

Notes- continued...

History of Political Philosophy- Medieval Era

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church gradually became the dominant political force in Europe. According to Wikipedia article, “during the Middle Ages, the study of politics was widespread in the churches and courts”.

Saint Augustine was a Christian theologian from Roman Africa born in 354. His central writing, *The City of God* deeply influenced western philosophy for later ages. It synthesized political traditions with those of Christianity. During this period, politics and theology were essentially one and the same.

He believed that the grace of Christ was indispensable to human freedom, and he formulated the doctrine of original sin which was significant contributions to the development of just war theory.. When the Western Roman Empire began to disintegrate, Augustine imagined the Church as a spiritual City of God, distinct from the material Earthly City.

The outlook being theological, “the approach in the study of politics where almost strictly normative” their task was to “ascertain which system of government would bring humankind closest to what God wished” (Roskin, 2003).

The Medieval Era –

Machiavelli The Renaissance marked the beginning of the modern political science. Niccolo Machiavelli, known for his great work *The Prince* in 1532, was considered by some writers, “is the crux of modern political science: the focus on power (Roskin, 2003).” Machiavelli’s motivations as a political scientist were devoid of any theological considerations. His approach is entirely practical and amoral. He was a realist.

Any modern definition of political science involving the dynamics of power – how it is acquired and utilized, may be traced back to Machiavelli’s approach in the study of politics. It was also Machiavelli who “established the emphasis of modern political science on direct empirical observation of political institutions and actors” (Wikipedia). It is already a common knowledge in the field that he is considered as the father of the modern political science.

The Age of Ideologies and Reason-

Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau are among the well-known social contract theorists, who believed that the society is a result of a contract. They viewed that, there is no society –in the distant past the people were in a state of nature. Governments came after when the people agreed to form the contract for their mutual protection. They had fundamental questions in political science – what is the purpose of the government and society? These thinkers “differed in many points, but agreed that humans, at least in principle, had joined in what Rousseau called a social contract that everyone now has to observe.”

Rousseau believed in the absolute goodness of man, for him, it is society itself which has corrupted him. But despite this, he still considers that society can be improved by the conscious efforts of the community members to impose the *general will*.

Rousseau's *Discourse of Inequality*, argues that private property is the source of inequality, and his famous book, *The Social Contract* outlines the basis for a legitimate political order. His *Emile* (1762) is an educational treatise. He invented the idea of novel savage....