

Good example of machiavelli and hobbes politics essay

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Politics is intricately intertwined with power and influence. The juxtaposition of the desire to establish dominion over others and the need to influence the subjects creates the conundrum called politics. The modern definition of politics is inclined towards the means of gaining power and exercising the positions of governance over a state or a community. In the antiquity and the middle ages, power was concentrated to the aristocrats and monarchs. It was left out to the rich and well-off in the society. Ideally, the conception of politics as being representative of the people's wishes was confined to the wealthy. In other words, it was only the wealthy who had amassed sufficient quantities that were able to get their political wishes carry the order of the day. Nobility, wealth and power came in one portion with the three being mutually inclusive.

Before democratic nations were established, politics was a tool for achieving personal ends. Power seekers used overt power moves to communicate their intention to acquire power in the society. Thomas Hobbes argues that people preferred living in a society where their rights are limited and their interests are easily overridden by the need to further the agenda of the state. The life before the society was short, nasty and as Hobbes would term it, brutish. Those who survived in the Hobbesian society were the strongest among them all. There were no laws governing the control and exercise of power. Society gave reprieves to people to live in the society where their interest was catered for by the state. Acquiring power in the newly created entities became an object of desire for many people in the society. In other words, according to Hobbes, the state had not yet acquired its civility. The conception of the social contract had not been internalized into society. The

people, therefore, literally had their whims to themselves. Everyone was a law unto himself. In that society, it was only natural that the fittest of them all would prevail. With no definite and clear governance structure, it was difficult to distinguish humanity from the rest of nature. It is arguable that the nature of operations of the lives of human beings was at its zenith with certainty being a scarce commodity in the market that was societal relations.

Machiavelli argues that the Hobbesian nature of man was carried forth in the political arena. Governed by a web of laws, overt political moves would attract a death penalty and, therefore, power seekers had to use subtle means of acquiring power compared to the methods of power acquisition in the Hobbesian society. Power seekers in their inherent quest for the preservation of humanity tend to operate smoothly within the dark embers of power pursuit. The approach, Machiavelli observes has two broad strands. First, it seeks to ensure preservation of life by avoiding the death penalty that would visit any otherwise unwise movement. Secondly, it seeks to ensure that the political operatives achieve their objective of acquisition of power. The process and steps of the power grab enable the operatives to work their way with the slightest of suspicion drawn from the other quarters. With the democratization of governments and state functions, the Hobbesian nature of man can be seen cloaked in pretensions and lies in the modern society. Pre-modern politicians used all the ways possible to ensure that they acquired power. Such practices in the modern era have been criminalized or are strictly prohibited. The trajectory of political strategies has changed with every change in government but the nature of politics has remained

unchanged over the years. The Hobbesian nature of politics can still be traced in the modern day brand of politics. In other words, the modern politician has merely mutated in order to fit in the prevailing political conditions. In order to survive and thrive, the modern day politician is aware of the legal and political options available at the table. He is keen not to drag his feet unnecessarily into political dirt that he cannot overcome. In that context, while it is argued that political operations have changed, it remains succinct that the politician in the Hobbesian times remains the same albeit with mutations as the politician in the Machiavelli's time.

What aim or aims do they establish for politics?

Thomas Hobbes argued that the reason behind the establishment of politics was to ensure the security of all the members of the society. Both Hobbes and Machiavelli agree that the aim of government is to provide security to its citizens. The common thread in that line of argument is founded on the social contract theory. Accordingly, the subjects in the sovereign's jurisdiction cede their power to the sovereign otherwise called the governor. It is the role of the governor to ensure that security is thereby provided for the people. The people, therefore, relegate themselves to be subjects of the sovereign in return for protection. The same conception influenced and continues to influence the foundation and stability of government.

Government is seen as the only alternative to the successful organization of humanity in society.

The two, therefore, conceive politics from the foundation of securing the interests of the majority in the society. Thomas Hobbes supported a centralized government with a central ruler. He supported aristocracy and

monarchy because they provided the structures for a stable government. Governments, according to Thomas Hobbes were formed after the citizenry got into a social contract with the rulers. The extent of the powers of the government was determined by the parameters of the social contract. Machiavelli, on the other hand, viewed politics as an expression of interest to control and dominate other people. Niccolo Machiavelli argued that politics was characterized by treachery, betrayal and immorality in order to achieve means of political control. People received the impression that their leaders were sincere in the service of the nation but according to Machiavelli, that was a decoy meant to deceive the public. In other words, the ultimate objective and ends of the politician is a secret known only to the politician. In that strain, the people must be convinced through political theatrics or otherwise that the politician has their interests at heart. However, what the politician believes or perceives of society remains irrelevant. The real nature of politics involved all methods that can maximize the power of the seekers. Power was achieved through immoral ways such as betraying friends and manipulation of other people. Machiavelli used the examples of reputable characters in history such as Romulus and Moses. He argued that both leaders used the overt methods of power acquisition to establish control and dominance over others. These characters have been romanticized in fables that are taught to generations. Machiavelli argued that rulers ought to be brutal in their approach to politics. It is far much better for a leader to be feared by his subjects than to be loved by them. The leader has control in the fear that the citizens espoused but could not control the level of love. Ultimately, as Machiavelli popularly postulated, the end justifies the means.

It does not matter that some element of immorality or illegitimacy is involved. What remains of critical concern is the fact that the subjects remain subjects and the rulers remain rulers. In that strain, the goal of the politician should be the maintenance of the status quo at whatever cost it may. The aim of politics has remained relatively the same apart for the open approach taken by statesmen and politicians. Some of the modern day politicians are Machiavellian and are only concerned about winning the next elections. Few politicians remain concerned about the implementation of the policies and issues they get elected for. The overriding philosophy has been premised on the pursuit of power at all costs and upon acquisition use of the power for one's own personal good. The struggle for the personal gain and that for the public remain mutually exclusive in as far as Machiavelli was concerned.

How do these aims impact the obligations and responsibilities of ordinary subjects or citizens?

In overall, the political aim is often the pursuit of power, absolute power for that matter. On the other hand, the overall obligation and responsibility of ordinary subjects often is the upholding of the sovereignty of the state. By that is to say a citizen should contribute towards the maintenance and growth of its nation. However, the lowered aims of the political class tend to disincline the ordinary citizen from his usual obligation. Instead, immense investment is anchored towards the realization of the narrow political interests. In general, the subject deviate from being loyal and servants of the state to being the servant of the political class based on the narrow interests. The pursuit of power becomes the most essential and overall

guiding spirit. Everyone desires personal success and glorification without necessarily considering the interest of the public which should have prima facie guided the process.

How do these lowered aims affect the obligations and responsibilities of those in positions of political authority?

As a consequence, the persons in positions of authority become a law unto themselves. They lose the sense of obligation and responsibility owed to society. Instead, they begin to pursue their personal interests and narrow political aims. In the long run, the system is interfered with in the most severe manner. The rule of law is eroded and filled by the rule of man. Those in positions of authority essentially step up into creating and implementing their narrow sectarian objectives. The lowered aims cloud the political space ultimately occasioning what may be described as the collapse of legitimacy and morality. The system loses its focus and the concentration are inclined towards personal growth. In overall, suffice to say that the lowered political aims have detrimental effects on the persons in position of authority. Their obligations and responsibilities to the public are effectively eroded leaving little to no room for public interest considerations.