

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke

Comparison

Thomas Hobbes

John Locke

<p>What was their primary text on government?</p>		
<p>Are people naturally good or bad?</p> <p><i>State of Nature</i>: the hypothetical condition of what life would look like without government</p>		
<p>Why do people form government?</p> <p><i>Social Contract</i>: a hypothetical agreement between rulers and ruled</p>		
<p>What's the best kind of government?</p>		
<p>Who should make laws?</p>		
<p>What should laws protect?</p> <p><i>Natural rights</i>: the rights people supposedly have under natural law, that is, given by nature to all human beings.</p>		
<p>What should be done if those laws are broken?</p>		

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What was their primary text on government?	<i>The Leviathan</i>	<i>Treatises on Government</i>
Are people naturally good or bad? <i>State of Nature</i> : the hypothetical condition of what life would look like without government	In a society without laws people will cheat, steal and kill to get what they want. They will live in fear of their safety.	Our natural state is not one of war, rather moral principles govern our actions. People enforce the laws of nature.
Why do people form government? <i>Social Contract</i> : a hypothetical agreement between rulers and ruled	While people are not generally good, they are rational and therefore people will organize to get protection.	Even in a state of nature there will still be inequalities and disagreements over property. People therefore acknowledge the need for an authority to judge between people. People then give up the right to enforce their rights into the community at large.
What's the best kind of government?	Absolute monarchy will need to impose order on the chaotic state of affairs. The monarch should have power over the state and the church.	He rejects the idea of absolute monarchy. Leaders also live in a state of nature alongside the subjects.
Who should make laws?	The monarch alone should make laws to govern the people and decide on religious matters—what to believe, and who should teach. The sovereign creates security, rights, and justice.	He insists on the need for a separation of powers—executive, judicial, and legislative.
What should laws protect? <i>Natural rights</i> : the rights people supposedly have under natural law, that is, given by nature to all human beings.	The people obey the law because they prefer it over the state of violence and fear. The government should protect the life and property of people.	The laws of a society are not created to abolish freedom, but rather to protect life, liberty, and property.
What should be done if those rights are broken?	You can resist if the sovereign threatens your life or property, which is at the heart of the social contract.	If a sovereign does not protect the natural rights of the people, then they should rebel against the sovereign.