Concept of Freedom in Socialism and Liberalism: Comparative Essay

Abstract

In this research paper we are going to demonstrate the differences between two of the most important and most influencing theories in the history of the political systems and societies; Socialism & Liberalism. We are going to expound the difference between the two theories according to specific points which are the most general and will help explain each theory clearly in order to be fully understood.

Introduction

In the beginning of the nineteenth century many ideologies emerged with the purpose of destroying the European order that prevailed in that period of time. Two of the most important ideologies or theories that emerged were socialism and liberalism.

The terms of socialism and liberalism are so commonly used nowadays not only by politicians, but also by the common people and the masses, and this is due to the incredible accessibility to information that people, all around the world, have. We are in an era where people can actually change their countries and demand to change their political systems. But in order to do this properly, people must be educated and well informed with everything related to politics and anything that could influence their political systems. Especially those who are dreaming of changing their countries, they must have enough knowledge for the mental wars they are going to go through in order to reach their dreams.

When it comes to those important political and social theories, there are a lot of misunderstandings and confusion. People tend to confuse between theories, and in order to be able to differentiate between them, one has to know the main characteristics of each one of them then contrast them and point out the differences and the similarities between them.

In this research paper we are going to do the same, as in explaining the main characteristics and the main features that distinguishes both socialism and liberalism from each other, and then point out the similarities and differences between both of them.

Demonstration of Socialism and Liberalism (Comparison)

1- Main Values and Pillars

· Socialism

Socialism is a social and political theory that emerged in the late nineteenth century where it was applied realistically at the time, after it was just writings known at the time as the name of romantic socialism, and it must be noted that the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx is the pioneer of this theory, as he wrote many books and articles on communist and socialist

principles, which later developed at the hands of many politicians and economists.

Socialism is an economic system that is opposing capitalism in terms of purpose and style. Socialism can also be defined as an economic system that encourages and supports socialist ownership of the means of production and cooperation.

The socialist system requires the abolition of individual ownership in the sense that it is not permissible for an individual to own a land, a factory, a mine, or any wealth that needs workers to work on it, however an individual may possess the tools of his house, clothes, and money as long as he does not affect workers. It may even allow him to own his residence as well, because this property does not harm others. The purpose of socialism is merely to create economic freedom so that the opportunity is equal among people in enriching, so the principle of inheritance is canceled, because its existence contradicts this economic freedom, which requires that people be born equal, only natural traits can distinguish one from the others. Socialism recognizes these natural features, so if one is physically strong and is able to work more and harder than others, therefore he is rewarded with a fair percentage of his work. And whoever is smarter, he may dominate his discoveries or inventions for a limited period. However, he is not allowed to inherent it to his sons even if he controls it, because that is against the economic freedom.

Socialism represents, by a number of thinkers, an integrated set of ideas, approaches, and political and social means that, regardless of the difference in detail, participate in the rejection of the exploitative society, and believes in unwavering faith in the inevitable progress of societies, affirming their will to establish a more just and sufficient society and to achieve effective equality Among all people and all nations.

The word socialism uses different political groups that differ among themselves about the method of applying socialism. Utopic socialism, which prevailed at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in response to the misery, injustice and exploitation of the capitalism, eliminated the capitalist system and peacefully & gradually transited it in to a socialist system. The utopian socialists dreamed of a future where a society can be built to include interests of capitalists and workers by persuasion.

As for social democracy, which represents a current in the contemporary labor movement and a type of reform socialism, it acknowledges the peaceful and progressive methods of transformation, and understands socialism as a moral saying.

While scientific socialism confirms the principles of abolishing the exploitation of human beings and the planned development of society, in order to improve the living conditions of the masses, in general agreement with the improvement of the status of every individual in society. Scientific socialism is a theory that aims to prove the inevitability and historical necessity of socialism and its legal progressive transition to communism.

From a Marxist point of view, socialism represents the first stage of communism, which support the economic status that is based on the social ownership of the means of production, and supports the social status where the working class has the leadership.

Socialism main features:

First: Public ownership (people of all classes) of the means of production:

Where socialist thought believes that individual possession - such as the concentration of wealth in the hands of a particular group - is the means by which other groups are enslaved and exploited in exchange for cheap returns, and their daily livelihood is not sufficient, hence the socialist system stipulates that individuals are not allowed to own the means of production, and these means should be for the whole society (public property), and are not restricted to specific individuals.

Second: Planning:

This system is based on the existence of a central planning apparatus, where it sets plans and sets goals that aim to advance the society and achieve the sufficiency of the people, by providing work and goods for all, and all establishments are obligated to work on achieving them within a specific, carefully studied period of time, in order to reconcile resources and needs, achieve the desired goals for advancement and development, and eradicate poverty and unemployment as much as possible.

Third: Providing what is necessary to satisfy the social needs:

The Communist system carries out a comprehensive and general study of society's needs of different goods and services, the resources available to provide those goods and services, and the investments that can be made and how to apply them to the fullest to secure society's needs of goods and services, and provide them in the best way possible.

· Liberalism

Liberalism emerged as a political movement during the Enlightenment era, as it was very popular among philosophers and economists in the western world, due to the liberalism's rejection of common concepts during that time of absolute monarchy, the divine distinction of kings, and the domination of the state religion over the people. The establishment of liberalism dates back to the philosopher John Locke in the seventeenth century, where Locke called for the natural human right of life, liberty and property. He also argued the need for governments to stop violating these absolute rights by taking advantage of the social contract. He also sought to replace dictatorial rule with a democratic government representing all segments of society.

Liberalism is a political and social philosophy founded on the ideas and principles of freedom and equality. Liberals adopt a wide variety of opinions and spectrums according to their understanding of these principles, but liberalism generally supports the ideas of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, religious freedom, trade or the free market, adherence to civil rights and the establishment of democratic societies, secular constitutions, and the principles of human rights. Liberalism can also be seen as an intellectual doctrine that focuses on individual liberty and sanctifies respect for the independence of individuals, and that the basic function of the state is to guarantee the freedoms of citizens as individuals, such as freedom of thought and expression, private property and personal freedom, etc.

The principle of classical economic liberalism is based on a free economy, which means that the state does not interfere in economic activities, and let the market controls its activities control,

and the individual has absolute freedom to choose the type of trade that he wishes to engage in. Social liberalism, on the other hand, prefers the state's intervention in the economy and the reliance on a social market economy, where it seeks to strike a balance between individual freedom and equality, and the rehabilitation of people through the provision of social services such as education and health security.

Liberalism aims primarily to liberate the individual, as it does not care about the behavior of the individual as long as its influence is limited to his own circle; otherwise it is strict. That is, if this individual's behaviors become harmful to society, then it says that he must be held accountable according to the law.

Liberalism believes that the individual is the center of the philosophy of life in general, therefore the values and determinants of thought, and behavior of the human beings have to be formed by the humans themselves. And that he has the right to live and live freely as he pleases according to his convictions not as society want him, of course, with the tolerance and acceptance of the different.

Politically, it is preferable to increase the independence of the legislature and the judiciary compared to the executive procedural authority, and that the citizen be given the most protection against arbitrary rule, as liberalism has led to the emergence of governments based on a constitution that people are consent with, then these constitutional governments set a number of legal regulations announcing individuals' rights in freedom of opinion, press, assembly, and religion. These regulations even have attempted to put an end to abuse of power by the police or the judiciary.

Economically, the state must not interfere in any industrial or commercial jobs. It is also not preferred that the government interferes in a commercial relation between individuals and traders. This is the meaning of economic liberalism, and includes freedom of trade, work, money movement, contracting and the practice of any profession or economic activity. However, the liberal concept has changed relatively when new liberalism emerged after World War II, due to economic crises and the recession resulting from the concentration of capital and huge individual monopolies, which prompted Western governments to intervene to revive the fundamentals of the economy, subsequently the liberal ideology changed by adapting the principle of the relative importance of the state intervention to regulate the market.

Liberalism main features:

1. Respect for the individual in that he is a human being or a member of the human community, and before he was described in terms of lineage, wealth, social orientation, or political influence.
2. Dealing with the authority represented by the state, its structures, and its apparatus, with a logical perspective and accountability, not with obedience or blind submission.
3. Basic belief in man, meaning faith in the possibility of human progress, and that the human being is able to take constructive steps and make positive strides, in order to achieve better goals and higher goals in terms of developing livelihoods and devising ways and means to achieve more good and hope.
4. Respect all human beings in terms of their division into nations, peoples or groups without ethnic or racial discrimination.

2- Evolution

· Socialism

The origins and principles of the socialist system date back to the year 1827, when the philosopher and sociologist Owen formulated a set of ideas called socialism, then this term became used by many philosophers and thinkers, and in the year 1864 the establishment of the first association based on socialist ideas was announced in England.

In the year 1917, the Russian revolution took place, which depended on the socialist ideas announced by Lenin, and in 1918 after the success of the revolution in Russia, Russia officially declared a transition to the socialist system, and years later the ideas of the socialist philosopher Karl Marx emerged which over time became the main principles of socialism. They later came to be called Marxism.

In the middle of the twentieth century, specifically after the end of the Second World War, the socialist system became one of the official systems in many countries of the world, especially the European ones, in which socialism spread greatly. Because it contributed to the achievement of many of the political goals that politicians aspired to in those countries, and the most important of them are: the countries of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea.

· Liberalism

Liberalism developed over four centuries, starting in the sixteenth century, as it emerged as a result of religious wars in Europe to stop these conflicts; given that the consent of the ruled is the source of the legitimacy of government and that the freedom of the individual is the basic principle.

Philosophers Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Emmanuel have suggested that the social contract theory, which assumed that there is a contract between the ruler and the ruled, argued that the consent of the ruled is the justification for the authority of the ruler. Because of the centrality of the individual in liberalism, it sees a need for a justification for the authority of the ruler, and thus the theory of the social contract is considered liberal, although some of the ideas of its supporters such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were incompatible with liberalism.

To sum up the development in liberalism on the political and economic levels, it can be said that the rights of the individual have increased over the ages until they jumped to the current concept of human rights that crystallized after the Second World War in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Perhaps the most important development in the history of liberalism is the emergence of social liberalism with the aim of eliminating poverty and the huge class differences that occurred after the Industrial revolution in the presence of classical liberalism, and for the care of human rights where the state may not be able to provide those rights without interfering in the economy but this is only for the benefit of groups that benefit less from economic freedom.

Conclusion

We can conclude from all the provided information above that socialism and liberalism are two of the most important political and social ideologies, or even philosophies. The fact that governments and political leaders adopting a specific ideology to be the theme of their political system or the methodology they use to rule the people, can actually impact millions of people for so many years, and here, in our point of view, where the great significance of those political ideologies lies.

In this paper we talked about socialism and liberalism and compared between them in certain points by demonstrating the most important facts about both of them, and from all that we have reached this conclusion: both socialism and liberalism have their distinguished history and different pillars, and both are applied by many systems in the world, however there are some similarities and some differences between them that we can point out.

· Similarities

- Both acknowledge the importance of humanity and human rights.
- Both are against the capitalist systems and seek to achieve social and economic justice between everyone.
- Both acclaim the differences between people and fight for everyone's right to embrace the beliefs they desire.
- Both refuse the extreme interference of government in the economy where socialism completely refuses it, and liberalism allows it but to a certain degree.

· Differences

- Socialism embraces the idea of community, while liberalism embraces the idea of individualism.
- In a liberalist system we can see competition and meritocracy, while in a socialist system we can see cooperation and empathy.
- In a liberalist system private property exists, while in a socialist system common ownership exists.

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