satisfy his own lower impulses (*Shahwa*). Under a state of this type, the subjects of the ruler are oppressed and are employed primarily by him as tools to satisfy his own desires solely. The ruler has ended the naturally arising conflict among his subjects and has restrained their lower impulses for the sole purpose of giving free reign to his own lower impulses.

Ibn Khaldun does not actually classify *Mulkul Tabi'i* as a regime as such, and he strongly condemns it as perverted and wrong, which is due to the lack of any principles of justice in *Mulkul Tabi'i* (Esteban, 2004).

*Siyasatul aqliyah* come to exist through natural solidarity and *Asabiyyah* being modified by rational human precepts concerning the ways and means of attaining mundane ends. To quote Muhsin Mahdi: "What is added to solidarity and its power of restraint and domination, in this case, is an external bond. The subjects of the *siyasatul aqliyah* do not obey the rules because they believe in the goodness and the ultimate salutary effects of the law, but because of forceful compulsion, the fear of immediate punishment, and the hope for mundane rewards.

The state is transformed from a political unit that is based on blood-relations to a civil and military bureaucracy which destroys natural solidarity and, in its place, imposes a type of rule based on force, the ultimate goal of which is to satisfy the mundane ends of the ruler and the ruled. There are two types of *siyasatul aqliyah*.

The first type of *siyasatul aqliyah* is that whose end is the common good, in which authority is exercised to further the common good. To quote Ibn Khaldun:

*The first type of rational politics may concern itself with the (public) interest in general, and with the ruler's interest in connection with the administration of his realm, in particular. The ends of this type of regime is the pursuit of the mundane common good of the ruled, the principle of justice upon which it rests stipulates that the ruler should not pursue his own interests exclusively, but rather the collective interests of his subjects.*

In the second type of *Siyasatul Aqliyah* the end of the regime is the selfish interests of the ruler only, rather than those of his subjects. According to Ibn Khaldun, this principle upon which this regime rests is:

*Attending to the interest of the ruler and the way in which his absolute power can be assured through suppression and contention. The common good has a subordinate position in this regime (Esteban, 2004).*

Much like *mulkul tabi'í*, Ibn Khaldun considers this regime to be a reprehensible form of political authority, and one that will be an utter failure.

The *siyasatul díníyah* has a divine origin, it is a political regime prescribed by God, through the prophet who declares and legislates. It is brought about by the introduction of religion and religious sentiment that is enjoined with natural solidarity and subsequently *Asabiyyah* which leads to a 'miraculous transformation in social relations. By the performance of awe-inspiring miracles and other extraordinary acts, the prophet instils in his followers a strong faith in the rewards and punishments of the next world, which completely transforms their social life. A prophet does away with man's natural lower impulses which are the base causes of disunity and unites them under a superior cause. The subjects under the *Siyasatul Díníyah* obey the prescribed religious law and are willing to die for it, for the sake of God, in the hope that they will be rewarded in the world to come.

As a result, the *siyasat díníyah* is a strong, united and virtuous group which can conquer and rule nations that are stronger than itself in all aspects except that the subjects of the state they are conquering do not have instilled in their hearts the powerful inner faith than those under the *siyasatul díníyah* do (Esteban, 2004).

### **3.4 Ibn Khaldun's Stages of State Metamorphosis**

Ibn Khaldun's state metamorphosis or cyclical dynastic change is the centre stage of his political thought and it was the unique explanation of the shortcomings of the concept of *Asabiyyah*. There are five natural phases which the state or dynasty passes through. Each phase has its

unique feature and input toward the state formation. The life span of the state cannot go beyond these phases and these are divided into two. The first three phases are the developmental stage of the state and the last two phases are the decline and failure stages of the state.

The first stage that a state passes through is one of establishment and growth. During this period, the by-product of *Asabiyyah*, which was solidarity based on family ties or religion and solidarity, continues to be necessary for the preservation of the state. In this period, the ruled are required to build the institutions necessary for a civilised culture, or if such a culture is already in place then they must submit to the new ruling class. Thus, there are new activities that need to be carried out, and new political relationships that need to be created. These cannot be accomplished except through a kind of solidarity that generates enough power to urge the state's subjects to accept the new ruler as their master and obey his commands (Esteban, 2004).

During this first stage, the ruler owes his position to his ancestry and the respect of his fellow tribesmen; his rule is dependent on their number, power and assistance. He must accommodate their desires, and share his power with them. This is also true of religion, the ruler who is establishing a state with the aid of a religious message which cannot act like a king, since religion means the obedience of all to God and the revealed religious law.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the state in this stage is still in a period of transition, and the primitive people that established it still retain their primitive attitudes to authority. It is the very attitudes that may stunt the development of civilization and the centralization of authority necessary for the state's development. Thus, it is the initial forces that created the state, which is *Asabiyyah* and its natural product of solidarity that may become a hindrance to its growth, unless of course a strong religious sentiment is adopted such as in the time of the *Khulafa'ul Rashidin* that can speed up the process. In this scenario, *Asabiyyah*, when complimented by religion, is not a hindrance, but rather a spur to the growth of the state (Esteban, 2004).

In the second stage, the ruler begins to monopolise power and becomes an absolute ruler. To Ibn Khaldun, a well-ordered state should consist of a hierarchy of powers with an absolute commander at the top whose rule is not shared or disputed by anyone. Man has a natural lust for power and the desire for dominance over others is innate in man's animal nature; once a man is in a position where dominance and mastery are in his grasp he will inevitably attempt to become an absolute ruler (Esteban, 2004).

At this point, the ruler is in a position to satisfy his lust for power and in turn to build a well-structured political state. This is achieved by the destruction or subordination of those who initially shared power with him, at first by playing them against each other, and then eventually using paid mercenaries who are loyal to him. Thus, the second stage in the development of a state is the period of consolidating the ruler's power and creating absolute kingship. Both *Asabiyyah* and religion (if it has been adopted by the newly-founded political state) are put in check by the ruler in terms of the sharing of their power and are used at the discretion of the absolute ruler.

*Asabiyyah* becomes increasingly powerful during this stage, and the ruled begin to completely submit to their new ruler and the laws of the state. Various administrative bodies are established, and the army, the treasury, and later a 'group of learned men' become the instruments of preserving the state.

As previously mentioned, if a true religious calling is enjoined with *Asabiyyah*, then *Asabiyyah* will become even more powerful, and the administrative bodies of the state will be rightly guided in the pursuit of the higher good. Because this second stage is so important for the consolidation of a ruler's power and the establishment of the functionaries of a state, it is imperative that a true religious calling is adopted to ensure the state has a strong basis (Esteban, 2004).

In the third stage of development of a state, the ruler's lust for power is satisfied because he has effectively concentrated authority, and he begins to employ 'Asabiyyah (and possibly religion) for the satisfaction of other desires; he begins to collect the fruits of authority. This is a stage of luxury and leisure, and the ruler directs his energies towards increasing the wealth of the state and its income.

By this point, the state has reached a stage where it can satisfy man's desires for luxuries; according to Ibn Khaldūn it is generally a period of rest and self-indulgence when men enjoy the comforts and pleasures of the world.

Thus, the first three stages of a state's development constitute the first of two broad phases in its life span, where it has come from a primitive existence and has reached the end for which it was established. This end may be the satisfaction of the ruler's lower impulses, the acquisition of worldly goods, or the pursuit of the ultimate reward in the world to come under the direction of the *Siyasat al Dīniyya*. During all three of the first stages, the state will attempt to expand its power base and wage war and conquest, which *Asabiyyah* (and possibly religion) aid in accomplishing. Throughout this first phase, the state grows and develops until it reaches a zenith and decline and decay begin to set in.

The natural life span of *Asabiyyah* begins to run its course, its effectiveness begins to dwindle, and the luxury that the state begins to enjoy in the third stage makes it weak and senile. However, in the case of the ideal *Khilafa* of the *Khulafa' u Rashidín* this was not the case, it is at this point in the cycle that this miraculous and ideal state was able to escape the natural process of decay and decline for a short time, due to its true religious calling and the strong conviction of its subjects as believers of the truth and veracity of Islam (Esteban, 2004).

The fourth stage of the state, it reached the zenith of its life span, in which the ruler and the ruled become content and complacent with their position of wealth? The initial zeal and force of *Asabiyyah* or '*Asabiyyah* enhanced by religion begins to dwindle, and the members of the state begin to believe that their ease of life will never diminish. Luxury, comfort, and the gratification of their desires become a habit within them. They are completely dependent upon the continued existence of what their predecessors had achieved and are powerless before forces that may lead to the disruption of their prosperity.

According to Ibn Khaldün, the length of this fourth stage depends upon the power and the extent of the achievements of the founders of the state, and the principles that the state has been founded upon. We may assume then that a state based solely on *Asabiyyah* will go through a relatively short fourth stage before it descends into complete disintegration and ruin, while a state that has adopted religion in addition to *Asabiyyah*, such as the *siyisatul Diniyya* will exist for a longer duration in this stage. However, regardless of the basis of the state, its *Asabiyyah* will inevitably begin to dwindle and will pass into the fifth and final stage of its natural life span (Esteban, 2004).

The fifth stage in the life of a state is one of complete disintegration and decline; the state is doomed to a slow or violent death. In this stage, either '*Asabiyyah* or '*Asabiyyah* enhanced by religion which was in the first stage its basis are here responsible for its decline. The success enjoyed by these forces in the first three stages of the state's life by this point have made the ruler and the subjects of the state lazy and ineffective; they have lost the initial zeal that either *Asabiyyah* or the adoption of a new religion had given them earlier on, and they are doomed to fail. The rulers of the state who previously may have been virtuous have destroyed the pride and loyalty of their subjects who have lost their drive to wage war for the state.

Thus, it would seem that Ibn Khaldün makes the connection between the inability to wage war and the disintegration of a state. As we have previously stated, both '*Asabiyyah* and religion originally provide an incentive and a means to carry out conquest, but at this stage, it is the

spoils of war that lead to a state's decline. The ruler inevitably becomes greedy and senile, claiming everything for himself, thus disenchanting his subjects upon which he is ultimately reliant for the survival of his rule and the state. Again, this was not the case in the time of the ideal *Khilifà* of the *Khulafa'u Rashidin*, as we will demonstrate below.

Normally, however, the comforts and luxury that were initially generated by *Asabiyyah* and religion at this stage bring about weakness and lack of morals among the subjects of the state. The state becomes powerless to defend itself against an outside invasion by a newer and stronger state that has not yet reached its natural occurring period of decline, and this new group may conquer the state, putting it out of its misery. If the state is not overcome by an outside group then it will continue to decline and may attempt a last-ditch effort to revitalise itself, though eventually, it will wither away.

To quote Ibn Khaldūn: “At the end of a dynasty, there often also appears some show of power that gives the impression that the senility of the dynasty has been made to disappear. It lights up brilliantly just before it is extinguished, like a burning wick the flame of which leaps up brilliantly a moment before it goes out, giving the impression it is just starting to bum, when in fact it is going out” (Esteban, 2004).

### **3.5 Criticism against Ibn Khaldun's Stages of State Metamorphosis**

These processes of rising, growth and fall to Ibn Khaldun continue cyclically. Before, during and after Ibn Khaldun's theory, empires, kingdom, caliphates, sultanates, etc, have risen and fallen following the pattern enunciated by Ibn Khaldun. This was the story of Abbasid and Umayyad caliphates, Seljuk, Safavid and Mughal kingdoms in one way or the other. Scholars who criticized Ibn Khaldun can be classified into three groups. The first is made up of those who think Ibn Khaldun was too simplistic in looking at the history of Muslim states within a small span of just four generations. Indeed, the Ottoman lived between the 13th and 20th centuries.

The defence here is that Ibn Khaldun's mentioning of four generations is allegorical and not categorical. The second category charged that Ibn Khaldun did not apply enough moral and adequate faith-based gauges in his theory. To this group, what should be uppermost in the rise and fall of any Islamic polity is that the fresher coming from the periphery are motivated by the zeal to return Islam and Society to the Caliphate style as witnessed during the era of the rightly guided Caliphs who succeeded the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The third group contains those who felt that the cyclical theory is no longer applicable to the modern highly developed and organised world. To this category of Thinkers, there are no longer Bedouins with uncivilised characteristics uncouthness and insubordination. Even if they exist, they no longer have access to the cities which are now developed, fortified and transformed by technology.

In addition, complex nation-states, civic responsibilities and nationhood system have been evolved which render constant rise, fall and collapse mechanisms in nullity. Nations are now defined by inviolable borders and national institutions, organs and imperatives. Ibn Khaldun never foresaw that development in government, security, military and structuralised economy will erode tribal feelings and thereby eliminate cyclical theory (Okene and Ahmad, 2012).

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Conduct analysis of Ibn Khaldun philosophy on group feelings (*Asabiyyah*).
- ii. What is your take on Ibn Khaldun's views on political authority?
- iii. Dissect Ibn Khaldun's stages of state metamorphosis.
- iv. Criticise Ibn Khaldun's stages of state metamorphosis.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

To understand the thrust of Ibn Khaldun thesis on state metamorphosis, one needs to know the concept of '*Asabiyyah*' that is natural solidarity, the three types of political authorities and the five stages of the state life span. These are not unconnected with his background as Arabian-Muslim, the period he lived and his case study. Even though such states can no longer exist due to the emergence of the modern states, the issue of the rise and fall of state will always be experienced in the history of political thought. This has to do with the capacity to command the happenings in the system in one way or the other in a particular period.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Ibn Khaldun explained the changing nature of the state with his unique concept of '*Asabiyyah*' i.e group feelings or unquestionable natural solidarity with no regard to justice or otherwise to another camp. He adopted three types of political authorities upon which state was controlled. These are *Mulkul Tabi'i*, *Siyasatul 'Aqliyah* and *Siyasatul Dinīyah*. He demonstrated how the state passed through the five phases of its life span under these political authorities. Except the *Siyasatul Dinīyah*, the state will rise and fall to give way for another state to exist

and it continues as a system process as long as ‘*Asabiyyah*’ is the engine room.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Conduct analysis of Ibn Khaldun Philosophy on Group Feelings (*Asabiyyah*).
2. What is your take on Ibn Khaldun’s views on political authority?
3. Dissect Ibn Khaldun’s stages of state metamorphosis.
4. Criticize Ibn Khaldun’s stages of state metamorphosis.

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