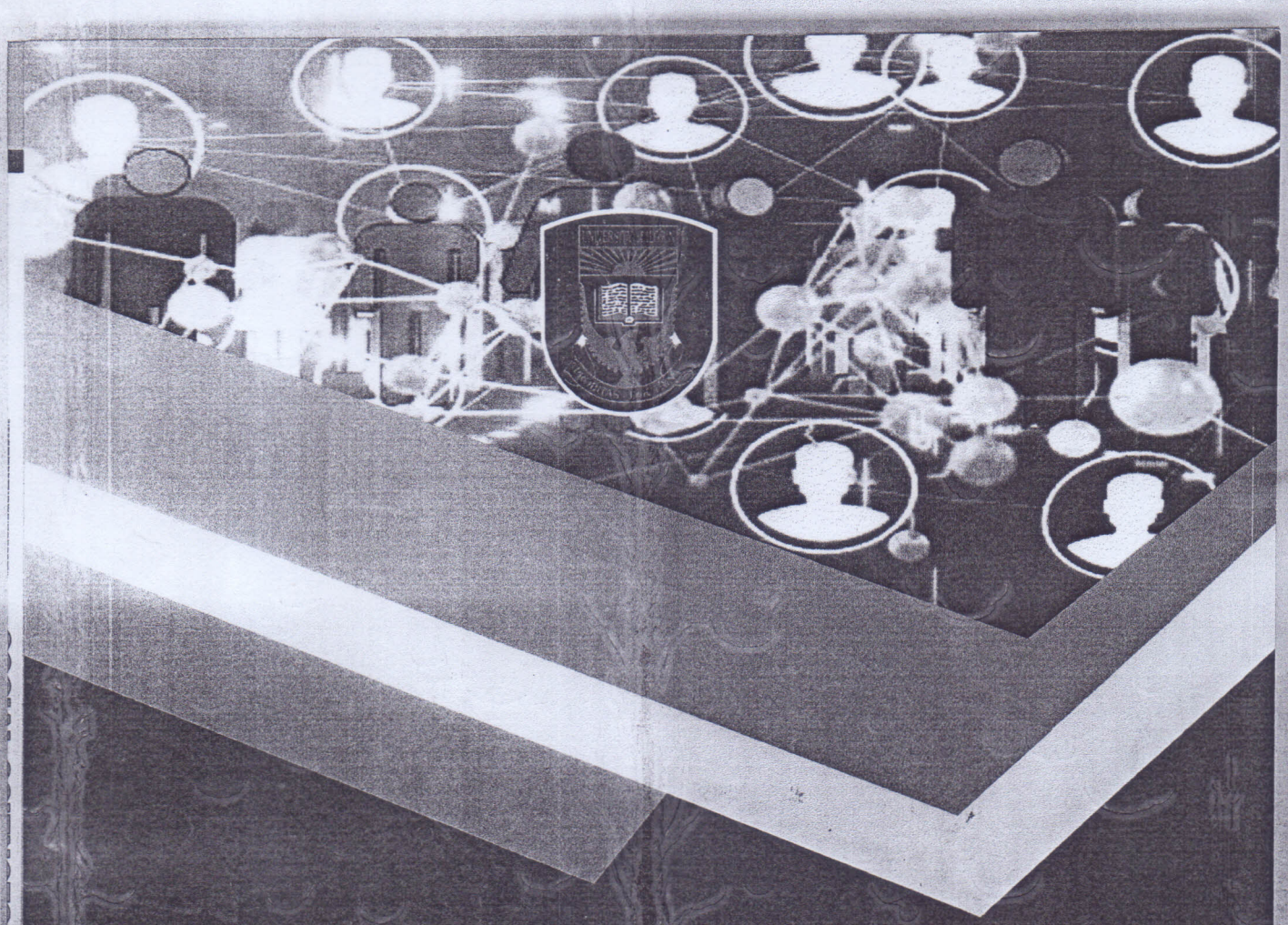


SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR BEGINNERS

VOL. II

Sociology, Social Work, Criminology, Psychology and Political Science

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CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR
THE CENTRALITY OF THE STATE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

The discipline of Political Science has witnessed several developments across the globe, notably in mainstream partisan politics, electioneering period and governance. The recurring failure of politicians to be guided by the ethics and ethos, and the dictates and principles of democracy has continued to raise the question of whether the study and the field of Political Science is of any relevance! This disturbing question is expedient as it shakes the core of Political Science. The level of anxiety which citizens have on the concept of democracy and its actual practice across the globe has been the propelling force behind the question. For instance, in the available elementary books on government and governance, certain desirable roles have been given to political parties and Nigerians have expected them to play these roles especially when the crusade for democracy reached its apex in the 1990s in Nigeria and by extension several African states.

Decades after the return to democratic rule, political parties have been central to devaluing the core principles of democracy, particularly contributing less significantly to democratic consolidation. In essence, they mirror everything that contravenes the rule-based ideology that democracy preaches. Even within their internal organizations, an insignificant amount of attention is paid to the tenets of democracy; dictatorial tendencies take centre stage as evident in their imposition of candidates for electoral posts, as well as disregard for the rule of law, violent activities and perpetuation of all forms of electoral malpractices among others have been widespread, mostly orchestrated by leaders of the various political parties.

In addition, when one speaks of governance, there is also a perturbing trend emanating from not following rule of law, rendering of insufficient services and the promotion of sectional and/or sectarian interests, all of which have combined to retard the projection towards democratic consolidation and good governance. Based on these but not limited to these, people have repeatedly questioned the essence and existence of political scientists. Undoubtedly, political scientists are people of systems who concerned themselves with how a political order performs to the expectations of the people derived from certain principles and laws guiding political actions and activities. For instance, political scientists are basically interested in how a federal system runs its affairs according to the tenets of federalism. Also, they are concerned about the process of election and how the conduct of various stakeholders conforms to the laws and principles that have been outlined to guide the conduct of people in the processes. Be that as it may, one may argue that a bifurcation should exist between political scientists and the active political actors.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Science has been regarded as the study of life in an organized state or community. Hence, the concept of the state is intrinsic to the discipline of political science and it is central to the discussion of other related concepts in the field. Laski (1926) is of the view that the study "concerns itself with the life of men in relation to organised states". This further solidifies the assertion that to study politics is to study the state. However, the centrality of

the concept state has attracted a considerate and controversial debate among scholars in the field of political science as to what is the rationale behind the establishment of the 'state'. Laski (1926) posits: "The modern state, is territorial security, divided into government, and subjects, claiming within its allotted physical area, supremacy over all other institutions". MacIver observes "when we speak of the state, we mean the organization of which government is the administrative organ. A state has a constitution, a code of laws, a way of setting up its government, and a body of citizens".

State is a cluster or group of people, membership of people, population of people or a political community that occupies a definite or demarcated territory, with a group of people charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order, and in which sovereignty is to be accorded to this group of people in order to prevent both internal and external aggression. Anifowose (1999) sees "State as the most inclusive organization which has formal institution for regulating the most significant external relationship of the men within its scope". However, to Ewing, no state is absolutely sovereign in relation to its own subjects or absolutely independent in relation to other states. State is very central to the discipline of Political Science. It serves as the focal point of analysis both at the domestic and international level. Without the state, the world will be in a state of nature, and a state of nature according to

Thomas Hobbes is a miserable state of war; it will be nasty, brutish, and solitary. Aristotle also observed that "He who is unable to live in a state or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or god". State is very central to the maintenance of both international and domestic peace and security. The maintenance of peace and security, political and economic developments, as well as prevention of internal and external aggression rest on the shoulders of the entity called state. Be that as it may, the definition of state does not wear a universal outlook, but it is uncontestable however that the state is a fundamental political unit, an aggregation of individuals who are organised in a defined territory for the pursuit of common welfare.

The Centrality of State in Political Discourse

Like most concepts in the field of Political Science, there have been several debates on the importance of the state. It is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental questions of politics. Just as various questions have popped up regarding the importance of the state, several scholars have also attempted to provide answers as it suits their personal purpose or interest. For Aristotle, the importance of the state "is to ensure good life" while Locke opines that "The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealth and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property, that is, lives, liberties and estates". The following are some of the importance of the state as an essential apparatus of governance.

1. Maintenance of Law and Order:
   Under any form of government, the aim of the state is to protect the individuals, ensure the security of life and property and maintain law and order. Classical works of Plato and Aristotle solidly back the fact that state was organised for maintaining law and order. Herbert Spencser is of the opinion that the state is nothing but a natural institution for preventing one man from infringing the rights of another. Adam Smith also noted that the state's duty is to protect the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies.

2. Common Welfare:
Another importance of the state is provision of common welfare. Plato and Aristotle maintained that the aim of the state was public good and moral welfare. The utilitarian school, of which Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are prominent adherents, proposes that the importance of the state is to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number of individuals under its jurisdiction.

3. Economic Welfare:
State adopts measures for eliminating poverty by way of ensuring that social goods are delivered to the people including social security, creating employment opportunities, insurance, loans and grants, transportation, telecommunications, electricity, and good roads.

4. Political Welfare:
The state also caters for the political welfare of the people. For this purpose the state gives some fundamental rights to the people, among which are right to vote and be voted for. To this end, the state is saddled with the responsibility of defining the areas of political authority, establish and state explicitly the formulation of those rights and obligations which are recognized as properly enforceable. From the foregoing, it is evident that the state possesses a considerable amount of power and the ability to engage in activities considered necessary for the pursuit of the attainment of its goals and objectives.

Features of The State
Traditionally, there are four fundamental features of the state. These are: government, definite territory, population and sovereignty. However, contemporary scholars have added two additional features to include compulsory nature of law of state, and the universality of the state jurisdiction. We discuss each of the features in detail.

Government
Government is the most authoritative, and legitimate machinery of the state. It is a body or system embedded with the responsibility to establish and uphold peace and safety of the state population. It comprises of few individuals charged with the obligation of maintaining law, peace and order. This association of individuals are either directly or indirectly elected by individuals from each given state. Government is the strongest tool utilized by a state to execute constitutional responsibilities, roles and duties. (Chris 2008:67) further observes that government as an apparatus set up by the state to coordinate the state, deals with its issues and administer its duties, roles and responsibilities. "It" is the machinery upon which the wills of the state are completed.

There is no widespread model of organising government. While there is no generally agreed arrangement of organizing government, it is commonly required to regulate the normal life of every inhabitants, to ensure strict compliance with the laws and ordinances of the state. For instance, some states share the responsibility of organizing government within the three arms of government, while in some the task of government is fused in two organs. Notwithstanding, government anywhere in the world discharges her responsibility of organizing, administering and ruling the state. While countries like Nigeria, USA, Liberia

and others give attention to the separation of powers within the organs of government, some states prefer the fusion of power within the organs of government.

Population
Population is fundamental and sacrosanct to the formation and survival of any state. It is the whole number of people, group of people or association of people in a country. It also refers to all inhabitants who occupied the territory of the state. This also comprises of all classes of people living in the state, ranging from the upper, middle and the lower classes. Different ethnic groups and nationalities may also occupy a state. A good example is Nigeria.

Definite territory
A state must exist within a properly defined or demarcated geographical territory. The territory of a state must be obvious and visible on the map with respect to the boundaries shared with neighboring properly demarcated. This is imperative in order to prevent external attacks and border disputes. Not only that, in global politics, it is essential for countries within the global system to create boundaries in the land, air and see to avoid reproach and infiltration by another except through legal procedures where necessary. Over the years, this action has promoted relative peace and order among actors in the international system.

Sovereignty
Sovereignty is an important feature that gives a state the title and pride of a legal state. It is the absolute and supreme power of the state to prevent both internal and external aggressions. Not only that, it is the capacity and potential of a state to protect all her territories without any form of external infiltration. A state without sovereignty is not qualified to be called a state but a colony. The term sovereignty is derived from the Latin word "supernaus" which means "supreme". Bodin defines it as the supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by law.
Hugo Grotius defines it as the "supreme political power vested in him whose acts are not subject to any other and whose will cannot be verrideen". Dugut says that "soverengty is the commanding power of the state, it is the will of the nation organized in the state. It is the right to give unconditioned powers to all individual subjects and all over association of subjects.

Indeed, it is the concept of sovereignty that differentiates a state from other forms of political entities such as nation or societies. The sovereignty of a State is permanent, exclusive, indivisible and all encompassing. It is the supreme, absolute and final power of the state. Types of sovereignty are: de facto and dejure sovereignty, titular sovereignty and popular sovereignty.
Notwithstanding these nomenclatures, states alone possesses sovereignty in real sense.
1. Compulsory nature of Law of State;
The law of the state must also be compulsory in nature and irrespective of the status of the citizen, the law must be enforced. Law of the state is blind; it has no regards for either rich or poor, and it must be respected by all (citizens and foreigners).
Disobedience to the laws of the state must be met with serious sanctions.
2. Universality of the State Jurisdiction;
The jurisdiction of the state is general in nature. When a state is set up, it is essential for her to incorporate all her regional zones and the state should be prepared to fully enforce her laws in those regions. The jurisdiction of the state covers the air, the sea

and the land that falls within her domain and infiltrators or external persons should either be allowed legitimately or sanctioned for illegal penetration. It is as a result of this comprehensiveness of the state jurisdiction that the state builds up the military to implement her laws and secure it in all circles. For example, the naval force is set up by the Nigerian government to uphold Nigeria Laws on all the seas within her domain.

Functions of the State

Aristotle argues that each individual is a political creature irrespective of his or her activeness in politics. This is because the state controls all activities within her domains directly or indirectly. The citizen is nothing except a member of the state and his or her whole existence depends on and subject to the state. The state is supreme and there is no limit to the spheres and functions of the state. Laski cited in Chris (2008:56) observes that "The government is the trustees and governors and it is their business to glean the needs of the society and to translate those needs into terms of effective status. The purpose of the state finds it personification in them".

The purpose of the state is the ultimate for which it does exist and its two folds: the promotion of the individual welfare and the realization of the collective ends of the society of the society. The state is pre-eminent, omnipotent and its activities or functions are all encompassing. The state is a means to an end and an end in itself. As a means, every citizen must cooperate with the state to achieve their aims and as an end; the state is to create condition for possible development and creative self expression of its members. Whatever functions the state embraces and whatever activities of government thereof, it should be demonstrated that it empowers the residents to achieve the best in themselves and ultimately, it helps the advancement of joy and spiritual uplift.

Essentially, the elements of the state can be assembled into two (2) significant headings:

1. Maintenance of law and order
2. Provision of Developmental Capacities

I. Maintenance of Law and Order

Regardless of the arrangement of Government adopted by any country, be it presidential or parliamentary, federal or confederal framework, liberal, capitalist or fascism, the principal reasons and premier capacities performed by the state is the establishment and maintainance of law and order. In these cutting edge times, state builds up principles and rules codified in the constitution which incorporates elements of the three arms of government, obligations and rights of both the government and the citizens. It is necessary for government to make constitutional provisions that will secure lives and properties of the citizens who are also expected to be law abiding. Generally, these functions incorporate assurance of the common liberty (fundamental human right) of citizens, security of the powerless against the strong and conservation of balance of all citizens under the steady gaze of the law. For the continuous existence of law and order, it requires setting up some enforcement (implementation) instrument (mechanisms). This is the reason government in each state sets up law enforcement agencies like the Arm and Navy. We also have others like the Police, Custom and Immigration Services. Not only that, in order to guarantee implementation of the laws of the state, state should set up a free and fair legal framework where erring person/persons of the state will be tried, penalised and/or sanctioned where necessary.

II. Provisions of Developmental Capacities

While it is paramount for the state to ensure the maintenance of law, peace and order, also, it is imperative for the state to provide a favourable climate for her citizens to accomplish their private goals. These developmental capacities encompasses the creation of physical and economic environment, ranging from the provision of shelter, good and accessible road networks, standard hospitals, infrastructural development and improvement, and access to education by all citizens. Regardless of the state being a Socialist, welfare state, capitalist or bourgeois State, it is highly essential for the state to make these arrangements available and accessible to the citizens in order to guarantee peaceful co-existence.

To accomplish this, the State ought to be a specialist of economic life by setting up monetary policies and strategies that will guarantee the abundance of the country in such a way that certain individuals won't monopolise it. Only then can harmony, serenity and improvement become a reality. This welfarism function is what the utilitarian school of thought which Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mills are advocates of bear in mind when they argue that state exist mainly to provide "greater happiness for the greater number of people".

The Theories of The Origin and Essence of State

There was interest among political thinkers and researchers in the order of Political Science about the birthplace of state and the rationale behind the foundation of the association called state. Prior to now, analysts have given answers to these inquiries yet none is has given satisfactory logical clarification to the embodiment of state. Attempts have been made to critically examine some of the theoretical dispositions propounded by scholars in the past on the source (origin) and embodiment of the state. Despite the fact that a portion of these theories are speculative and dismissed, they contain a few components of truth and tips for understanding the domain of the past. Additionally, they help to discover how and why the state came into existence.

1. Social Contract Theory

This theory has a significant effect on the reasoning behind the foundation of State. Despite the fact that this theoretical disposition looks vague, it makes significant effort in unravelling what is State, the connection and form of relationship that exists between the State and citizens. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679); John Locke (1632-1704); and John Jacques Rousseau, contributed massively to the development of this theory. While Thomas Hobbes was fundamentally influenced by the conflicts that portrayed the rule of Ruler Charles 1 of England, John Locke was then again, affected by the oppressive rule of Lord Charles II. Writing on the state of nature, Thomas Hobbes asserted that except citizens give up their inalienable rights to the authority irrevocably if not the society will live in a 'state of nature' where life is short, brutish, nasty and where there is no account of time nor navigation. According to Thomas Hobbes, people are narrow-minded, combative, selfish, shrewd, severe, greedy and forceful. Therefore, to avert such state of nature, they must surrender to the monarchy without any form of resistance.

2. The Divine Theory

This is the oldest of all the theories of state. Scholars of the divine theory were of the view that state came into being through the law of God. That is, God set up and administered the state directly by Himself or indirectly through some rulers who were regarded as agents or vice-

regent of anarchy. On this premise, God purposely made his elegance to save humanity from destruction. It was under these circumstances, according to this theory, that God assigned the King to rule over the people. Thus, rulers (kings and queens) began to legitimize their lordship over their subjects for being appointed by God. The theory was utilized to help the absolutism of James I, like rulers of his era, ruled without being accountable to his people.

3. The Theory of Force

The theory of force is another fallacious theory used to illustrate how State came into being. The clarification given by this theory was that State was made historically by conquest, war and force, with the most grounded men vanquishing the feeble men or state accordingly setting up their authority. As per scholars in this domain, the occupation and counter control of States and the ensuing foundation of power over these regions were as a result of conquest or force. The theory of Force, therefore traces the origin and development of the State to conquest and legitimizes its position by the suggestion that might is right. The theory, has thus, four implications. To start with, force is not a historical factor but it is the current basic element of the state. Also, the States were conceived of force only; thirdly, power is the jurisdiction and raison d'etreand, finally, the maintenance and extension of power within and without is the sole point of the state.

4. The Organic Theory of State

The organic theory of state sees the foundation and elements of the State as a product of complex association and unions within the association which works together in a mechanical structure. The proponents of this theory advanced the reasons for the establishment of the State that it was born out of the failure of people to accomplish their goals without working together or cooperating with other individuals or groups of individuals. This theory is also pertinent to the evolution of State and offers a valuable clarification on interdependence among units of government, institutions and citizens in order to achieve tranquil coexistence by both individual and State development objectives.

CONCLUSION

The importance of state cannot be over emphasised. State is exceptionally vital to political discourse given the way that all other concepts in the discipline revolve around it. Notwithstanding, scholars have endeavoured to characterize the concept in such a way to exhibit its significance within the state setting and global politics. There are different points of view or theories that attempts to build up and justify the reasons, however they are not deemed sufficient for the justification of its establishment but they have made giant stride in shaping the knowledge of the concept.

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