



**Power To The People**

# Social Contract Theory

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**



## **Social Contract Theory:**

The Social Contract Theorists Christopher W. Morris, 2000-01-01 This reader introduces students of philosophy and politics to the contemporary critical literature on the classical social contract theorists Thomas Hobbes 1599 1697 John Locke 1632 1704 and Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712 1778 Twelve thoughtfully selected essays guide students through the texts familiarizing them with key elements of the theory while at the same time introducing them to current scholarly controversies A bibliography of additional work is provided The classical social contract theorists represent one of the two or three most important modern traditions in political thought Their ideas dominated political debates in Europe and North America in the 17th and 18th centuries influencing political thinkers statesmen constitution makers revolutionaries and other political actors alike Debates during the French Revolution and the early history of the American Republic were often conducted in the language of Hobbes Locke and Rousseau Later political philosophy can only be understood against this backdrop And the contemporary revival of contractarian moral and political thought represented by John Rawls *A Theory of Justice* 1971 or David Gauthier's *Morals by Agreement* 1986 needs to be appreciated in the history of this tradition *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls* David Boucher, Paul Kelly, 2003-09-02 First published in 2004 Routledge is an imprint of Taylor Francis an informa company

**The Social Contract Or Principles of Political Right** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1913

**The Social Contract** John Wiedhofft Gough, 1957

**Classical Social Contract Theory** Sebastian Erckel, 2009-05-11 Essay from the year 2008 in the subject Politics Political Theory and the History of Ideas Journal grade 80% good University of Kerala Department of Political Science course Political Theory Liberal Tradition language English abstract This essay compares the classical social contract theories of Hobbes Locke and Rousseau Different perceptions of the state of nature resulted in different ideas about the social contract and its emphasis on either security Hobbes individual rights Locke or the collective freedom of Rousseau's general will Political philosophy is believed to have started with Plato's *Republic* the first known sophisticated analysis of a fundamental question that humans have probably been concerned with much longer how should human society be organised i.e. who should rule and why Plato believed that ruling required special training and skills and should therefore be left to an aristocracy of guardians who had received extensive training While the notion that ruling requires expertise can hardly be denied there is also agreement among most philosophers that whoever qualifies for the job of ruling needs to do so with the interest of the people in mind But what is the interest of the people and how can it be discovered According to Plato a necessary precondition for rulers is wisdom and that is why he wanted his guardians to be especially trained in philosophy One may think that the people themselves should know what is best for them but somewhat surprisingly this idea has been rejected not just by Plato but also by many philosophers following him Another approach is to link rule on Earth to a mandate received from a divine Creator However even the idea that humans could not exist without a government has been questioned most notably by anarchism Thus the question of how political rule the power

to make decisions for others could be justified is an essential one Only legitimate rule creates obligation and without obligation it is hard to see how any form of society can survive It is precisely for these elementary questions that social contract theories attempt to provide an answer for The social contract can be seen as a device both for justifying not only rule itself but a particular type of rule and demonstrating that political obligation can indeed be demanded A unique feature of the classical social contract theories discussed in this paper is that they started out with an analysis of the state of nature

**The Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau,1998 Rousseau argues for the preservation of individual freedom in political society An individual can only be free under the law he says by voluntarily embracing that law as his own This text is not only a defence of civil society but also a study of the darker side of political systems

**The Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau,2016-09-23 During the period of the French Revolution Rousseau was the most popular of the philosophers among members of the Jacobin Club Rousseau's Social Contract is a cornerstone in modern political and social thought and makes a strong case for democratic government and social empowerment

**Social Contract and Political Obligation** Peter J. McCormick,2019-11-21 First published in 1987 This study is concerned with the problem of political obligation the normative question of why one should obey the law and with social contract thought as an answer to this question It is entitled a critique but the critique is not of social contract theory as such but rather of the orthodox treatment of contract that yields so readily to the rough handling and easy rejection that is the normal lot of contractarianism in contemporary treatments In its place will be suggested a reinterpretation of contract that sees it as making different assumptions and requiring different premises and that is proof against many of the orthodox refutations of social contract theory the reinterpretation is thus in the nature of a vindication First from an examination of the most commonly cited champions of contractarianism namely Hobbes Locke and Rousseau will be derive a reinterpretation of contract in the form of a new model or syllogism the features of which will be brought out by contrasting it first with the contemporary ideas of John Rawls and then with the orthodox model itself Democratic consent theory as the heir to the remnants of the orthodox model will be examined and the ideas of T H Green will be considered as embodying an important feature of contractarianism omitted or ignored by the orthodox model and hence by democratic theory Finally the new model of contract will be suggested as a potentially useful approach to the problem of political obligation in the modern context This title will be of interest to student of politics and philosophy

**The Social Contract and Discourses** Jean-Jacques Rousseau,1973 With the publication of The Social Contract in 1761 Jean Jacques Rousseau took his place among the leading political philosophers of the Enlightenment Like his contractarian predecessors Thomas Hobbes and John Locke Rousseau sought to ground his political theory in an understanding of human nature which he believed to be basically good but corrupted by the conflicting interests within society Here self interest degenerated into a state of war from which humanity could only be extricated by the imposition of a contract As a party to the compact each individual would find his true interest served within the political

expression of the community of man or the general will What is the content of human nature and how does it compel mankind to come together to create a civil society What form does this society take What benefits does it offer its citizens and what must each individual sacrifice to reap its rewards How does sovereign power manifest itself and what consequences follow for those who choose not to abide by the general will Does Rousseau s political theory set forth a blueprint for democracy one that results in equality universal suffrage and popular sovereignty or is it a recipe for central state totalitarianism These are just a few of the complex questions that will confront readers of *The Social Contract* Whatever their intent or ultimate result Jean Jacques Rousseau s views on the state and man s relationship to it have culminated in one of the most powerful and compelling pieces of political philosophy ever written

*Will and Political Legitimacy* Patrick Riley, 1982 At the heart of representative government is the question What makes government and its agents legitimate authorities The notion of consent to a social contract between the citizen and his government is central to this problem What are the functions of public authority What are the people s rights in a self governing and representative state Patrick Riley presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the meaning of contract theory and a testing of the inherent validity of the ideas of consent and obligation He uncovers the critical relationship between the act of willing and that of consenting in self government and shows how will relates to political legitimacy His is the first large scale study of social contract theory from Hobbes to Rawls that gives will the central place it occupies in contractarian thinking

*The Social Contract* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1893

**The Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, George Douglas Howard Cole, J. H. Brumfitt, John Cecil Hall, 2005-01-01 Jean Jacques Rousseau s ideas about society culture and government are pivotal in the history of political thought His works are as controversial as they are relevant today This volume brings together three of Rousseau s most important political writings *The Social Contract* and *The First Discourse* *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* and *The Second Discourse* *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality* and presents essays by major scholars that shed light on the dimensions and implications of these texts Susan Dunn s introductory essay underlines the unity of Rousseau s political thought and explains why his ideas influenced Jacobin revolutionaries in France but repelled American revolutionaries across the ocean Gita May s essay discusses Rousseau as cultural critic Robert N Bellah explores Rousseau s attempt to resolve the tension between the individual s desire for freedom and the obligations that society imposes David Bromwich analyzes Rousseau as a psychologist of the human self And Conor Cruise O Brien takes on the noxious deranged Rousseau excoriated by Edmund Burke but admired by Robespierre and Thomas Jefferson Written from different even opposing perspectives these lucid essays convey a sense of the vital and contentious debate surrounding Rousseau and his legacy

**The Social Contract & Discourses** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2021-01-13 A book in which Rousseau theorized about the best way to establish a political community in the face of the problems of commercial society which he had already identified in his *Discourse on Inequality* 1754 Amazon

*Social Contract* Michael Harry Lessnoff, 1986 *On the Social Contract*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2019-02-19 This new edition features a revision by Donald A Cress of his bestselling 1987 translation of *On the Social Contract* together with Introduction footnotes and chronology by David Wootton one of our leading historians of the Enlightenment

**The Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1920 **Of the Social Contract, Or, Principles of Political Right & Discourse on Political Economy** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1984 [New Approaches to Social Contract Theory](#) Michael Moehler, John Thrasher, 2024 This book discusses new directions in social contract theory While social contract theory has a long history in moral and political philosophy social circumstances have significantly changed over time It presents new approaches to social contract theory that apply to such conditions addressing some of most pressing social problems today

**The Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1950 After an old university friend and fellow archeologist s murdered forensic archeologist Ruth Galloway travels to Lancashire to examine the bones he found which reveal a shocking fact about King Arthur and discovers a campus living in fear of a sinister right wing group called the White Hand

**On the Social Contract** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2014-05-31 Long hailed as one of the most original controversial and influential works of modern political theory Jean Jacques Rousseau s *On the Social Contract* or *Principles of Political Right* 1762 sets out to address an apparently insoluble difficulty how can we organize a political community so as to guarantee its members the complete physical and emotional freedom given to them by nature while at the same time ensuring peaceful order and cooperation within the state How can we find a form of association which defends and protects with full communal force the person and the possessions of each member and in which each person by uniting with all nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before Rousseau s solution to this problem offers a vision of a republican constitution in which the citizens are free because as rational beings they choose to live in a state where they all have an equal share in the sovereign power and are all equally subject to the laws established by the general will of all No matter what the form of government in order to be legitimate it must be subject to the sovereignty of the people *On the Social Contract* is justly famous as a collectivist response to the more individualistic liberalism of Hobbes and Locke For Rousseau true freedom in the modern state can only be realized if the citizens as rational individuals subordinate their selfish personal desires to the laws enacted by the general will of all citizens he states in one of his best known and most paradoxical sayings must be forced to be free Only then can they realize their full potential as free moral beings

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