



Interstellar Workshop, ESTEC 2019

The Sociology of Interstellar Exploration

Annotations on Social Order, Authority and
Power Structures

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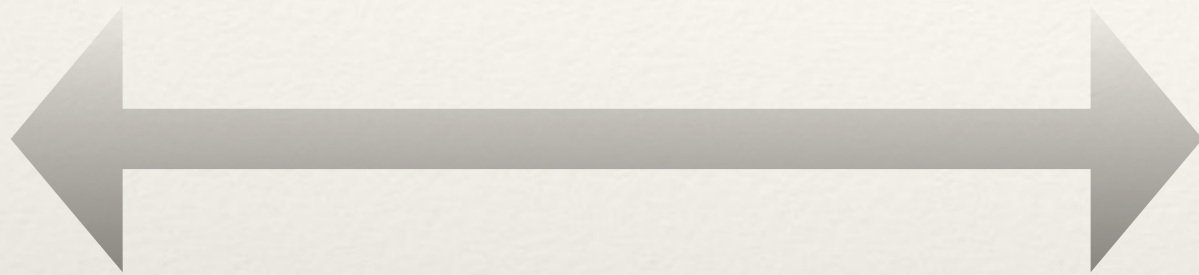
„Homo homini lupus.“

–Thomas Hobbes, 1657

„Man is naturally good and vice and error are alien
to him.“

–J. J. Rousseau, 1762

World Ship Society & other long term missions



Space Missions

- ❖ are limited in time and range;
- ❖ rely on military structures and strong hierarchies;
- ❖ are controlled from earth;
- ❖ use specific communication codes and commands;
- ❖ have clear and achievable objectives.

Societies & Social Groups on Earth

- ❖ are social systems that strive for stability;
- ❖ use varied forms of political structures;
- ❖ vary in their success of achieving stability;
- ❖ can be long-living, rapidly changing or break up in chaos;
- ❖ use and integrate resources from other systems

World Ship Society

- ❖ is a self-sustaining social system;
- ❖ has no other social systems to rely on for resources;
- ❖ has to strive for stability by integrating interior elements for growth and development;
- ❖ is not limited in time and range;
- ❖ has to rely on clear authority and power structures.



Max Weber (2002)

Legal, Traditional & Charismatic Authority

- ❖ legal authority: resides in office, not person;
- ❖ traditional authority: based on holy orders & customs;
- ❖ charismatic authority: legitimized by personal qualities and based on emotional devotion and charismatic gifts.



Some things to consider...

- ❖ What kind of political system would be adequate?
- ❖ How would we deal with authority in separate social sub-systems, like religion, economy, education?
- ❖ How would our concepts of being individuals have to adapt to a society that cannot afford even limited instability?
- ❖ What would family, work, reproduction, medical treatment, faith ...mean?
- ❖ **What would it mean to be an individual in a world ship society?**

