

Social Contract

Hobbes' Beliefs

Man is inherently *evil*. In order to avoid man's evil state of nature, rational people understand that some sort of social cooperation is only possible when people mutually agree to follow certain guidelines.

He basically said without rules and reinforcement, people would not create anything of value and instead attack and defend from others until they die.

Theorem 0.1

This leads to a **social contract** - the view that persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live.

Social Contract Theory

Theorem 0.2

Hobbes argues that everyone in society has implicitly agreed to two things:

1. The establishment of a set of moral rules to govern relations among citizens
2. A government capable of enforcing these rules

Hobbes believes that the morals derived from natural law do not permit individuals to challenge the laws of the sovereign, meaning that you cannot disobey the laws of the government.

All morally significant beings have certain rights such as the right to life, liberty, and property.

Living in a civil society gives a person moral quality they would not have otherwise

Rights

Rights can be classified according to the duties they put on others

Definition 0.1

Negative Rights are rights that another can guarantee by leaving you alone to exercise your right.

- Right of free speech
- Right to be safe
- Right to move around

Positive Right - a right that obligates others to do something on your behalf (guarantee of an action)

- Right to free education
- Community and national security

Absolute Right - guaranteed without exception **Limited Right** - may/can be restricted

Rawls's Theory of Justice

Rawls notes that both cooperative and competitive behavior can be found in every society. The former because social cooperation produces more benefits than a situation in which individuals are

completely on their own. The former because it is important how the benefits are divided among society.

To be well ordered, a society must establish the rights of its members and also determine a just way of distributing both the benefits and burdens of social cooperation

The Case For:

- It is framed in the language of rights
- It is based on a solid understanding of human nature, recognizing that rational people act out of self-interest in the absence of a common agreement
- It explains why under certain circumstances civil disobedience can be the morally right decision

The Case Against:

- None of us signed the social contract
- Some actions can be characterized in multiple ways

How do the philosophies compare? *Reason for making a rule:*

- **Utilitarianism:** it causes the greatest happiness for the most people
- **Kantianism:** it could be universalized for all people
- **Social contract theory:** rational people would collectively accept it as binding because of its benefits to the community