

Differentiate between the Political Philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and J.J. Rousseau

1. In Context, chart of all the three Philosophers:

2. Introduction:

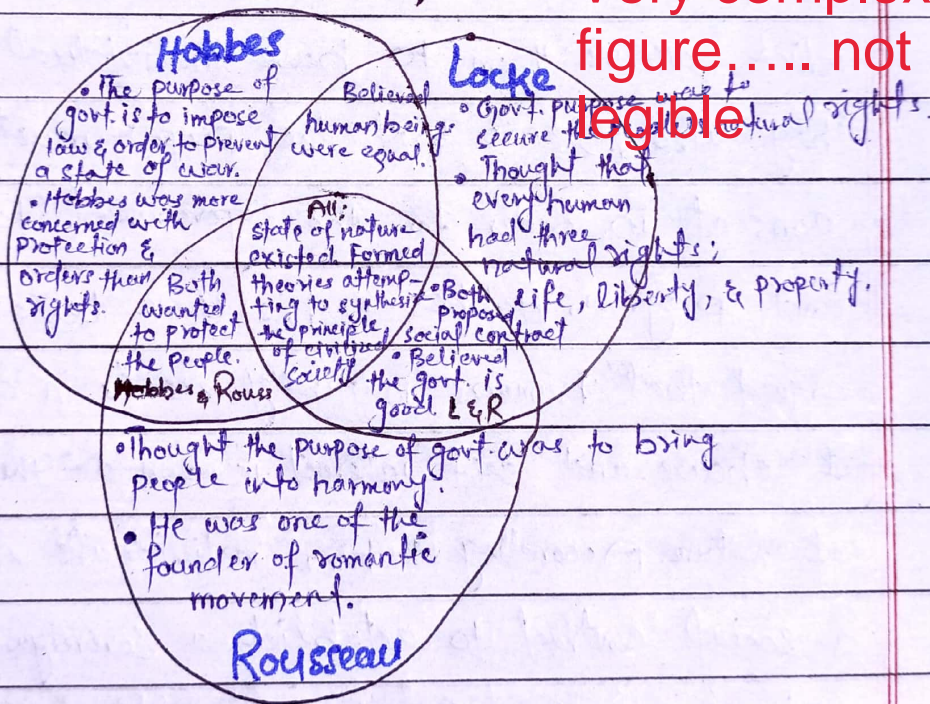
Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau are all social contract theorists that believe in how people should have certain rights which allows them to have individual freedom. They also believe that the people must give consent in order for the government to work and progress. Hobbes in his work Leviathan, argued that humans naturally exist in a state of chaos and self interest, known as the state of nature. According to him individuals enter into a social contract to establish a sovereign rule, giving up certain liberties in exchange for protection and order. John Locke posited that humans have inalienable rights, including life, liberty, & property. He argued that the purpose of govt. is to protect these rights, & if the govt. fails to do so individuals have the right to rebel.

In contrast, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, emphasizing the concept of the collective will. Rousseau believed that society corrupts individuals, & true freedom can only be achieved through direct democracy where citizens makes decisions collectively.

Introduction is a bit lengthy

Comparison of Philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau:

Very complex figure, not easily legible



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

In Context

Ideology	Focus
Absolutism	Social Contract Theory (sovereignty)
Influenced by:	Influenced:
Niccolo Machiavelli, Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, Ibn Tufayl etc.	John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, Montesquieu, David Hume, J.S. Mill, Bentham, Leibniz etc.

Historical Context:

English Civil War (1642-1648): Thomas Hobbes lived during the crucial period of the English Civil War, a conflict b/w Monarchists supporting the king, and Parliamentarians led by Oliver Cromwell, advocating for more Parliamentary power.

Major Works:

Leviathan (1651), The Element of Law (1640), De Cive (1642), De Corpore (1655), De Homine (1657).

John Locke (1632-1704)

In Context

Ideology	Focus
Liberalism	Social Contract Theory (Individual rights)
Influenced by:	Influenced:
Thomas Hobbes, Rene' Descartes, Aristotle, Francis Bacon, Ibn Tufayl, Grotius.	Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Sterne, Jefferson.

Historical Context:

Glorious Revolution (1688): The overthrow of James II and the establishment of William III and Mary II as constitutional monarchs influenced Locke's thoughts.

Rise of Empiricism: Locke was part of the empiricist tradition, emphasizing the role of experience and observation in acquiring knowledge.

Major Works:

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1689), Two Treatises of Government (1689), Some thoughts concerning Education (1693), The Reasonableness of Christianity (1695).

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

In Context

<u>Ideology</u> Liberalism	<u>Focus</u> Social Contract Theory and General will
<u>Influenced by:</u> Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Machiavelli, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes.	<u>Influenced:</u> Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, David Hume, J.P. Sartre, Mustafa Kamal Atatürk.

Historical Context: The Enlightenment - A period emphasizing reason, science, & individual rights. John Locke and Montesquieu (French enlightenment thinker), along with the scientific advances of the time influenced Rousseau's own philosophical development.

Political Turmoil in France - Characterized by absolutism and social inequality of the Bourbons kings influenced Rousseau's political philosophy.

Key Works:

A Discourse on the origins of Inequality (1755),
The Social Contract (1762), The New Eloise (1761),
Emile or Treatise on Education (1762).

	Hobbes	Locke	Rousseau
i. Man is...	Evil	Good	Good, Society screwed us up.
ii. Govt. is...	Needed to protect Public	Wanted to benefit public	needed to enforce social contract
iii. Govt. should be...	All powerful; cannot overthrow	conditional; can overthrow	Arbitrary can overthrow.
iv. Power should be...	Not shared; Executive is absolute	Shared; legislative & executive	Shared and direct (representatives not needed).

Comparison of Social Contract Theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau:

1. View on Human Nature:

	Hobbes:	Locke:	Rousseau:
i. Human by nature is self-centered, egoistic, & isolated: Man is essentially selfish, self-seeking, cunning, and competitive to the point of combativeness.	Believing on human virtue: To him humans are fundamentally decent, orderly, and society loving as well as capable of ruling themselves. Yes.	Embracing the virtue of natural man and contemplating the corruption of social man: He said man by nature is not bad & corrupt. It is physical environment that makes corrupt and bad.	

Thomas Hobbes view on Human Nature:

ii. Differentiating humans from animals - the speech and Reason prioritize humans:

iii. Inherent human nature: the desire for unlimited power leading to persistent competition and conflict

iv. Disparities in strength and mental capacity lead to conflict in desires:

v. Fear as a Motivator: inseparable from human nature and a driving force in conduct

John Locke view on Human Nature:

ii. To Locke, all individuals are naturally in a state of equality and freedom:

iii. Locke's assertion about the purpose of human action: Pleasure acquisition and Pain avoidance

iv. Locke observed that people possess sufficient rationality to recognize mutual and peaceful

Cooperation as their best interest:

Rousseau's view on Human Nature:

ii. Man is essentially good and is good as long as he follows his natural instincts:

1- Self-Regarding, 2- Others-Regarding

iii. The Perils of human made disparities: Private Property and social inequality as catalyst for societal woes

2. Views on the State of Nature:

A. Thomas Hobbes view on the state of Nature:

i. Hobbes's harsh state of nature: Perpetual War of All against All with fear of violent Death. The life of a man in the state of nature was solitary, poor, brutish, and short.

ii. In Hobbes's state of nature: Sole right is might, dominated by fear and self-interest

iii. Absence of morality and civilization in Hobbes's State of Nature: No industry, agriculture, knowledge, arts, letters, society, law, justice and

no distinction between right and wrong, good and bad.

iv. Absence of Common Power: Uncontrolled human activities in Hobbes's state of Nature

v. Hobbes on human conflict: Fear, anxiety, and unending desire disrupt peace

Such a state of affairs could not continue because of two factors inherent in man, i.e.: Reason and fear of violent death.

⑧ The state of Nature according to John Locke:

i. Perfect freedom state: Men abide by the limits of Nature according to Locke

ii. Locke's state of Nature - state of equality, mutual assistance, and preservation:

iii. State of Nature according to Locke - Pre-state stage, and pre-political yet not pre-social:

iv. Natural law governance based on Reason or Consciousness in the state of Nature:

v. Peaceful state in Locke's perspective - state of nature as grounded in Goodwill, mutual assistance, and the preservation of peace:

vi. Resemblance to Civil Society - Locke's state of Nature as a reflection of civil society without formal government:

© Rousseau's Concept of State of Nature:

i. Rousseau's state of Nature, pre-political, not pre-social - understanding the distant phase before the emergence of Political structures:

ii. Harmony unbroken - A state of Peace, not of War:

iii. Rousseau's state of Nature - A realm of liberty and equality where independence and contentment flourish: Primitive man was living in peace and harmony. No ties and obligations, hence, he was happy. There were no property, industry, art, & science.

iv. Transition to settlements - The Evolution of social institutions with changing lifestyles: The development of science, civilizations, and the

Origin of property made men self-centered.
It broke down the happy natural condition of mankind and made it necessary to establish a civil society.

8. Views on social Contract:

A. Social Contract of Thomas Hobbes:

i. Formation of civil society - Escaping the miserable and brutish state of Nature:

In the state of Nature, in the absence of common authority and state, life of the people was miserable and brutish.

ii. Social contract motive - Man's desire for peace and security:

iii. Birth of the state - fulfilling the contractual pledge for security and property certainty in civil society:

iv. Contract was social and mutual - surrendering natural rights to form a sovereign assembly for collective benefits:

v. Binding Contract - agreement to obey a

Superior and his command:

- vi. Absolute Sovereign Authority - absence of conditions and denial of the right of Protest:

B. Social Contract of John Locke:

Locke's social contract is a political contract because it establishes a civil society.

- i. Locke's dual social contracts - involvement of every individual in forming civil society and establishing government: This contract was made by each with all. A single body politic under one government was formed.
- ii. Locke's specific contract - Surrendering not all natural rights but rights of interpretation and execution: Locke's contract was specific not general.
- iii. Collective sovereignty without absolute ruler - Surrendering rights for government protection: In this contract, people surrendered their rights not to any person or group but to the community as a whole.
- iv. Unanimous contract - firm foundation for government based on the consent of the masses: This contract was unanimously made by the people with their own consent.

v. **Irrevocable Agreement** - The contract once established, prevents reversion to the freedom of the state of Nature:

vi. **Conditional Obedience** - People's obligations to government tied to protection of individual basic rights:

Right to life, liberty, and Property.

c. **Rousseau's view on Social Contract:**

Rousseau's social contract emphasized the collective well-being of society over individual interest.

i. **Rousseau's social contract as the transformation from state of Nature to Political Society:**

To him, the social contract means the process by which the state of nature comes to an end and the political society is formed.

ii. **Rousseau's social contract uniting individuals under the supreme guidance of the general will, crafting a moral and collective body:**

Rousseau said only by agreement and consent authority is justified and liberty retained.

iii. **Surrendering Power to the Community** - individuals yield to the absolute power of the

Collective for the common benefits:

Individual surrender to the community as a whole. Community will work for the common benefit.

iv. Equality in the social contract - All gain in the establishment of a civil society marked by freedom and Equality:

v. Rousseau's social contract shields private lives from state authority and only intervening when interests clash:

Conclusion: