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Some models of social order in the history of philosophy

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Introduction

This paper traces the problem of social order in historical perspective. Here we attempt to identify the milestones in the quest for social order and to discuss the insights that they provide on the problem. In fulfilling our task, our primary focus shall not be the study of the views of individual social and political philosophers. However, some of them will be used as illustrations of the various watersheds in the history of the quest for social order. According to Robert Nisbert the problem of social order, seen in historical perspective, refers to the "plurality of quests for community"[1] attempted by the social and political philosophers starting from Plato. This problem centers on the attempts to reconcile the individual and society. It is thus concerned with the search for tenable ways to define the relationship between man and man as well as man and society. There have been various forms of community in the history of social and political philosophy. Nisbert identifies four of these forms in the quest for community. These are "the political, religious ecological and revolutionary communities".[2]

Each of these watersheds or kinds of quest for community can be identified in the context of major social philosophers, like Plato and others. It may

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[1]   R. Nisbert, *The Social Philosophers*, New York, Washington Square Press, 1982, vii.
[2]   Ibid.

be noted that one does not need to accept Nisbert's classification in its entirety because, ultimately, all the social philosophers deal essentially with the political community.[3] The quest for political community can be understood in terms of what major social and political traditions like liberalism, socialism, democracy and social democracy have to say about the concept of the state, social order and community.

The milestones in the search for social order can be discussed in terms of certain fundamental problems in the quest for community. One of the major problems arising from an examination of social order in historical perspective is the question of how to conceptualize human nature and to employ it in the explanation of the emergence of the civil society and the state. The attempt to contrast the conditions of men after the emergence of the political community or state was basically aimed at revealing what was distinctive about individuals and about society.[4] For Andrew Gamble, to propose the existence of a state of nature was to contrast the natural order with the social order.[5] This intellectual current can be seen in Hobbes and Locke among others.

Therefore, viewed against the background of the state of nature, Gamble observes that the conception of the state that emerges is that of a public power. The modern state has become definable through two main ideas. First, that it is a centralised power that tries to overawe all other powers in a given territory via its agencies. And second, that the state is founded on consent, or a relationship between those that direct it and those who are subject to it.[6] With specific reference to this part of our chapter, we must note that "the theory of the modern state can be tackled in terms of two central themes; sovereignty, concerned above all with the relationship of the individual to the state, and political economy, the problem of the relationship of state power to civil society".[7] Clarifications of these themes are provided by Hobbes and Locke among others.

1. Problem

Following from the attempt to conceptualise the state and thus to articulate a form or model of social order, certain fundamental questions or problems arise. First, is the problem of what level or degree of independence, freedom and autonomy should individuals have within, and in relation to the state? In other

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[3]   O. Oladipo, "Interview and Discussion Session on Community", Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan (July, 1998).

[4]   A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, London, Macmillan, 1981, 41.

[5]   Ibid.

[6]   Ibid., 47–48.

[7]   Ibid., 49.

words, what is the extent of the power that society can exercise over the individual? For Plato, what is required, is a total integration and harmonisation between the individual and society. On the other hand, Aristotle prefers that the different components of society (individuals and groups), be given their independence and autonomy.

The second problem centres on what is the extent of power that can be exercised by the sovereign or ruler in a state, over the citizens? Hobbes answers that the power of the sovereign over the members of the community is absolute and illimitable. Locke, on the other hand, argues that the sovereign in a commonwealth should not have absolute power over the members of the society. He suggests that the sovereign may be overthrown or removed by the people who hold ultimate sovereign power, if there is abuse of power. A third problem also arises about what role the economy plays in defining social order, and how we can justify the use of violence in installing or overturning a social order? According to Marx, it is the form of economic life that determines the nature of a society. For him, change from one type of society to another is possible on the basis of class conflicts and revolutionary actions of a violent kind.

What the philosophers mentioned above have in common, in spite of the seeming differences in their preoccupations, is the belief that social order is crucial to the survival and flourishing of human beings, both individually and collectively. For them, social order allows man to attain his fullest development as a person and as a social being. These social philosophers explain social order in terms of notions like society, state, community, commonwealth, polity, juridical union, public person or republic. Though the particular meanings of these notions differ in some regard, nonetheless, the thrust of these various descriptions is to show that social order exists within the context of a specific form of society.

Furthermore, despite the variations in their descriptions of social order, these philosophers agree that, in a significant sense, the society is higher, more important and greater than the individual because it is only within the context of society that the major goals of human existence can be achieved. Also, because no individual is self sufficient or self sustaining, social order becomes imperative, in order to assure the development of the person within the framework of an interplay of mutual relations and activities among people in a society. However, there is no consensus among these philosophers about the proper limits of the power of society over individuals. Plato, for instance, holds that the community should completely define everything that the individual does, whereas, Aristotle suggests that the society is best defined by the recognition of the autonomy of its various components.

Another area of convergence among these social philosophers is the belief that social order aims at ensuring justice. The most prevalent idea of justice that cuts across their views is that justice refers to the condition in which everyone fulfils his duties and obligations towards every other person. And to ensure that justice is done, they further agree that some idea of law, morality and constitution is vital in establishing and maintaining social order. Therefore, one can see that the fundamental task of the social philosophers is to provide justifications for certain conceptions of social order. They also try to explain how social order can be established and sustained. It is in line with this objective that the social philosophers provide their conceptions of the political community.

2. Some epochs in the history of political philosophy

The quest for political community is identified in the views of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Rawls, who serve as representatives of three major epochs in the history of political thought; the Ancient, Modern (classical Liberal and Socialist writers) and the Contemporary (Welfarism and Social Democracy).

2.1. Ancient period: Plato and Aristotle

Plato in his conceptualization of social order lays emphasis on the importance of justice in the state. He places emphasis on division of labour and the happiness of all in the society. According to him, "justice is doing one's own business. Justice is having and doing what is one's own or what belongs to one".[8] The state is organized on the basis of justice "when the trader, the auxiliary and the guardians each do their own business".[9] Therefore, a state is seen as just when "the tree classes (namely, the guardians, auxiliaries and artisans) in the state perform their specific functions".[10]

For Plato, the best guardians or rulers of the state are people whose lives are guided by the interest of the state. The guardians must pass through various experiences before they become rulers in the state. "They will be carefully watched and brought up from their youth".[11] They will be tested in many areas of life and only "those who are successful in their education shall be appointed rulers or guardians of the state".[12] Through education, the guardians will develop

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[8]   Plato, *The republic*, in J. Somerville (ed.), *Social and Political Philosophy*, New York, Anchor Books, 1963, 18.
[9]   Ibid., 19.
[10]   Ibid., 20.
[11]   Ibid.
[12]   Ibid., 21.

qualities like civility and humanity in their relations with one another and the rest of the people under their protection. "Everything about the guardians will be designed to ensure that their virtues will not be impared"[13].

With the state's programmes of educating each person or group to perform their functions well, Plato argues that "the state has its foundations in the greatest happiness of the whole. The state that is ordered with a view to the good of the whole is a just state and the just state is the happy state".[14] And so, Plato links justice with happiness and then argues for the division and proper performance of social functions and roles in order to achieve a community that is united, harmonious and well organised.

Plato also identifies some types of government which are Timocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy, Tyranny and Aristocracy. For him, "governments vary as the dispositions of men vary and the states are as the men are".[15] He means that the states grow out of human character and that human nature is also vital in the formation of social order. This further implies that good people will more likely form a good social order and vice versa.

Plato argues that aristocracy as a form of government is good and just. It is the government of the best.[16] On the other hand, timocracy is the government of honour. It is a middle point between oligarchy and aristocracy. Timocracy is guided by the spirit of contention and ambition and it celebrates the military culture and upholds war as a major value or principle. On its part, Oligarchy is based on money or wealth. It honours the rich and dishonours the poor. According to Plato, "there are two states in an oligarchy, one of the poor and the other the rich men. It gives freedom to the individual to order his life as he pleases"[17]. Also "there is liberty in a democratic state and it is full of variety and disorder. Democracy dispenses a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike".[18] And finally, tyranny is the rule of a lawless man who for Plato, has extinguished all good principles, and virtues. The tyrant, has instead, given rein to madness. The tyrant according to Plato, "is a cheat and a deceiver who uses force to plunder peoples goods and properties. He celebrates lust, passion and derangement and he does not exclude anyone from his oppression".[19]

Some comments and criticisms of Plato's idea of the state and social order are imperative here, for a better understanding of his position. According to Fre-

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[13] Ibid., 23.
[14] Ibid., 25.
[15] Ibid., 27.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 31.
[18] Ibid., 35–36.
[19] Ibid., 43–45.

drick Copleston,[20] Plato's political theory is developed in close connection with his ethics. The state is composed of individual men, and exists for the attainment of the good life. For Copleston, Plato was more interested in constructing the form of the ideal state or the pattern to which every actual state should follow. On his part, Leo Strauss[21] stresses that Plato's dialogues refer more or less directly to the political question. Plato demands an answer to this question of the proper form of society, the just city. For Plato, justice is full dedication to the common good and it demands that a man withhold nothing from his own city. This, for Straus, implies a form of absolute communism. More importantly, the just city as an association of men demands that each man should do only one job to the best of his ability and with full dedication. Therefore, Strauss concludes that "the teaching of *The Republic* regarding justice although not complete, can yet be true in so far as the nature of justice depends decisively on the nature of the city. The Republic then, indeed makes clear what justice is".[22]

Aristotle in his definition of social order places emphasis on the state as a form of community geared towards some good or end. He describes the state as a creation of nature and argues that reason and law are the basis of the ideal state. For him, happiness is the highest good, the end and the perfect practice of virtue in the state.[23] For Aristotle, "every state is a community of some kind and every community is established with a view to some good, because men always concludes that "if all communities aim at some good, then the state or political community as the highest form of community aims at the good in a greater degree than any other".[24]

Aristotle traces the formation of the state from the family to the village and finally the state. For the state to be, there should exist a union of male and female as beings that cannot exist without each other. From the union of male and female, the family emerges. Where there are many families, we have a village as a colony of families. And when we have many villages that are united into a single complete community large enough to be self-sufficient then the state comes into being.

Aristotle further claims that the state emerges out of the efforts to satisfy the basic needs of life and it grows with a view to assuring the good life. Given the fact that the earlier forms of society are natural, Aristotle says that, 'the state is also natural because it is the end or goal of these earlier forms. The state is

[20] F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1: *Greece and Rome*, London, Burns and Oates, 1961, 223–224.
[21] L. Strauss, "Plato", in *History of Political Philosophy*, USA, University Chicago Press, 1987, 33–67.
[22] Ibid., 67–28.
[23] Aristotle, *Politics in Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. by J. Somerville, New York, Anchor Books, 1963, 59.
[24] Ibid.

therefore a creation of nature".[25] For Aristotle, "man is by nature a political animal and he is able to separate good from evil, just acts from unjust acts".[26] This ability is seen in human beings that live in the family and state. And so we note that it is within the ambits of life in the family and state that questions about justice and morality arise.

Aristotle argues therefore that the state is prior to the family and the individual because the whole is prior to the parts. And if the whole is destroyed, the parts cannot exist. Thus, the state as a creation of nature is prior to the individual because the individual as an isolated person is not self sufficient. Moreover, he notes that man possesses a social instinct given to him by nature and when he attains the social union, man is the best of animals. But when man is separated from law and justice, then he is the worst of all. According to Aristotle, "justice is therefore the bond of men in states, and the principle of order in political society is the administration of justice or the determination of what is just"[27] it is important to note the emphasis that Aristotle gives to the role of justice and morality as bases of social order.

Also, an important idea in Aristotle's conception of social order is his discussion on citizenship. He says that "the citizen of a state is that person who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state".[28] There are different varieties of citizens according to the different forms of government. For Aristotle, government as the supreme authority in a state may lie in the hands of one, few or many persons. And "the attainment of the common interest is the goal of a true government no matter how many persons govern. Any form of government that governs in view of the private interest is a perversion".[29]

Aristotle identifies some types of government such as royalty, aristocracy, constitution, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy.[30] Royalty for him, is the government of one man who rules with a view to the common interest. Aristocracy however, is the government of a few men who are the best men due to their interests in the well-being of the state and citizens. A constitution is a government in which the citizens at large govern for the common interest. Aristotle observes that the perversion of royalty is tyranny; or aristocracy is oligarchy; of polity or constitutional government is democracy.

For Aristotle, while tyranny is a kind of monarchy in which the interest of the ruler is primary, oligarchy makes the interest of the rich or wealthy primary. On

[25]   Ibid., 62.
[26]   Ibid.
[27]   Ibid.
[28]   Ibid., 67.
[29]   Ibid., 69.
[30]   Ibid., 70.

its part, democracy makes the interest of the poor or needy primary and "none of these perverted forms of government has the common good as its goal".[31] He further maintains that "a good government consists of two parts. One is the actual obedience of citizens to the laws and, secondly, the goodness of the laws that they obey".[32] Therefore, Aristotle holds that reason and law form the basis of the idea state while happiness is its ultimate goal. "The ideal state cannot exist without enough provision of the means of life for everybody in it. All in the ideal state should have the necessary materials to do their shares of the work".[33]

There is also an emphasis on reason as the guiding principles of the perfect state. Reason for Aristotle, helps the different sectors in the state to perform their duties well. The perfect state is also guided by law, whose presence ensures order. Good law ensures good order. For him, the perfect state must be self-sufficient and should strive to attain the good life. In this state, all the people should perform their duties properly in order to achieve happiness, which for Aristotle, "is the highest good, the end and the perfect practice of virtue".[34]

In some concrete terms, Aristotle holds that certain things should be present in the ideal state for instance, food, arms, revenue, religious worship, arts and power. And with special reference to power, he endorses "a power that decides what is for the public interest and what constitutes proper and just relationships between men".[35]

In an attempt to foster a better understanding of Aristotle, Carnes Lord[36] argues that the city or Polis in Aristotle's doctrine, is a kind of partnership, association or community of persons who share certain things in common. This community exists for the sake of living well, nobly or happily. For C. Lords, the best regime or state depends on the presence of a variety of virtues and in this as in other respects. Aristotle attempts to improve on the teachings of Plato only the better to fulfil its fundamental intention.

From the above analysis, we see that Plato and Aristotle were mainly concerned with the issue of establishing conceptions of justice which would most effectively guarantee the sustenance of social order. These ancient philosophers discussed the important question of the extent of the freedom and autonomy that should be granted to individuals and groups without compromising the power and security of the state. In all, the views of the ancient philosophers provide the required conceptual basis for a fuller analysis of the nature of social order.

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[31]   Ibid.
[32]   Ibid., 76.
[33]   Ibid., 95–96.
[34]   Ibid., 97.
[35]   Ibid., 98.
[36]   C. Lord, "Aristotle", in *History of Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 134–154.

2.2. Modern period: Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau (liberalism)

Hobbes conceives social order in terms of the commonwealth or Leviathan, which emerges out of, and is antithetical to the state of nature. The Leviathan is a product of the reconciliation of the rights of nature with the laws of nature. He discusses the powers of the sovereign and the liberty of his subjects, in relation to achieving the goals of security and protection of life and property in the state.

According to Hobbes, social order as the great Leviathan, commonwealth, state is an artificial man created to protect and defend the natural man. He says that "the sovereignty of the leviathan is its artificial soul which gives life and animation to the whole body".[37] In his view, the Leviathan's strength lies in the wealth and riches of all its members. And every part or member of the Leviathan is induced to perform his duties by the sovereign who has the power to punish or reward.

Hobbes traces the emergence of the Leviathan to the nature of man and the conditions of the state of nature. He says that nature has made men equal in the faculties of the body and mind. However, despite that there are differences in the way men are endowed with these faculties, although these differences are not so considerable as to allow one man certain qualities that others do not have. For him, this equality of ability among men gives rise to the equality of hope or the belief that all have the same chances of attaining their ends. This equality gives rise to disputes over the resources of nature, in which people exercise their powers in order to conquer, dispossess or deprive weaker ones of their lives, liberties and properties.

Therefore, Hobbes contends that the equality of men gives rise to a condition of mutual destruction in which no man can be sure of emerging victorious or subsisting for a reasonable length of time.[38] According to him, that period of human existence when men live without a common power to control them all or arbitrate among them is called "the state of war".[39] In this state, every man is against every man. Hobbes takes care to point out that, this state of war encompasses not just conditions of actual conflict, but also the state of existence in which men are disposed to behave as if they are in a state of war. Furthermore, in the state of nature or war where every man is every man's energy and the security and protection of life and property is not assured, there is no industry or fruitful labour. And other human activities like culture, art and society do not exist.

But this is not all about the state of nature. Hobbes informs us that "worst of all, there is a continual fear and danger of violent death. In short, the life of man

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[37]   Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in J. Somerville (ed.), *Social and Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 139.
[38]   Ibid., 142.
[39]   Ibid., 143.

is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short".[40] Against the background of the absence of a common power, law, notions of justice and injustice, right and wrong in the state of nature, Hobbes says that the passions and the reason of man lead him to search for peace. Man's quest for peace arises from his fear of death, and his desire for those resources necessary for adequate living. By desiring peace and co-operation, man uses reason to fashion some convenient articles of peace out of the right and law of nature.

According to Hobbes, the right of nature is the liberty that all men have to use their powers to preserve their lives, while the law of nature is a general rule derived from reason which forbids a man to destroy his life or the means of preserving his life. For Hobbes, the first and basic law of nature is to seek peace, while the second laws of nature enjoins a man to readily give up his right to self-defence if others show a willingness to do likewise. He notes that a man gives up his right to self preservation either by renouncing or transferring it. A right is renounced when one does not care to whom the benefit goes, while a right is transferred when one intends that the benefit goes to some specified persons.

Hobbes maintains that the acts of rights renunciation or transfer are conducted through declarations and transactions binding the participants to a term of agreement. The goal of rights transfer is the guarantee of security of life and the means of preserving life. For Hobbes, contrast is the name given to the mutual transfer of rights among men. It is the basis of the commonwealth, which exists in order to ensure that lives are preserved and made happy. The protection of life and property is guaranteed in the commonwealth, only when men erect a common power on whom they confer all their powers and strengths. Hobbes notes that "this common power can be one man or an assembly of men".[41]

Hobbes says that everyone in the commonwealth submits his will to the chosen representative who transforms into a Leviathan or a product of the authority of every man united in one person. The individual who carries this Leviathan, or represents it, is known as the sovereign, who has sovereign power over all in the commonwealth, being his subjects. Because the sovereign derives his power from the consent of the people, he has the right to act on behalf of the commonwealth. The sovereign according to Hobbes, cannot breach by covenant since he did not make any covenant with the people. He cannot be accused of injustice because, every subject is the author of the sovereign's act. For Hobbes, the sovereign cannot be put to death or be punished by his subjects. This sovereign is the judge of all that is necessary to ensure peace and order.

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40   Ibid.
41   Ibid., 148.

Therefore, Hobbes concludes that "the liberty of subjects is seen in the context of the formation of a commonwealth to ensure peace and protection".[42] The commonwealth binds men in artificial chains called civil laws and these civil laws are determined by the sovereign. Thus, the liberty of the subjects is determined by the sovereign's laws.[43] We see Hobbes efforts at constructing an absolute and supreme social order in which the sovereign governs as the final arbiter of all things. Without doubt, one can see the great faith Hobbes had in the immense capacity of the Leviathan to control the activities of men and preserve life.

Lawrence Berns observes that Hobbes intentions in his Leviathan, are to put moral and political philosophy on a scientific basis for the first time, and to contribute to the establishment of civic peace and amity.[44] For Berns, it is important to realise that the social contract is made up of a covenant of each member of the future civil body with each other, to acknowledge as sovereign the rules of their choice. It is also made up of the vote that determines who will be the sovereign. Therefore the peace of civil society depends upon the sovereign having the power of life and death over his subjects.[45]

Locke also traces the emergence of social order from the state of nature. However, he stresses the role of consent in the creation of social order. While government and the idea of dissolution of government. For him, the state of nature is crucial to the understanding of political power. The state of nature is that natural state that man exist in. this is a state of perfect freedom in which man can do as he wishes within the bounds of the law of nature. For him, the state of nature represents a state of equality and liberty, depicted by the reciprocal power and jurisdiction that men have.

According to Locke, the state of nature is not a state of license; man may do as he wishes with his person and possessions, but he has no liberty to destroy himself or his possession.[46] As such the state is guided of nature is guided by the law of nature which is reason. Locke holds that reason teaches all that since they are equal and independent, the no one ought to harm any other person in his life, health, liberty or possessions. The law of nature guarantees peace and preservation of all.

According to Locke, the earth is the property of all men as a whole. But the property of each man is his own person, the labour of his body and the work of his hands. He asserts that "something becomes a man's property when he has removed it from the common state it existed in as nature, and then, applies his

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42   Ibid., 161.
43   Ibid., 162.
44   L. Bern, "Thomas Hobbes", in *History of Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 396.
45   Ibid., 405–416.
46   J. Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, in J. Somerville (ed.), *Social and Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 169–170.

labour, mental and physical to it".[47] For Locke, man ought to acquire property within the limits set by reason, to determine what is enough for his use.

Locke suggests that consent is important for the establishment of social order of society. He holds that a man gives his consent when "the agrees with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceful existence".[48] This community for Locke, assures the security of property and protection from external aggression. When a number of men consent to form a community, "they become incorporated and thereby constitute a body politic in which the majority have a right to act in the interest of the whole".[49]

Two kinds of consent are illustrated by Locke; tacit and express. The express consent of any man entering into a society makes him a perfect member of that society and a subject of that government. On the contrary, a man gives tacit consent when he has any possessions in, or enjoys any part of the dominion of a government. Even as a foreigner or traveller, a man is obliged to obey the laws of a government so long as he enjoys its protection.

Locke argues that "when anybody unites his person and possessions to any commonwealth he becomes a subject of the government and a member of the commonwealth".[50] For him, the commonwealth provides an established, settled and known law, received and allowed by common consent as the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure to be used in deciding all controversies. Secondly, the commonwealth (unlike the state of nature) provides a known and impartial judge having the authority to determine all disputes according to the law. Thirdly, the commonwealth provides the power to defend and support any just or right sentences and to execute them.

The commonwealth also strives to attain the common good, to secure the properties of all and to prevent intrusions on its sovereignty thereby protecting its members from invasion.[51] Locke also identifies three types of government; democracy, oligarchy and monarch. He says that a government is a perfect democracy when the majority has the whole power of the community vested in them. They use this power to make laws from time to time and execute such laws through officers they have appointed. An oligarchy puts the power of making laws into a few hands, while a monarchy put this power into one hand who can transfer such power by hereditary or elective processes.

Locke clarifies his position concerning the commonwealth by declaring that it does not refer to any particular form of government but rather to an inde-

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[47]   Ibid., 176–178.
[48]   Ibid., 178.
[49]   Ibid., 179.
[50]   Ibid., 183.
[51]   Ibid., 186.

pendent community. The supreme power in a commonwealth is the legislative. However, he adds that the people still retain the supreme power to remove or alter the legislative if it acts contrary to the trust reposed in it. "The people always have the right to preserve the fundamental sacred and unalterable law of self-preservation for which they entered into society, by ridding themselves of any person who invades this right".[52]

According to Locke, the legislature can be divided into three parts. The first is the single hereditary person who has the consent supreme executive power as well as the power to convoke or dissolve the other two parts of the legislative within certain periods of time. The second part, is the assembly of hereditary nobility, while the third is an assembly of representatives chosen by the people.

Concerning the dissolution of government, Locke takes care to separate it from the dissolution of society. The dissolution of society can occur if a foreign force conquers a society. When this society is dissolved, the government cannot exist. However, he maintains that dissolution of government occurs within the society in various ways. The primary way governments are dissolved, is if the legislative is altered. Dissolution of government is also possible if a person sets up his arbitrary will, in spite of the society as declared by the legislature. Other causes of dissolution of government include, when a ruler hinders the legislature from assembling and acting freely in pursuance of its stated goals, or if elections or electors are altered by the arbitrary power of the ruler, without the consent of, and contrary to the common interest of the people. Or again, if the ruler delivers the people into the subjection of a foreign power. And finally, if the ruler neglects or abandons his office and functions to the detriment of the execution of laws. For Locke, "in all these cases when the government is dissolved, the people have the liberty to provide for themselves by erecting a new legislative in order to ensure their safety and good".[53] Thus we see that Locke emphasizes the value of law in the establishment of social order. He also talks about consent and division of powers as integral aspects of social order.

Robert Goldwin encapsulates Locke's political theory as the statement that "all government is limited in its powers and exists only by the consent of the governed"[54]. For Goldwin, Locke's efforts are gathered towards understanding political power, and explaining the true, original, extent and end of civil government. Also, the fundamental principle of the separation of powers is clearly expressed by Locke whose great theme is freedom and his great argument is that

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[52] Ibid., 188.
[53] Ibid., 195–197.
[54] R.A. Goldwin, "John Locke", in *History of Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 476–477.

there is no freedom where is no law. Goldwin concludes by saying that Locke seeks to free from every form of absolute arbitrary power.[55]

Rousseau on his part, attempts a definition of social order through the construction of society out of the social compact. He discusses the nature of man and the law of nature. Basically, he locates social order in the operations of the general will. For him, Justice and law are important in any social order. According to Rousseau "man is born free and yet we see him every where in chains"[56]. This means that since one has obligations by virtue of being born into society, these responsibilities that one has to others makes one not to be free. In the earliest and the only natural societies which are families, children are attached to their parents up to the point that they no longer need their parents protection. At this point, the bond of nature is dissolved and everyone reverts to the state of independence. Thus, liberty is a consequence of the nature of man. For Rousseau, because men are born free and their liberty is theirs, nobody can dispose of other peoples liberty, only the owners of such can dispose of them. And to renounce our liberty as men is to renounce our essence as man and with it, all the rights and duties of humanity. In his view, no adequate compensation can possibly be made for such a complete sacrifice. And moreover, such a renunciation is incomplete with the nature of man because when his actions are deprived of freewill, then we cannot talk of morality.

Rousseau holds that the social contract came into being when men living in the state of nature got to a critical point where the strength of each man was not sufficient to overcome the obstacles to the first law of self-preservation. Therefore, since life is no longer assured in the state of nature, man has to change his way of life. As a result, men from an assembly of forces to help overcome resistance and guarantee preservation. According to Rousseau, the social compact emerges as an answer to a fundamental problem; "where shall we find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force, the person and property of each association and by which each person while uniting himself with all, shall obey only himself and remain as free as before?"[57]

For Rousseau, the answer to this question lies in the articles of the social contrast that come up with the basic mandate that each associate give up all his rights to the community. Thus, the compact demands that "every man should place in common his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will"[58]. Therefore, the contract is the result of an act of association embarked upon by individuals, which produces a moral and collective body.

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[55]   Ibid., 502–510.
[56]   J.J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, in J. Somerville (ed.), *Social and Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 203.
[57]   Ibid., 213.
[58]   Ibid., 214.

The act of association for Rousseau, gives the contract its unity, common self, life and will. And so, it becomes a public person, or the product of the union of the individuals into a body politic or city. The body politics is called a state when passive, and a sovereign when active. And it becomes a power, when compared to others of its kind.

Rousseau argues further that the associates in the public person are collectively called people, while as individuals participating in the sovereign authority, they are called citizens. The people are called subjects because they are subject to the laws of the state. He notes that the sovereign emanating from the public person can never bind itself in any manner that derogates the original contract. Also, the sovereign cannot violate the contract without destroying itself. Rousseau draws attention to the major qualities of the civil state which emerges out of the state of nature. The civil state replaces instinct with justice, gives the actions of men a moral character, and imposes a sense of duty and right. Therefore, the social contract is the basis of the civil state, provides for man civil liberty and proprietorship of all that he owns.

According to Rousseau, the general will is the outcome of the social compact and only the general will can direct the forces of the state agreeably to the common good as the end of the civil state. Therefore, society is to be governed on the basis of common interest. Sovereignty for Rousseau, is the manifestation of the general will. It is therefore indivisible and inalienable. The general will as an act of sovereignty, constitutes law. Sovereign is divided into parts; the legislature and executive. These parts are emanations from the sovereign or state. The general will is always right and tends towards the public interest.

However, Rousseau carefully separates the will of all from the general will. He claims that "the general will is the common interest while the will of all is the sum of the private interests in the society".[59] The general will affirms the equality of right and the concept of justice. The equality of men decrees that all should enjoy the same rights without any partiality.

For Rousseau, "a true act of sovereignty is not a convention to association between superior and inferior, but a convention of a body with each of its members".[60] This convention is justified and guided by the contract and it is equitable because it is common to all. It is beneficial because it exclusively aims at the general good and it is solid due to its public force and supreme power. Rousseau argues also that justice is good and conformable to order, and to attain justice, there would be adherence to the rules, conventions and laws that exist to reconcile rights and duties. As such, all rights are determined by laws which

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[59]   Ibid., 224.
[60]   Ibid., 227.

constitute the act of the general will. Every state governed by laws is called a republic, because, in a republic only the public interest governs.

We see then his emphasis on the compact as the basis for the civil state whose aim is the general will. The general will guides all to the public good or common interest via its laws that tend towards justice. He also emphasises the moral character of the state. According to Allan Bloom, "Rousseau's task is to answer the entire political question by establishing the proper relation between the particular and the general will".[61]

From the above analysis we see that Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau share in common the general notion of liberalism which places value on civil and political liberties. It also values personal and social liberty.[62] In liberalism, priority and meaning is attached to liberty or personal autonomy as the fundamental good and there is an emphasis on the opportunity for individuals to be self determining. Thus, the individual's interests and experience form the core of liberalism. Individualism as a central element in liberalism reflects a belief in the supreme importance of the human individual. The liberal goal is therefore to construct a society within which individuals can flourish and develop each pursuing the good as he or she defines it, to the best of his other abilities.[63]

Personal liberty comprises all the various rights, which ensure the individual protection against government. Civil liberty covers all free and positive channels and areas of human activity and participation. It covers the absence of government interference and control in economic life and religious toleration. Thus civil liberty is the right of individuals to think their own thoughts and learn in their own ways from experience with nobody impeding the process. It covers basically freedoms of thought, expression, speech, writing, publishing and disseminating ones thought, to discuss things with others and to associate with others in the peaceful expression of ideas. Social liberty refers to the opportunities for advancement or social mobility. It is the right of all individuals, irrespective of race and creed and irrespective of the position of their parents, to be given every opportunity to attain a position in society commensurate with their capabilities.[64]

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[61] A. Bloom, "Jean Jacques Rousseau", in *History of Political Philosophy*, op. cit., 576.
[62] R.B. Douglass, "Liberalism" in *Encyclopaedia of Government and Politics*, vol. 1, ed. by M. Hawkesworth and M. Kegan, London, Routledge, 1996, 133; R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, USA, Scott Foresman & Co. 1989, 24–25; A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, London, Macmillan, 1981, 69.
[63] R.B. Douglass, "Liberalism", op. cit., 135; R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 22; A. Heywood, *Politics*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997, 41.
[64] A Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 69; R.C.Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 24–25.

Liberalism also embraces and upholds toleration, as well as the heterogeneity of the good that human beings are prepared to seek. Toleration enjoins people to allow others to think, speak and act in ways of which they disapprove as a guarantee of individual liberty and social enrichment. Closely linked with toleration is the liberal belief in pluralism. Liberalism values diversity by being accustomed to accommodating beliefs and values that are different. Pluralism or diversity gives and enlarge steadily the opportunities for individuality to flourish. Pluralism upholds the rights and freedoms of groups and associations in the society. Therefore, it is believed that pluralism as moral, cultural and political diversity is healthy as a way of promoting debate and intellectual progress by ensuring that all beliefs are tested in a free market of ideas.[65]

Liberalism values freedom and equality as natural rights of individuals. Such rights belong to them as rights existing prior to their entry into society. Thus, if all have natural rights, then all are equal in at least one fundamental sense. While freedom relates to individual liberty, equality reflects the belief that individuals have the same moral worth. This reinforces a commitment to equal rights and entitlements such as legal and political equality.[66]

Liberalism also endorses consent, which holds that authority and social relationships should always be based on willing agreement. Government should therefore be based on the consent of the governed. This idea favours representation and democracy. Therefore, consent implies that the state is seen as a partnership between government and the people expressed in a contract. As a result, all citizens should have the right to participate in choosing the government.[67] Constitutionalism is a major feature of liberalism. It enjoins the limitation of powers of government through fragmentation by checks and balances, and the establishment of a codified constitution.[68]

From all that has been discussed above, we may agree with Macridis position that liberalism consists of three central elements or cores; moral, political and economic. The moral core contains an affirmation of basic values and rights attributable to the nature of a human being's freedom, dignity and life. The political core includes primary rights such as the right to vote and participate, usually associated with representative democracy. For Macridis, the third feature of liberalism; the economic core, concerns economic and property rights which covers economic individualism, the free enterprise system or capitalism. It also

[65] R.B. Douglass, "Liberalism", op. cit., 135. R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 41; A. Heywood, *Politics*, op. cit., 42.

[66] R. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., l22 ; A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 70; A Heywood, *Politics*, op. cit., 42.

[67] A. Heywood, *Politics*, op. cit., 42; A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 69–70.

[68] A. Heywood, *Politics*, op. cit., 43.

embraces the rights and freedoms of individuals to produce and consume, to enter into contractual relations, to dispose of their own property and labour as they decide.[69]

2.3. Modern period: Marx and Engels (socialism)

According to Gamble, the early socialist position developed out of the notion of radical democracy. Radical democracy on its part, accepted the moral core of liberalism; civil rights, individual freedoms, etc. However, Macrids notes that radical democracy demanded the secularisation of many functions that the church provided, such as education and even the expropriation of its properties.[70] Radical democracy supported the political core of liberalism but viewed it from Rousseau's perspective that all power emanates from the people, and that a majority makes binding decisions. In addition, radical democracy rejected voting qualifications and any censure of the exercise of popular will. It also has fundamental reservations concerning the economic core of liberalism.[71] It was therefore an endorsement of some notion of the peoples parliament.

Macridis argues further that radical democracy evolved in the direction of economic and social reforms, initiated by the state's intervention in the market economy. It stressed the importance of social and collective goals which can be best implemented by the state. They favoured state intervention in the provision of major social services, but they did not enjoin the take over of all economic activities by the state.

Socialism emerged against the background of the radical democrat's rejection of the consequences of crass capitalism. The socialists rejected the gross inequalities in the ownership of wealth and income arising from the operation of a free market economy. Thus, the central question posed by the socialist was, how could a state founded on justice and equality, tolerate relationships among its members that destroyed the cohesion, harmony and fairness of the society, by permitting huge discrepancies in wealth, possessions and opportunities.[72] The socialist response according to Gamble, lays emphasis on the private ownership of property as the basic cause of the evils and injustices of society. Private property created basic divisions of the population into classes, each having opposing and conflicting interests. Socialism argues that, only if this problem is addressed, can we have a just and integrating society.

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[69]   R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 23.
[70]   A Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 102; R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 53.
[71]   R.C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, op. cit., 53–54.
[72]   A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 102.

Thus, the main elements of socialism (Marxism) can be summarised as follows; it looks at the types of human society in shaping social life. It also periodizes history into a progressive dialectical movement and it highlights the role of social classes in the creation and transformation of major types of society.[73] Lastly, socialism analyses the development and features of modern capitalism as the final form of class society. It draws attention to the conflict and opposition between two major classes; the bourgeoisie and proletariat as well as the contradictions that result from this conflict.[74]

Marx and Engels conceive social order in terms of the communist society which will emerge out of a series of revolutionary transformations in the nature of human societies. According to Marx, the communist society as the ideal social order is the product of struggle by the proletariat class. By establishing this communist society, the proletariat class emancipates itself from the shackles of exploitation, oppression and injustice.[75] Also, by establishing the communist social order, the proletarians proclaim the need for complete social transformation and thereby create the means of guaranteeing freedom and justice for all.

According to Marx, the keynote of communism is the abolition of bourgeoisie private property which symbolises the age-long exploitation of the many by the few. Marx traces the emergence of the communist society to a series of historical evolutions in the modes of production and institutions of property. These historical evolutions are occasioned by class conflicts and antagonisms. Marx argues that "in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which atone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch".[76] Thus, he implies that the economy is the bedrock of all other realms of social and political existence.

Furthermore, Marx contents that the entire history of mankind can be described as a history of class struggles and contest between the oppressors and the opppressed.[77] It is these class struggles that have led to a series of revolutionary transformations in the history of societies. These class conflicts occasioned the transition from the primitive society to the feudal and then capitalist societies. In the capitalist society the occurrence of exploitation, oppression and class conflicts between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, creates an awareness of, and the need for change in the society.

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[73] T. Bottomore, "Marxism", in *Encyclopaedia of Government and Politics*, vol. 1, op. cit., 155–156.
[74] Ibid., 156.
[75] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party in Great Books of the Western World*, 50 (ed.) Chicago Encyclopaedia Britannica inc. 1990, 426.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

According to Marx, the situation of class conflicts in the capitalist society reaches a stage whereby the oppressed proletarians must liberate themselves and the entire society from all exploitation and class distinctions. Indeed, the communist social order will emerge only if the working class or wage labourers realise that "the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat cannot attain its emancipation from the exploiting and ruling class the bourgeoisie without at the same time and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles".[78]

Therefore, Marx's central argument is that the communist social orer is the outcome of a unique historical sequence of revolutionary class stuggles. These series of class struggles have always pitched two contending groups, the oppressor and oppressed classes against each other. Marx holds that in the past, there were class conflicts among the freemen and slaves, the patricians and plebeians, the lords and serfs.[79] However, he holds that it is the class conflict between the bourgeoisie proletariat that will usher in the communist society.

According to Marx, the modern bourgeoisie society which emerged from the debris of the collapsed feudal society has not really showed itself to be different from other hitherto existing societies. In fact, the bourgeoisie society continues to retain and propagate the tensions arising from class antagonisms. It establishes new classes and new conditions of injustice and oppression. In short, the modern bourgeoisie society creates new forms of conflicts to replace the old ones.[80] According to Marx, this situation will give rise to two great opposing groups, namely, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And it is expected that this class struggles between the owners of capital and the providers of labour, will culminate in a violent explosion that will usher in a victorious proletariat class.

However, Marx draws attention to the important fact that the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariats is significantly different from other earlier struggles or conflicts. This is because "all the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society to their conditions of appropriation".[81] In other words, the victorious classes in the earlier struggles simply created strategies for maintaining and perpetuating their domination and enslavement of the oppressed or subordinate classes.

However, Marx explains that the proletarians are faced with a different situation. They can only dominate the forces of production in the society by abolish-

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[78]   Ibid.
[79]   Ibid.
[80]   Ibid., 416–419.
[81]   Ibid., 419.

ing every mode of appropriation including their own. In effect, the proletarians "have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify: their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurance of individual property".[82]

Furthermore, Marx holds that there is another important reason why the proletariat struggle and victory is different from its predecessors. According to him, the proletariat movement is a movement of the majority and not of the minority. The proletariat movement distinguishes itself from the previously existing historical movements "which were movements of minorities or movements in the interest of minorities. The proletariat movement is the self conscious independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority".[83]

According to Marx, the basic distinguished feature of that communist society which the proletarians will bring into existence, is its "abolition of bourgeoisie private property (which) is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, based on the exploitation of the many by the few".[84] Furthermore, he says that communism does not merely abolish private property. It also converts capital into the common property of all members of the society. As such, capital looses its social and class character or constitution.

According to Marx, the communist society denies capital of its class character in order to ensure that man is deprived of the power to subordinate the labour of other men through appropriation. Hence, the communist society displays the zeal and support for any revolutionary struggle against injustice and oppression.[85]

From the above analysis, one can argue that Marx makes a vital contribution to the search for social order by postulating a communist society that would set men free from injustice, exploitation and oppression. The communist society is the final outcome of a series of revolutionary transformations in the history of modes of production and institutions of private property. The most important feature of the communist society is its emphasis on the common ownership of property as a way of guaranteeing equality and justice for all in the society.

2.4. Contemporary period: Rawls (social democracy)

According to Gamble, social democracy emerged from the question of how laissez-faire capitalism could be transformed into an industrial society which

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[82]   Ibid., 424.
[83]   Ibid.
[84]   Ibid., 425.
[85]   Ibid., 426–434.

could win the loyalty and secure the participation of the whole people.[86] For him, the need for social democracy arose from the picture of unregulated capitalism and the urge to correct its worst abuses. In more lucid terms, Rev. Dr. E. Beyer argues that social democracy tries to strike a middle point between the blind profiteering characteristic of crass capitalism and the rigidly and collectivist unanimity of communism.[87]

Heywood points out that social democracy has usually been articulated on the basis of principles like welfarism, redistribution and social justice.[88] However, the essence of social democracy has been variously articulated. For Gamble, one key subject matter that animates social democracy is the desire to discover some means by which capitalism can be transformed into a post-capitalist society without sacrificing some of its major strengths or achievements. For Heywood, we have at the nucleus of social democracy a compromise or reconciliation between an acceptance of capitalism as the only reliable socio-economic mechanism for generating wealth, and a desire to distribute wealth, in accordance with moral rather than market principles or considerations.

According to Claude Ake, social democracy goes much more beyond abstract political rights and takes concrete economic and social rights seriously. On his part Callinicos says that social democracy basically aims at realising the goal or good of collective self determination more fully than liberal democracy can. Social democracy, abolishes the separation of the economy and polity characteristic or typical of market capitalism. Thus, the principle of democratic self government is transferred or extended to economic life and politics is brought to bear on the challenges and problems of every day life, thereby infusing it with a direct relevance to the citizens practical concerns, Dr. E. Beyer summarises the major focus of social democracy as the insistence on the protection of human values such as rights, freedom, labour, market economy and social responsibility. Social democracy, for him, demands the protection of the people by the state through social regulations, assistance and protections.[89]

Rawls in his famous text *A Theory of Justice*, tries to provide what he considers to be a model of social order based on a conceptualisation of justice. His ideas tilt towards the redistribution of wealth and opportunities typical or social democratic theory. According to Rawls, "justice is the first virtue of social insti-

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[86] A. Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 174.
[87] E. Beyer, "Interview and discussions on social democracy", SS Peter and Paul Seminary Ibadan (September, 1998).
[88] A. Heywood, *Politics*, op. cit., 55.
[89] Ibid.; A Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, op. cit., 174; E. Beyer, "Interview and discussions on social democracy", op. cit.; C. Ake, *Democratisation of Disempowerment in Africa*, Port Harcourt CASS Monograph 1994, no. 1, 3; A. Callinicos, "Socialism Democracy", in D. Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993, 200.

tutions. Each person possessions an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. In a just society, the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled".[90]

For Rawls, the identity and conflict of interest that illustrate life in any society marked by social co-operation, collaboration and distribution, necessitate the existence of a set of principles. He ways that these principles are to guide our choice among the various social arrangements which determine the division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares. Rawls maintains that "these principles of social justice. They provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social co-operation".[91]

Rawls insists that a society is well ordered only when it is designed to advance the good of its members and also effectively regulate its operation by a public conception of justice. He holds that "the primary subject of justice, is the basic structure of society or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social co-operation".[92] Moreover, the justice of a social scheme depends mainly on the principles of justice which free and rational persons concerned to advance or promote their personal interests would accept in an initial position of equality. Rawls says that the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract.

Understood as a purely hypothetical situation, Rawls argues that he original position is essentially about the fact that "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, etc."[93] Rawls assumes also that the parties in the original position do not even known their conceptions of the good or their special psychological attitudes and inclinations. Solomon argues that Rawls' idea of justice as fairness emphasises on the procedures by which rights and duties can be determined and allocated in ways that ensure fair distribution of advantages and benefits.[94] To this effect, Rawls highlights the idea that the human beings starting point in life is a matter of chance. Hence, Rawls places all choices behind the veil of ignorance, which aims at ensuring that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice, due to cir-

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[90] J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford Clarendon Press 1971, 3.
[91] Ibid., 4.
[92] Ibid., 7.
[93] Ibid., 12.
[94] R. Solomon, J. Greene, *Morality and the Good Life*, New York, McGraw–Hill College 1999, 426, 435.

cumstances or chance. Hence, the veil of ignorance describes the operations of the original position in which individuals do not retain any prior knowledge or advantage that can unduly affect their choice of the principles of justice. To the extent that the principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance, the intention of Rawls is to guarantee that no one is disadvantaged or advantaged in the choice of principles, either by the outcome of natural chance, or the contingency of social circumstances.

According to Rawls, the persons in the initial situation would choose two principles. "The first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties. While the second holds that social and economic inequalities for example, those of wealth and opportunity are just, only if, they result in compensating benefits for everyone and in particular for the least advantaged members of society".[95] In other words, Rawls proposes two principles of justice: "Firstly, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. Secondly, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity".[96] Thus, Rawls proposes the greatest equal liberty principle, the difference principle and the fair equality of opportunity principle.

Rawls first principle covers basic liberties for instance, the freedom and right to vote, freedom of speech, and of the press, freedom of the persons. His second principle requires that the basic structure be arranged such that any inequalities in prospects of obtaining the primary goods (wealth, income, power) must work to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged in the society. His principle of fair equality of opportunity demands a movement beyond formal equality of opportunity to ensuring that those with similar skills, abilities and motivation, enjoy equal opportutities.[97]

Furthermore, Rawls original position is a peculoar interpretation of the initial situation of man. This initial situation is characterised by a principle of fairness which is applied through the idea of the veil of ignorance. The veil of ignorance has been introduced to nullify the effects of specific contingencies that put man at odds and tempt them to employ social and natural circumstances to their own advantage.[98]

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[95]   Ibid., 14.
[96]   A. Buchanan, "A Critical Introduction to Rawls Theory of Justice", in *John Rawls Theory of Social Justice. An Introduction*, ed. by G. Blocker and E.H. Smith, USA, Athens Ohio University Press, 1980, 9.
[97]   Ibid., 9–12.
[98]   L. Katnzer, "The Original Position and the Veil of Ignorance", in ibid., 43–53.

Without doubt, Rawls commitment to equal liberty seems clear. He proposes a basic shift in our operative definition of equality. The original notion of equality of opportunity suggests a state in which every one enters the contest having an equal position at the starting point. Thereafter, the race goes to the swiftest and the prize to the most deserving.[99] Contrary to the above view, Rawls contents that in order to treat all persons equally and to provide genuine equality of opportunity, society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favourable social positions. The idea is to redress the bias of contingency in the direction of equality.[100]

In the words of Schaar, *A Theory of Justice* is the "most comprehensive and sophisticated effort in recent social theory to formulate what can be properly called a democratic and even socialist ethic".[101] On his part, Rober Wolff observes that *A Theory of Justice* is before all else, an argument for substantial redistribution of income and wealth and Rawls argument presents a vision of a harmoniously integrated, stable, social and political order whose structure is articulated by the two principles of justice.[102]

Conclusion

So far we have tried to study social order in historical perspective. We saw its main focus as the search for a proper idea of community that can meet the needs and goals of human social existence. We discussed the concept in terms of three main epochs the Ancient, Modern and Contemporary. Within these periods, we located the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, Liberalism, Socialism and Social Democracy. These different emphases on the idea of community combine to create a historical sequence of the unfolding of the search for social order.

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[99]   N. Bowie, "Equal Basic Liberty for all", in ibid., 111; J.H. Schaar, "Equality of Opportunity and the Just Society", in ibid., 166.
[100] J.H. Schaar, "Equality of Opportunity and the Just Society", op. cit., 170.
[101] Ibid., 171.
[102] R.P. Wolff, *Understanding Rawls*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1977, 190–202.

Summary

This paper traces the problem of social order in historical perspective. Here we attempt to identify the milestones in the quest for social order and to discuss the insights that they provide on the problem. The problem of social order, seen in historical perspective, refers to the attempts to reconcile the individual and society. It is thus concerned with the search for tenable ways to define the relationship between man and man as well as man and society. The milestones in the search for social order can be discussed in terms of certain fundamental problems in the quest for community and our views of what major social and political traditions have to say about the concept of the state, social order and community. One of the major problems arising from an examination of social order in historical perspective is the question of how to conceptualize human nature and to employ it in the explanation of the emergence of the civil society and the state. In articulating a form or model of social order, certain fundamental questions or problems arise. First, is the problem of what level or degree of independence, freedom and autonomy should individuals have within, and in relation to the state? In other words, what is the extent of the power that society can exercise over the individual? The second problem centres on what is the extent of power that can be exercised by the sovereign or ruler in a state, over the citizens? One can say that the fundamental task of the social philosophers is to provide justifications for certain conceptions of social order and political community.

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