

## SOC2112: Classical Sociological Theories

September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**For Monday Readings:** Jefferson, Wollstonecraft, and Tocqueville \*

### **Hobbs:**

- *Life is short* – ensuring security with order
  - How do we achieve order?
- Social contract theorist
  - Nobody has seen the social contract – it's an idea of fiction – but great starting point to think
  - Hobbs was only interested in safety – we give up access to weapons, our right to revolt, political self determination/expression, in exchange for security = enjoy our life privately/social and economic processes are secured
  - If we give our ability to decide how our society is going to be
  - No right to change the King or system – you only have the right to your economic life
- God vs. Man
  - Hobbs is amongst the first to understand society where God has nothing to do with society – it's up to humans to organize society
  - God placed us in the state of nature – it's up to Humans to create
  - God created humans, and his work stopped there
  - Secularization:
    - Not necessarily that people stopped believing in God – but politics and God have nothing to do with our political system – democracy
  - Modernity
    - The form of society that is most recent, that develops in the 17<sup>th</sup> century – God gets put in brackets
    - Societies don't need God to shape society
    - **Jefferson:** Supreme Judge of our World (God) = in a way God can guarantee the good intentions of the Americans – he's the Witness – very unusual and new
- Foundations?
  - Strength – there is no right for people to revolt
  - Hobbs does not have a theory of justice and how a just government should be
  - Theory of injustice: tells you when people have the right to revolt

- Human nature (state of nature)
  - In that state, they live according to their own nature
  - Man is more selfish, asocial without much desire of social interaction
  - War against all
  - State of nature is not ideal – he argues that its better to move from the state of nature to social construct (people at the bottom are more *social*)
- Equality
  - If we're all equal, we're all naked, physical strength – we're roughly equal in intelligence – it ensure that no one can establish total dominance on someone else – there's always short term alliances
  - The total fact of equality feeds conflict and continuous conflict – they're just going to come back
  - Equality in the context of selfish and asociality, people are not bound to pair up together – it guarantees war – people would rather live to themselves – everyone is afraid of something – since we're equal, there's no way to end it
- Problem?
  - Nobody has seen the state of nature
  - Difficulty is that the whole story built up from the foundation is that their foundation is totally invented – nobody knows exactly if their totally selfish and to themselves
- Deductive reasoning:
  - Start from a proposition and then reason the consequences – do not need any empirical information to build up the story (because no one has seen that state of nature)
  - People are asocial and individualistic - people are going to compete but won't have any alliances = create conflict
  - The whole thing is reasoning – we can deduce many things
- Views on rights:
  - Rights are not an issue due to his views od sovereignty
- Property:
  - Peace, order, and good governance (Canada)
- Sovereignty:
  - Belongs to the “Ruler” – the Leviathan – sort of monster = government – which stands above the social contract – it can be the King or a small group of people, stand above the social contract
  - Once you've given your consent, you can never take it back – doesn't matter if you're ruled by a pirate, or to a person that convinced you to

- give your consent – there is no right to revolution, you just got to live with it – there’s no right to get rid of a bad ruler
- Rulers will continuously succeed each other – once you have a sovereign it should be a chain
  - The problem with it is that the chain got cut due to revolutions, wars, etc.
- A war against all – the ruler’s job is to pacify to make sure that people have economical liberty
- Equally powerless in front of the Sovereign

**Rousseau:**

- Social contract theorist
  - The social contract – the role is to provide for justice!
    - Different than Hobbs = Hobbs was only interested in safety – we give up access to weapons, our right to revolt, political self determination/expression, in exchange for security = enjoy our life privately/social and economic processes are secured
    - If we give our ability to decide how our society is going to be shaped = in exchange for economic and social security
  - Rousseau = re-establish justice – morality
  - **There was no room for God** – it used to be in European society was very dependant on the Devine – on the supernatural – powerful reason why in those theories of Devine Rights – it keeps people from revolting – getting rid of kings and systems – if the king was put their by the Will of God – you’re not just going against the king, you’re going against God.
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- Human nature (state of nature)
  - Thinks people are good, but corrupted by society
  - “*Le bon sauvage*”
- Equality
  - People are good, social, and equal – basically they don’t get into each other’s space.
  - Nobody is rich, nobody is poor
- Problem?
  - Nobody has seen the state of nature

- Difficulty is that the whole story built up from the foundation is that their foundation is totally invented – nobody knows exactly if their totally nice
- Deductive reasoning:
  - Start from a proposition and then reason the consequences – do not need any empirical information to build up the story (because no one has seen that state of nature)
  - Why would we need social contract and what will the human nature look like?
- Views on rights:
  - People have rights that lead us to what type of rights?
- Property:
  - State of nature and the state of society (social contract) – it happens of a result of agriculture (farming) – its interesting because Rousseau assumed in the state of nature people didn't need agriculture (hunting, fishing, etc.) – when agriculture happens – conflict arises
  - Agriculture arise and one of the outcome of agriculture activity is that in the first time in human history people are going to have a surplus – more than they need to eat – as a result, properties won't be equal
  - People that develop surplus, are going to become richer
  - Social and economic inequalities develop due to agriculture surplus
  - People want to protect their land = develop a sense of property
  - Increase amount of corruption – but inequality, conflict, war = people are not good and sociable
  - If you cultivate a field, it can possibly become yours – improving the land according with the contract signed with the government
  - If you do not keep the land up to standards, the government can take it back
  - For Rousseau, property is not good – from property – inequality follows – with inequality you get *conflict* (Hobbs sees that conflict...)
  - **Agriculture** – they do reason from deduction – follow the thread to wherever it leads you – in the state of nature, people are good
  - Contemporary work shows that Rousseau was right – inequality started from the beginning of agriculture – economically/surplus relations
    - Agriculture was a turning point which altered the state of nature – we can't go back to the state of nature
- Sovereignty:
  - Belongs to the people – people need to consent to being ruled

- The strong can get what they want anyway – so he doesn't need a right. So therefore we don't need a ruler
- The right is irrelevant – just because you win doesn't mean it's right
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**Locke:**

- Social contract theorist
  - Property is part of the social contract – we want to protect *our property*.
- Human nature (state of nature)
  - Thinks of them as social beings
  - Locke and Rousseau share similar ideologies on the state of nature of humans
- Equality
  - People are good, social, and equal – basically they don't get into each other's space.
  - Nobody is rich, nobody is poor
- Problem?
  - Nobody has seen the state of nature
- Deductive
  - Historical experience on his theory of government
- Views on Rights:
  - He believes that man has rights
  - Our right to our **property** – his political vision
    - *You own yourself* – defending slavery
    - Labour – anything you can do with your hands (farmers: literally the labour made with your hands) – **the effort you put in is a part of you – the wheat contains a part of you = your property**
    - Because you own yourself, and when you put a piece of you in it – you own it. But, there are limits! You need to use it to its full advantage
    - If you can't use them properly, you use your rights of ownership on them
    - Politically, if you don't usefully use your land – capitalistic views – if money is sitting in a bank account, what are you doing? You're not using it to benefit from it

- Socialists use Locke's ideology for limit
    - It cannot be alienated from you – it cannot be taken away from you (ex: sell something = alienated from you)
    - Alienable = can be taken away from you
    - Inalienable = cannot be taken from you – as in yourself
    - Property is good – but it is also limited to use – justice demands that any extra is *not* your property – what is fair, what is just, and what is unjust?
- Sovereignty
  - Belongs to the people
  - People have the right to consent
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## SOC2112: Classical Sociological Theories

Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**For Thursday:** Tocqueville

### **Thomas Jefferson:**

- There's the idea that all men are created **equal**
  - The fact of equality on its own does not qualify for anything
- And they're **free**
  - We the people of the 13 colonies – we are *free* people
  - Change between God/Man
  - People do not have to obey God – they can choose how to be governed – political freedom to choose
  - If the Church tells you to follow something – you are not free
  - By being free, people have to give consent to the way they're being ruled – it has to happen on a continuous basis – it's from our consent that the government wins **justice power**
  - People may draw their consent – the declaration states – one of the foundation of the social contract of the US, one of the key idea is Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – secure these right
  - A just government will do whatever it takes to protect their life – doesn't mean they will achieve happiness, but at least we need to have the ability to pursue it

- If the government stops doing that, that government loses its right to rule – which is why the majority of the text of the Dec. of Independence listed why the British empire were tyrannous – by being tyrant, the king of England loses his power to rule and people get to leave and be free, to revolt – removing themselves from the sovereignty to create their own government/independent country
- The Supreme Judge of our World (God) can vouch for them
- Key concepts in all of our authors:
  - Justice
  - Consent
  - Equality
  - Rights
- We've gotten used to these concepts due to their literature – they argue together – but they also rely on the same language (the same conceptual language) – they agree on the existence of the concept but have different views
- They manipulate the same concepts – build a tradition of thought by sharing the concepts

### **Mary Wollstonecraft**

- People have rights – she's arguing in response to Edmond Burk's views during the French Revolution
  - Burk writes a strong critique by arguing in favour of the virtue of England
- Concept of Rights: based on Reason
  - People have rights from birth – nothing we need to acquire during our lifetime
  - We are rational creatures – Age of Reasoning
  - People are reasonable – we're capable of Reason
  - The difference between Humans and Animals is intelligence, the ability to Reason
  - There must be a way in her way of thinking to make room for God (background role) – our rights are given by God, and because they were given to us by God, no one can take them away from us – alienated
  - People will start talking about “**natural law**” in this context – up to date - underpins the concept of law – what can and should be done?
  - “**Natural justice**” – when you look where these terms come from – how people started using them – we realize that they're placeholders

in a sense for God – in context where we're not supposed to talk about God

- In Canadian law, laws should not be based on religious beliefs – it's supposed to be secular – one of the components of the Charter, there's a separation between Church and State
- The world of law it should be insulated by the world of Religion through the use of “natural law” and “natural justice”
- This law and this justice was given to us by God through the European development
- It makes us free people and justified to rebel while situations are bad enough – **Jefferson**
- The Vindication of the Rights of Man/The Vindication of the Rights of Woman
  - She's talking about gender relations
  - Women are stuck in a life cycle – appear educated and refined – but they don't have the tools to get educated
  - Women are kept superficial – focusing on being pretty – out of men's wish they be like that
  - Infidelity = attracting other men and want to be attracting men which then the men are not happy, yet *they* created that picture
  - Men are driven to act and portray themselves – but women can turn that into an advantage (if women were smart in some way)
  - Critique of England
    - “Men should be pressed for sea service” = the life of a sailor was not great – away from family and basically England needed many sailors – they would literally pull people off the streets to be *pressed* into the boats and become sailors without asking them = *pressed into service* = forced into doing something you didn't want to do
    - More respect for liberty, than for property – but if they were rich, they would get out of it (*pressed* poor people off the streets)
    - In case of death of father, the *oldest* son receives all the inheritance – the mother becomes dependant on the son and the other children are *stuck* (Covent, priests, marry into a rich family) rcf