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## STATE OF NATURE ACCORDING TO THOMAS HOBBS

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### ABSTRACT

According to Thomas Hobbes, the natural state is one in which no government and no power to impose rules. People in this stage are motivated solely by their self-interests and wants, resulting in ongoing rivalry and struggle over resources and power. Hobbes believed that everyone was at odds with one another and that life was harsh and chaotic in the natural world. He maintained that to preserve order and avert this condition of chaos, a strong and absolute authority is required

**Keywords:** Resources, Power, Government, Authority

### INTRODUCTION

The term “State of nature” describes human existence in the absence of political affiliation or governing organization. Philosophers have had varied opinions about the condition of nature before civilization throughout the ages. It is a commonly held belief that the need for laws to promote peaceful coexistence led to the gradual replacement of the natural state with an organized society. Understanding the state of nature is crucial to comprehend the necessity of a formal authority, a government, law and order, and human coexistence. The human condition outside of civil society, as emphasized by philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and J.J. Rousseau, distinguishes between explanations derived from nature and those derived from convention, as well as the reasons for each. Thomas Hobbes believed that man was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” and that nature was a conflict between all. It is justified to view society as the antidote to this fatal situation (also see social compact). Some, like J.J. Rousseau, have been more upbeat, visualizing noble anarchy in which family-like relationships serve as the primary social bonding mechanism, supplemented by legal enforcement in modern civilizations.

During the Enlightenment, the concept of the “State of Nature” gained particular traction with three philosophers: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). It describes a condition of affairs before humans came together to

establish formal communities and make the social contract, giving up some individual rights in favor of collective government.

### **THOMAS HOBBS NATURAL STATE**

English philosopher, physicist, and historian Thomas Hobbes is well-recognized for his political theory. His most well-known contribution is his political ideas. His worldview remains applicable to modern politics as he focuses on social and political order, and how to coexist peacefully among people without risking a civil war. Hobbes presents extreme options, suggesting that we submit to an unaccountable sovereign: someone or some group with the authority to make decisions on all social and political matters. Otherwise, we face a situation similar to civil war, in which everyone is insecure, and fears violent death, and human cooperation is nearly impossible. Hobbes refers to people living in the absence of a supervising body as the 'state of nature,' a civilization devoid of politics. He contends that to comprehend politics and morality, one must comprehend man as man; as a result, psychology serves as the basis for political and moral science. Hobbes assumes a fictitious state of nature where people behave entirely out of passion to observe humanity in its most natural state concerning government and laws.

The citizens in this state have no set tasks or obligations and are free to do as they wish. According to Hobbes, the “war of every man against every man” is a violent, never-ending state of competition in which everyone has a natural right to everything, regardless of what other people want, is what defines the state of nature. Hobbes famously describes existence in the natural condition as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” The sole rules that govern the natural state are self-preservation-based principles rather than agreements made between individuals. These laws are known as the laws of nature. The political philosopher and original thinker Thomas Hobbes favored an absolute, powerful monarch who could uphold safety and harmony. He maintained that maintaining peace and order was the primary goal of the government and the law. He envisioned a state of nature, devoid of both law and government, where humans existed naturally. The most notable aspect of the natural state is warfare, in which all men are enemies of all other men. Men strive with one another for the same things like food, clothes, and other necessities but since they are about equally powerful to achieve their goals, war and strife are the inevitable outcome. Consequently, man's existence in the natural state is characterized as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Every man has an

inherent right to protect his life in the state of nature by doing whatever he sees fit. He is also constrained by the natural law, which states that a man cannot act in a way that jeopardizes his ability to live. He so proclaimed that entering a commonwealth (civil society) and creating a social compact would be man's only chance to break free from the laws of nature. The only remaining natural rights must be transferred to one absolute sovereign (the monarch or Parliament) to accomplish this. Thomas Hobbes believed that there were no binding standards of right and wrong in the state of nature. Individuals seized everything they could, and existence was defined as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Thus, nature was in a constant state of conflict, which could only be resolved if people consented (via a social compact) to cede their freedom to a sovereign, provided that sovereign authority also guaranteed their survival. According to Hobbes, the sovereign has absolute authority, meaning that no other authority may overrule the sovereign, whose desire becomes law. He continues by saying that since the sovereign acts on behalf of everyone, nothing he does may harm his subjects.

English philosopher Thomas Hobbes discussed the theories of the social contract in his book *Leviathan*. A social contract in political philosophy is an agreement among the populace to be ruled and safeguarded by a higher power. He claims that anarchy is what defines the natural state. The people descend into a state of warlike behaviour in the absence of established laws or morality, which causes complete chaos and disarray. With the aid of a social compact, humans can transition from this state of nature into civilization. In a similar vein, a sovereign state determines the unquestionable laws that will aid in governing a society. Some of the basic concepts of international relations can be understood via the lens of Hobbes's views about how people would act in their natural state. The idea is based on the knowledge that without political authority to protect them, people would go to war. Hobbes theory, which holds that anarchy would ensue in the absence of government, contributes to our understanding of state-to-state relations and explains why a power structure is necessary. Security is necessary wherever there are states. The sovereign sets up the system of governance so that people are comfortable. The study of the interactions between political states follows, sustaining political control following the notion of the anarchic condition of nature. Hobbes defined the rules of nature as the prescribed behavior that sensible beings recognize as necessary for a peaceful life. He thinks that these "imperative" laws of nature, which command people to accept and submit to political authority, will be accepted by anyone who would not like for there to be a state of war.

## **CONCLUSION**

The state of nature for Thomas Hobbes was a condition of lawlessness and chaos. In the absence of government, individuals had to compete for survival necessities such as food and shelter, etc.

Hobbes believed that good and evil are relative, but everyone is universally afraid of dying violently, which is considered the worst evil. Because of this fear, people are always worried that their neighbours will use force to take resources needed for survival. This leads to constant conflict as each person tries to attack before being attacked. Hobbes argued that life for mankind is short and brutal, with no room for industry or wisdom. He believed that civil society acts as a barrier against man's antisocial tendencies. However, his theory was based on the Puritan idea of universal human depravity, and he contradicted himself by stating that humans are both instinctively and rationally driven to be politically inclined. His concept of the state of nature was also used to support deference and submission to the government, despite it being intended as a philosophical justification for revolution.

He continues by saying that since the sovereign acts on behalf of everyone, nothing he does may harm his subjects. As a result, he cannot be charged with unfairness. Since the sovereign is the one who makes all laws, he cannot be considered unlawful or unfair. As a result, Hobbes' philosophy incorporates both positivist and natural law concepts. It will become clearer later on that this way of thinking had an impact on positivist jurists like Bentham and Austin.