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**COURSE TITLE:** Citizenship and the State II

**QUESTION:**

1. How can a Lebanese retain or lose his or her newly acquired Nigerian citizenship?
2. Social Contract Theory explains the evolution of states; what other theories explain the same, and their strengths?
3. **WHAT IS CITIZENSHIP?**

Citizenship is the status of a person as recognized under the constitution of a country or a sovereign state as being a legal member of such country or state. It gives the person holding the citizenship access to all the benefits and rights stated in the constitution of such country.

**WAYS OF ACQUIRING CITIZENSHIP IN NIGERIA.**

There are three ways of acquiring citizenship in Nigeria which are listed below:

* By birth: This means anyone who is born in the country automatically becomes a citizen of the country. For the fact that your mother or father is a citizen of the country, you become a citizen of the country too and you equally enjoy the rights or benefits of being a citizen of the country. A citizen of Lebanon can retain his/her newly acquired Nigerian citizenship this way.
* By registration: This means that a person can be registered as a citizen of the country. Section 28 of the Constitution of Nigeria applies to a woman who is married or has been married to a man who is a citizen of Nigeria. For the fact that the woman has been married or is still married to the man who’s been a citizen of Nigeria, she can register and become a full legal citizen as well. This is another way of the Lebanese citizen retaining his/her newly acquired Nigerian citizenship.
* By naturalization: In order to get a certificate of naturalization, the person must satisfy the President that:

1. He/she is a person of full age and capacity.
2. He/she is a person of good character.
3. He/she has taken the Oath of Allegiance prescribed in the Seventh Schedule to this Constitution.
4. He/she is in the opinion of the Governor of the State where he/she proposes to be a resident, acceptable to the local community in which he/she is to live permanently, and has been assimilated in to the way of life of Nigerians in that part of the Federation.
5. He/she is a person who has made or is capable of making useful contribution to the advancement, progress and well-being of Nigeria.

This is another method the Lebanese citizen can retain his/her newly acquired Nigerian citizenship.

In Lebanon, the **Lebanese nationality law** governs the acquisition, transmission and loss of Lebanese citizenship. Lebanese citizenship can be obtained by **birth** or **naturalization**. A Lebanese can retain his/her citizenship through the two ways mentioned above.

* By birth: Of course, as it was elaborated on under ways of acquiring citizenship in Nigeria, when one is born into a country and for the fact that your parents are citizens of that country, the person is automatically a citizen of that country.
* By naturalization: This refers to a woman being married to a man who’s a citizen of Lebanon. The woman can apply for a Lebanese citizenship after being married for at least a year and the marriage has been entered in the Civil Acts Register in the Republic of Lebanon. Although, a non-Lebanese man cannot apply for a citizenship through naturalization. Arguments have shown that if the Lebanese wife was enabled to pass Lebanese citizenship to the non-Lebanese husband, it would lead to a flood of Palestinians acquiring citizenship, therefore upsetting the delicate demographics in the country.

**LOSS OF NIGERIAN CITIZENSHIP**.

There are two ways of losing Nigerian citizenship; **voluntary and involuntary**.

* Voluntary: Voluntary renunciation of Nigerian citizenship is permitted by law. Contact the Embassy for details and required paperwork. This means that the Lebanese citizen can lose his/her newly acquired citizenship of Nigeria voluntarily if the person wishes to do so. He/she can go to the Embassy and do all the necessary things to renounce the Nigerian citizenship. It is permitted in the country. That is why it is voluntary, it’s out of the person’s free will.
* Involuntary: The following are grounds for involuntary loss of Nigerian citizenship:

1. Registered or Naturalized citizen voluntarily acquires the citizenship of a foreign country.
2. Naturalized citizen, before seven years of residence, sentenced to prison for three years or more.
3. Registered or Naturalized citizen is convicted of acts of disloyalty to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

This is involuntary because the person may commit some acts of offence to the nation and therefore has to be sentenced to some years in prison. A Lebanese citizen can lose his/her newly acquired Nigerian citizenship this way.

2. **WHAT IS THEORY?**

A theory is a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained. In other words, theory is a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based. It is also an idea to account for a situation or justify a course of action. Theory can also refer to a category with which we analyze, organize and synthesize ideas into an interconnected whole. There are two forms of theory which became significant during and after the **middle ages**. These two forms are: **Government contract** and the **Social contract**. But I’m going to dwell on **Social contract** theory.

Social contract theory is the view that persons’ moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live. Socrates uses something quite like a social contract argument to explain to Crito why he must remain in prison and accept the death penalty. However, social contract theory is rightly associated with modern moral and political theory and is given its first full exposition and defense by Thomas Hobbes. After Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are the best known proponents of this enormously influential theory, which has been one of the most dominant theories within moral and political theory throughout the history of the modern West.

Social contract theory also borders on the institution of a political society by means of a compact agreement among the people by ordaining some kind of government. The government would be able to resolve grievances/problems in the state of nature. John Locke (1632-1704) had a purpose which was to justify the English Revolution of 1688 after James II had been removed from the throne and William occupied it (the throne). Jean Jacque Rousseau (1712-78) developed his *Social Contract* is important on two grounds:

1. It inspired the French Revolution of 1789 which was a revolt against the despotic French monarchy.
2. It is the springboard of the theory of popular sovereignty.

**MERITS OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY.**

1. It serves as a reminder to Government of the human purposes which the state can serve so as to justify its existence.
2. In line with Locke and Rousseau’s idea that civil society rests not on the consent of the ruler but of the rule the theory instituted.

I would say theories similar to Social Contract theory are: Leviathan (1651), Two Treatises of Government (1690), the Social Contract (1762), etc.

**LEVIATHAN BY THOMAS HOBBES.**

Leviathan is a book written by Thomas Hobbes. The book concerns the structure of society and legitimate government, and is regarded as one of the earliest and most influential examples of social contract theory. Leviathan was written during the English Civil War and argues for a social contract and rule by an absolute sovereign. Hobbes believes that civil war can be avoided by an undivided government.

Two Treatises of Government is a book of political philosophy. The first treatise attacks patriarchalism in the form of sentence refutation of Robert Filmer’s Patriarcha, while the second treatise outlines Locke’s ideas for a more civilized society based on natural rights and contract theory.

The Social Contract is a theory or model that originated during the Age of Enlightenment and concerns the legitimacy of the authority of the state over the individual. The relation between natural and legal rights is a topic of Social Contract theory. The starting point for most social contract theories is an examination of the human condition absent of any political order.

Social Contract is known as a theory that has evolved over time. The above theories explain the same.

**FEATURES OF SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY**.

1. Explanation of Moral Motivation: We can reasonably be expected to follow the rules because, on the whole, they are to our own advantage. Breaking the rules tends to undermine them and thereby endangers our own well-being.
2. Unlike utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory does not assume that there is one correct conception of the good. People can agree to a social contract because it is rational to do so.
3. Civil disobedience: Social Contract Theory provides a plausible account of when civil disobedience is justified.

**Strength:** The evolvement of states and government can be seen.

**Note:** Social Contract theory can be seen as a versatile theory considering the fact that many other theories are similar to it.