**GROUP 10**

**COURSE: POLITICAL SCIENCE 102**

**GROUP PROJECT: THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF STATE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The evolutionary theory of state is by far the most agreed upon and is seen by some philosophers as the most reasonable and the others not entirely satisfactory. They believe that the state is as a result of natural evolution.

According to J. W. Burgess, he explained that the evolutionary theory of state is premised on the gradual and continuous development of human society out of a grossly imperfect beginning though crude but improving forms of manifestation towards a perfect and universal organisation of mankind. Unlike other theories, the evolutionary theory of state believes solely that the state development came clearly from the product of history. The family being the basic unit of socialization was the sole creator of the state and one of the factors of its development. As people increased in number, it became more important to gather the people in order. This theory emphasizes that the state originated from a clan-band structure which explains the formation of the world's first political structures and an example is the Saudi Arabia monarchy which from 1744 till date has produced a leader to rule over the people from the AlSaud family. Aristotle believed that the state came into existence for the bare needs of man’s life and continued to exist for his good life that which we can all agree on that an organized state is better to live in than a state where lawlessness reigns. The main supporters of this theory are John. W. Burgess, Maclaver, Garner and Gettell.

More will be explained in the subsequent paragraphs. We do hope you all understand and agree with us. Thank you as you read further.

**Evolutionary Theory**

The historical evolutionary theory holds the view that the state has originated through a gradual (slow) evolutionary process. State is neither the handiwork of God, nor the result of a superior physical force, nor the creation of a resolution or contract, nor the mere expansion of family.

It treats the state as a product of historical development like any other human institution. The key factors which played a part in the evolution of the state are natural social instinct, kinship and family, religion, force, economic needs and activities and political consciousness.

We can identify the following stages through which the state has evolved over the years.

Tribal state: The Oriental Empire-Roaming tribes generally settled down in regions where nature was bountiful and responsive to the needs of man. These states were essentially power and property states, built on wealth and military force .Each tried to expand and dominate others. Wars and instability was the order of the day.

The City state- The next stage in evolution of state took place with the birth of city states in Ancient Greece around 1000 BC. When Greeks settled in Europe they got organised in local communities.

The Roman Empire- By the close of the first century B.C., the Greek system of government came to be replaced by the World Roman Empire and the entire western world got united under a single political regime (Empire).

Feudal state- Upon the disintegration of Roman Empire, its territories fell into the hands of powerful nobles-big land owners. Land tenure came to be accepted as the basis of man’s status in the society.

The Church vs. The state- By the time Roman Empire got disintegrated, the church had got itself established as a potent authority. When the Empire fell to pieces, it was in a position to step into its place and to give Europe peace and order. The church even asserted its supremacy over the temporal kings. This led to the emergence of conflict between the church and the king.

Renaissance and Reformation- Renaissance was the period in Europe between the 14th and 16th century. Renaissance implied the revival of the classical learning and involved the transitional movement in Europe which changed the medieval outlook into a modern one.

The coming of reformation, which can be described as an indirect result of renaissance further gave strength to the spirit and forces of nationalism.

Birth of the Nation- State-politically the modern age dawned with the emergence of Absolute Monarchy in various states of Europe which now came to be nation-states and which had overthrown the feudal states.

The rise of nation- State in England, the American Revolution of 1776 and French revolution of 1789, gave strength to the concept of nation-state fortified with the spirit and philosophy of nationalism. The unification of Germany (1864-71) gave further strength to the concept of nationalism as the hallmark of the state.

The Origin of the State: Political thinkers have attempted to explain the origin of the state in various ways. When,where and how the state came into existence have not been recorded anywhere in history. Therefore, the political thinkers were compelled to adopt various hypotheses, many of which are now discredited in the light of modern knowledge. Among the many theories which are concerned with the origin of the state the following are explained in this chapter.

1. The Theory of Divine origin
2. Social Contract Theory.
3. Matriarchal and Patriarchal Theory.
4. Force Theory.
5. Evolutionary Theory.

The Historical or Evolutionary theory

Five theories in explanation of the origin of the state, but no single theory offers an adequate explanation. The theory which explains and is now accepted as a convincing origin of the state, is the Historical or Evolutionary theory. It explains the state is the product of growth, a slow and steady evolution extending over a long period of time and ultimately shaping itself into the complex structure of a modern state. This theory is more scientific. The state is not a mere artificial mechanical creation but an institution of natural growth or historical evolution says Professor Garner.

There were a number of factors which helped the evolution of the state. They were kinship, religion, war, migration economic activities and political consciousness. The important **factors** which contributed to the growth of the state are

1. Kinship
2. Religion
3. Property and defence
4. Force
5. Political consciousness

**Kinship**

Kinship is the most important and was based upon blood relationship and kinship was the first strongest bond of unity. Family constituted the first link in the process of the evolution of the state with the expansion of the family rose new families and the multiplication of families led to the formation of clans and tribes. Kinship was the only factor which bound the people together.

According to Professor Maclaver, the magic of names reinforced the sense of kinship, as the course of generations enlarged the group. The blood bond of sonship changed imperceptibly into the social bond of the wider brotherhood. The authority of the father passes into the power of the chief once more under the age is of kinship new forms arise which transcends it. Kinship creates society and society at length creates the state'.

**Religion**

Religion provided the bond of unity in early society. It also affected all walks of life. The worship of a common ancestor and common gods created a sense of social solidarity. There was fear in the hearts of men as far as religion was concerned. Even today we see religious practices, affairs and faith in uniting people. In the early days a number of races are united by religion and unity was essential for the creation of state.

**Force**

Force also played an important part in the evolution of the state. It was the use of physical force that was responsible for the growth of kingdoms and empires.

**Property and Defence**

Property and defence played a vital role in the evolution of state in ancient times particularly among the people who were nomads and wagabonds and tribals. Professor Laski has referred to the necessity of acquiring property by the members of society and protecting the property acquired with reference to the population mentioned above.

This led to making adjustments in the social system and relationship between the members of different groups. The need to protect property ultimately compelled the ancient people to establish the state.

**Political consciousness**

The last is political consciousness arising from the fundamental needs of life for protection and order. When the people settle down on a definite territory in pursuit of their subsistence and a desire to secure it from encroachment by others, the need for regulating things and persons is felt imminently and this is the essence of political consciousness.

It follows that many factors helped the growth of the state. No single factor alone was responsible for its origin. Sometimes all and sometimes many of them help the process by which uncivilized society was transformed into a state.

Of all the theories which seek to explain the origin of the states, the evolutionary theory is the most satisfactory. It should be noted that no theory pin-points the time at which the state originated as a consequence of many factors working in union at different times.

**FEATURESOFTHESTATE**

1. **Effective Governmental Authority**

One of the defining characteristics of the state is that it takes place within a context of the ultimate authority to which all are subordinate. Authority is a legal concept which means that government has the legal right of making decisions which people are required to obey; and the right to use coercion to enforce its laws. This feature is very important because governmental policies are not likely to be effective if the rules are not obeyed. Also, if the stamp of authority behind law is lacking, in line with government’s authority to enforce, then no effective authority will be produced. For instance, in some societies people willingly/voluntarily comply with virtually all laws and force is really exerted while in other societies governments rely heavily on coercion which is often unsuccessful at times because of the resistance which they will encounter through riots and demonstrations. In the Nigerian society, there is substantial disobedience because most people do not comply with most laws most of the time.

1. **Sovereignty**

This word derived from a Latin word ‘*supramus*’ which means supremacy. The absolute and perpetual power of the state in its domestic use means the power and authority of the state over all persons, things within its territory. In other words, sovereignty means that the state has general power of law making and of the enforcement of laws. Sovereignty’s key features are:

1. Absoluteness: Sovereignty is legal in nature in the sense that it is binding on all inhabitants that fall within the jurisdiction of sovereignty i.e. citizens and associations alike. There is no limitation to its legal powers. However, it is important to note the fact that when a state is a member of African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) etc. It will have to abide with the regulations of the organisation, in this sense, the state will be subjected to the laws of

the international organisation. For instance, a state like Nigeria is bound to act in accordance with the principles of such organisations not minding her sovereignty. An example of how a state is bound to act in accordance with the principles of International organisations is evident in Nigeria acting in accordance with the decision of the International Court of Justice to Force Nigeria to cede Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon.

From this example it appears Nigeria’s sovereignty has been limited to a certain extent. This is not so. Rather, the country is abiding by the regulations of the international organisation as a member state; hence this subjection does not in any way limit the country’s sovereignty. In the same way, world opinion for the safe acquittal of Amina Lawalin Katsina State from the claws of Sharia propagandaist did not in any way limit the country’s sovereignty in handling domestic affairs.

b) Indivisibility: Sovereignty is the supreme, final, absolute, coercive power of the state over the people living within the same, hence it is indivisible i.e. cannot be shared or divided by a state with another state.

c) Independent of foreign control: Once a state becomes independent, its sovereignty remains independent (free of external control). However, in contemporary times there has been economic interference with regard to structural adjustment-the generic term used to describe a package of economic and institutional measures which the IMF, World Bank and individual Western Aid donors have persuaded many developing countries to adopt since the 1980s in return for a new wave of policy oriented loans. With regard to the feature of sovereignty, a number of issues have been raised especially in developing nations like Nigeria as to how sovereign can a state be? This brings in the need to distinguish between political and economic sovereignty.

(1) Political Sovereignty: This refers to the power of a state to control any superior body, person or own political institutions. To this end, for a State to be fully sovereign, it has to be

Independent, that is, having the power to make laws through its elected representatives. In other words, political sovereignty signifies the power of the people-the electorate.

Legal sovereignty on the other hand, is the power of the government of the state to enforce the law entrenched in the constitution. The state is therefore legally sovereign if it exercises such power as long as such power is not superior or subject to anybody.

(2) Economic Independence or Sovereignty: This is the power to control the economy of a state. However, most countries in the third world or developing countries though claim to be politically independent are in fact, economically dependent. A cogent example is Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) adopted during the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida structural adjustment programme a generic term used to describe a package of economic and institutional measures is with the IMF, the World Bank and individual western-aid donor policies to overcome developmental stagnation by promoting open and free competitive economies in developing countries. However, this recipe of deregulation, privatisation, diminishing alleged over-sized bureaucracies, reducing of subsidies etc and encouraging realistic prices so as to stimulate productivity has so far not guaranteed the desired development. Based on the above, one cannot but agree with the position that a country that cannot control the economy is not very likely to be politically autonomous. This is because the pre-requisite of political sovereignty leans on economic sovereignty given that those who control the economy may probably control the government.

(d) Inter-Connectedness of Activities: By virtue of the world being a global village there is inter-dependence or inter-connectedness of the activities (at the military, economic and social levels) of the different states that make up the international system. At the military level, it is argued that the state borders are permeable. On the economic level, there is a great deal of inter dependence. So that decision about economic matters sometimes has to be

Taken with reference to external body or in reference with external force. A sovereign state invests the authority of the state in certain persons or groups of persons defined by law (i.e. entrenched in the constitution). These groups of persons differ from state to state. In the United States of America sovereignty is distinguished between the president, the congress and the Supreme Court, in Britain, it is between the Queen in parliament i.e. the Queen, the Lords and commons, in Nigeria, it is with the president, national Assembly (senate and House of Representatives) and Supreme Court.

(4) Permanence: It is important to note this feature because government comes, government goes but the sovereignty of the state remains forever. In other words as long as the state exists, sovereignty continues without interruption.

(5) Monopoly over the Legitimate Use of Force: In relation to the government possessing a monopoly over a legitimate use of force the third point is related to the second. In effect, a government is legitimate if the people to whom its orders or directs believe that the structure, procedures, acts, decisions, policies, officials, or leaders of government possess the quality of ‘rightness”, propriety, or moral goodness-the right, in short, to make binding rules. It shows that not every power being exercised is legitimate, to this end; such legitimacy can be attested to by decrees, enactments. Thus, leaders in a political system try to endow their actions with legitimacy be it feudalism, monarchy, oligarchy, hereditary aristocracy, plutocracy, representative government-democracy so as to acquire legitimacy. In essence, when a leader is clothed with legitimacy, it usually is referred to as authority with a special kind of legitimate influence. However, in the contemporary world, the reigning political ideology (a set of more or less persistent, integrated doctrines that purport to explain and justify their leadership in the system) is “democracy” which invariably is more in need of legitimacy than most other systems. Importantly, legal legitimacy rests on a belief that power is wielded in a way that is legal; hence the constitutional rules, the laws, and the powers of official are accepted as binding because they are legal or legitimate. This feature does not mean that here are never challenges to this authority which occurs only when the authority of the state is no longer recognised by some sector within it given that groups within a national society will sometimes resort to force in order to further their aims. However, the authority of the state is generally recognised and as consequence of this authority it is legitimate for the state to employ force in order to defend itself against internal and external challenges.

(6) Existence of Society- Wide Consensus: The fourth point explains why the first three exist. The state is founded on some sort of society-wide consensus. This consensus may be based, for instance, on a common nationality (even where there are a wide variety of ethnic and racial groups). In other words, the relationship between the influencer and influenced can be sustained through agreement i.e. the agreement of one to be subjected to that of another. Such agreement would also determine the restriction of power relations between the two groups. But whatever the basis of a consensus, there are some values throughout the system that make the functioning of a centralised political authority possible. At times too, the diversity in social, economic, religious and ethnic terms makes subordination to a common political authority possible.

(7) Population: The fifth point of difference has been implicit in much of what has been highlighted above. Thus, in a state, the actors are people. However, there can be no minimum or the optimum population necessary to constitute a state. The presupposition therefore is that an intrinsic relationship should exist between the state and the inhabitants’ of a given state who sustain it.

**PROBLEMS OF THE STATE REALTED TO THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY**

1. There was space for tyranny as the authority of the father of the family over the members was absolute and undisputed.

2. There was no power of any sort vested in the people they were subjects to the authorities over them.

3. Religion was used to determine many factors in primitive society which gave rise to dogmatism.

4. Existence of social classes that is the class distinctions with the unequal distribution of wealth was sharpened as a result of agriculture which gave rise to social changes.

5. There existed immense hostility among tribes which served as an incentive to go to war.

6. Ownership of private properties gave strong incentives to loot to warring tribes

**SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF A STATE.**

1. The laws governing the creation of the state should be followed strictly and any unnecessary agitation for more creations must be made to go through the proper channels and not for the purpose of pleasing anybody.
2. All forms of corruption, selfishness, embezzlement, discrimination should be removed from their vocabulary. Citizens should be given their rights to vote for suitably qualified candidates instead of having greedy and unskilled politicians imposed on them. The era of election manipulation where by one party wins all the seats should be consigned to the past.
3. The work force of the Government should be reduced because the number is simply staggering and uncalled for. Most of the workers are idle and not really needed but are there as favour to political allies. Regular tests should be given to the employees to gauge their competence and qualification for the role they occupy.
4. More working together internally and externally; less arrogance; less money and power hunger; and less extravagance.
5. The government highlight the key/major problems of the country, ranging from electricity, roads, healthcare, housing, employment, security, etc. Put them on a scale of preference and solve them one after the other.

THE THOUHGTS OF HISTORICAL FIGURES ON THE DEFINTION AND EVOLUTION OF STATE

The state has been defined in various ways by different scholars. As of today modern scholars have defined the state taking into account the changes that has occurred over the years. In 4th century B.C. Aristotle the father of political science defined the state as ‘a union of families and villages having for its end a perfect and self-sufficing life, by which we mean a happy and honourable life. This definition is so accurate that some scholars believe that the definition cannot be improved upon. His definition communicates the primary objectives of the state but more definitions need to be studied.

Holland said that a state is a politically organizes people of a definite territory.

Prof Woodrow Wilson: a state is a people organized for law within a definite territory.

All those definitions are not just short but also inadequate so we look at definitions from Dr. J.W. Garner and Prof. Harold Laski.

Dr .J. W. Garner, defines it as a concept of Political Service, the state is a community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independence or nearly so, of extreme control and possessing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience.

Prof. Harold Laski. Before going into his definition of the state it is important to know more about him seeing as his definition is one of the most prominent ones around. He was a British political scientist, educator, and prominent member of the British Labour Party. He was born on June 30, 1893 in Manchester, England. He was the author of prominent books like “Authority in the modern state and Other Essays where he attacked the notion of an all-powerful sovereign state, arguing instead for Political Pluralism. The state is a territorial society divided into government and subjects claiming within allotted physical area, a supremacy over all other institutions. After analyzing the two definitions one can deduce certain elements that are vital in a state and they are population, territory, government and, sovereignty.

Verges pointed out that to trace origin of State to one factor is wrong, but it is gradual realization of human nature.

**Conclusion**

It follows that many factors helped the growth of the state. No single factor alone was responsible for its origin. Sometimes all and sometimes many of them help the process by which uncivilized society was transformed into a state.

Of all the theories which seek to explain the origin of the states, the evolutionary theory is the most satisfactory. It should be noted that no theory pin-points the time at which the state originated as a consequence of many factors working in union at different times.

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