

Glossary of Democracy and Liberalism: Special version for Latin America

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(Working document subject to further revisions)

ABSOLUTISM

Absolutism is a term used to describe the government of the ancient regime of various European states like France, Russia, Spain and Prussia, where the monarch was the only legitimate source of power. In this regime the monarch deprived all potential sources of power such as the aristocracy and the Church. Absolutism is sometimes compared with the twentieth century Totalitarianism but contrary to it, the monarch did not have immediate control of everyday life (see TOTALITARIANISM).

BERLIN, ISAIAH

The Latvian-born British philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-97) was one of the most revered liberals of the twentieth century and one of the few intellectuals that stood up to political extremism and intellectual fanaticism. Although he wrote many books and essays, his world notoriety came especially from his essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) where he made a distinction between negative and positive rights of individuals. This essay remains the starting point for any theoretical discussion of political freedom (see INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS).

CAPITALISM

Capitalism is an economic system focused on the creation of wealth and on individual property rights where, individuals own the means of production and the capital generated by it. In the capitalist system all property is privately owned, production is planned and income is distributed through the operation of markets. In a country where the market is allowed to take its natural course, this form of capitalism is called 'laissez faire', from a French expression meaning 'let it go'. The advantages of capitalism include the fact that it represents a competitive system based on private property and its free disposal. Also, it is the only economic system that allows democracy to manifest fully through individual rights. None of the capitalist countries of the West are of the *laissez faire* type as their governments reserve the right to make adjustments in the market rather than allow it to go free. There are many ways that this is done, for example through the control of certain segments of the economy such as energy, the financial exchange and by the imposition of differentiated levies on goods and services.

CAUDILLISM

Caudillism is a cultural phenomenon that appeared in the nineteenth century revolutionary South America where charismatic regional leaders gained some form of authoritarian political power supported by their own armies or militia. The word 'caudillism' comes from the Spanish word 'caudillo' which is translated as 'leader' and 'chief'. The people viewed this as a better alternative to the monarchs and their representatives. Most of the leaders of the independence revolutions of Latin America, including Simón Bolívar, were caudillos. Caudillos often fought amongst themselves for power and Bolívar himself defeated his peer Manuel Piar to gain control of his army. From the time the first Latin American republics were established in the first half of the

nineteenth century, until well into the twentieth century, many Latin American heads of state were former caudillos. In Brazil the equivalent of 'caudillism' was 'coronelism', or the power of 'colonels', with colonels being a designation for the locally dominant patrons (*patrões*), who protected the locals in return for their loyalty.

CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is the engagement of citizens prior, during and beyond the election of their representatives. Good citizenship is important to keep the state in check so that the state's resources are prioritised to those areas believed to be most deserving.

CIVIL RIGHTS

While the word 'civil' comes from the Latin word 'civilis' meaning 'citizen', the expression 'Civil Rights' derives from Rousseau's book *The Social Contract* and refers to the rights held by individuals and groups and which derive from the 'Social Contract' – the implicit common agreement between society at large and the government. Under this conception, the word 'civil' refers to 'that which is not government'. Since the implicit *Social Contract* derives from society rather than from God or nature, the civil rights it provides are always under pressure to be increased or decreased. If, on the one hand, the state has the power to deprive people of liberties they once had (e.g. the freedom to use drugs or to drink alcohol), the existing political groups are also enabled to argue for new 'rights' such as the right to vote and the right to healthcare.

COLLECTIVISM

Collectivism is the view that the group rather than the individual is the fundamental unit of political, social and economic concern. Although every individual is able to reason for himself, individuals are constantly tempted to surrender their individuality in exchange for becoming part of a group. The group has strong attractions such as the warm feeling of being a part of it and from the mistaken belief that the group is always right. However, the power of groups originates from a kind of highly discriminatory social behaviour known to sociologists as '*them and us*'. In addition to discrimination such behaviour is also conducive to mob formation, slander and crime.

COMMUNITARIANISM

Communitarianism is the name independently given to the philosophy that opposed liberalism, which appeared during the 1970s in the United States in the works of the political philosophers Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer. Communitarianism offers a blueprint of a society based on communities bound by shared ends. Communitarians expect that the state has the duty to provide all the things that communities need, from education to housing, green areas, universal health care and employment (see COLLECTIVISM).

CONSERVATISM

Conservatism encompasses all the political philosophies that favour tradition, that is, the maintenance of society's institutions and customs. Conservatism is not against change in government but opposes sudden changes or changes that are based on the untested wisdom of ideological blueprints. The kinds of change that conservatism favours are that which are organic, piecemeal and based on existing social experience. The iron law of conservatism is the '*law of unintended consequences*', which states that '*interventions in complex systems have no guarantee of a desired outcome but the unanticipated outcomes of such interventions are often undesirable*'. The undesirable outcomes of social intervention can be understood through an analogy such as the side effects to medicine.

In England, one of the most influential voices of conservatism was the Irish-born parliamentarian Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Burke was against the revolution in France but in favour of the one in America. His arguments were that the French revolutionaries of the eighteenth century lacked the wisdom of tradition. His book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was scorned by both liberals and radicals like Joseph Priestly, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham and Mary Wollstonecraft and was praised by the literary intellectuals such as Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, James Boswell, Horace Walpole Arthur Young and Fanny Burney. However, Burke's worst fears turned into reality when the new French Republic purged under the rough justice of the Reign of Terror. While in his time Burke was better known for his conservatism he was twice rediscovered, during the nineteenth century, for the quality of his prose and during the twentieth century for his common sense ideas behind conservatism (see NEO-CONSERVATISM).

CONSTITUTION

Constitution refers to a set of laws devised by a group of people to define how government should be. In most modern democracies the constitution rules with a mandate of the electorate itself, which chose the legislators (including the constitutional assembly) as well as the head of the executive. The purpose of the constitution is to protect the civil rights of all individuals, including the prevention of abuse of power on the part of the majority against minorities. Examples of such minorities are small ethnic groups, religious groups and even the two extremes of intellectual capacity.

Most constitutions are codified as written documents. However constitutions can also be non-codified, when the definitions regarding the structure of government are spread among various bodies of law. The Constitution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain does not exist as a single written document but it is spread among various bodies of law including both modern statutes and historical documents such as the *Magna Carta* of 1215, the *Petition of Rights* of 1628, and the *Bill of Rights* of 1689 which turned England into a 'parliamentary monarchy'.

If the United States of America is to be taken as role model for constitution effectiveness, then less is definitely more. While, as stated above, the United Kingdom has a diffused constitution, the constitution of the United States including all of its amendments fits into six pages. The reason why the constitution of the United States is so brief is that it is focused on protecting the freedoms of everyone, without attempting to address specific

segments of the population. The statistics of serious crime shows interesting correlations between low serious crime and a small constitution. In terms of total number of crimes committed per head of population, the United States ranks 24th in the world while the United Kingdom ranks 46th. Many of the new democracies of Latin America have huge constitutions and yet they struggle with the problems of internal security.

DEMOCRACY (DEFINITION)

Although the concept of democracy as the government of the people was introduced in classical Greece and the concept of republic in classical Rome, neither Greece nor Rome had a democracy in the sense applied today. The sense is that the government is elected by and answerable to the people. Although in classical Greece the citizens had the right to vote, only a small proportion of its population were recognised as full citizens.

In his famous Gettysburg address of 1860, Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as the government by the people, for the people and of the people. There is a suggestion in this definition that democracy simply means to abide by the decision of the majority of the people. This is only true for the simplest form of democracy, also referred to as direct democracy, which is not recognised as an acceptable form of democracy. Democracy comes in many forms and in order to better understand them, we can imagine the existing forms arranged alongside in a continuum, with one end representing direct democracy and the other liberal democracy. The most advanced form of democracy is liberal democracy while direct democracy is the least advanced.

Regardless of type, there is a consensus within all forms of democracy that people can change the existing economic system over time. There are two implications of this. The first implication is that in a democracy no one vision is privileged over the others and none is permanent. The second implication is that in order to allow for future changes in the economic system, a democracy must be flexible. A flexible democracy requires a lean government whose permanent posts are limited to those that are necessary for it to function (see DIRECT DEMOCRACY and LIBERAL DEMOCRACY).

DEMOCRACY, CONSTITUTIONAL

A constitutional democracy differs from a direct democracy by having a constitution in place to safeguard individual rights from the constant threat of abuse of power either by organised groups or by the government. A constitutional democracy differs from a republic only through its acceptance of the figure of a non-absolutist monarch. Thus, countries like Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden are constitutional democracies and ruled by monarchs.

DEMOCRACY, DIRECT

Direct democracy is a system where a simple ballot or acclamation is used to decide policies or changes in government. Although direct democracy appears to be harmless, it is prone to be manipulated by powerful and persuasive leaders, enabling them to rule with tyranny, ostensibly with the majority backing the tyranny. One example is the regime implanted in Germany after the First World War by the National Socialist or the Nazi party.

DEMOCRACY, REPRESENTATIVE

Representative Democracy is a system where citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. This is a way to circumvent the biggest problem of direct democracy, which is the engagement of citizens. Representative democracy has variations, the most important ones being participatory democracy and liberal democracy (see PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY and LIBERAL DEMOCRACY).

DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATORY

Participatory Democracy is a system which is characterised by the use of public hearings to support decisions. This system tends to be used in regional and local governments, especially in situations where the latter is the decision maker. It is also widely used in the Annual General Meetings (AGMs) of many labour and professional guilds and associations. It requires some sort of proportional representation, a reasonable level of education that includes the civic spirit as well as transparency and accountability both in the electoral system and in the government. However, this system has a problem that is often overlooked, the fact that that people differ in their attitudes to participation and in their preparedness to attend meetings. This is the Achilles heel of participatory democracy, for it allows cunning participants to prolong a public hearing or an AGM, in the hope that many of the participants will leave the assembly hall before a particular matter is voted.

DEMOCRACY, LIBERAL

Liberal Democracy refers to a democratic system that includes a rule of law that protects individual rights from the abuse of groups. Although its present form crystallised during the process of the American independence, its roots lay in the eighteenth century English liberalism which came from the work of John Locke in the previous century. The English philosopher John Locke was a defender of individual liberty and a fierce critic of the absolutist monarchy.

Although the eighteenth century is usually the term referred to describe the period of English liberalism, the real period spans from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 –where the catholic King James II of England was overthrown and replaced by the protestant William III of Orange-Nassau and his wife Mary II– to the start of the French wars in 1793. This period is also called ‘the classical age of constitution’ and it also coincides with the age of Enlightenment.

One of the most critical points of liberal democracy has to do with the size of the government. The state apparatus should not be so big that it robs people of their individual liberties nor so small that it is unable to protect them. Another critical point of liberal democracy is the balance of power. The system of public governance is based on three powers plus a head of state. A liberal democracy protects the rights of all individuals (also known as civil or human rights) by preventing the abuse of one segment of the electorate by another. The meaning of justice of a liberal democracy implies that although every one is equal under the law, the natural differences among individuals are normally accepted. People differ in terms of ability, motivation and entrepreneurship and this lead to differences in terms of wealth acquisition. Liberal democracy maintains that it would be unfair to place the industrious with the work shy.

Until the last part of the twentieth century, the main rival ideologies of a liberal constitutional democracy were hereditary monarchy, fascism and communism. Nowadays the rival ideologies of liberal democracy are the other forms of democracy (See LOCKE, JOHN and ABSOLUTISM).

DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL

Social Democracy is a conceptual form of democracy based either on the economic system of socialism or in a mixed economic system, which emerged from the eighteenth century theories of socialism. Social democracies tend to have a large welfare state accompanied by the high taxes needed to finance it. In a social democracy, the state attempts to compensate the natural differences in capacity among individuals with the practice of positive discrimination. Examples of social democracies that crystallised during the twentieth century are those of Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal.

The downfall of the social democracy is that all large governments are onerous and recalcitrant to reform. Therefore this system does not offer the flexibility to allow a switch of economic system should that become the will of the electorate.

DEMOCRACY VERSUS REPUBLIC

Many people confuse 'democracy' with 'republic' and although the two terms are interrelated they are not the same. Democracy, comes from the Greek word 'demos', meaning 'people' and 'kratos' meaning 'rule', refers to 'the rule of the people'. Republic, which comes from the Latin word, 'res' meaning 'affair' or 'matter' and 'public', with the expression 'res publica' meaning 'the public matter'. It refers to a type of political regime where the head of government is chosen or elected by the people. As already seen, many European democracies are ruled by non-absolutist monarchs.

DEMOCRATISATION, THIRD WAVE

Third Wave Democratisation is a term used by Samuel Huntington to describe the jump in the trend of democratisation that occurred in the last part of the twentieth century.

EDUCATION, LIBERAL

Liberal education refers to the general knowledge obtained from the teachings of the Western canon of literature and science. The word 'liberal' comes from the sense used in ancient Greece, where the education of freemen was called 'liberal' and that of the slaves 'vocational'. Although nowadays a complete education requires both the liberal and vocational types, liberal education is the one that enables individuals to think for themselves, to recognise reason and to ask the right questions regarding government policy. In the American system of higher education a degree in liberal arts requires students to learn something from the three areas of knowledge: humanities, sciences and mathematics. There are other ways to obtain a liberal education, such as through continuing education and self-learning.

ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment is defined as the philosophical period that replaced the Renaissance during the sixteenth century and lasted until the end of the seventeenth century. The Enlightenment was not just about philosophy but also about the application of reason to natural science and to society. The enlightened philosophers were the first to write for the general public and not just for their peers. In addition to separating scientific truth from revelation, the philosophers of the Enlightenment defended science from irrational attacks, questioned the established authority and promoted liberal education and academic freedom. The importance of the Enlightenment for democracy is that it developed further the political philosophy of liberalism that appeared during the Renaissance and which became the foundation for modern liberal democracy (see LIBERAL EDUCATION).

FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution refers to the movement that shook France between 1787 and 1799. The pinnacle of the movement occurred on July 14 1789 when a mob of Parisian revolutionaries stormed the Bastille prison in the hope to obtain ammunition to their cause. It marks the point in history when the meaning of various political terms that existed since the classical period began to change. Right after the French Revolution the word 'democracy' was initially used to denote the new regime that replaced both the absolutist monarchy and the aristocracy, while a 'republican' of the French Revolution was called a 'democrat'. Although the French Revolution is highly regarded in history it was also very costly in terms of lives and destruction of the national heritage (see THE GREAT SWITCH and LEFT-RIGHT POLARISATION).

FUKUYAMA, FRANCIS

Francis Fukuyama (1952-) is an American political scientist presently at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and has also worked for the RAND Corporation and the State Department in the United States, with a PhD from Harvard in Political Science and a BA degree in Classics from Cornell. His analysis of the world post the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1988 and the dismantling of the Soviet Union and its communist regime originated his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*. This book was a defence of liberal democracy as the regime best able to satisfy man's universal needs for recognition. Fukuyama's controversial statement regarding the 'end of history' was a play on Marx's words, when Marx predicted that the victory of the socialist society would also be the end of history. Fukuyama's version suggested that if history was to end it would do so with the final victory of liberal democracy. Since the publication of *The End of History* Fukuyama has reappraised some of the ideas in it and has produced other interesting books, the latest being *The Origins of Political Order*, 2011, which summarises the world political organisation from prehuman times to the French Revolution. A second volume is expected to cover the period from after the French Revolution until the twenty first century.

GOVERNMENT (DEFINITION)

Government refers to the way society is ruled, including its individuals, institutions and even the processes of making the rules for society and enforcing them. Historically there are many forms of governments such as monarchy, aristocracy, theocracy, oligarchy and

republic. The government of most liberal democracies is normally subdivided into three branches which counterbalance one another: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. These act as a regulator of one another, thus helping to prevent the abuse of power. The ideal government is one which is both accountable and effective. However, according to Fukuyama, it is difficult to get those two attributes together especially when '*institutions are weak, corrupt, lacking capacity, or in some cases absent altogether*' (see FUKUYAMA, FRANCIS).

HAYEK, FRIEDERICH

The Austrian-born economist and thinker Friederich Hayek (1899-1992) was an economist and political thinker who defended liberal democracy as the most equitable and dignified system of government. Hayek liked to point out that in a liberal economy a personal misfortune such as the loss of a job, was much less painful than in a centrally-controlled economy, for while in the first it is caused by something impersonal (the market) in the second it is caused by a personal decision of someone in authority. Thus, although a liberal democracy cannot prevent the pitfalls of the market or the calamities of an economic downturn, when these occur they are not as soul destroying.

Hayek liked to quote a saying of Benjamin Disraeli where the latter described the nightmare of the English nineteenth century liberal political thinkers as the state in which '*no avenue to wealth and honour would exist save through the government*'. Such a nightmare is a close description of the phenomena that has occurred throughout the Latin American democracies since the end of the twentieth century, where obtaining a safe job in government has become the greatest aspiration of the Latin American youth. Unwittingly, Hayek also put the finger on another Latin American problem that appeared during the economic recession of the 1980s: the stigma surrounding job loss. In the free market economy there is no need for such stigma as people's ups and downs are normally attributed to the market.

HEGEMONY, WESTERN

The concept of hegemony started with European hegemony, which was based on Europe's economic dominance that started in the growth of mercantilism in England and other countries. During the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, the United States became the greatest world economy, which led many to equate Western hegemony with the political dominance of the United States. However, the existence of international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization which recognise the sovereignty of all nation-states equally reduces the Western hegemony as another conspiracy theory.

HISTORICISM

A term originated from the German word 'historismus', historicism is another term for the philosophy of historical determinism that appeared in Germany in the late eighteenth century. One example of historicism is Marx's prediction of an inevitable social revolution of the world's workers that will destroy capitalism and replace it with socialism, which derived from Hegel's historicism. Two important twentieth century philosophers who criticised historicism were Leo Strauss (1899-1973) and Karl Popper (1902-1994). Their

argument was that historicism abrogates the democratic responsibility that every individual has to freely contribute to the betterment of society. The term historicism should not be confused with history itself and it does not preclude the idea that history offers useful lessons to individuals and societies.

HOBBS, THOMAS

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), one of the philosophers of liberalism, is known by his 1651 book *Leviathan*, a criticism of how the rulers of society abuse the power once entrusted in them with the advent of 'common power' or society, which appeared in response to the need to protect natural man from continual fear and danger of violent death. In it, Hobbes presents his vision of 'natural man', how man was prior to society: a solitary and brutish being who was also free to exercise his natural rights. The Hobbesian concept of 'natural rights' was used as a justification for individual rights (see INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS).

HUNTINGTON, SAMUEL

Samuel Huntington (1927-2008) was one of the most distinguished political scientists of the twentieth century and his 1996 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* was seen as a forecast of 9/11 as well a staunch criticism of Western Civilisation at the end of the twentieth century. In this book he divided the world into seven or eight civilisations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African and stressed that the cultural fault lines that separate them will be the source of future world conflicts. Huntington was also the first to study the social and political changes behind what he called 'the third wave of democratization' that occurred at the last part of the twentieth century.

IDEOLOGY

The word 'ideology' was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy, referring to the systematic study of ideas and came out of a need to understand the social and political changes which began to unfold rapidly after the French Revolution. Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friederich Engels (1820-1895) viewed ideology as a weapon to control the human behaviour and to maintain the social order. This was done through the simplification of a vision of the political world into one which could be absorbed by the people and by dividing up the people into separate groups that would be more easily controllable. As a result of the growing influence of Marxism the word ideology became associated with doctrinaire bullying on the part of social manipulators. Now Ideology is a blueprint of a political order, like socialism, the blueprint for creating a heaven on earth formed by the workers society.

The main problem with most ideologies is the attached codicil that the end justifies the means. As Mario Vargas Llosa pointed out, ideology requires that a society is crushed in order to conform to its set scheme. Ideology is understood by its critics as a kind of secular religion that seeks to obtain a heaven on earth as opposed to a heaven in the afterlife. While a paradise on earth has never been created, history provides many examples of attempts which turned into hell.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

As defined by the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 'rights' are entitlements (not) to perform certain actions, or (not) to be in certain states; or entitlements that others (not) perform certain actions or (not) be in certain states. The British philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-97) separated individual rights according with two types: negative rights, consisting of those rights and freedoms considered natural to mankind and positive rights, referring to those rights and freedoms that an individual needs to pursue in order to achieve self-realisation. Berlin explained the distinction between negative and positive rights through the following statements: '*I am a slave to no man*' and '*I am my own master*', where the first refers to a negative type of freedom and the second to a positive one (see BERLIN, ISAIAH).

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is a concept with several ethical implications whose common denominator is that the individual, as opposed to any social group, forms the basic unit of society. All modern constitutional democracies accept that the individual is the basic unit of society. Individualism can be understood in contrasts with collectivism, the idea that the socio-economical-political unit is a group rather than the individual. The original case for individualism used the notion that man had '*natural rights*' that predate society. However this is a subjective notion in the sense that it is impossible to pinpoint when man first appeared and to establish whether such early man was solitary or gregarious. The main justification for adopting the individual as the basic unit of society is that the individual and not society, is a real agent that can be legally indicted and held accountable.

Individualism does not agree that there should be a majority view on everything. It is about recognising that not only our scale of values are limited by our powers of imagination but that scale of values can only exist in individual minds. For this reason individuals should be allowed to follow their values and preferences rather than be forced to follow the values and preferences of somebody else, obviously safeguarding the limits: the recognition that all other individuals have the right to do the same. Individualism does not exclude social ends; it only limits social ends to the instances where individual views coincide.

One of the criticisms of individualism is that it is tantamount to egoism or selfishness. However, this accusation is based on a mistaken concept of egoism or selfishness. There are two types of egoisms, one bad and one good. The bad type of egoism is the inability to see things from the point of view of others. The good type of egoism is the self-respect which is manifested in many forms including in the desire for recognition. In the French language, which is where these terms appeared, there are different words for the two types of egoism: '*amour de soi*' and '*amour-propre*' or about individuals who opt to live isolated from society. Individualism cannot be about the bad type of egoism for it recognises the limits of one's own rights in the rights of others. However, the good kind of egoism is indeed a component of individualism, which recognises the natural right to pursue one's happiness, which in turn requires independence, initiative and responsibility.

KANT, IMMANUEL

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), one of the greatest philosophers of the Enlightenment, was one of the first to recognise a single human race and that every individual is a citizen of the world. Kant saw the world progressing towards an ideal society in which reason would '*bind every lawgiver to make his laws in such a way that they could have sprung from the united will of an entire people, and to regard every subject, in so far as he wishes to be a citizen,*

on the basis of whether he has conformed to that will'. His idea of the perpetual peace, which later became known as *universalism*, is revealed in his essay *Perpetual Peace* (1795) in which he proposed the establishment of a world federation of republican states (see WESTERN UNIVERSALISM).

LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING

The polarisation between the Left and the Right was exacerbated during the twentieth century by the Cold War when those who sided with the United States and its allies and defended the capitalist economic system of its liberal democracy, were said to be part of the Right while the Left was formed by those who sided with the Soviet Union and defended its economic system of socialism. Such twentieth century left-wing and right-wing alliances were also associated with sets of values. The Right could be defined through values such as strong nationalism, anti-immigration and cultural intolerance and the Left by its values of higher government spending, more welfare and greater central control of the economy. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the disintegration of Soviet Union removed many of the ideological fault lines that polarised the world into left-wing and right-wing. In the twenty first century there is no clear cut separation between the Left and the Right.

Although most political scientists in the twenty first century have relegated the right-left debate to the bin of meaningless clichés, Latin American politics still appear to be polarised between the Left and the Right. However, a closer inspection of such polarisation reveals that it is, in fact, an artefact to conceal hidden interests that have little to do with the old values of the Left and the Right. Even though most Latin American heads of state identify themselves with the Left, this Left comes in a great variety of models and is no longer clear. There is a 'light' left that sees free trade as an opportunity to place agricultural goods in the global market as well as a 'heavy' left characterised by the state control of the economy. The government of the former Brazilian president Lula da Silva is a typical example of what is known as 'light left'. Under him Brazil became one of the sponsors of the G-21 group of nations, created to strengthen the case of the emerging economies among the supranational organisations, especially the World Trade Organization. Who would have thought that a left-wing government would adopt an agenda to fight the existing double standard on free trade? Remnants of the heavy left still remain in Latin America, in Cuba and Venezuela. However, Cuba under Raul Castro is gradually being shifted away from the big state and beginning to allow people to become entrepreneurs.

LEFT-RIGHT POLARISATION, HISTORY

The terminology Right and Left adopted by the political ideologies of the twentieth century derived from theories about human nature that appeared during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, concerning the notions of the individual and the collectivist. A definition of these two ideologies is provided below. According to such theories, the individual was defined as the entity that feels pleasure and pain and who is responsible under the law, while the collectivity refers to culture, society, class, gender etc. Before attempting to disentangle the confusion between that which characterises the Left and the Right it is important to know how, where and when these two concepts came about. Historically the Right refers to the side of power while the Left refers to the side contrary to it. In this sense, the adepts of the philosophy of the Enlightenment were left-

wingers because they opposed the philosophical scholasticism of the Church. In the English political system that was formed after the restoration of the monarchy –following the Civil War led by Cromwell–, the rivalry was between the ‘Tories’, formed by the clergy and small landowners who were loyal to the monarchy and defended it and the ‘Whigs’, formed by liberals who favoured a constitutional monarchy. Although nowadays classical English liberalism is often associated with the Right, historically they were Left since they opposed the ruling power.

In France the Left-Right polarisation appeared in the aftermath of the French Revolution from the radical and the moderate factions of the Jacobin Club during the National Convention of 1792. The Jacobin, the radicals, were the majority and they sat at the left side of the assembly while the minority of moderates sat at the right side. This division between the radicals and the moderates also correlates with the order of priority they attributed to liberty and equality. To the moderates (the Droite) liberty came first while to the radicals (the Gauche) equality came first. The radical majority, those who sat at the left won the victory in the convention. However, their radicalism later led to the Reign of Terror and its show trials followed by public executions by the guillotine (see FRENCH REVOLUTION).

LIBERALISM

Liberalism is a philosophical, economical and political system that promotes civil liberties and combats all forms of despotism. Although Liberalism has its roots in the Renaissance and in the English *Magna Carta* of 1215, it was during the Enlightenment that it consolidated, from the works of the English philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), who discussed and compared the organised systems of justice and natural justice. However, the English or Anglo-Saxon liberalism is based in that which John Locke described as ‘a social contract between the government and the citizens and the recognition that people are born with natural rights and an innate sense of fairness controlled by natural law’. To Locke, man’s natural justice is blunt and this is why the justice systems were created. The latter has the duty to protect the natural rights of individuals. Locke also recognises that natural law tends to resurface whenever civil law fails. Locke also states that the social contract is broken when the government takes away the power of the people; when this happens the citizens are not only disobliged to obey the government but have a duty to rebel.

English liberalism, which became the model for the rest of the world, emerged in eighteenth century English society from a combination of factors that were conducive to individual liberty, free markets and free trade. While most European monarchs were absolutists, the English monarch ruled together with the parliament. Thus, while in France the anti-monarchy and anti-aristocracy sentiment ran high, in England many thought they had a regime that was worth maintaining. English conservatism was about respect for tradition and the maintenance of society’s institutions and customs. Although the English conservatives were opposed by the liberals their differences were mostly about the amount of loyalty to the monarchy, with the conservatives being those who stood by the ruling monarch.

Table I. Renowned Liberals throughout the world.

PHILOSOPHY	ECONOMY	POLITICS	PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS
John Locke	Adam Smith	Thomas Jefferson	Frédéric Bastiat
Montesquieu	David Ricardo	Benjamin Franklin	Henry Hazlitt
David Hume	John Stuart Mill	Jacques Turgot	Guy Sorman
Alexis de Tocqueville	Max Weber	Francisco de Miranda	Johan Norberg
Wilhelm von Humboldt	Carl Menger	Nicholas de Condorcet	Carlos Rangel
Benjamin Constant	Joseph Schumpeter	Thomas Paine	Alvaro Vargas Llosa
Isaiah Berlin	George Stigler	James Madison	David Boaz
Raymond Aron	Ludwig von Mises	David Lloyd George	Virginia Postrel
Karl Popper	Friderich Hayek	Konrad Adenauer	Carlos Rodriguez Braun
Leo Strauss	Milton Freedman	Margaret Thatcher	Carlos Alberto Montaner
Robert Nozick	Vernon Smith	Vaclav Havel	Martin Wolf
Roger Scruton	Jesús Huerta de Soto	Mario Vargas Llosa	Olavo de Carvalho

LIBERALISM, CLASSICAL

Classical liberalism is a new designation given to the original eighteenth century English liberalism that defended the negative rights of individuals such as the right not to be subjected to certain conditions, such as the right to come and go and the freedom of speech. Such designation was given to avoid confusion with the other political philosophies that were also called liberal.

A twentieth century revival of classic liberalism became known as 'neo-liberalism' while its adepts became known as 'neo-liberals'. Thus, neo-liberalism can be described as a philosophical, political and economic doctrine which promotes the minimum intervention of the State in the economic agents. Neo-liberalism was based on the anti-interventionist theories of Friedrich Hayek and the monetarism promoted by the Chicago School of Economics. Neo-liberalism is guaranteed by the freedom of the economic agents. The resulting free system of prices allows the cooperation of all individuals without demanding that the persons speak with one another or have any sympathy for one another (see THE GREAT SWITCH and NEO-LIBERALISM).

LIBERTY

Liberty is the state of being free from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on the way to act, believe or express oneself. The kind of liberty that the classical liberals defended was the non-interference of the state over the natural rights of man as well as freedom from abuse on the part of the power-holding majority. The early political goal of liberty came from the replacement of elitist and aristocratic societies and states with governments based on constitutional principles capable to guarantee legal equality, religious toleration and freedom (see CIVIL LIBERTIES).

LIBERALISM, SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC

Social-democratic liberalism or modern liberalism is a philosophy that favours a non-revolutionary move from capitalism to socialism by using the established social processes.

However, the 'socialism' that social-democrats appears to aspire to is not clearly defined and range from the strictest socialism to the kind of socialism that is compatible with capitalism. It appears to be the favoured political philosophy of all labour parties worldwide. A form of social-democratic liberalism was contained in the 'perestroika' policy of the former president Mikhail Gorbachev, who described it as the building of a 'new, humane and democratic socialism'.

LIBERTARIANISM

Libertarianism in the strict sense 'is the moral view that agents initially own themselves and have certain moral powers to acquire property rights in external sense' (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). In a simplified way libertarianism is a political philosophy that favours the maximum of individual freedom. The libertarian vision is against government interference on things that can be resolved by individuals themselves or through civil society. It is also in favour free trade since it provides consumers with better goods at lower prices while trade restrictions do just the opposite. The term also gained some pejorative connotation due to smear campaigns, such as the accusation that libertarianism is a theory of moral permissibility. In fact, libertarianism is a theory of justice that concerns both with morally enforceable duties of individuals and the moral duties that individuals owe to one another.

The freedoms defended by libertarians are recognisable as universal. Libertarians recognise that the limits of freedom of an individual are those set to guarantee the same freedom that other individuals have. The libertarian movement encountered some early support in Locke, although the modern philosopher that mostly influenced it was Robert Nozick (1938-2002) through his 1977 book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* attacking paternalistic actions of governments that try to 'forbid capitalistic acts between consenting adults' arguing that the rights of the individual are primary.

LOCKE, JOHN

John Locke (1632-1704) the English philosopher and physician who is considered the *Father of Liberalism*, was one of the most influential figures among the Enlightenment thinkers. He was a follower of the empirical philosophical tradition of Francis Bacon and one of the three philosophers who introduced the concept of *Social Contract*, along with Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau. A critical element in Locke's *Social Contract* was the role of law.

Locke's writing reflected his capacity to think clearly as well as to articulate the ideas of his time, thus serving to guide not just the English liberals but also the founding fathers of the United States. The following extraction taken from chapter VI of his work *An essay concerning the true original extent and end of civil government*, shows how Locke viewed the role of the law as a purveyor of liberty.

"So that however it may be mistaken, the end of the law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all the states of created beings, capable of laws, where there is no law there is no freedom. For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others, which cannot be where there is no law; and is not, as we are told, 'a liberty for every man to do what he lists.' For who could be free, when every other man's humour might domineer over him? But a liberty to dispose and order freely as he lists his person, actions, possessions, and his

whole property within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary will of another, but freely follow his own."

MERCANTILISM

Mercantilism is the economic system that replaced feudalism and the precursor of capitalism. It appeared in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the states which sought to increase their wealth, especially by gold and foreign currency, through international commerce, where exports were thought to be desirable and imports undesirable. The English mercantilism was spearheaded by chartered companies such as the East India, the Royal African and the Hudson Bay.

As an economic system mercantilism only favoured the privileged individuals who got state concessions, that is, the merchant class. The market of stocks and shares started with mercantilism which eventually evolved into capitalism, which focused on wealth creation through the efforts of individuals instead by wealth accumulation under the sponsorship of the state (see CAPITALISM).

MIXED ECONOMY

A mixed economy describes an economic system where the state controls some important slice of the production directly, through state-owned companies or indirectly, through the sale of concessions, while the people are free to conduct the remaining means of production. Although this system has characteristics of both capitalism and socialism, the amount of control by the state makes it lean towards socialism or capitalism. A state which over manages its economy is usually more oligarchic and less democratic.

During the second half of the twentieth century most Latin American countries adopted a mixed economic model geared towards self-sufficiency and involving a great deal of market involvement by the state. The state had a tight control of industry, telecommunications and importation. Such control was exercised by the state's companies or by holders of concessions or licences. In the twentieth century Latin America, the widening of the gap between the better off and the worse off was often blamed on capitalism when in reality such an economic system was more like mercantilism (see MERCANTILISM).

NATION

The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy defines nation as 'a society which has certain features such as common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties, whose membership is usually involuntary'. The concept of nation is often confused with the concept of state: all states can be considered nations in some sense but few nations are sovereign states. In twentieth century Latin America, there are hundreds of native indigenous nations but there are only thirty five sovereign states (see STATE).

NATIONALISM

Nationalism was the most successful political force of the 19th century, after it emerged from the Romantic exaltation of 'feeling' and 'identity' and the liberal requirement that a

legitimate state be based on its ordinary 'people'. Nationalism presents itself in many forms, each with its own distinct language and this makes it a most difficult concept to understand. Examples of such languages include that which describes the loyalty to the nation, the language used as a weapon of political mobilisation and to describe the ideological myths that populist politicians tend to use to seduce their audiences.

According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy the term nationalism usually describes two phenomena: (1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and (2) the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination. Those two types of phenomena are supported by the two main types of nationalisms recognised: cultural and political. Nationalism can, therefore, be understood as a collective term describing the interests, beliefs and aspirations and the particular attitudes and actions towards those regarding one's nation.

Different forms of nationalisms are employed in the name of national sovereignty, especially when it is under some apparent threat. Most nationalist rhetoric appears to be straight forward but they can also conceal prejudices that blur how one's own culture is perceived. The rhetoric of nationalism which promotes hate against an alleged enemy can serve as a scapegoat for the troubles of society. By playing the nationalist card, populist politicians can easily galvanise large groups through which they gain power. For example, National Socialism in Germany blamed the Jews and Gypsies for the problems of the country and its hate campaign cemented popular support for Adolf Hitler. A similar example happened at the same time in the Dominican Republic, when black Haitians were blamed for the economic problems of the country, leading to their 1938 genocide.

A more recent example is that of the Balkans in Central Europe, an area which witnessed a spree of internal wars and genocides during the 1990s. This is an area characterised by the overlap of three major world cultures, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Turkey, on top of which there were other cultural overlaps such as religion, language and a large number of ethnic groups, created a mosaic of identities. This, in turn, led to a rise in nationalisms across the region, with devastating and bloody consequences.

NEOCONSERVATISM

Neoconservatism an expression that was created to denote new conservatism embraced by former anti-communist liberals in the post-Cold War era in the United States, as a reaction against the political and cultural attitudes that seemed to dominate the Democratic Party. This is a new conservatism in the straight-forward sense, the belief that what works deserves to be conserved. Since what the American neoconservatives wanted to conserve was their tradition of liberty then what is called neoconservatism in the United States is in reality liberalism. In the United States, those opposed to neoconservatism created the pejorative shortened term 'neocons' to refer to the neoconservatives.

The American neoconservatives drew inspiration from the eighteenth century political writer Edmund Burke and decided to apply Burke's '*law of unintended consequences*' to government interventions including all planned changes and especially those changes informed by an idealised blue print. The scepticism of the American neoconservatives comes from learned experience that 'the attempts to remake society have caused more harm than the harm that prompted their reaction'.

One of the early leaders of neoconservatism in the United States was Irving Kristol (1920-2009), author of the 1983 book *Reflections of a Neoconservative*. A non-observant Jew from New York, Kristol founded and edited various conservative magazines and later became a member of the conservative think-tank called the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). The association of the neoconservatives with the Bush senior administration was partly behind the persistent vilification campaigns of the left and was based on the fact that some of the AEI members had been advisors to Bush senior.

NEO-LIBERALISM

The word 'neo-liberalism' was created to denote the revival of the original eighteenth century-style liberalism with adaptations for the late twentieth century globalisation. The added prefix 'neo' aimed at distinguishing it from the other political philosophies that bear the same name. In Latin America the meaning of 'neo-liberalism' was associated with the economic reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s, aimed at reducing the size of the state –in order to reduce its deficit and deregulating industry in order to promote growth. The lobby of anti-reform polemicists, formed mainly by government workers who stood to lose most from them, drove an anti 'neo-liberalism' campaign. The word 'neo-liberalism' lost its meaning and is no longer used.

OLIGARCHY

Oligarchy refers to government by the few, especially by a small number of persons or families. Big monopoly capitalists and state mandarins are two types of oligarchs and both of them are prone to abuse of power. However, state mandarins might be judged to be the worse offenders because their abuse of power occurs at the expense of public money.

PARLIAMENTARISM

Parliamentarism is a type of democratic government where the legislative power is exercised by the parliament which also acts as the administrator of the executive. In this system even when there is a President, the latter is the figure head of the state while the head of the government is the Prime Minister.

POLITICS

Politics refers to activities associated with government and the conflict that exists between the government and the governed. This conflict comes from the disproportionate power that the government has in relation to individual citizens. Citizens have a duty to keep government power in check to demand a rule of law that they can regard as legitimate and to ensure that the government's exercise of power is only carried out under such a rule of law.

POPULISM

Populism refers to the manipulation of mass public opinion for whatever reason or agenda. The most effective weapons of populism is nationalism and its many variants. An

example of populism is when Social Democrats (Sods) accuse Liberal Democrats (Lids) of being callous and greedy, especially when they oppose the expansion of welfare programs. Looking from the viewpoint of the Lids, they oppose welfare on grounds of fairness: they view some welfare programmes as ways to reward the indolent and punish the industrious. In Latin America few parties carry the epithet 'liberal' as politicians are aware of the negative implications associated with it. Thus, political campaigns that promise more welfare are more successful than those who promise prudence and austerity (see NATIONALISM).

PRESIDENTIALISM

Presidentialism is a type of democratic government where the President is both the head of the state and the head of the government. He is also the authority in charge of the executive.

RENAISSANCE

Renaissance is the period that started more or less at the time of the first millennium of the Common Era, when Europe began to rediscover the arts and the philosophy of classical Greece and to question the ecclesiastic dogmatism of the time, preparing the ground for the Enlightenment.

At the time of the *Magna Carta* the Renaissance was in full bloom in Italy but only in terms of the classical aesthetics. The rebirth of classical philosophy and letters followed the rebirth of the arts. The men of letters of the Renaissance wanted to rethink philosophy instead of simply accepting philosophy as the preserved church scholasticism. As they began to do that, they were able to uncover the errors that were passed down from the translated texts and to restore the originality of the classical texts.

During the Renaissance the Italians bemused themselves with the Athenian democracy they rediscovered and even had a go at establishing it in Florence and Venice. The rest of Europe, which consisted mainly of nations, was governed by monarchs with no inclination to let go of their power. Nevertheless, the intellectual atmosphere of the Renaissance had a crucial role in preparing the ground for the Age of Enlightenment that resulted, when reason became a common ground between the science of nature and the science of society (see ENLIGHTENMENT).

REPUBLIC

The word Republic comes from the Latin *res publica*, meaning 'the public thing'. A Republic refers to a nation state ruled by some form of public representation that includes a Rule of Law regarded as legitimate and under which everyone is equal. Although the concept of Republic overlaps greatly with that of Liberal Democracy, the Republic does not admit the figure of a monarch, not even as a figure head that has no real power in government (see LIBERAL DEMOCRACY).

RULE OF LAW

The rule of law is the system of justice of a country. In a democracy the rule of law incorporates three basic ideas:

1. the supremacy of regular law as opposed to arbitrary power;
2. equality before the law of all persons and classes, including government officials; and,
3. the incorporation of constitutional law as a binding part of the ordinary law of the land.

The rule of law of the most advanced democracies did not appear in one go but emerged slowly over the centuries.

The English *Magna Carta* of June 15, 1215, granted by King John, is considered the first Rule of Law designed specifically to protect individuals and their rights from attacks from other individuals and abuse by government. The caveat of the *Magna Carta* is that the rights it recognised were not universal but restricted to archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justices, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants and the king's officials and loyal subjects. The other milestones of the rule of law in Great Britain are *habeas corpus*, the Bill of Rights and the abolition of slavery.

A recent history of the development of the rule of law in Great Britain, outlining its various milestones from the *Magna Carta* until the Human Rights Act, is the eponymous book by Tom Bingham, a former Lord Chief of Justice. In his recent book *The Rule of Law* (2010), Lord Bingham delineated the following eight principles which underline the rule of law:

1. The law must be accessible and so far as possible intelligible, clear and predictable.
2. Questions about legal rights or liabilities should not be decided by discretion but by the law.
3. The law should apply equally to all, except where there is an objective justification for any difference.
4. Ministers and public officers must exercise the power conferred on them in good faith, fairly, for the purpose for which the powers were conferred, without exceeding the limits of such powers and not unreasonably.
5. Means must be provided for resolving, without prohibitive cost or inordinate delay, bona fide civil disputes which the parties themselves are unable to resolve.
6. The law must afford adequate protection of fundamental human rights.
7. Adjudicative procedures provided by the state should be fair.
8. The rule of law requires compliance by the state with its obligations in international law as in national law.

The eight principles outlined above can be synthesised into just one: the rule of law is not negotiable. Although these eight principles are specially centred on the individual liberties of citizens, they also hold relevance for issues of national interests; the interests of citizens involve all those principles at the same time. The legislative may pass laws extending the powers of the executive to deal with these problems such as introducing laws allowing the police to use new technologies to monitor individuals' suspected of terrorism. However, the Supreme Court has the authority to strike down legislation which it views as incompatible with the rule of law.

Liberalism in its earlier concept was the political philosophy committed to the freedom of the individual and the preservation of human dignity. Sometime later a second concept of liberalism was introduced based on a pro-statist viewpoint. This change in the

understanding of liberalism, referred to as “the great switch”, led to what became known as ‘Social Democracy’.

In France the present rule of law was that introduced by Napoleon I in 1804. The Napoleonic Code, as it is better known turned out to be a revised form of the Roman civil law which already predominated in Europe, with many modifications including the law already in effect in northern France which had been based on Germanic law. The Napoleonic Code in turn became the prototype for the civil laws of many countries in Europe and in Latin America.

SECURITY

Security, which can be defined as ‘*the state of being free from danger or threat*’, is a key desire for most individuals. Security refers to a wide range of things from finance to job and health. Security is at the heart of the criticism of liberal democracy, namely the inequality of security that has been observed in such systems, that is, the coexistence of great wealth and poverty. However, inequality of security is not something exclusive of liberal democracies; it also occurs in totalitarian governments.

Two main types of security are recognised: absolute and relative. In the liberal democracies, absolute security comes with wealth or with government positions where complete independence is of paramount significance such as that of certain categories of public judges and prosecutors. In totalitarian governments, absolute security is reserved for a privileged proportion of top civil servants. Although liberal democracies cannot provide absolute security for all, everyone is entitled to a limited security through a guaranteed minimum income.

SEN, AMARTYA

Amartya Sen (1933-) is an Indian-born economist specialised in welfare, poverty and development who in 1998 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economy for his research in welfare economics. Sen developed the modern social choice theory formulated by J K Arrow during the 1950s to come up with a better way to estimate poverty –the Sen index of measuring poverty. His improved method of estimating poverty (using a wider range of information from groups as well as individuals) improved decisions regarding welfare both at national and supra-national level by making them less ambiguous and more consistent. Sen proposed that the international financing institutions (IFIs) should focus on making poorer countries sustainable rather than simply providing loans or financial aid. This idea has greatly contributed to a change in the perception of poorer countries, which are now beginning to be seen as future trade partners in the global market.

SOCIAL CONTRACT

The early sociologists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau understood the state in terms of an implicit social contract spelled out in its system of ‘law and order’. States have their own system of law and order with various levels of sophistication. In the most sophisticated states it is comprised of a constitution, ordinary laws and a law enforcement system formed by the public prosecution, the police force and the penal system. Nowadays the functioning system of ‘law and order’ with its

constitution, ordinary laws and a law enforcement system is referred to as 'Rule of Law'. Where the state has a weak 'Rule of Law', the failure in maintaining law and order is often caused by an inadequately funded police force and penal system (see RULE OF LAW and LOCKE, JOHN).

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Social-economic systems refers to the kind of applied economic philosophy that the states adopt, like socialism, capitalism and mixed systems.

SOCIALISM

Socialism is an economic system in which all means of production and trade (i.e., land, machinery and tools) are held in common. There are different types of socialisms, from the most moderate forms to the radical ones. Radical forms of socialism seek to abolish private property entirely but moderate forms permit individuals to own and use a limited amount of goods for private purposes. Under socialism the means of production are the property of the community and it is the community alone that determines how the means of production are employed. The government typically owns, administers and controls the common means of production, from agriculture to industry. Main socialist thinkers include Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Karl Johan Kitschy, Leon Trotsky, Nicolay Voinovich Bukharin and Geog Plekhanov.

SOCIETY

A society can be a community of people, an organisation, a club and even a temporary situation where people are in company of one another. This includes even the big community that is formed by the state itself. Since society is an abstraction it is senseless and futile to indict it with anything as commonly done by many social theorists and activists. This is a crucial point in the liberal and libertarian view that individuals have moral duties towards one another.

STATE

The concept of 'state' is an essential one for the citizen because it is the holder of the social contract which rules the way people live. People often confuse the notion of state with that of nation. The state is a sovereign political unit with a centralised government with powers to pass and enforce laws and to impose its sovereign authority over a larger area while a nation is a tightly-knit group of people who share a common culture. A nation may or may not be a state in the political sense. The word 'nation-state' is normally used to designate the politically independent unit.

The start of organised societies can be traced back to some 6,000 years ago in Mesopotamia and 5,000 years ago in China. Genuine states appeared in China at 770-256 B.C. in the period of the Zhou Dynasty. China became a unified state after a period of bloody wars between the existing states that extended from the end of the Zhou period to the next three centuries. The modern states such as those of Europe, characterised by

a rule of law and a division of powers are much more recent, the oldest ones being four or five hundred years old.

STATISM

Statism is an ideological preference for a large powerful state. Both the left and the right tend to favour statism, although the statism defended by the left is one where the state has control the means of production while the statism defended by the right is the state with large armed forces. The policy of acquiring economic self-sufficiency which became the norm in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century caused its states to enlarge their public sectors. The result of such policy is that now most Latin American states are facing the tremendous onus on their large public sectors, with a heavy bureaucracy that has forced the poor into an ever growing informal economy.

Another dimension of statism is the expectation that the social and moral problems of a country need to be resolved by the state and not by individual efforts. Statist action groups press for more state control over a variety of ethical and moral issues such as in vitro fertilization, euthanasia, sexual behaviour etc.

SWITCH ,THE GREAT (The change in the concept of LIBERALISM)

At some point at the end of the nineteenth century there emerged another political philosophy that was also called liberalism, based on positive rights of individuals and defending the big state as a guarantor of such rights. The evolution of the meaning of liberalism, from a pro-individualist theory of people and government (Individualism) to a pro-statist one is so significant that cultural historians refer to it as the 'Great Switch'. It was caused by the socialist ideas that sprouted in the nineteenth century and turned many liberal minds into conservatism, for example Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) who in 1874 became the British Prime Minister.

Recently, scholars have proposed different terms for each of the two concepts of 'liberalism'. The more recent concept of liberalism became known as 'modern liberalism' or 'social-democratic' liberalism while the original concept of liberalism became known as 'classical liberalism'.

UNIVERSALISM, ENLIGHTENED

Enlightened Universalism or Universalism is an idea that appeared during the Enlightenment in the work of the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who believed that the new advances in science and philosophy had placed the world in a progressive path towards an ideal and peaceful society in which reason would *'bind every lawgiver to make his laws in such a way that they could have sprung from the united will of an entire people, and to regard every subject, in so far as he wishes to be a citizen, on the basis of whether he has conformed to that will'*. Kant saw the universal character of humanity as a single human race with every individual was a citizen of the world. This vision of a single progressive path towards universal peace and the ideal society is known as universalism.

Universalism as the idea that man has a common and universal nature which guides the trajectory of humanity towards an ideal and peaceful society has nothing to do with the conspiracy theory known as Western hegemony.

TOTALITARIANISM

Totalitarianism is the term used to describe a government that has suppressed all opposition. To be totalitarian, a government does not need to be ruled by a dictator. An elected government supported by a majority but devoid of a reliable justice system can easily suppress the opposition. One problem of such government is that it is also prone to infringe human rights. An unreliable justice system can also lead to vigilantism which often results in miscarriages of justice. In totalitarian societies there is always one larger group that dominates all the others by being complacent to its heirs, dismissive of the disenfranchised and unforgiving to its detractors.

UNIVERSAL ORDER

Universal Order refers to the network of supra-national bodies which are empowered to oversee supra-national issues such as the failed states, terrorism, the environment, marine resources, human rights and even cyberspace.

UNIVERSALISM, WESTERN

Western Universalism is a term used pejoratively by some left-wing thinkers for the Universalism that appeared during the Enlightenment. It is part of the conspiracy theory of hegemony agenda regarding the world dominance on the part of the United States and its allies (see WESTERN HEGEMONY).

UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism is a political philosophy proposed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), which was based on the so called utility principle –*that which brings about the greatest happiness of the greatest number is good*. Utilitarianism has some good aspects but the idea of serving the majority is beset with ethical problems involving its potential to harm vulnerable individuals and minorities. One example of utilitarianism was the custom in ancient Sparta to kill all babies born with a birth defect as they would have no place in their military-based society.

WASHINGTON CONSENSUS

The expression ‘Washington Consensus’ was originally used by the economist John Williamson to denote the consensus that existed among the international financial institutions (IFIs) based in Washington, D.C., that certain countries in Latin America were already modernising their economies through reforms and for that reason, were worthy of trust with new loans. The kind of reforms Williamson referred to were: fiscal discipline; setting priorities in public expenditure; tributary reform; financial liberation; exchange policy; free commerce; allowing more direct foreign investment; privatisation; deregulation and the promotion of property rights. These reforms aimed at reducing the

size of the state –in order to reduce its deficit– and deregulating industry –in order to promote growth. The problem with these reforms is that they required sacrifices which in turn generated massive opposition, especially on the part of those who stood to lose most from them: government workers. The anti-reform polemicists twisted the meaning of the expression ‘Washington Consensus’, presenting it as conspiracy to lure the emerging economies to do that which would only serve the interests of the United States. Many of the economic problems that the new open economies faced in the 1990s were due to the failure to reform or to watered down reforms.

WEST, THE

The West is another name for the Western culture or Western Civilization which began to take shape between 370 and 750 CE in Western Europe and now includes all the cultures that were heavily influenced by it. The West has three cultural pillars: i) the Judeo-Christian tradition, ii) the Classical legacy –especially Western philosophy–, and iii) the Enlightenment with its legacy, a specific set of values including the separation between the state and the spiritual authority, the Rule of Law, representative bodies and individualism.

ZEITGEIST

The German word Zeitgeist means literally the spirit of time, meaning the set of ideas, beliefs and practices of a culture or generation.

Zeitgeist is also the title of a three part documentary movie by Peter Joseph first released in 2007, about the bad state of the world from the environment to the global institutions including religion and government. This series became the base for a global movement promoting cooperation between people instead of competition and condemning corporate corruption and indifference towards the environment, greed, apathetic self-interest and the desensitisation to the suffering of others. Although some of the issues shown by Zeitgeist the movie are accepted, its collective indictments are completely frivolous in terms of achieving solutions.

If the global Zeitgeist is not as it should be, the most efficient way to counteract the existing problems is through the philosophy of Liberalism that includes individual responsibility: we as individuals are responsible for bad things done to other people and to the environment. We can help to change the bad state of our society by doing the right thing such as not over consuming resources, not ganging up on others and by doing the right thing whenever we can. To liberals, directing our actions to what we can do, especially to those nearer to us is much more effective than shooting accusations in the dark.

How to quote this glossary:

Pires-O’Brien, J (Editor) (July 2011). *Glossary of Democracy and Liberalism: Special version for Latin America*. Retrieved from <http://www.portvitoria.com>