

Democracy And Popular Sovereignty In Modern Social Contract Theory

Posted on September 11, 2019

A social contract can be defined as a philosophical assumption that implies agreements whereby people form states to have social order (Locke 3). The implication is that people give up certain rights to the state or government for the greater benefit of social order. Therefore, the theory of contract gives the justification behind the historical concept that legitimate state power and authority must be driven by the consent of the people (Heywood 7). These theories are derived from the human situations absent in any social order which is referred to as natural state or rather state of nature. Similarly, the sovereign will where everyone in the society is bound by the social contract to obey may be recalled back by the people. The implication is that people have realized that the state is no longer taking care of their interests and, therefore, enhances activities that only benefit a few individuals with power. The paper seeks to critically examine the reason the society may want to terminate social contract.

Violations Of The Contract

The theory of social contract has been advanced by famous scholars like Jean Jacques Rousseau. The social contract is not naturally fixed. Instead, it should support the means to the end where the end benefits everyone. Rousseau asserts that a social contract is only legitimate when it adequately meets the general interest of the people. Therefore, when the people realize that there are failings in the social contract; people will seek negotiation to change the terms using elections, Parliament or even judicial processes. For instance, rebellion is allowed in case the contract is affected and does not help the general interest of the public, notably due to the fact that rights that originate from the agreement to the contract, people are expected to adhere to their contractual obligations (Heywood 7). Therefore, those who commit crimes risk losing certain rights, and the society is expected to protect themselves from such outlaws. Rousseau believes that man must be coerced to be free. By this, he implies that the sovereign will of the people is indivisible and inalienable. This theory influenced the French revolution in 1789 as well as the socialist movement (Locke 4).

Why People May Breach The Social Contract

The social contract may be breached when the government has failed to totally address equality and equity issues in the society (Brown 12). In particular, income as well as social economic gap has seen much society attempts to violate or seek to violate the social contract. Income inequality is considered as the unequal distribution of domestic income across different economies. Income

inequality is given as the ratio of income of country against the population of the citizens. For instance, statistics may show that larger percentage of country economy is controlled by few percentages of its citizens. The income gap is linked to growth increase whereby the national income goes up when there is the increase in distribution (Heywood 12). Therefore there have been huge differences between the high and middle-income earners. This issue had been politically and economically the main factor of the gap. At the same time, several economists accept that the growth can be attributed to unequal environments, education, and social relationships.

Also, discrimination in giving social services such as education has seen some sections of the society feel dissatisfied and hence may seek to withdraw their social contract. Education is recognized to influence equality in many societies. For instance, there are certain groups or communities that completely have no access to education. Also, stagnant market wages have played a huge role in creating income gap. The wage market has not been taking into consideration the welfare of manual laborers. Some employees who are paid low wages cannot even live standard and decent lives. On the other hand, the few who are paid their salaries continue to rise. Moreover, most organizations also look for highly skilled workers who create more gaps that exist between the high-income earners and the lower income earners.

Lack of harmonizing trade and business in a society; the laws should be able to promote conducive environment for conducting business. In respect to the interaction between liberalization of trade and inequality, it was revealed that certain number of developing nations have major inequality while others have experienced low inequalities. Kuznets assert that even for the countries who experience high-income level still undergo certain difficulties in dealing with environmental pollutants like carbon emissions (Habermas 6). Economic growth of the country can be described as steady increase in ability to supply different economic products to its population. However, this steady growth and production of goods that serve its population can only be enhanced through the application of technology. When there is a steady increase in the production of goods, then there is high economic growth. Individual societies have the capacity to offer steady and robust income to its citizens because they have large resource base which should benefit the public. Notably, there is a huge weight on many societies to effectively utilize and take advantage of the current economic growth. Presently, the higher percentage of the whole population can be said to be less developed societies.

There is a high number of people at the low end of the income in respect to a range of per capita income. In general, less developed nations are expected to carefully and critically assess themselves about this wide range of intuitions in most countries (Habermas 3). These countries must be certain on failure to maximally exploit their resources and grow their economies. They can expand their economy through the production of goods per capita goods as well as expand their agricultural base so that they can get higher income out of them. However, there are challenges that these countries may face, one of the challenges is the challenges to growth varies in substance and policies in different countries. Overall, the majority of the societies are believed to provide effectively their resources because they are said to have failed in maximally utilizing their resources material for the general good. These countries are also urged to apply technology and innovation to improve their economy.

An equitably society allows its growth with its citizens. The country's economic dynamism has become influential in politics as well as regional influence (Habermas 6). The large economic base of most countries enables its leaders to pursue policies that are beneficial to the country. The great economic base can be transformed into great power. The country's leadership should be visionary. To remain stable both regionally and internationally, societies need to deal with issues that affect it internally (De Visscher 9). First, the issue of corruption that robs its citizen's vital government services should be eradicated. This is because many countries have collapsed because of a high rate of corruption in their countries. So to be a super power for several decades, most nations have allowed corruption infiltrate their country. Also, despite the huge GDP, the country should strive to narrow the gap that exists between the rich and the have-nots. This will let the country move as a unit towards a common good (Rousseau 7). Also, employment, despite its efforts to provide employment for its citizens, the government should create job opportunities because it is through the employment that the country builds its economic base. Therefore, the highest percentage of unemployed residents can violate the social contract (Brown 22). Finally, issues such as injustices, judicial latency, racism and discrimination of any nature should be eradicated so that the country be conducive for all the citizens to conduct their activities.

A country that embraces democracy has witnessed global leadership and supremacy. These countries have shown its military myth in many ways. Its economic base is incredible. Innovation and research from its institutions of higher learning have helped it establish a robust ground for the economic development of the country. Additionally, in a country where democracy is embraced, giving equal services to the citizens' means that everybody irrespective of their wealth, region and race, access government allocations, opportunities, appointments and other essentials without discrimination (De Visscher 11). This implies that an effective government can exist only when resources, money, social class and control are not inappropriately favored at the expense of the general public.

Effects Of Using Huge Sums Of Money In Politics/Bribing Electoral Processes

Ideally, despite the advantages that money may contribute to the politics of the United States, using a lot of money in politics have got influences including fighting and sabotaging democracy. Thus, huge sums of money can interfere with the democracy of a country. However, those who support the use of massive amounts of money in politics argue that donors should have the right to contribute to a particular candidate since they believe in the vision and ideas of that candidate. This argument may not be verified later (Rousseau 11). When such huge sums of cash are allowed infiltrating politics, then there will be a change in fair representation. The politician will favor interest. Instead of giving equal service to all citizens including the ordinary citizens who voted them in, the candidate who spent large sum of cash especially those sponsored by business people will tend to favor such people. One of such favors would comprise receiving government appointments or having the policies swayed so that they can have those policies support them together with their businesses (De Visscher 19).

Therefore, the democracy that was expected to serve the country would not be able to achieve its functions of equality and fairness. When the democracy is at stake, the ordinary citizens' rights are infringed.

Also, when huge sums of money are left to infiltrate politics, the moderate candidate is filtered out. Moderate candidates could have visions and ideologies that are effective for governance. Those who give money, as well as the activist of the party, tend to have dominance of political campaigns. The competition is viewed as for those who have money and power against those who do not have. Consequently, the partisan and the candidates who do not have more money are not accepted since they do not have the advantage of the money. Those who support the usage of huge sums of money in politics argue that such amounts of money in the policy helps in the funding of political parties as well as taking care of their expenses during campaign periods, thus essential for people to take part in politics (Brown 12). Hence, using significant amounts of money in politics threatens democracy as it leads to unfair participation in politics. Similarly, those who are rich tend to pose tremendous influence through participating in campaigns as well as making the voting process efficient. Those wealthy individuals participate in politics through their contribution in campaigns which depicts their worth to the candidate.

The infiltration of a large amount of money in politics can influence the outcome of the elections. This does not imply that money is used for bribing or interfering with the election's outcome. Besides, the first disadvantage linked to usage of huge sums of funds in politics is that it has the ability to make politicians favor the special interest groups, or rather the rich while ignoring the interest of the common citizens; the poor and the middle class. When ideologies of the ideal democracy are manipulated and influenced by few individuals, then the entire country will suffer the lack of fairness and democracy through the abandonment of the views and vision of its everyday citizens (Rousseau 7). This implies that the government will be seen as working for only a few rich people when it should rather work for the common good of all the citizens.

Another challenge of allowing money to infiltrate politics is that it raises the probability of the contesting candidate to be seen as able and visionary while that may not be the case. Money can increase their popularity of the candidate that lacks the capacity to lead (Brown 41). Much as supporters of the use of a large amount of money argue that the donors share in vision of the candidate, some studies have revealed that the wealthy people including the established business people push for their needs and preferences passed into policies or even laws compared to the needs of the ordinary citizens. Additionally, the ideologies of the wealthy individuals seem different and unique from those of the regular citizens.

The vision for the democracy is that we should be a nation where every individual irrespective of their income level, can take part in the political process, is able to run for office without asking for donations from the rich and the influential individuals. Individuals' vision should be to work for the betterment of all the electorates. Working with the special interest groups or billionaires is the violation of the principles of democracy. By eliminating money infiltration in politics, the nation is

moving towards embracing its democracy. It is essential if all the citizens of the United States are guaranteed total right to vote or be voted (De Visscher 9). The reforms money in politics should be added with the struggles to improve rights to voting whereby there are restorations of protections of the cats dealing with the right to vote.

Therefore our democracy can never be said to be mature if the elected leaders do not listen to the views of the ordinary citizens yet they represent only the rich and the influential individuals in the society. The influence of money in politics incorporates interruption from the business people, interference with the policy and inefficiency of the governance (Heywood 21). The system of political patronage is vital to campaign money since it provides an environment whereby the government employees are forced into supporting the ruling party. In case these employees do not support the ruling party then they risk losing their jobs. The reason is that nations require democracy in governance, a government that provides a fair opportunity for everyone to get services, and a government that is inclusive (Rousseau 11). However, there is legislation that is in place to control the use of money in politics; it is believed that public funding can help reduce infiltration of money in politics. Public financing can take the form of donations through democratic avenues. A country that does to respect the principles of democracy risk falls in social, economic and political developments.

The Role Of The States /Government In Social Contract

Governments should ensure prosperity and equity. Every governments and state that have ruled in the past have been monarchies or rather republics. The primary political objectives were to retain stability and control of the citizens no matter what happened. Scholars such as Aristotle's primary aim was to assist the society to attain the good life that is free from monotonous as well as demanding effort and filled with leisure. In particular, regarding the fundamental objectives of politics away from the excellent life, Aristotle had a belief that humans are meant to live political life; man is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis. He who is without a polis is an inferior sort of being". The implication is that human beings need politics to achieve a good life. He describes six main types of government in which three healthy and the other three are perverted, also, among the superior, are kingship, nobility, and among the group of perverted are a democracy, tyranny and the oligarchy. Therefore, out of the six types of rule, the ideal state could be one which does not care about the majority of the populace, and not the minority. Nevertheless, Aristotle gives some regulations regarding which rank the governing body may come from (Brown 12). As a matter of fact, those who are very rich frequently fail to notice the poor people and worry concerning themselves, and are improbable to obey, while those individuals who are very poor will mainly envy and really hate the rich people. Hence, their laws may condemn the rich people. To emphasize his view, Aristotle asserts that a nation aims at people as equal, and therefore the middle-class individuals are bound to become the best composed in respect of elements in which a country is naturally composed.

Therefore, it can be concluded that from the start of Aristotle's writings, he has equality as well as fairness within his mind, and he is geared towards having a constitutional democracy ruled by an unbiased middle class. On the contrary, there are leaders who strive to maintain power to establish republics. By applying manipulation, leaders grasp absolute power while ensuring that the citizens are in a position whereby they cannot purpose without his guidance. Ruler should work with his subjects in order to avoid hatred (Brown 18). They should show generosity to their people, and claims that a leader cannot be charitable as this implies he could have to be generous in many ways that would make him misuse his wealth and be strained to impose fresh taxes, which will then cause causing discontent among the citizens. Martens argues that since a leader is incapable of becoming generous and depicts placing himself at risk, if that leader is sensible, he will mind receiving a reputation for the meanness (7). Consequently, being ungenerous, the citizens will quickly realize that their ruler would have the money to defend them on their own, hence creating happiness. Through manipulating his constituents will make them believe that the citizens are free and are well treated, but in realism, they are in fact under their ruler's control.

State should embrace ethics in politics. Aristotle values ethics in politics. Ethics, as perceived by Aristotle, is a trial to look at the primary end. He argues that all human being deserved a dignified life. Some critics argue that Aristotle's ideal state marries with that one of Carl Marx who accurately disagrees with the state of capitalism and displays the pains that a capitalist society puts on the lives of its population. Marxist scholars believe capitalism only survives in nations. The oppressions, done by rulers to the citizens is designed by the ideals of capitalism, is both felt at the economic and political levels (Machiavelli, Bondanella & Viroli 2). Occasionally, people read in the dailies or watch from various sites the cruelty and inhumanity with which employers treat employees. When it is hidden in the wage, it is established in the condition of the working environment; if it is untold in the labor courts, it is told with immense emotions in the personal diaries of the victims. Aristotle had a similar view to Marx that economic differences and conflict create the class in society: the rich, the middle class, and the poor, exploding the class struggle and related class clashes. At a point in the revolution, inspired by a desire to put an end to the oppression, led by selfless characters, the aspirations of the oppressed are addressed, staged, and conveyed by powerful emerging voices. A Marxist analysis - 'Class Polarization outlines the historical processes that the class structure undergoes. The structure becomes rapidly polarized; being pushed to either end with an imagined knot in the middle. To Marxists, capitalism immensely influences the systems of education, a truth reflected in the organization of educational systems of former colonies. It is on education that the society flourishes; it creates employment, fosters nationalism and reduces the poverty gap. All the viewpoints and concepts encapsulated in Aristotelian, and Marxist societies, have lessons that we as human beings to borrow from. Aristotle calls for moral virtues that will help us grow. Marxism also addresses all the matters relating to the classes within the society and their effect.

Aristotle argues that Human beings are capable of living and satisfying their essential needs through labor (Machiavelli, Bondanella & Viroli 3). However, this can take the form of exploiting human beings. Due to the value, the capitalist society has placed on wealth; most workers today still face difficult times. The capitalist society seeks to oppress the poor working class while they take home enormous

wealth. On who is the perfect citizen in the view of Aristotle's political state, there are certain abilities, spirit as well as intelligence levels required to understand the political and safety services. For instance, a ruler is expected to be seen having compassion, honesty, humanity loyalty, and even be religious. Machiavelli states that whatever one poses to know is that a ruler, particularly an individual new to power, should not always act in ways which would make any man good since he is frequently indebted to behave against the said virtues. The implications are that it is revealed how cunning as well as manipulative a ruler should be to his citizens, and to the exterior powers since once threatened, the arrangements for the war should be done rapidly and how being authentically excellent can get one into trouble (Martens 21). Another position Machiavelli maintained is that is that the benefit of becoming a real friend or rather a real foe to their neighbors and assertions which remaining unbiased to an external conflict will likely bring about the end in a nations. Moreover, the prince also emphasizes on a strong military to support their ruler, believing that small military is what bring power loss. However, the specific military approach is not mentioned for winning battles.

Overall, Machiavelli describes what a successful ruler might seem like and argues that success remains determined by how long one can stay in power, as well as how much prosperity can be gained. In his view, it is even better to be reckless than being cautious, and if one want fortune, they must work at it to make it work for them. Overall, it is evident that the philosopher's writings have contended, and will in no doubt persist to have authority on the politics of the world for many years to come (Heywood 7). For instance, Aristotle calls for a justifiable society with fairness and equality. He believes that a country where a rule is mindful of his citizens, that the people will be happy. Much as Machiavelli may be criticized by as section of people, are advocating for dictatorial leadership form, he too wished the society should experience a leader that takes of every citizen regardless of their class or ethnic background.

Checks And Balances

A culture of Corruption in our societies displays the presence of absurd politics. This politics swings between distortion and paternalism, likewise expose on the other as well as the justification and one which similarly needs abundant intellectual diplomacy. Undoubtedly, scholars could be fatigued of the allegations of corrupt business behavior, though they are equally frustrated by arguments which lease corrupt to escape (Martens 15). Many questions have been asked why these corrupt leaders continue to prosper in the society and how corruption can be mitigated. Corruption has reduced nation's potential; of stabilizing themselves economically. This has led to economic inequality since the corrupt individuals do not share their corrupt items with the society but only use them to help individuals. Economic inequalities are depicted by the different positions in the economic distribution. These are measures with respect to pay, income, and wealth. Income is not only considered the money obtained through work such as salaries. One of the characteristics of the income gap is that there is a wider gap between the high-income and the middle-income countries. The average growth annual of the countries varies considerably. This implies that are uneven growth and developments in different parts of the society. It is argued that corruption creates the differences in income growth are

attributed to lack of human capital to take advantage of the potential that can drive their economy. This human capital is believed to be vital in filling the wider gap that exists between the highest income and middle-income countries.

Also, corruption leads to payment of low wages. In respect to inequality, it was revealed that a certain number of developing nations have major inequality while pother has experienced low inequalities (Martens 5). Due to corruption, there is a huge weight on most nations to effectively utilize and take advantage of the current economic growth. Presently, the higher percentage of the whole population can be said to be less developed societies. There is a high number of people at the low end of the good in respect to a range of per capitacion generalize, less developed nations are expected to careful and critically assess themselves about this wide range of intuitions in most countries (Held 8). Countries are expected shun corruption and maximally exploit their resources and grow their economies. They can expand their economy through the production of goods per capita gods as well as expand their agricultural base so that they can get higher income out them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the view Rousseau, the visions for the society is that they should be a nation where every individual irrespective of their income level, can take part in the political process and equally enjoy government services. The vision for nations should be the one the leaders are corrupt and only engages in the looting spree for the benefit of the few. Individuals' vision should be to work for the betterment of all the citizens. Moreover, reforms on public resources are necessary. Therefore the Nigerian democracy and success can never be said to be mature if the elected leaders do no shun corruption. Corruption and inequality may force the citizens to attempt to withdraw their social contract. This may lead to civil disobedience to dislodge incompetent leaders who have perpetuated the corrupt activities.

Works Cited

- Brown, Wendy. *Walled states, waning sovereignty*. MIT Press, 2017.
- De Visscher, Charles. *Theory and reality in public international law*. Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Inclusion of the other: Studies in political theory*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
- Held, David. *Political theory and the modern state*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.
- Heywood, Andrew. *Political theory: an introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Locke, John. *Locke: Two treatises of government student edition*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Machiavelli, N., Bondanella, P., & Viroli. *The prince* (Vol. 43). Oxford University Press (2008).

Martens, Stephanie B. "Introduction." *The Americas in Early Modern Political Theory*. Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016. 1-16.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Rousseau: 'The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.