**First duty of government**

What is the first duty of government? On the surface, the question is asking about what people need and value most when having a government, but in deep, it asks about what people lose and miss more if living without the government. While some argue that people’s demand of security is far beyond desire of certain rights including property, liberty, health, upon closer inspection, we see that people’s fear of losing property and liberty are as strong as losing security. Therefore, I argue that government’s primary purpose is to secure these right

Firstly, In Thomas Hobbes’ opinion, man is purely selfish by nature, “every man is enemy to every man” (*Leviathan Ch 13).* And he proclaimed that a state of nature is a state of war, in which has “continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.” And each person would be motivated only by desires with the intention of maximizing his own utility. Therefore, the only reason a form of a social structure exists is people’s desire of **security**. However, I argue that his argument and logic are not sufficient. First of all, there are a lot of debate about whether people are inherently good or inherently bad, so the foundation of his theory is not solid. Secondly, Hobbes’ political theory separates politics and morals completely, and his “government” is not for any well-being of the people within it, but is solely derived from the presumption of “the state of nature”. His logic is that people are inherently selfish and equal, then they will enter the state of war, to secure themselves, people will give up certain rights for government protection of order. But in practice, how can a group of selfish and brutish people agree to give up all rights to form a government that can’t give them any welfare, can’t fulfil their any interest and desire? If people are truly what Hobbes says, isn’t it reasonable that they form a government where everyone has comparative freedom and rights to pursue their own interest? Thirdly, Hobbes claims that security can be guaranteed when every person obey the sovereign power: “To obey, is to honor, and consequently to disobey, is to dishonor”(*Leviathan Ch10*). The government’s only job is to provide security. Since the government will not provide any sort of thought, education, culture output, how to make sure that people are 100 percent obedient? In my opinion, government will not be cohesive if it does not have cultural identity, if it does not institute for broader purpose and secure people’s certain rights. As long as the government is not cohesive, how can it guarantee the security of the people? Clearly, the government only aim to providing security will fail to provide security in the end.

Besides, I argue that government should place the right to possession on the same level as right to life and health. In the state of nature, according to Locke, “Men being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal and independent” (*Locke, Ch10*), people are free to do anything, use any natural resources without permission – no one had “a private Dominion, exclusive of the rest of Mankind” over those resources(Locke, Ch 5). Such resource is mostly useless raw material for people survival and well-being unless people put in labor into it. The ownership to property is created by the related labor, ranging from simple act to production involving planning and effort. And such labor/property is supposed to be protected by the government. Why? First of all, as Locke wrote that “every man has a property in his own person”, which constituted the individual and “included one’s body, action, thoughts and belief” (*Locke, Ch5*). Therefore, life, liberty and estate are all included into his concept of property, so when we mention that primary purpose of government is to protect property rights, we are not merely referring to material objects, rather, we are referring the fundamental rights that are essential to our well-being and happiness. Secondly, the right to private property works to the advantage of whole society. Why? Back to “*Habachi”* example in class, suppose we live in a society that does not protect private property, in Hobbes state of nature, what will people do when the student who goes out to get “Habachi” comes back? People will rob her. Then she will not risk her life, put in effort to get that “Habachi”. It obviously unacceptable from my perspective. Therefore, more or less, we are all believer of Locke’s theory. If private property is not protected, there will be no chance people will be proactive and take initiative at work. The total revenue of the entire society will with no doubt decrease. Thirdly, in Locke’s government has more freedom, and it against monarchy. In Leviathan, Hobbes recognized three types of sovereigns – monarchies, aristocracies and democracies, but he expressed a clear preference for monarchies. And Hobbes think people in that monarchy have no right to change the form of government, no right to criticize it. By contrast, Hobbes rejected the concept of an absolute sovereign. Sovereign can be challenged by people and as people have duty to support and obey the government rule, they also have right to rebel against it (*Locke Ch 11*). In Leviathan, what people need to do is to obey and get security. In my opinion, Leviathan is more like a huge jail rather than a government. It would be painful to live in it.

To sum up, the government which only aims to provide security will in the end fail to provide security, it should be instituted among men for broader purpose, to secure our property rights that owned by ourselves.

**Thesis** 2: Playing the role of John Locke, defend this thesis: “Of course a part of the role of government is to provi­de security, but government is really instituted among men for broader purposes. The primary purpose of government is to secure certain rights that no one can take from us.”

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Therefore, as shown above, government only focus on providing security is not enough. Then I argue that without government, people will

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**Thesis** 1: Playing the role of Thomas Hobbes, defend this thesis: “The first duty of government is to offer security to its citizens. After all, that is why government is created in the first place.”

**Thesis** 2: Playing the role of John Locke, defend this thesis: “Of course a part of the role of government is to provi­de security, but government is really instituted among men for broader purposes. The primary purpose of government is to secure certain rights that no one can take from us.”

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讨论人性是善是恶这个问题，可不是儒家特有的。

现代早期的两个西方哲学家：托马斯·霍布斯（Thomas Hobbes）和约翰·洛克（John Locke）也都分别描述过人本性“向善”还是“向恶”。

在霍普斯看来（利维坦），人在“自然状态”之下可以说是“恶”的。最开始人与人的交流仅仅有一种方式：战争。只有在全面战争之后，人类才会意识到合同和政权的重要性，然后上缴自己的一部分权力。

在洛克（第二政府论）看来，霍布斯的描述不完全，在全面战争之前的时代，人类因为理解“自然法”、拥有“理性”，所以其实是有过和平自治的时代的。所以在洛克看来，人类可以说是向“善”的。

对于这两位西方哲学家来说，讨论人性是“善”还是“恶”都是为了实现政治目的：由人性能够推断出什么样的政府形式是最好的。

套用题主的语言，之所以会讨论人性是什么这个话题，诱因是为了解释政权、或者为了正当化某一种政治形态。逻辑是，如果人性如此，那政权就应该如此。

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