

Comparison of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau on Social Contract:-

Thomas Hobbes

John Locke

J.J. Rousseau

Introduction

"Hobbes political philosophy is beyond all comparison the most imposing structure that the period of English war produced."

~ (Sabine)

"The preservation of property is the chief end of the state."

~ (Locke)

"Man is born free but is found everywhere in chains."

~ (Rousseau)

According to Hobbes, the essence of Hobbesian philosophy is found in

All people had three natural rights - life, liberty and property.

According to Rousseau, social contract means the process by which the state of nature

his book "Leviathan" which was published in 1651.

Social contract agreement b/w the ruler and the people.

comes to an end and political society is formed.

2- Biography

Hobbes was born in Westport England. His experience during a time of upheaval in England influenced his thoughts. His famous work is Leviathan. He died in 1679.

He was English philosopher. inspired by Glorious Revolution. He was born in Somerset, England in 1632.

Rousseau was born in France, Germany. In his early life, his mother was died and father was imprisoned.

3- Context of Theory

Hobbes → regarded as a contractualists. He explains the origin of

Locke was influenced from logic and science.

Greatly influenced by conditions of France. In France,

state and nature of sovereign powers. He said, origin of state is man-made, and not God gifted.

He gave theory to justify the power of Parliament and in his friend's support. Ashley Cooper.

the monarch was exploiting the farmers. Farmers were Economic slaves, and ordinary men suffered at the hands of Feudals. So, to liberate the people and free them from the chains of nobles.

4-Social Contract

Theory

a) Human nature

Man is selfish, Brutal and Dishonest. Man has lust for power, sex, property and money

Generally, Good, kind, optimistic, cooperative nature.

Human nature is neither good nor bad. He is naive Noble savage.

b) State of Nature

state of war.
No morality exists. Everyone lives in constant fear. No one is really free, but since even the "weakest" could kill the "strongest". Men are equal.

Reasonably good, but property insecure. Generally peace, harmony and good relations

Men are free and equal. In state of nature Men are noble savages.

c) Social Contract

Man in state of nature is Nasty and brutish and selfish by nature. This selfishness creates chaos and Anarchy in state of nature.

Social contract has limited power. Concept of separation of powers exists. All the men must agree to live by the same rules.

The social contract involves the alienation by each, of himself and all his rights to the community and it takes place in 3 stages

c) Social contract

To overcome the anarchy, people started realizing that they need a powerful authority over them which will preserve their right to life and so people will make the authority (sovereign) (Leviathan) to control them to ensure stability.

Main purpose of the contract, the protection and preservation of natural Rights i.e. life, liberty and property.

a) Each gives himself up absolutely

b) All do this unconditionally

c) Each recovers the equivalent of everything he loses as natural freedom is given up in exchange for social freedom, where no-one is dependent on another and each obeys himself.

d) views

Saw the Era of English war
Pessimistic view

Optimistic views

Born of Switzerland,
Mixed views

6)

e) Books

Leviathan

Two treaties of
Government

The social
contract

f) Types of Government

Absolute
Monarchy

Constitutional
system

Democracy

g) Rights of citizens

Right to
security

Right to life,
liberty and
property

collectively
Decided
Rights

h) Right to overthrow Government

When fails
to provide
security

When fails to
protect cardinal
Rights

When fails to
act on
general will

i) Impact on Founders

Governments must
be designed to
protect the
people from
themselves

Govt must be
designed to
protect people
from the Govt

Natural Right
must be secured

Govt, responsive
and aligned
with general
will

Individual will
sub-ordinate
to general will

5- Implications of The Theory

Thomas Hobbes

Locke

Rousseau

a) Political organizations

state is created
so political
organization
will not be
present.

political
organization
present

General will
is present

b) state

As people did a
contract, so
state was
artificial and
the fear
ended

Artificial state.
people were
fed up of
chaos.

Artificial
state.

c) Sovereign

King will be
sovereign

community will
be sovereign

General will
including Real
and actual
will would
be sovereign.

d) Nature of contract

<u>Hobbes</u>	<u>Locke</u>	<u>Rousseau</u>
<u>d) Nature of contract</u> Non-revokable because it was a Unilateral contract and king did not demand it by himself.	Revokable Bilateral contract	Contract was Revokable and Bilateral Because people themselves are responsible for the whole community.

6- Critical Analysis of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau

6.1- Critical Analysis of Hobbes Social Contract Theory

6.6.1- Hobbes concept of absolutism

It is totally a vague concept in the present scenario. Democracy is

the need and examples may be taken from Burma and other nations.

6.6.2. Concept of Sovereignty

According to Hobbes, the sovereign should have absolute authority. This is against the rule of law because absolute power in one authority brings arbitrariness.

7- Critical Analysis of Locke's Social Contract theory

7.1- concept of state of nature

Locke concept of state of nature is vague as any conflict with regard to property always leads to havoc in any society. Hence, there cannot be a society in peace if they have been conflict with regard to property.

7.2 - Concept of Laissez-faire

Locke concept of laissez-faire is not of welfare oriented. Now in present scenario, every state undertakes steps to form a welfare state.

8 - Critical Analysis of Rousseau's Social Contract Theory

8.1 - Concept of state of nature

Initially harmonious, disrupted by societal inequalities.

8.2 - Concept of Role of Govt:

A participatory government reflecting the general will of the people, aiming for common good. Rousseau propounded that state, law and the government are interchangeable, but this in present scenario is different.

Even though governments can be overthrown but not the state.

A state exists even there is no government.

Conclusion:

Conclusively, in modern times Rousseau's ideas about participatory democracy, individual freedom within a collective framework, and governance based on general will might resonate more in democratic societies that prioritize individual rights, participatory governance and collective decision. Ultimately, the applicability of these theories in modern times varies depending on the specific context, societal values, and the balance between individual liberties and the need for governance and order. Societies often adapt elements from these theories to address contemporary social and political changes.