

Liberal Internationalism's Political Philosophy

John Locke (1632- 1704)

Adam Smith (1723- 1790)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (28 June 1712 – 2 July 1778)

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Historical Context

- King James II , Catholicism and allegiance to France!
- Manifesto of 1688 Glorious Revolution, an affirmation of constitutional limitations of royal power against catholic absolutism of Stuarts.
- Stuarts were overthrown, exiled, and replaced by the dynasty of the House of Orange, whose first king William III and Mary II had to accept the Bill of Rights the Parliament voted for at the end of 1689, after having removed James II Stuart due to his infringement of the pact between the king and his people.
- Siding with the political culture of the Whig party, in 'Two Treatises of Government' Locke defends the prerogatives of the English Parliament, adjusting Hobbes' absolutist doctrines to include individual and social liberties
- British empiricists: Locke, Berkeley and Hume, versus continental cognitivists Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza
- Locke in 'The First Treatise of Government' refuted patriarchal version of the Divine Right of Kings as proposed by Sir Robert Filmer.

John Locke (1632- 1704)

- Locke was fellow of Christ Church at OU. He wanted to study for the clergy but then studies medicine
- In his early writing he always preferred authority over liberty : “magistrates must have absolute and arbitrary power over all actions of people”
- Supported Anglican Churches’ imposed punishments over other protestants and particularly over Catholics
- He endorsed “passive obedience” i.e. even if you do not agree with laws you need to obey them
- But in “essay concerning toleration” (1667) he refuted authoritarianism and moved to “passive disobedience”
- A subject can disobey sinful laws provided that he does not use violence
- His writings always excluded Catholics of course. Catholicism and France always being the “other”



First Treatise of Government

- The first treatise is a refutation of Sir Robert Filmer's defence of absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings

- Strong criticism of Patriarchalism and the king being the supreme patriarch!
- Interpretation of “honour thy father and thy mother”!
- People being like children (immature, *saqir*, *mahjoor*) in need of authority
- Dominion is given to Adam and from there to all kings
- Locke claimed that Genesis did not give Adam dominion over other humans but over all other creatures
- Also the words are in plural hence it is meant for all humans not just Adam or the kings
- In any case parents do not have right to kill their children!

Second Treatise of Government

- Like Hobbes, Locke starts from the state of nature, which he describes as a natural condition of perfect freedom and equality.
- According to him, the state of nature is governed according to the laws of nature.
- A standard rooted in the nature of things, part of God's law and they are knowable to human reason.
- State of nature is a state of liberty but not a state of license as it is governed by laws of nature, hence it is not a state of anarchy
- Laws of nature: no one has to harm others in his life, health liberty and possessions
- the law of the nature in the state of nature will be in vein if there was no one who could execute that law and punish the transgressors
- Each individual is judge and executor of the law of nature: each individual can punish those who violate the law as enemies of mankind and can ask for reparation
- The right to punish in the state of nature when the laws of nature are violated, underpins the state's right to punish when laws are violated



The Right of Punishment

- The right of punishment is divided into two categories: Reparation ad restraint
- Reparation is a private right by the victim, while restraint is the right of every person
- Reparation and restraint are the only reasons for which one man might lawfully do harm to another
- How about death penalty? Yes this is admissible as it is in the state of nature
- A murderer has given up the reason and declared war against all others so he must be put to death as a deterrent to others as well, as we do with a lion or a tiger



Leaving the State of Nature 1

Yet, Locke thinks such a condition should be abandoned. Why? Locke falls back on the fears of his time – the absence of power produces “inconveniences” and potential civil tumults, and where there is no common set of laws and impartial adjudicators, the advantages of “perfect freedom and equality” are offset by the worries of aggression.

More specifically, three “inconveniences” arise:

1. Law is not certain: individuals’ interpretation of the law of nature is too subjective and passionate.
2. There is no impartial and recognized judge.
3. There is no third authority capable of executing laws.



Leaving the State of Nature 2

- To defend their life, freedom, and properties, therefore, individuals in the state of nature renounce their natural power to punish infractions of the natural law and hand it over into the hands of the community.
- This community is a “Commonwealth” which Locke sometimes calls “**body politics**”, “civil society” or even “political society”. As in the case of Hobbes, therefore, Locke argues that a possible exit from the state of nature depends upon the stipulation of a **pact** among equals grounded in the modern logic of authorization: every single individual authorizes society to make laws and execute them through the force that was conferred to it. Still, one can notice two differences from
 1. The pact does not require the institution of a representative sovereign, whereby we shall see that legislative power can be exercised either directly by the body politics or by his representative trustees.
 2. The political order is not opposed to the state of nature, but rather serves to better guarantee individuals’ natural rights.



State of War

- Hobbes in Leviathan had declared state of nature as a state of War yet for Locke state of nature is peaceful
- In this state of nature imposing one's power on another makes the state of nature into a state of war
- If your liberty is taken away from you by an aggressor, that aggressor will also take away anything else at will including your life
- the state of war begins whenever there is force without right, that is whenever force is used unjustly
- this unjust use of force does not happen only in the state of nature but also under government
- the individual can legitimately use force in self-defence.
- If there is no justice on earth for those who have been wronged what can they do? An appeal to heaven!



Liberty

- Locke distinguishes two kinds of liberty: Natural liberty and Social liberty
- The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth
- the social liberty is the liberty of man in society: to be under no other legislative power but that established by consent in the commonwealth.
- So liberty is freedom from the absolute and arbitrary power of other persons
- So liberty must include limits on actions that violate this equal liberty for all
- Can a person consent to become a slave? slavery under social contract?
- Hugo Grotius defends this possibility. It is the right so a person to dispose of his freedom. People can contract themselves to political slavery
- For Locke voluntary slavery is not theoretically possible. To surrender one's liberty is to surrender one's means to preserve his life. This is against laws of nature



Property

- The greatest purpose of government is the preservation of property. What is property?
- How could private property be justified if all men are equal in the state of nature?
- Locke accepts Samuel Pufendorf's understanding. Common property is not property, in order for men to take advantage of earth resources there must be some kind of private ownership
- Locke believes that private property is a natural right grounded in the natural law of self-preservation. There is not clear definition here.
- As we own our bodies, we own our labour. When we use this labour to improve other resources, we remove those resources from the common stock
- Mixing his labour with property. Examples of gathering acorns and apples
- Yet there is limit to this and that is that resources should be used only as much as the owner can consume. Spoiling resources should be avoided
- But this is not a problem as we can transform these excess into silver and gold which do not have any inherent value to. Their value is agreed by men's consent and this consent makes them legitimate
- Hence no limits on personal enrichment as long as these are acquired in a legitimate way
- What about the poor? They are entitled to charity! (implications for IP)



Government

- There are two stages in establishing a government.
 - First a group of people agree to leave the state of nature and form a political society this is the social contract
 - Second: the majority of people decide on the form of government in this social contract
- The majority rule is very important as without this the society can not act as one body. If all do not submit to the rule of majority this compact will not work
- What about those not giving consent to government or are born after this is established?
- Government's jurisdiction over land and tacit consent
- This proved to be very appealing to countries like the US, to create loyalty to the state. any person who voluntarily decides to reside in the US, had tacitly consented to become a citizen of the US and to obey its laws!
- This is still a challenging question for example in issues of integration and multi-culturalism



Right to resistance

- For Locke a just government is a limited government
- The legislative power is the supreme power of any government. It is limited to the public good of the society
- If government violated limits imposed on its power and violates property, it becomes despotic and tyrannical
- Since government is separate from the social contract, it could be overthrown without descending into anarchy and civil war.
- Revolution does not throw society into a state of nature
- Locke does not talk about revolution directly. But he uses the term “ribellare” which he uses to define the acts of government as true rebel and not those abolishing this system
- If a king or the government violate laws, they forfeit the power that people have put in them and become illegitimate. Accordingly people have right to resume their original liberties and they can opt for establishing another government which they shall see fit
- Who can say when a revolution becomes necessary? “people shall be judge”! Hence every man shall judge for himself
- Appeal to the Heaven!



Sources of Right - Consent

- Locke is more concentrated on analysing the concepts of authority and power and different types of relationship in society e.g. father and family, employer and employee, master and slave.
- The point of this is to demonstrate the limitations of governmental power and what constitutes true governmental authority.
- He is famous for his doctrine of consent i.e. that governmental authority is based only on consent, that it is a distinctly different type of relationship from any other type of relationship in society and that there is no basis or arguable rationale for arbitrary rule.
- Hence we have a philosophically argued basis for limited government by consent – which constitutes a movement towards constitutionalism without fully establishing in what it might consist in any great detail apart from a few pointers towards majority rule and an elementary idea of the separation of powers.
- The argument is less definitional and always relates back to God



Road to Capitalism

- We live in a capitalist world, those left outside are poor and authoritarian! How did we get here?
- Ethics of enrichment. Extensively discussed before by the likes of Pierre Nicole and Bernard Mandeville. Jansenism
- Hitherto self interests were defined as “vice” and “vicious”
- Judaism, Christianity and Islam all have extensive injunctions against self-enrichment without regard for others
- In Christianity and Judaism and Islam the focus has not been on this life but on the life that comes
- Buying and selling in these religions was allowed as long as “the price was just”. Borrowing and lending was also fine as long as “no interests are charged”
- Also republicanism emphasised putting the “polity” before ones self-interests
- Pioneering works of Jansenists: Pierre Nicole and Pierre de Boisguilbert: Ethics of self-enrichment and free trade



Adam Smith

- 1776: US declaration of Independence, Death of Hume and publication of the Wealth of Nations
- What underlies economic behaviour? How should government act to foster economic prosperity?
- Is credited with being the main theoretician who moved political philosophy towards economics based on free enterprise of liberal capitalism, but was actually a “moral philosopher”
- if individuals are allowed to act in their exclusive self-interest , they will benefit the entire society. Natural harmony of interests between individuals in the market



Adam Smith

- Private interests are the engine of progress and development. Contrary to religious claims on vices and greed
- Advocating *laissez-faire* and minimalist state which became the identifying feature of the Anglo-American liberal political thought. More like institutional mechanisms which bring people to act in socially beneficial ways
- Elaborated on imperatives of market economy, and the actual tool that delivered prosperity for all was “competition”
- Invisible hand of competition turns self-regarding behaviour into aggregate social benefit
- commitment to the soundness of the ordinary human being’s judgments, and a concern to fend off attempts, by philosophers and policy-makers, to replace those judgments with the supposedly better “systems” invented by intellectuals



Smith's Liberal Internationalism

- Individuals can be relied on with minimal control as they find market interests in line with their own interests
- States' interest is an aggregate of individual interests at international level
- Promoting principles of universal free trade : Mercantilism versus trade
- Irrational international politics will gradually be replaced by rising primacy of commerce in human affairs leading to more peaceful, productive and rational relations among states.
- Kenneth Waltz: Smith laid the formal foundations of English Liberalism i.e. individual initiative regulated by market competition
- Accused of utopian or idealist belief in the possibility of progress at international levels



Famous Quote

- “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chuses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens”
- Distinguishing between state of war and state of peace:
- “The wealth of a neighbouring nation, however, *though dangerous in war and politicks*, is certainly advantageous in trade. In a state of hostility it may enable our enemies to maintain fleets and armies superior to our own; but in a state of peace and commerce it must likewise enable them to exchange with us to a greater value”



Role of the Government

- First: the duty of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies
- Second: the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice
- Third: the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions, which it can never be for the interest of any individual, or small number of individuals, to erect and maintain.



Jean Jacques ROUSSEAU

- Rousseau a very different type of philosopher, he offers no justification of existing society, indeed he condemns most aspects of civilisation including the arts and the sciences
- has inspired many modern critiques of society specially socialists
- An egalitarian and a democrat which gives him a modern feel, but his inspiration came from the virtuous republics of the past and Geneva
- Rousseau was trying to make people think in a different and more critical way about the nature of government and society
- He wanted to expose the fraud perpetuated by the seemingly legitimate laws, ostensibly based on consent
- Locke, he postulates, ends up justifying inequalities seemingly established in the state of nature and legitimized for all time by the contract
- Rousseau is both a democrat and egalitarian whereas neither Hobbes nor Locke could be described as such. Despite the fact that both had commenced their analyses with assumptions that all men were the same and equal in nature



Inequality

- Rousseau takes the assumption of equality more seriously. Why men being born free but finding themselves everywhere in chains?
- He redefines state of nature as a state in which men are neither good nor evil. The society itself gives rise to morality
- “The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground bethought himself of saying “this is mine” and found people simple enough to believe him, is the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, war and murders, from how many terrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind by pulling up the stakes, filling up the ditch and crying to his fellows, “Beware of listening to this imposter, you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all and the earth itself to nobody.”
- civil society is an artefact of man which creates moral obligations and duties
- Rousseau clearly ignores any concept of economic progress
- the arts and sciences develop along with commerce and trade, and the latter simply increase dominance whilst science and arts are produced for the same dominating elite, a minority of consumers



Kant and Perpetual Peace

- Kant was a central figure in the philosophy of the Enlightenment
- Reason can deliver freedom and justice
- He distinguishes “form of sovereignty” from “form of government”
- Liberal states are pacific in their international relations (pacific federation)
- The civil constitution of every state shall be republican; as a result the consent of citizens will be required whether or not war should be declared
- The right of nations shall be defied in the framework of a federation of free states, there should be an international constitutions, like for the states to which nations can freely subscribe. This constitution is not like a treaty that ends a war, rather prevents all wars.



Summary

- Liberalism means different things to different scholars. Lockean limited government of the French tradition of socialist government?
- Two Treatises of Government. Locke's ultimate objective is to achieve anti-absolutist progress. Locke as the father of modern liberal constitutionalism
- Positive outlook to human nature. Democracy and good governance needed
- Complex interdependence
- Adherence to universal values
- Relations between liberalism and imperialism
- Different versions of liberalism. Classical liberalism, social liberalism, neoliberalism, libertarianism
- Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman criticism of social-liberalism
- Liberal ideas at the heart of creating international institutions
- Democratic Peace Theory
- Future of liberalism and alternative ideologies
- Criticisms of liberalism, Doyle (separate peace for liberal states), Carr (centrality of power is missing in liberal discourse)