

Hobbes theory of sovereignty philosophy essay



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Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan is a very influential book on the politics and government written during the turmoil of the English Civil War in the 17th century. The book is important in itself that in it Hobbes aims to formulate the essence of the power of the sovereign. Indeed, Hobbes's political philosophy is based on royalism and absolutism in governance. Moreover, Hobbes's political philosophy is concerned about the supremacy of the absolute power of the monarchy in both legislation and government.

On the other hand, Hobbes's doctrine of the absolute power and sovereignty is a political view which is based on the idea that the power of the monarch is stronger by making agreement between the kings and the subjects. And within this social contract everything is ruled and formulated by the absolute power or the sovereign with the aim of preserving the peace and order in the society. Therefore, Hobbes claims that the king or the sovereign is right when he punishes the subject for their committing crime against the state and the king. Accordingly Hobbes defends the deeds of the king against the subjects and preserves kings orders and ideas that king is right every time for his the chosen person by the society.

Hobbes thinks that the subjects should the obey the rules and orders of the sovereign under every conditions, and the sovereign is right and just in his decisions, ideas and rules for the sake of the goodness of the society.

Therefore the aim of the paper is to justify Hobbes's argument for the claim that he thinks that it is impossible for a sovereign to harm or act unjustly towards his subjects. Moreover, Hobbes this idea of sovereignty means that there are no any constraints on a sovereign as to how he treats his subjects. Hobbes defends, first of all, this view due to the fact that for securing self-

preservation, the main aim of the law of nature, which Hobbes set, is to enforce the subjects or the people to seek peace and order and to defend himself against the dangers of the dangerous commitment of the society. Thus, Hobbes's theory of political philosophy requires that people should give all their rights to the sovereign. Thus, it is clear from these statements and writings by Hobbes, it is only the king who has the authority and power to decide what will be necessary for the defense and preservation of the security of the people. Therefore, it is also clear from the statements that while the subjects in the society are lack of all their rights for the sake of the freedom and the order of the state, the sovereign's power and authority become unlimited with his will which is above everything including the law itself.

According to the twelve principles of the rights, Hobbes states that he rejects the idea of Separation of Powers. All of the powers are given to one man, the sovereign, and people are bound to the orders of the sovereign. According to the twelve principles, the subjects cannot change the form of government; the subjects give to the sovereign the right to act for them; the selection of sovereign is by majority vote; every subject is author of the acts of the sovereign, thus the sovereign cannot injure any of his subjects, and he cannot be accused of injustice; the sovereign cannot justly be put to death by the subjects; the sovereign has the right to do whatever he thinks necessary for the preserving of peace and security and prevention of discord; the sovereign prescribes the rules of civil law and property; the sovereign is judge in all cases; the sovereign makes war and peace as he sees fit; and he command the army; the sovereign choose counselors,

ministers, magistrates and officers; the sovereign rewards and punishes the people; and the sovereign establishes laws of honor and a scale of worth. This governmental structure leads to absolutism, which is contrary to the separation of powers in state. This kind of ruling and state has more disadvantages than the advantages.

Hobbes states that in the state of nature men were at war against each other. In the nature and condition of war every one is in war against every one. Here Hobbes claims that there are three principal causes of war which are competition, diffidence, and glory. Hobbes idea is that men were at war with each other as a result of chaos which is arisen from the lack of a ruler and a sovereign. Therefore Hobbes describes the problem of condition of human life as the absence of government before there were not any laws and rules to control people. Hobbes claims that people who act appetitive and brutally created a chaotic and war like situation. Therefore, according to Hobbes, life before the construction of the civil society and law was considered as continuous and total war.

Thus, for Hobbes the good is the commonwealth in which a sovereign saves people from the warring condition. While according to Hobbes, evil is located in the primitive society where is not ruled in accordance to laws by a sovereign. The interests of people are in warring state in such a state. However, when people give their rights to a sovereign, a sovereign prevents the warring nature among people. Thus Hobbes locates good in the people's giving their rights to a sovereign.