

The state

One way of attempting to justify the state is to conduct a thought experiment. What would life be like without the state? “The state of nature”

Hobbes (1588-1679)

Leviathan (1651)

With no government, human nature will bring us into severe conflict with one another.

Humans will be forced into conflict because of the following factors:

1. Natural scarcity of goods
2. All have equal ability to kill or be killed
3. We will need to gain resources
4. We need to protect ourselves
5. We need to establish a particular reputation

Individual rationality (working in immediate short term interest) will clash with collective rationality (what's in everybody's interest)

Hobbes' solution

A powerful sovereign who will severely punish those who break the law. It will then be in our self interest to obey the law.

Individual rationality will coincide with collective rationality