**Tutorial questions**

We tend to think of power as originating from someone with authority or who is an authority. Is this an adequate view of power?

* This is an inadequate view of power as there is a presence of other forms of power as suggested by Foucault, which is an invisible form of power that do not originate from a single individual.
* According to the textbook definition, the power is the ability to control others, even against their will.
* Power originating from someone with authority is usually by the virtue of their position in specific institutions. One example is the Principle of a school who is someone with authority due to his position as the head of the school.
* Weber supports this point by saying that power is a direct affair and is possessed by institutions, groups and individuals to secure their own interests. He further supports this point by saying that power in an institutional is through a top-down approach, which supports the point that power originates from those of the higher ups and influences those of the below/bottom in the hierarchy
* An authority, on the other hand, refers to someone who is an expert in a particular field, example a research scientist who has won a Nobel price is an authority as he or she is recognised to be an expert in a specific research field.
* However, according to Giddens, such people may not retain their power due to the lack of trust by the common people as we do not put our faith as easily in experts as before. This is especially in the aspect of an authority, in which in the case of the science field, there are still a large portion of people who do not respect or believe in the theories of evolution by evolutionist experts who produces large amount of evidences to support their theories. As such, even though some famous evolutionist may be an authority in their own research field, they may not hold power for all the people but only some power who choose to believe in him. Nonetheless, it is still a source of power as he is able to control those who believe in him, though according to Giddens the people has become more prone to withdrawing their belief easily, and thus is unlikely to control people to do things against their will. Thus, it should be considered to be an incomplete form of power as there is no permanent and complete control over the believers as they can choose what they want to believe rather than believe solely in the individual himself.
* This is also a disagreement on weber’s view that power secures obedience by those in legitimate authority.
* In addition, Foucault’s view of power do not agree that a power comes from someone with authority and someone who is an authority. This is because he believes in an invisible and “unconscious” type of power which governs our behaviours and is internalised within us such that we do not know it. Thus, people does not come from anyone’s hands but rather is constrains how we act as individuals. One such example is that companies attempt to use advertising and marketing to internalise within people that their brand is the best choice by building brand image. This is an indirect form of power as people are not usually aware of such actions and this is not done forcefully against people’s will.

How would you conceptualise the modern state? Use examples to support.

* According to Giddens, a modern states refers expanding role of not only the governance of economic aspects but also the social aspects of the state.
* I agree with Giddens’ point that the modern state not only factor in the economic aspect of the society but also more “humane” and welfare aspects of the society which makes the society more equal.
* One example is the state funding in the building of social services such as healthcare, hospitals which will lower public healthcare costs and benefit the masses.
* Durkheim also supports that the modern state eradicates social division and inequality, which is evident in the attempt of the provision of social mobility factors such as compulsory or subsidised education for children, financial support to the lower classes to prevent vicious cycles of poverty and providing equal opportunities for all according to merits.
* However, social inequality cannot be removed fully due to the interference by the elite’s minority who uses their influences to maintain and protect their own interests. While it is not true that the state is manipulated fully by the dominant class at will as suggested by Marx, the influence by this class cannot be undermined. One example is the funding of political leaders by private companies or rich individuals while they are campaigning so as to ensure that policies that are beneficial to themselves can be suggested and implemented. Another prominent example is seen through doing business with the Chinese in China, as they view relationships more than any other form of benefits.
* However, there is still an emphasize on economic growth as the wishes of the masses is for the standard of living to increase and one of the most direct way to accomplish this is to increase affluence.
* This is especially so when in modern state “the ruling class does not rule” (Kautsky), as governments who do not perform are voted out of power through democratic processes. Even with authoritarian rules as in the case of Singapore, government which do not take into the account of the people’s welfare are often faced with tensions and protests. One such example is the Foreign Talent Policy, which majority of the Singaporeans do not support due to overcompetition over job opportunities as well as local resources, has led to the change in the stance of the government.

Is culture is anyway related to power?

* Yes it is related to power as a group of people with the same culture can give rise to social solidarity which aids the development of power as the masses can acknowledge and come to a consensus more easily.