

Health, Development & Human Rights

A Natural Right to Property

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Readings

- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*.

Questions

1. According to John Locke, what characterizes the state of nature?
2. What is the law of nature and what is the fundamental law of nature (these are not necessarily identical, though they are very similar)? What natural rights follow from this and why do they follow?
3. One topic Locke discusses at length is property. Why is there a natural right to property? What are the conditions he gives for persons to rightfully appropriate from the commons for private use?
4. Locke uses a lot of terminology similar to Hobbes' (state of nature, state of war, natural laws, natural rights, and so on). Based on your answers above, does Locke advocate a Hobbesian political theory, or are these theories different? For instance, do Locke and Hobbes agree that the state of nature is always a state of war? Do they both agree on our natural rights?