

# Comparing hobbes and lockes views on human nature and government argumentative e...

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



Thomas Hobbes and John Locke are two English philosophers of the 17th century, who explored the nature of political processes such as the emergence of states and the subordination of the individual or society to political power. Although they used the same philosophical and scientific instruments and share categorical apparatus, their conclusions are quite different to each other. The fact that their ideas influence the political process in England at that time indicates the historical importance of their ideas. The fact that these ideas have been adopted by different political groups indicates a significant difference in the estimates. Hobbes and Locke in his works used the terms or social contract, natural state and natural laws. Next we will see the difference between their approaches to these terms. Both philosophers were materialists. Materialism is also visible in the social philosophies of Hobbes and Locke, which turned to be a revolution in views on the origin of society and the state. In the Middle Ages everything in this sphere was explained theologically: God ordered the people to live a public life, gave them laws and state power. English thinkers put forward a naturalistic view trying to explain society and state with natural causes. Their teaching has been called "the theory of the social contract", according to which, once upon a time people lived in a state of nature. In empiricism of Hobbes and Locke we can clearly see the main features of modern philosophy: anthropocentrism, secularism, epistemological optimism. However, common goals and objectives proclaimed in various exercises, does not mean the same approach of these philosophers to their solution.

## **Human nature**

According to Hobbes, nature has created men equal in relation to their physical and mental abilities. The difference between people is not so great, that's why there is no reason for a person to benefit for himself or herself. Mutual distrust stems from equality, as suggested by Hobbes. In human nature, Hobbes sees three main reasons of war: " So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel " First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory".

Hence it is clear that as long as people live without a common political structure keeping everyone in their fear, they are engaged in the war of all against all. When there is a war, nothing can be unjust. Strength and cunning in war are the two cardinal virtues. Just as Hobbes, John Locke (1632-1704) saw human mind and psyche as primary manifestations in human nature. If his predecessor focused on the negative qualities of man, Locke was inclined to think differently about the person. He saw that the individual is capable of self-discipline, and therefore described the natural state, not as a " war of all against all," but as the atmosphere of freedom, equality, independence, awareness of mutual responsibilities.

## **Nature of the state**

Thomas Hobbes believed that the natural state is opposed to the state, which is due to the transition to the instinct of self-preservation and reasonable desire for peace. The desire for peace, according to Hobbes, is the main natural law. Only force represented by a state can turn natural laws (desire for peace) into imperative in force. The state arises in two ways: as a

result of violence and because of the social contract. Hobbes prefers contractual origin of the state. By entering into a social contract a people dispossess all his natural rights to the sovereign.

Unlike Hobbes, who maximally aligned the concepts of the state and civil society, Locke distinguished them carefully. The person transmits the part of inherent rights to the civil society. For Locke, the concept of civil society and the concept of the rule of law are deeply connected with each other.

However, according to Locke, a person may be subject to the requirements of civil society and the power of the state only under certain critical conditions. In this context, it is important to remember the ideas of Locke about the need for separation of powers into three branches.

In order to enable, a state to perform its functions, Locke proposes and justifies the principle of separation of powers into legislative power, executive and judicial. Implementation and improvement of this principle are one of the most important tasks in building a modern state of law that ensures the inalienable rights of the individual. Locke pointed out the overriding role of the legislature.

The state is, according to Locke, a collection of people, combined in one unit under the aegis of the same set of general law, creating a court, competent to settle conflicts between them and punish the perpetrators.

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke presented two different versions of interpretation of the idea of "social contract" - the principle of coordination of interests and actions of people for the sake of establishing order in society. According to Hobbes, the ruler is outside the scope of the social contract, he is not bound by the contract, he establishes his own rules. John

Locke believed that ruler is party of the social contract, who undertakes obligations just like other parties. According to Hobbes, a means of directing people toward a common goal and keeping them from violate, is a state itself. Every person submits his will to the state. Hobbes compares state with Leviathan, the giant of Greek mythology. He believed that the power of the state should control not only the behavior of the person, but his views, including moral, religious and even scientific.

Another trend in the theory of the social contract goes back to Locke and political thought of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It used the theory of the social contract to justify the restriction of monarchical power on the part of society, creating theoretical assumptions of liberal democracy and constitutionalism. Locke's contribution lies in the fact that he gave a complete and systematic concept of the social contract, understood as a transitional stage from the natural state to civil society. Also, he substantiated the thesis of consent (consensus) as the main subject of this contract, pointed to property relations, political freedom and human rights as the fundamental principles of civil society and finally expressed these ideas in a clear and accessible manner, which contributed to their proliferation and transformation in the ideological postulates during the American and French revolutions, as well as in the subsequent liberal tradition of European political thought.

Thus, the teachings of these two philosophers not only laid the theoretical discussion on these important policy issues. History of England of the 17th century was the field of competition of political players, who wanted to implement certain ideas pf political rule into practice. It is worth

remembering that in times of English Civil War, when the pendulum swung towards republicanism, Thomas Hobbes, a supporter of absolute monarchy, was forced to flee to France, which was the best example of absolute monarchy at the times of Louis 14th. The same is true with John Locke. At various times, when the influence of monarchists intensified and his patron Lord Shaftesbury lost influence, he left the country. He finally returned to England after the victory the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the accession of William of Orange. It is important to note that the parliamentary and constitutional democracy, which was advocated by John Locke, began its development from the early 18th century. Thus, the doctrine of Hobbes and even if became to be known, but mostly describe the situation that existed before the revolutionary events of 17-18 centuries in Europe. We can witness the contrary situation with the ideas of Locke - he anticipated the enactment of a new political system. His ideas were destined to be applied in the future. His teachings influenced Montesquieu, who was one of the ideologists French Revolution.