

M15 Leading idea “Social pact”

One of the conflict that should arise in a forced co-existence within a group of teens, is related to the claiming of the right on something that is considered ‘public’, as to say, of everybody.

When people have the same rights to everything, the possibility of conflict is inevitable. Hence, in order to guarantee a peaceful co-existence within a space chosen as a space for socialization, there is the need to make pacts with people, even people who aren’t particularly nice (to us). Under this perspective, we could refer to the idea of a social pact and in particular to the thought of the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes who theorized the existence of a hypothetical state of nature in which human beings have all the same rights to everything. Because one of the natural laws is that of survival, every human being takes possession of whatever is within reach, including the life of others. That is, every man is a wolf for the other man (homo homini lupus). In the state of nature, human beings are in the condition of permanent war. Reason allows human beings to leave the state of nature, pushing them to form pacts between themselves in order to stop a war of all against all, which would otherwise be counterproductive for their survival. In leaving the state of nature, humanity establishes its natural laws. Of these, the first law is aimed at maintaining peace and the second law is aimed at respecting pacts. Through reason, human beings realize that one’s liberty is necessarily limited by the liberty of the Other. This can be interpreted as a form of social pact.

In a cosmopolitan society, the differences and conflicts that can come up affect the predetermined social conditions, and what might be taken for granted in regard to the sharing of spaces might change. If, for example, we think of the places where boys and girls informally spend their free time, how might the introduction of different cultures affect the encounter in terms of territory? Would the ‘outsiders’ be accepted or rejected? Would the initial occupiers be overturned? What conflicts might arise? What informal solutions could be adopted to solve these possible conflicts?



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