SOCIAL POLICY NOTES

- **The welfare state** is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the social and economic well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life. The general term may cover a variety of forms of economic and social organization.[1] The sociologist T.H. Marshall described the modern welfare state as a distinctive combination of democracy, welfare, and capitalism.

- **Miliband**: “The intervention of state is always and necessarily partisan: as a class state, it always intervenes for the purpose of maintaining the existing system.”

- **Marxism**:
  - Commodification: capitalism turns goods, services and labor into commodities that have exchange value – bought and sold in market.
  - Primary activity of state is to maintain the conditions for the existence and expansion of capitalism as a socio-economic system.
  - Claus Offe: “While capitalism can’t co-exist with, nor can it exist without the welfare state”

- **Agency- Structure**:
  - “Individuals make their own history, but they do not do so in conditions of their own choice”
  - **Poverty**: best known structural explanation of poverty... very nature of capitalism produces poverty
  - Production and accumulation of profit leads to production of poverty
  - **Structure** is the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available
  - **Agency** is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.
  - Structural functionalists such as Émile Durkheim see structure and hierarchy as essential in establishing the very existence of society. Theorists such as Karl Marx, by contrast, emphasize that the social structure can act to the detriment of the majority of individuals in a society. In both these instances "structure" may refer to something both material (or "economic") and cultural
  - Briefly it say that our decisions are shaped by structure

- **Feminism**:
  - Aims to ending the subordination of women
  - **Liberal feminism**: individual/equal rights in education, employment and politics/