



## IDEOLOGIES OF GOVERNMENT: AN INTRODUCTION

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(Received 5, June 2024; Revision Accepted 2, July 2024)

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ideologies of government. Descriptive in nature, this essay highlights the importance and relevance of an ideology in the life of an individual or country, and x-rays some of the ideological outfits which have been developed to guide different modes of social organization. The essay contends that a leadership that is guided by a well-articulated and people – friendly ideology would certainly regard the promotion of the welfare of the masses and the transformation of the society as its major priorities. The interests of the people and the development of the society tend to be neglected when the rulers subscribe to self-serving and predatory ideological worldviews.

**KEYWORDS:** Ideology; Government; Politics.

### INTRODUCTION

“It is a function of ideology, the system of ideas which generates and sustains action, to define interests, to establish their order of priority and, on the basis of this definition and ordering, to create structures of action which seek to enhance and defend those interests. If ideology defines interests, there cannot be national interest without national ideology” Patrick Wilmot (1980, p.3).

The foregoing assertion encapsulates part of the importance and relevance as well as some of the functions of ideology.

The importance and indispensability of ideology are amplified by the fact that no individual can meaningfully run his/ her life without being driven by certain beliefs, norms or values. That is, every human being consciously or unconsciously subscribes to particular ideas or norms. Similarly, those who oversee the affairs of countries are - knowingly or unknowingly – guided by certain ideas and beliefs. These ideas and beliefs may be people – friendly and development – inducing or they may be predatory, ruinous or anti-people.

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As Enemuo (1999, p.75) observed, it is also valid to state that every system of government, whether democratic or despotic does have an animating ideology. While quoting Carlton Rodee and others, Enemuo also stated that those who wield power whether as family heads or chiefs of state seek to justify their acts in terms of some ethical principles, and this may be by reference to the father's knowledge of what is necessary for the child's healthy growth, or the president's authority that derives from an electoral majority and constitutional procedure.

In this essay, attention is focused on the concept and importance of ideology and some of the ideological outfits which have been developed or enunciated overtime to guide individual behaviour as well as serve as benchmarks for the running of governmental activities in human society. It is important to note that there are numerous ideologies which have been developed and articulated by different philosophers and thinkers; but in view by the overwhelming and inhibiting, constraints of time and space, only a few of these ideologies shall be examined in this paper. The centrality or dominance of the concepts of "ideology" and "government" in this analysis logically necessitates that they be clarified. This is our task in the next section.

### **IDEOLOGY AND GOVERNMENT: SOME CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES**

In this section of the essay, we shall attempt to define and clarify the central terms, concepts or phrases employed. This is to indicate how they are to be understood. As Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996 cited in Obo, Omenka and Agishi, 2017, p.23) observed, if concepts are to serve the functions of communication, sensitivity to and organization of experience, generalization, and theory construction, they have to be clear, precise, and agreed-upon. The issue of definition is as old as knowledge itself; and since social sciences' concepts take contextual meanings, the use of such concepts has to be explained (Ujo, 1994, p.1). Indeed, as Snyder (cited in Ujo, 1994, p.1) has reminded us, throughout the course of history, people have found it difficult to respond to one another across rooms, streets, nations, and continents, often with deplorable results. Neighbours have come to blows and nations have gone to wars by misunderstanding words. Too often words take on such a bewildering variety of

meaning that it becomes dangerous to use them without adequate definition.

It is important to also draw attention to the fact that "a flurry of definitions, no matter their imprecisions, should not be seen as a sign of the weakness of the concept. Rather, it should be seen as evidence of the international interest and the vitality of the concept" (Kukah, 1999, p.43). In order to parry-off unnecessary "intellectual blows," it is apposite for us to clarify the major terms or concepts used in our analysis. More importantly, it is difficult to controvert the fact that "the primary requirement for debating anything is to understand first and foremost the critical thing being talked about" (Chafe, 1994 cited in Obo and Obo, 2013, p.244). The concept of "ideology" and "government" shall thus be examined.

### **IDEOLOGY**

In terms of definition, ideology is a very slippery concept; no one has been able to define it to the satisfaction of everybody. According to David McLellan (1986, p.1), ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social science, for it asks about the bases and validity of our most fundamental ideas. As such, in his words, it is an essentially contested concept, that is, a concept about the very definition (and therefore application) of which there is acute controversy. In fact, as Iain Mackenzie (1994, p.1) has argued, the concept of ideology is notoriously difficult to get to grips with; it is loaded with a wide range of possible meanings, many of which are contradictory.

On his part, Andrew Heywood (2003 cited in Obo et al, 2017, p.25) has pointed out that few political terms have been the subject of such deep and impassioned controversy, and that the first problem confronting any discussion of the nature of ideology is the fact that there is no settled or agreed definition of the term, only a collection of rival definitions.

The preceding assertions reinforce the view that "ideology is a typical social science concept so easy to use but so difficult to define in such a way that it can ensure incontrovertible acceptance" (Ekanem, 1997, p.79). It was perhaps in view of this that Christenson and others (1972 cited in Ekanem, 1997, p.79) pointed out that "the concept behind the word is a complex one, and there is considerable controversy among scholars as to what ideology is - and is not", and that. "a bad odor surrounds the word ideology.

It suffers from ill-repute, and, to some, is identified with hated totalitarian beliefs and is characterized as false, delusory and "highfalutin propaganda". The point has been made that if we go further back into the meaning of **ideos** and **logos**-which are the Greek roots of the word ideology – as was done by the German phenomenologist Martin Heidegger, we find that **ideos** originally meant light, that which illuminates, while **logos** meant unfolding, bringing together, grasping; so whichever way one looks at it, ideology should lead to an unfolding of reality, a grasping of reality, an understanding of reality, an illumination of reality. Ideally, ideology should remove the veils of superstition, ignorance, obscurantism, and mystification; it should allow the truth of reality to come forth. (Wilmot, 1980, p.15).

It is generally agreed that the word "ideology" was first used in the 1790s by a French theorist – Antoine Destutt de Tracy, a founding member of the **Institute Nationale**, who introduced the term as a newly conceived science in opposition to the subject of metaphysics, and by which he meant the "science of ideas" - a fresh discipline intended to be the basis of an entirely new social and political order (Johari, 1987; Hoffman and Graham, 2009; and Heywood, 2003 cited in Obo et al, 2017, pp.25-26). According to Baradat (2006 cited in Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019, p.51). like other thinkers of his time, De Tracy believed that people could use science to improve social and political conditions... Ideas, De Tracy believed, are stimulated by physical environment. Hence, empirical learning (the kind that is gained through experience) is the only source of knowledge. Supernatural or spiritual phenomena play no part in the formation of ideas.

In the words of Godwin Ichimi (2014, p.33), ideology connotes a conviction held by an individual or shared by a group about what constitutes the ideal way of life and living. These ideals, in his view, can be consciously and/or unconsciously held and to the extent that they impinge on the public domain, they define the nature and orientation of politics. He also states that in a general way, an ideology presupposes a "system of coherent thoughts" with the strands of same drawn from some basic assumptions of the real world. Ichimi also points out that: ideologies delimit the scope of inclusion and exclusion of the acceptable and permissible; they define the task to be established, and strive to actively promote a common perception of same by its adherents; they

not only define goals but also lay out the organizational structure for their actualization; and ideologies have also been perceived as vehicles for the expression and articulation of interests, hopes, and anxieties.

An ideology begins with the belief that things can be better; it is a plan to improve society. As Anthony Downs (cited in Roskin, Cord, Medeiros and Jones, 2010, p.39) put it, ideology is "a verbal image of the good society, and of the chief means of constructing such a society". Political ideologies are not calm, rational attempts to understand political systems; they are, rather, commitments to change political systems (an exception being classic conservatism, which aimed to keep things from changing too much). In politics, ideology cements together movements, parties, and revolutionary groups. To fight and endure sacrifices, people need ideological motivation, something to believe in (Roskin, Cord, Medeiros and Jones, 2010, p.39).

Ideology can be seen as a set of ideas that reveal political template that a politician uses to create his brand as well as outline the standard which he uses to attract people with similar ideas to support him. It has also been defined as any set of ideas or opinions on which an individual or group may base, or profess to base, his or their political activity, and which, taken together, form in some sense a unitary whole; and according to this view, mere isolated or scattered ideas or opinions on matters cannot possibly be called an ideology (Fulford, 2017 and Jan, 1958 cited in Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019, p.51).

Ideology is variously an emotional and intellectual commitment, an all-encompassing political religion, a definition of purpose and an orientation toward action; it not only evokes a vision of the direction towards which the polity is going, it may also suggest more proximate actions. Moreover, ideologies serve to establish and deepen identity, promote unity, provide guidelines on appropriate political behaviour, confirm the legitimacy of the political leadership, facilitate conflict management, and directly affect the distribution of political power by demeaning and diminishing the standing domestic opponents (Eminue, 2001, p.295).

The point has been made that political ideology consists of a set of interconnected and stable beliefs that describe an individual's general political worldview. Ideology is also more generally considered as a type of belief system which is any configuration of ideas or attitudes that are bound

together in a form of interdependence; moreover, ideology is said to communicate a common way a particular group or community views the world and believes it should be structured (Campbell et al, 1960; Converse, 1964; Denzau & North, 1994; cited in Carmines and D'Amico, 2015, pp.206-207). According to Teun A. Van Dijk (2016, p.115), ...as 'systems of ideas', ideologies are socio-cognitively defined as share representations of social groups, and more specifically as the axiomatic principles of such representations. As the basis of a social group's self-image, ideologies organize its identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups. Ideologies are distinct from the socio-cognitive basis of broader cultural communities, within which different ideological groups share fundamental beliefs such as their cultural knowledge.

According to J. C. Johari (1987, p.461), in its broadest sense, the term ideology signifies a set of ideas ranging from one desiring no change in the prevailing order to another crying for a total transformation of society; moreover, it includes the refutation of one and the justification of another set of ideals irrespective of the fact that a critic may call a particular ideology as a "utopia" or a "false consciousness". The ideas, in Johari's view, may also be in the form of an explanation of some fact, or a justification of some claim or a quest for some truth, or a manifestation of some conviction and the like.

It has also been opined that generally ideology may be defined as an action - oriented system of ideas or beliefs that identifies the problems besetting the structures and processes of a society, and the alternative programmes and strategies for establishing another system that will overcome the observed deficiencies. All ideologies, the argument continues, are necessarily futuristic in the sense that they tend to be geared toward bringing about some changes in the present condition of a society at some time yet to come but this does not mean that all ideologies are progressive. While most political ideologies tend to be oriented toward changing the structures and processes of society into something new and better, there are some that seek to preserve the existing social arrangements (Ayeni-Akeke, 2008, p.168).

A number of "rival" definitions of ideology have been outlined by Andrew Heywood (2003 cited in Obo et al, 2017, p.26), and these include:

- i. a political belief system;
- ii. an action-oriented set of political ideas;
- iii. the ideas of the ruling class;
- iv. the worldview of a particular social class or social group;
- v. political ideas that embody or articulate class or social interests;
- vi. ideas that propagate false consciousness amongst the exploited or oppressed;
- vii. ideas that situate the individual within a social context and generate a sense of collective **belonging**;
- viii. an officially sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimize a political system or regime;
- ix. an all – embracing political doctrine that claims a monopoly of truth; and
- x. an abstract and highly systematic set of political ideals.

It is instructive to note that an ideology can be used to support, justify, and sustain or reinforce a regime or political and socio-economic status quo. It can also be used to oppose and change (or overthrow) a political system. Ideology can also serve as an instrument of mass mobilization as well as a means of communication between the masses and their leaders. However, as Ojukwu and Nwaorgu (2012, p.29) have opined, ideologies are not hermetically sealed systems of thought, rather, they are fluid sets of ideas which overlap with one another at a number of points.

## **GOVERNMENT**

Many conceptualizations of the term government have been articulated by different authorities. According to Appadorai (2000, p.12), government may be defined as the agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized. In his words, properly speaking, therefore, the term includes the sum total of the legislative, executive and judicial bodies in the state, that is, all those who are engaged in making, administering and interpreting law.

On his part, Nnoli (1986 cited in Agi, 2006, p.5) regards government as that agency of the ruling class which is charged with the responsibility of exercising state power on behalf of the whole class, and its members are expected to define in concrete terms the goals of the ruling class in the society at any period in the history of the domination of society, and devise the strategies and tactics with which to accomplish these goals.

Obviously, Nnoli sees government through the prism of the Marxist paradigm.

For Oyeleye Oyediran (1998, pp.1-2), a government consists of only a part of all the people and groups in a particular area, even though impliedly, those not in government perceive the government as theirs and as if they are the government; government involves in some way authority, ruling and power. According to him, it must be mentioned that government is established to maintain order in society thereby regulating and directing the behaviour of its members, and in order that the goals, values and norms of an association or society are maintained, government tries to make laws to guide the behaviours and actions of individuals or organizations.

A four-fold definition of government has been attempted by S. E. Finer (1970 cited in Agi, 2006, p.6):

- (a). firstly, government may denote the activity or the process of governing, i.e, of exercising a measure of control over others;
- (b). secondly, government may denote the state of affairs in which this activity or process is to be found – in short, a condition of ordered rule;
- (c). thirdly, government may denote those people charged with the duty of governing; and
- (d). fourthly, government may denote the manner, method or system by which a particular society is governed.

Finally, government can also be defined as “the institutions, people, and agencies responsible for making and administering laws and public policies for a particular state or country” (Agi, 2006, p.6).

Therefore, by “ideologies of government”, we are referring to those ideas, beliefs, norms, values and benchmarks which guide the government in the running of the day-to-day affairs of a state or country. Ideologies of government are sometimes described as “leftist”, “rightist” and even “centrist”, depending on their major assumptions or tenets. According to Enemuo (1999, p.77), it has been suggested that the categorization of ideologies into “left” and “right” may have originated during the First French Republic when the National Assembly met in Paris after the French Revolution; the deputies distributed themselves according to their views, and while the conservatives who supported the monarchy and opposed any curtailment of the powers of the king and privileges of the nobility sat to the right of the speaker, the radical, anti-royalists who were advocating equality and liberty sat to his left, and

the liberal moderates at the centre. It is usually understood, in the view of Enemuo, that ideologies to the “left” favour more egalitarian distribution of the wealth, status and power within a society, while ideologies to the “right” advocate elitist arrangements.

**SOME MAJOR IDEOLOGIES: A WORD ON BASIC TENETS AND ASSUMPTIONS.**

As earlier alluded to, many ideological outfits have been developed to help guide the running or management of the affairs of human society. The basic principles and assumptions of some of these ideologies are highlighted below.

**FASCISM**

The term fascism is derived from the Latin word “fascis” which means “a group or cluster”. Fascist ideas and principles can be traced to the nineteenth century but they were mainly influenced and shaped by the outcomes of the First World War. According to **The New Encyclopaedia Britannica** (vol. 7, 1975), the word “fascism” was first used in Italy by Benito Mussolini in 1919, and in that year, a Fascist Party was formed and Mussolini, its leader, was appointed Prime Minister in 1922; and by 1926, a one-party Fascist state had been established.

The point has been made that in ancient Rome, the authority of the state was symbolized by the **fascis**, a bundle of rods bound together (signifying popular unity) with a protruding axe-head (denoting leadership); this was appropriated by Mussolini to label the movement he led to power in Italy but was subsequently generalized to cover a whole range of movements in Europe during the inter-war period (McLean and McMillan, 2003, p.192). It was during this period that Mussolini founded an association of veterans called **Fasci di Combattimento** which he used to quell workers’ strikes and takeovers that were becoming rampant as a result of worsening economic conditions and ineffectiveness of the government; and this intervention greatly enhanced the prestige of the fascists and attracted more members to their organization (Enemuo, 1999, pp.81-82).

Fascism emphasizes the supremacy of the leader; that is, the powers and actions or inactions of the leader are unquestionable. Every member of the society is required to support and be completely loyal to the leader. In the words of Appadorai (2000, p.127), the central political idea of fascism is the creation of a state of truly sovereign authority which dominates all the forces in the

country and which at the same time is in constant contact with the masses, guiding their sentiments, educating them and looking after their interests. In a fascist state, every citizen is expected to subordinate his/her interest to the state's interests as articulated by the leader.

Mussolini's position was that "the keystone of the fascist doctrine is the conception of the state, of its essence, of its functions, its aims" and that "for fascism the state is absolute, individuals and groups relative". The concept of the state is central to the fascist ideology. To the fascists, the state is the vehicle through which the attributes of the nation, the nationality or the race are expressed; and the people represent the locus of emotion while the state is the structure through which that emotion is expressed. Moreover, fascism holds that the society is represented by the state which is a separate entity having a life or existence at once different from, and more than, the life of any individual within that society (Sargent, 1999, pp.191 and 192).

Fascism is militaristic; imperialistic; anti-intellectual; anti-feminist; anti-democratic; dictatorial; and anti-communist. It also severely criminalizes any form of political opposition. Generally, fascism is: **monist**, that is, based upon the notion that there are fundamental and basic truths about humanity and the environment which do not admit to question; **simplistic**, in the sense of ascribing complex phenomena to single causes and advancing single remedies; **fundamentalist**, that is, involving a division of the world into "good" and "bad" with nothing in between; and **conspiratorial**, that is, predicated on the existence of a secret worldwide conspiracy by a hostile group seeking to manipulate the masses to achieve and/or maintain dominant position (McLean and McMillan, 2003, p.193).

According to Rick Wilford (1994, p.185), as recently as the end of the 1990s, fascism, albeit "a discredited set of ideas", still enjoyed a lingering appeal and this stirred a justifiable unease. In his words, part of the answer to fascism's apparent durability lies in its ability to simplify the complexities of political life. Fascism, in his view, thrives on simplistic thinking and sloganizing, blaming "them" – whether Jews, blacks, or "foreigner" in general – for "our" problems; this feature of the ideology alerts us to its exclusivity: it is characterized by the disposition to divide peoples and/or nations into two irreconcilable camps, namely, "them" and "us". Moreover, such

dualism is invested with a hierarchy of value: "they" are not just different from, but inferior to "us".

Apart from Italy under Benito Mussolini, the other country whose government officially adopted fascism as its ideology was Germany under Adolf Hitler and his Nazi movement. Fascism has however been severely criticized for being racist and incoherent. As Paul Hayes (cited in Wilford, 1994, p.185) states, "fascist theory is not a tightly knit bundle of ideas... It is, in fact, rather untidy and inchoate... composed of a large number of diverse ideas, drawn from different cultures". Moreover, fascism is a belligerent form of nationalism, contemptuous of the rights of both individuals and other nations, seeking proof of its vitality in the ability to subject others to its thrall; and the pursuit of its goals – whether national glory or racial supremacy – is not conducted through the power of argument but rather through the argument of power (Wilford, 1994, p.186).

#### **ANARCHISM**

Anarchism is derived from the word "anarchy", which is Greek in origin, and it denotes "without government", "without rule", or "without authority". The first man who publicly called himself an "anarchist" was Pierre – Joseph Proudhon, a French political thinker, and he is often regarded as the Father of Anarchism. Other leading anarchist thinkers and authors include: Mikhail Bakunin, William Godwin, Peter Kropotkin, Max Stirner, Alexander Berkman, Leo Tolstoy, Emma Goldman, Josiah Warren, etc. However, according to Andrew Heywood (2003, p.188), the first, and in a sense classic, statement of anarchist principles was produced by William Godwin even though he never publicly described himself as an anarchist.

The general view about anarchism is that it has to do with chaos, disorder, brutality and violence. Those who identify with it are regarded as advocates of lawlessness. These are all erroneous impressions, according to adherents of anarchism. Anarchism advocates a complete absence of any form of government, rule or authority; it holds that no one has the right to exercise any form of power, rule or authority over anyone else. Anarchists claim that only in a society without authority of any kind would the individual "be able to develop his full nature and to realize all that he has in him to be. This complete development of individuality would be rendered possible by the entire absence of external

restraints; the individual would, in fact, for the first time, be really free” (Joad, 1946 cited in Johari, 1987, p.217).

Anarchists generally believe that it is possible and desirable to organize human society without government and without authority. Heywood (2003, p.190) has pointed out that the defining features of anarchism is its opposition to the state and the accompanying institutions of government and law, and that anarchists have a preference for stateless society in which free individuals manage their affairs by voluntary agreement, without compulsion or coercion. In other words, anarchists regard the state and all its appurtenances as evil, and they also consider the state as the most powerful institution or agency which compels the people and encumbers their freedom. Peter Kropotkin, a prominent anarchist ideologue, once defined anarchism as the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government - harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, and also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being (cited in Sargent, 1999, p.172).

A core and fundamental element of anarchism is the total and an unequivocal rejection of every form of control or restriction. For anarchism, government is harmful and undesirable, and this is underscored in Nicolas Walter’s assertion that “many people say that government is necessary because some men cannot be trusted to look after themselves, but anarchists say that government is harmful because no man can be trusted to look after anyone else” (cited in Sargent, 1999, p.174). In fact, as Proudhon himself put it, to be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue (cited in Heywood: 2003, p.191).

Anarchism emphasizes the untrammelled freedom of the individual in the society. As Alexander Berkman (cited in Sargent, 1999, p.173) noted, anarchism teaches that people can live in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind,

and a life without compulsion naturally means liberty; it means freedom from being forced or coerced, a chance to lead the life that suits you best. The basic assumption of anarchism is that power exercised by one person or group over another is the cause of most of society’s contemporary problems; anarchists all focus on the corrupting nature of power, and they believe that human beings are capable of organizing their affairs without anyone exercising authority over others; and this does not mean there will be no order in society; it means people can cooperatively produce a better system that can be produced by any authority (Sargent, 1999, p.174). Anarchism is completely opposed to the institution of private property; it places great importance on the worth of the individual; and it advocates revolutionary methods and the seizure or expropriation of private property. It has been said that anarchism is an unusual ideology in that it has never succeeded in winning power, at least at the national level; no society or nation has been modelled according to anarchist principles (Heywood, 2003, p.189).

Anarchism’s appeal as a political movement has been restricted by both its ends and its means; its goal of overthrowing the state and dismantling all forms of political authority is widely considered as unrealistic. Moreover, anarchism’s notion of a stateless society is viewed by many as, at best, utopia. Anarchism is also criticized for rejecting conventional means of exercising political influence: forming political parties, standing for elections, seeking public offices, etc (Heywood, 2003, pp.189 and 190). The anarchist ideology is also seen by critics as not constituting a single and coherent set of ideas.

### **LIBERALISM**

Liberalism is gotten from the term “liberal”, which is derived from the Latin word “liber” which referred to a class of free men, that is, men who were neither serfs nor slaves; it has meant generous, as in “liberal” helpings of food and drink; or, in reference to social attitudes, it has implied openness or open – mindedness, and it also came to be increasingly associated with ideas of freedom and choice (Heywood, 2003, p.23).

Although liberalism did not emerge as a developed political creed until the early nineteenth century, distinctively liberal principles had gradually been developed during the previous three hundred years; liberal ideas resulted from the breakdown of feudalism in Europe and the

growth, in its place, of a market or capitalist society. In many respects, early liberalism certainly reflected the aspirations of a rising industrial middle class, whose interests conflicted with the established power of absolute monarchs and the landed aristocracy. In its earliest form, liberalism was a political doctrine which attacked absolutism and feudal privilege, instead advocating constitutional and, later, representative government. By the early nineteenth century, a distinctively liberal economic creed had developed that extolled the virtues of **laissez-faire** capitalism and condemned all forms of government intervention (Heywood, 2007, p.45).

As a political creed, it could be said that liberalism was an ideology of a rising bourgeoisie that was completely opposed to feudalism. Feudalism had imposed many crippling impediments on the individual freedoms of the human person in the society: at the economic level, the rising bourgeoisie were constrained through over-taxation by the feudal lords; politically, they were not represented in the policy-making institutions and structures of the feudal system; and intellectually, they were harassed and brutalized in their search for superior knowledge. To overcome these constraints, it is said that the rising bourgeoisie articulated the ideology of liberalism which has the promotion of the freedom of the individual as its essence. According to Layman Tower Sargent (1999, p.108), liberalism most strongly stresses individual freedom; it is closely related to liberty, and the emphasis on liberty has been a major thread in all liberal thought. In his words, ...the role of government is limited – it cannot invade the rights and freedoms of the individual. Human beings will err, but liberals have always believed error is far better than the suppression of error. This belief follows from the belief in the value and inevitability of change. If change is good and will always occur, today's error may be tomorrow's truth.

The preceding view reinforces Johari's assertion (1987, p.542) that liberalism is very closely connected with the idea of "liberty" since the very essence of the doctrine is to aim at freedom and thereby expressing and fulfilling the human spirit. In other words, he reasons, liberalism is the voice of a free life – a life in which freedom is maximized

to the extent that the individual may think, believe, move, express, discuss, associate and so on.; as such, it serves the purpose of many thinkers ranging from the economist desiring man's freedom to produce or distribute goods or import and export commodities, to the men of politics laying emphasis on men's right to choose and remove their rulers, or form and change their government by persuasion if possible and by revolution if necessary.

Liberalism regards humans as partly social and partly self – centered but equal, free, reasoning and rational individuals who can determine their own needs and how to attain them; it views human life as sacrosanct and celebrates the individual as the unit of the society. It is stated that its celebration of the individual is based on its assumption that he is an intelligent, self – loving and creative being that always strives to excel and differentiate himself – through diligence and honest competition – from others and, thereby, avoid the dampening and levelling effects of collective existence (Ayeni-Akeke, 2008, p.177). Liberalism is the ideology that underpins the capitalist system; as a mode of production, capitalism emphasizes the private ownership of means of production and the fact that the economy should be run by the market forces of demand and supply. That is, government intervention is unacceptable

Summarily, it has been stated that liberalism's aim is to create a nation, not of humble though kindly treated workers dependent upon a small rich class who alone can enjoy the full benefits of a civilized life; and not off proletarians regimented, controlled, and provided with standardized comforts by a group of dictators or bureaucrats acting in the name of the state; but a nation of free, responsible, law-abiding, and self-reliant men and women-free from the grinding servitude of poverty and (so far as possible for men) from the tyranny of circumstances; with healthy bodies and alert and trained minds; enjoying a real equality of opportunity to make the most and best of their powers for their own advantage and that of the community, and to choose the way of life for which they are best fitted; having a real share of responsibility for regulating the management of their common affairs and the conditions of their own life and work; and secure of sufficient leisure to live a full life and to enjoy the delights of nature, letters and the arts (**The NATIONAL LIBERAL**



**FEDERATION**, 1934 cited in Eccleshall, 1994, p.28).

The cardinal elements of liberalism can be listed to include: individualism; freedom; reason; equality; toleration; consent; and constitutionalism (Heywood, 2007, pp.45-47). Some of the leading proponents of this ideology include: Adam Smith, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, John Rawls, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Paine, Fredrick Hayek, Robert Nozick, etc. Some criticisms have been levelled against liberalism; for instance, while theoretically everybody is equal, access to means of life is not free. Moreover, though liberalism emphasizes the fact that everyone should be free to seek political power, the means by which this could be realized is not universal.

Furthermore, liberalism does not seem to have solutions for the growing crisis of socio-economic inequality which characterizes liberal-democratic societies.

**SYNDICALISM**

The term “syndicalism” is derived from the French word “syndicat”, which means trade or labour union. It is an ideological outfit which symbolizes a revolt against the systemic flaws and inadequacies inherent in liberalism, and by extension, capitalism. According to Andrew Heywood (2003, p.201), syndicalism is a form of revolutionary trade unionism, and it first emerged in France where it was embraced by the powerful trade union - the General Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.) - in the period before 1914; syndicalist ideas later spread to Italy, Latin America, the United States and Spain, where the country’s largest labour union supported them.

Syndicalism advocates the domination of the socio-formation by the workers; that is, for syndicalists, organized bodies of workers should be the key actors or core elements in the social organization of every human society. In the words of Joad (cited in Appadorai, 2000, p.120), syndicalism may be defined as “that form of social theory which regards the trade union organizations as at once the foundation of new society and the instrument whereby it is to be brought into being”.

Syndicalism drew upon socialist ideas and advanced a crude notion of class war: workers and peasants were seen to constitute an oppressed class, and industrialists, landlords, politicians, judges and the police were portrayed as exploiters; but workers, according to syndicalists, could defend themselves by organizing syndicates

or union, based upon particular crafts, industries or professions, and in the short term, these syndicates could act as conventional trade unions, raising wages, shortening hours and improving working conditions (Heywood, 2003, p.201).

Syndicalism generally upheld the position that every non–revolutionary society is bifurcated into two antagonistic classes, the workers and the capital–owner whose interests and claims are irreconcilable. They also believed that at the root of the misery and penury plaguing the society was the institution of private property, and that the only way out was the radical and revolutionary overthrow of the oppressive, exploitative, and capitalists-dominated system, and, in the words of Appadorai (2000, p.120), “to substitute collective capital in place of private capital”. This is one of the points of convergence between syndicalism and socialism.

The syndicalist ideology differs from socialism in the method its advocates for achieving its goals, and that method is direct economic action (Appadorai, 2000, p.120). As F.W. Coker (cited in Appadorai, 2000, p.120) has reasoned, in contrast to socialist schools, syndicalism stresses the idea that the social transformation to be sought by the proletariat must be a self-transformation and that the institutions through which existing society is to be displaced by a new society are institutions that grow out of, and are built up by, the working class through its unaided efforts and in defiance of political authority. Another difference is the fact that while socialism acknowledges the need for the existence of the state on temporary basis until it withers away as it transits towards communism, syndicalism opposes the establishment of the state because for syndicalists, the state is clearly a tool of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Syndicalists contend that since the workers are the real producers of value, they should be the masters of entire production and in the future society all power should be given to the syndicates; as Joad (cited in Johari, 2005, p.683) has stated, the workers who create value should be the controllers of society; that is, the workers as producers should exercise control not only in the industrial sphere but also in the political sphere, or, to put it more accurately, that the political sphere, with its organ (the state) should cease to exist as such, and that its functions should be taken over by the bodies of the producers organized on a vocational basis.

As earlier alluded to, as an ideology, syndicalism is uncompromisingly labour-centred; it is completely opposed to the creation or existence of the state and its institutions and structures and thus it is an expression of distrust of government irrespective of how democratic it claims to be. For syndicalists, the workers are the most important actors in social organization and they are expected to be in total control of the affairs of the society through their organized “syndicats” or trade unions. In the words of Appadorai (2000, p.121), the efficient organization of labour unions, by crafts or industries, and of local labour councils is the first step towards syndicalism.

Some of the major tactics used by syndicalists for the attainment of their goals include:

(a). boycott – the refusal to take employment with or purchase articles made by a firm regarded as unfair in its dealings with workers;

(b). sabotage – this may involve acts of breaking machinery, damaging premises of work, spoiling manufacture and the like. It may cover any act of destruction that aims at paralyzing the capitalist economic system: let the building machinery be destroyed so that capitalists are put to any amount of harm. The workers may also resort to the ways of un-popularizing the products of their industries; and

(c). the general strike —this does not necessarily mean, contrary to what the term appears to denote, a strike of all workers in a country. It is sufficient to have a strike of the workers in the key industries (like electricity, gas, and transport) in order to paralyze economic life to end capitalism (Appadorai, 2000, p.121; Johari, 2005, pp.685-686).

Syndicalists attach great importance to the idea of a general strike and they are especially enamoured with the potential efficacy of this tactic in bringing down capitalism. Georges Sorel, a leading French syndicalist ideologue counseled the workers to take the general strike as a “myth”, a symbol of working-class power, capable of inspiring popular revolt. Moreover, syndicalists generally believe that the general strike may be made successful if the workers have self-reliance and self-discipline that would contribute to their solidarity (Johari, 2005, p.685; Heywood, 2003, p.201). But, according to Ayeni-Akeke (2008, p.188), Sorel was not very clear on how adequate a general strike would be for bringing about the kind of revolutionary transformation he envisaged but he gave the impression that the mere threat of

a general strike or even its demonstrated potential was enough. In Ayeni-Akeke’s words, if successful, Sorel proposed that the emergent society should be organized into small producer associations that would exercise absolute control on productive and distributive activities, and these associations would be linked together for minor administrative and cultural purposes in a manner similar to the confederation of small, local associations advanced by Bakunin, the anarchist. The development of syndicalism has been enhanced by the works, thoughts, and teachings of Pierre – Joseph Proudhon, the anarchist, Georges Sorel, Pelloutier, Auguste Blanqui, Emile Pouget, etc. However, this ideology has been criticized for being unsystematic and confused; as its major strategy, the idea of general strike is said to be relatively ambiguous; and it has also been inveighed by anarchists for concentrating too narrowly on short-term trade union objectives (Heywood, 2003, pp.201 and 202).

#### **FEMINISM**

In view of our conviction that in the process of developing the human society, all hands – irrespective of gender - must be on deck, and against the backdrop of the overwhelming empirical and irrefutable evidence of the tremendous contributions of women to human and societal development across the world, it is apposite to x-ray an ideological outfit which stresses the indispensability of the womenfolk in social organization. Herein lies the need to highlight the ideology of feminism.

Defining the term “feminism” can be a Herculean task; this is largely due to the diverse views and positions expressed by feminist writers. While drawing attention to this definitional **problematic**, Rebecca West (cited in Wilford, 1994, p.252) declared: “I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute”.

The point has been made that the most important ideology to emerge in the last half of the twentieth century is feminism. It has a central core of agreed-on principles and a number of divisions and disagreements, which are the focus of attention of many authors. In its modern form, feminism developed from a position of opposition, opposition not to men but to the oppression of women and, first by implication and then explicitly,

all peoples who are treated as inferior by dominant groups (Sargent, 1999, p.123).

According to Sarah Benton (1994, p.123), feminism cannot be defined as a theory of difference between men and women. That is what biology offers. Feminism is a political theory of why and how the male sex exercises power over the female sex, in actuality and symbolically. At different times, feminists may emphasize the potential for sameness or the actuality of sexual difference, depending on the political moment. As a theory, Benton reasons, feminism operate on that border between imagining what could be and unmasking what is. It is also a political movement which challenges the power exercised by men, and it is a movement which creates a new political identity for those who engage in it.

Feminism is, then, a practice for personal living and political action. It is a practice in which women can “be themselves” and a theory which authenticates the need and right of women to assert a separate political being.

As a political term, feminism was a twentieth century invention and has only been a familiar part of everyday language since the 1960s. “Feminist” was first used in the nineteenth century as a medical term to describe either the feminization of men or the masculinization of women. In modern usage, feminism is invariably linked to the women’s movement and the attempt to advance the social role of women. As such, it is associated with two basic beliefs: that women are disadvantaged because of their sex, and that this disadvantage can and should be overthrown. In this way, feminists have highlighted what they see as political relationship between the sexes, the supremacy of men and the objection of women in most, if not all, societies (Heywood, 2003, p.240). A common starting point for all feminist ideas is the belief that women are disadvantaged in comparison to men, and that this disadvantage is not a natural and inevitable result of biological difference but something that can and should be challenged and changed. Unlike traditional political theories and ideologies, feminism provides a way of looking at the world that sees women’s situation and the inequalities between men and women as central political issues; as such, it provides a fundamental challenge to dominant assumptions about the scope and nature of politics. Beyond this, there is enormous disagreement as to the nature, causes and cure for women’s inequality, subordination or

oppression, for feminism is certainly not a unified ideology but contains many competing strands (Bryson, 1993, p.192). In the words of Rosalind Delmar (cited in Wilford, 1994, p.252), at the very least, a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order.

Feminism is a system of critique and has as its central focus the concept of patriarchy, which can be described as a system of male authority, which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Feminism is therefore a critique of patriarchy, on the one hand, and ideology committed to women’s emancipation on the other. At the heart of feminist social and political analysis is the challenging of the public/private divide in politics, which has historically denied women access to the public political space and therefore representation of their interests. Starting from a point of unity – “sisterhood is global” – feminism today is an ideology with many practitioners that have situated themselves on various theoretical intersections (McLean and McMillan, 2003, pp.196 – 197).

Although the term “feminism” may be of recent origin, feminist views have been expressed in many different cultures and can be traced back as far as the ancient civilizations of Greece and China. Christine de Pisan’s **Book of the City of Ladies**, published in Italy in 1405, foreshadowed many of the ideas of modern feminism in recording the deeds of famous women of the past and advocating women’s right to education and political influence. Nevertheless, it was not until the nineteenth century that an organized women’s movement developed (Heywood, 2003, p.241).

The first text of modern feminism is usually taken to be Mary Wollstonecraft’s **Vindication of the Rights of Women** published in 1792. By the mid–nineteenth century the women’s movement had acquired a central focus: the campaign for female suffrage and the right to vote, which drew inspiration from the progressive extension of the franchise to men. This period is usually referred to as the “first wave” of feminism, and was characterized by the demand that women should enjoy the same legal and political rights as men (Heywood, 2003, p.241).

By the time the women's movement became a political force in the West, feminists drew attention to the fact that women were paid less than men, were not promoted, were psychologically and physically abused by men, were denied loans and insurance, and were in general second – class citizens. They argued that the root of the problem was psychological; women and men were forced into “gender roles” that had little to do with biology. Boys were conditioned to be tough, domineering, and competitive and “macho”, and girls were taught to be meek, submissive, unsure of themselves, and “feminine” (Roskin, Cord, Medeiros and Jones, 2010, p.54). The works of other women such as Betty Friedman, Mary Astell, Elizabeth Stanton, Angelina Grimke, Kate Millet, Susan Anthony, Sarah Scott, Germain Greer, etc. also contributed to the development of the ideology of feminism.

### **CONCLUSION**

As earlier alluded to, the importance and/or relevance of ideology in the life of an individual, organization or country cannot be over-emphasized. For instance, a leadership that is guided by a people-centred and development-oriented ideology would regard the promotion of the welfare of the people and the overall transformation and progress of the society as the essence of governance. On the other hand, when public office holders subscribe to a self-serving ideology or when a leadership is characterized by ideological barrenness, the society becomes the loser as its development would not be prioritized. The foregoing point – regrettably – depicts the situation in Nigeria where the rulers have adopted a predatory ideology of “kleptocracy”, by which public offices are used as instruments of primitive accumulation of wealth. This is what drives the “prebendal and ruinous rulership” (Obo and Adejumo, 2014, p.141) which Nigerians have suffered since the country got independence in 1960.

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