

Questions

Explain Montesquieu's theory of power of separation. Why has he been called Aristotle of the 18th century?

Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers, outlined in "The Spirit of the Laws" (1748),

revolutionized the political philosophy by dividing government into legislative, executive and judicial branches to prevent tyranny. His systematic and empirical approach, drawing from historical examples, earned him the title: "Aristotle of the Eighteenth Century." Montesquieu's ideas influenced modern democratic systems, shaping constitutional frameworks globally. His theory aimed to provide checks and balances to prevent any concentration of power, thus safeguarding liberty.

Division of Powers:

- 1) Legislative Power
- 2) Executive Power.

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3) Judicial Power

→ 1) Legislative Power:

It is responsible for making laws. Montesquieu believed this branch should represent the people and their will. In modern contexts, this is typically a parliament or congress.

2) Executive Power:

This power sector has the capability of enforcing laws and conducting foreign policy. Montesquieu argued that this branch should be separate from the legislature to ensure that laws are applied impartially.

3) Judicial Power:

This branch is tasked with interpreting the laws and ensuring justice. Montesquieu emphasized the need for an independent judiciary which should be free from the influence of the executive, legislature and also monarchy.

Why Separation of Powers?

He was ~~af~~ of the view that power in the hands of one person leads to tyranny.

As Lord Acton has said

"Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely"

Montesquieu saw two types of powers existing at that time, Monarch (the

sovereign) and the administration, (legislature, executive, and judiciary).

The system will work only if these powers are separate however, the combination of these powers will definitely create chaos and problems.

Why Montesquieu has been called the "Aristotle of the Eighteenth Century".

Montesquieu is often compared to Aristotle because both were comprehensive thinkers whose works covered a broad range of subjects including politics, ethics and society.

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Systematic approach to Political Thought:

Like Aristotle, who offered a systematic analysis in his work Politics, Montesquieu also categorized governments and offered a methodical analysis of how they should function.

Aristotle identified various forms of governments, their strengths and weaknesses.

such as
oligarchy,
democracy,
and
monarchy.

Similarly, Montesquieu analyzed different governmental structures including republics, monarchies and despotism, explaining their mechanics and potential failures.

Empirical approach:

Both Aristotle and Montesquieu approached empirically basing their conclusions on observations of real political world. Aristotle used the example of Greek city-states, while Montesquieu drew up examples from Rome, England.

and France to shape his ideas about governance.

Realist and Practical:

Like Aristotle, Montesquieu also based his approach to the problems on realistically. As Dunning says, the methods followed by Montesquieu for the solution of problems are like those of Aristotle.

Laws are the product of collective wisdom:

He (Montesquieu) ~~was~~ borrowed from Aristotle the idea that laws are produced by the collective wisdom of the society and that laws should suit the existing circumstances.

Both are Constitutionalist:

Aristotle was a constitutionalist who saw security in the constitutional form of government. Similarly Montesquieu emphasized on constitutional separation of powers of

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legislature, judiciary and executive.

Both have Influence:

Aristotle laid the groundwork for Western political philosophy, Montesquieu's idea of government laid the foundation of modern constitutional framework. The US constitution of checks and balances is inspired by Montesquieu.

Conclusion:

Montesquieu's Theory of Separation of powers was a revolutionary contribution to political philosophy, aimed at preventing tyranny by distributing powers of the government into three branches. His systematic approach to political analysis and his influence on future generations of political thinkers earned him the title of "Aristotle of the Eighteenth Century".

Q: According to Karl Marx
the mode of production
in material life determines
the general character of social,
political and spiritual process
in life. Elucidate.

Karl Marx was born in
Germany in a wealthy
Jewish family. His family
had to change their religion
due to the Nazi regime.
He wrote few works which
made him exile from
Germany. So, he had
to shift to France. ~~There~~ ^{In Berlin,}
~~he got inspired by Hegel~~
~~philosophy.~~ In the
Paris manuscripts Marx sets
out his theory that the
human essence is labour.
What differs humans from
animals is not reason or
moral capacity as some phil-
osophers in past had sugg-
ested but it is the
human capacity for labour.

He wrote books like "the Communist Manifesto and "Das Capital", where he has talked about class struggle and Communism.

A Economic Determinism:

i) Materialistic Concept of History:

Marx says: "A man must eat to live" shows that ~~from~~ historically humans have evolved through material needs. The way a person or society lives shapes ~~with~~ their whole structure of living, (political, social, religious).

B) Division of Society:

ii) Modes of Production:

The first one is Modes of production which represents everything that brings money to the society.

Types:

iii) Co-ordinate Production:

These include labourers, Engineers and inventors.

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ii). Inanimate:

These This includes the raw material, tools, and soil, (sources and technology).

c) The Relation of Production:

The forces of ~~election~~ production creates, the relation of production. These are the owners of forces of production. These are the classes that run and command the society. They are also called "haves", and the one they are ruling are called "haves not". The haves not have always obeyed and the "haves" always ruled the society.

D) Economic Base and Super Structure:

Marx divided society into two key points -

i) The Base:

which means economic foundation

ii) The Superstructure:

~~That is~~ Everything built on top of economy

like politics, laws, education and beliefs. According to Marx, the economic base determines the nature of the superstructure. For example under capitalism laws and government serve to protect capitalist interests and private property.

E) Class Struggle:

Marx emphasized that in every historical era, the way goods are produced (the economic mode) creates division between the ~~those~~ those who own the means of production (capitalists) and those who do not (workers). This division leads to class struggle, where the ruling class justifies their dominance through the money they have. The ruling class not only runs businesses but also the most important decisions of the state.

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They have created an image in the society where if they made the poor believe that the elites are better in every aspect.

They justify their dominance and maintain social order.

F) Ideology of a Capitalist State:

The bourgeoisie maintain a good image in the society to control the working class. Elites run economy, industries and factories of the country and are dominant while the proletariat have accepted them dominant through "false consciousness".

G) Ideology about Religion:

Religion is opium of the people (Marx). The protestants presented two ideas of religion. The profit that the elites got from

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business was called glory from the God and when the working class suffered they called it a test and that their reward will be given in the hereafter as a heaven.

Protestantism's ~~class~~ aligns with capitalist through idea of individuality and success maintains their status by telling workers to accept their exploitation as natural and divinely ordained.

Conclusion:

Marx believes in the transition from feudalism to capitalism and further to Communism, that will be the final stage which will prevail justice in the society. As one will be the thesis its opposite will be anti-thesis and the right decision between them will become synthesis.

Or Feudalism → Capitalism = Communism.

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Question from the Past papers

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Q. Critically analyze salient features of Plato's Republic. Do you think some of its features are valid, even today?

Introduction:

Plato was an ancient Greek Philosopher and was born in Athens. He grew up at the times when Greece faced the most troubled phase, and lost the Peloponnesian war. The Political system of Greece was under complete chaos. That is when he conveyed his concept of an ideal state through dialogues between Socrates, Cephalus and his son (Polymarchus).

What is Justice?

According to Cephalus Justice is "old man speaking the truth and paying his debts" whereas

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Polemarchus defines justice as ~~to~~ ~~Socrates as~~ as "To give each what is owned" and "Doing good to friend and harm to enemies". On the contrary Socrates believes that doing good to ~~your~~ friends and causing harm to enemies will further intense situations and will corrupt the behaviour of the opponent. One doesn't take time from being a friend to a foe. Justice should be in a way that improve every damage. Socrates believes, justice is the integral part of the human soul, and can be prevailed by dividing society into three categories.

Classification of Society into three groups:

For Plato education is the key component of an ideal society. Growing up he was inspired by the education system of sparta.

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"Education is a method by which attitude of a person is known and the ideal state is established" (Plato).

Plato believed for gaining wisdom one should opt higher education.

Classes:

Producers	Soldiers	Philosophers
Hunger	Courage	Wisdom
Stomach	Heart	Brain
12 years education		

Combine all of the above which will create a Utopian state.

This is the division of society into on the basis of people's dominant forces.

Humans strive for three things.

- 1) Hunger / desire.
- 2) Courage / Bravery
- 3) Wisdom / Knowledge

All humans carry all these within them but every human ~~has~~ has one of them dominant over the two.

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Those who have hunger ^{will} become producers. Those who have courage will become soldiers and those who have wisdom will be leaders of the state. All of them have different roles to play and different duties to perform.

Specialization of functions:

Plato says when a baby is born the first learning school for him is home. Till seven years of age he/she learn at home. After that he will learn at school till the age of Eighteen.

Those who will not pass the exam will become producers.

Those who pass shall be sent to the higher Education for more fifteen years. However, the education is still not complete, send them to field for ~~more~~ fifteen years and they will be the best among all.

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Non-interference:

The three class (producers, soldiers and leaders) will not interfere with each other. Everyone will have to perform their duties.

Meritocracy:

~~The selection of officials will happen only~~
Everyone will go for education. The priority will only be merit. Women, men, and rich and poor all will have this education.

(As Plato says in his book "The Republic (Book I)")

"The heaviest penalty for declining to rule is to be ruled by someone inferior to yourself."

Communism:

Plato's communism applies only on two classes.

- 1) Soldiers
- 2) Rulers.

The producers (farmers and auxiliaries) ~~can own~~ are private property and not in this list.

1) Communal ownership of Property:

Plato advocates abolition of property among the guardian class. Private property will distract them. It will create personal interests, ~~which can lead to corruption and division~~.

2) NO ~~Private~~ families:

They won't get married (soldiers and rulers) if they get married and ~~have~~ have children then property would never be snatched from them.

For making an ideal state one must sacrifice. Some people will make state their aim and will work for that only, just like Plato.

Criticism:

The state of Plato is impractical. Division of society into ~~are~~ three means separation of powers. With no check and balance the society will get corrupt. Ultimate power leads to ultimate corruption. (Aristotle).

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Total span of education is quite lengthy. A person will have to study half his life and without any family will cause mental distress.

The totalitarian tendency of Plato's Republic is criticized by Karl Popper by saying "Plato's vision is the one that suppress^{es} individual freedom and creativity."

Bertrand Russell in his book "A History of Western Philosophy" where he criticized Plato's authoritarianism and elitism.

"Plato's Republic is the earliest of Utopias. Unfortunately...

It is a combination of high minded ethics and ruthless authoritarianism."

Features of Platonic State and its applicability in today's world:

"Mostly Communist States are inspired by Plato's ~~idea~~ ~~st~~ idea of a Republic."

But not all features are applied in today's world.

a) Both, Plato's Republic and today's communist states ~~are~~ believe in Unity of the State.

Plato by renunciation of family and property by guardian class and modern by bringing all means of production under State's control.

b) Specialization of Functions.

Plato achieve it by the division of society into classes while the modern communism by ~~bringing all means of production~~ dividing them into skilled and non-skilled.

c) Both focus on collective interests than individuals.

Communism does not give chance to individuality, freedom of expression or thoughts. It is to avoid division in the society.

d) Both strive to eliminate economic competition in the society but Plato is only for the guardian class while modern is for the entire society.

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→ Both believe that leader is the sovereign and Supreme of all. Both believe that state is the protector and it should never be asked questions as criticism on state leads to critical thinking which will cause disturbance ~~in the p~~ among general public.