

# Social Contract Theory

1. Objectives
2. Administrivia
3. Social Contract Theory

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture you should be able to:

1. Describe Hobbe's state of nature and the rise of the Leviathan

1. No lecture on Wednesday
2. Office hours all week
3. Milestone Essay due MONDAY, June 29th

## June 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 ✓	24 ✓	25	26 ✓	27
28	29	30				

Essay Due

Sign up for a time-slot  
in google docs



Click on the icon to  
be taken to google docs

Anything Else? Anyone?



Assume we wake up tomorrow and discover that all forms of government in Canada have dissolved.

- There are no local governments
- There are no regional governments
- There are no provincial governments
- There is no federal government

And the USA hasn't figured this out yet....





Questions:

1. What would things be like if there was no state?
2. Would we be free?
3. Would we be motivated to form into civil society?
4. What power would the state have over us?

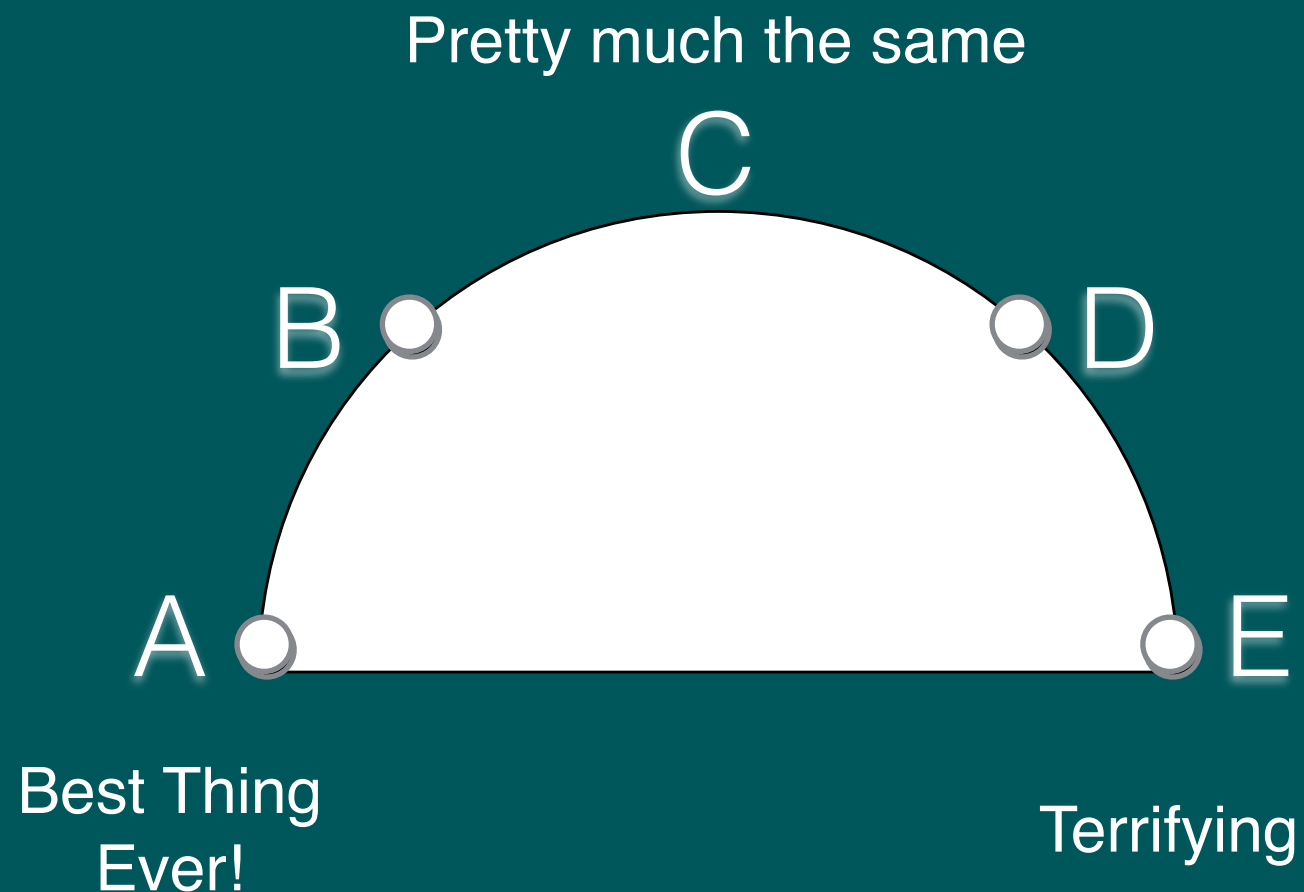




# Poll

## Question

What would things be like if there was no state?



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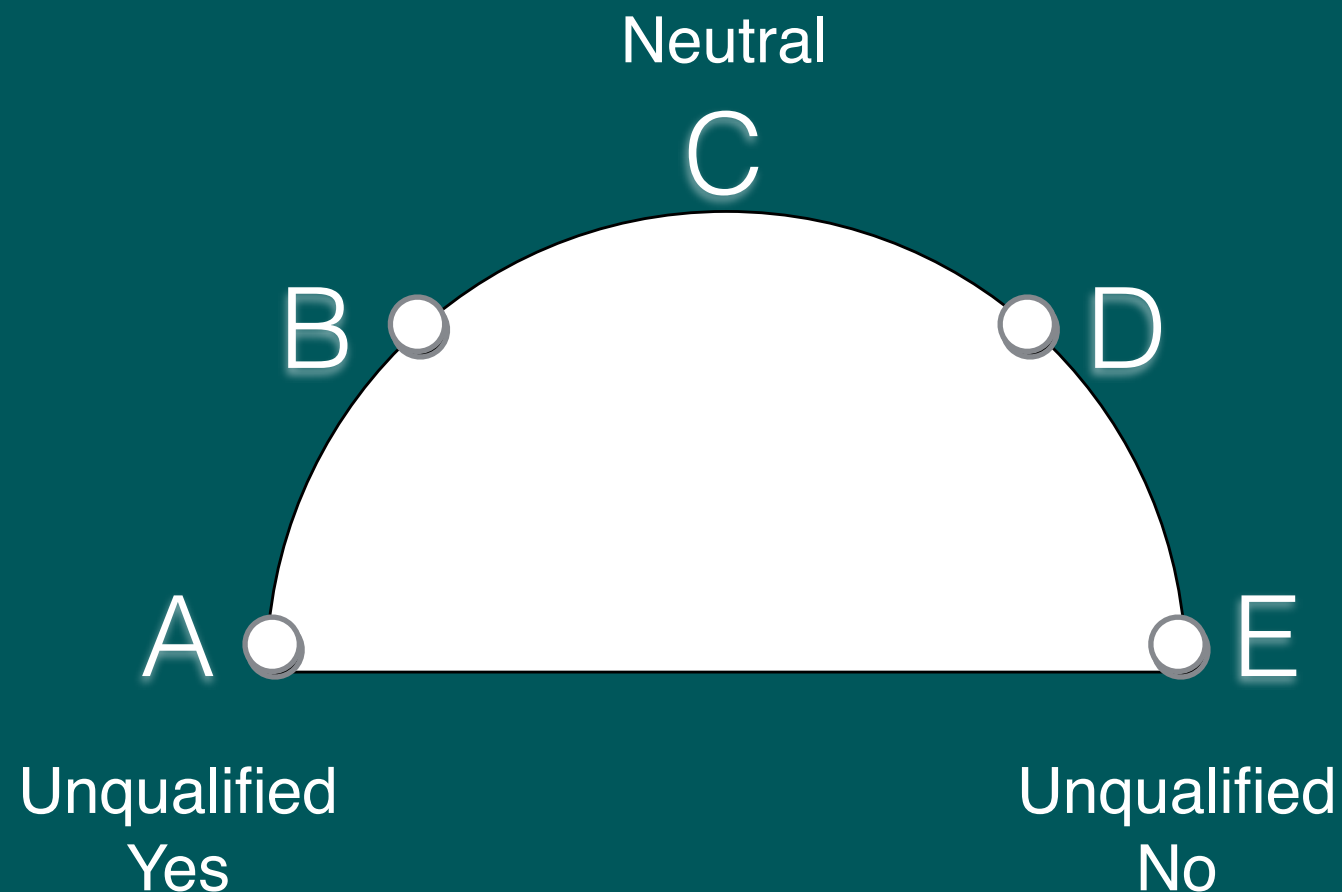




# Poll

## Question

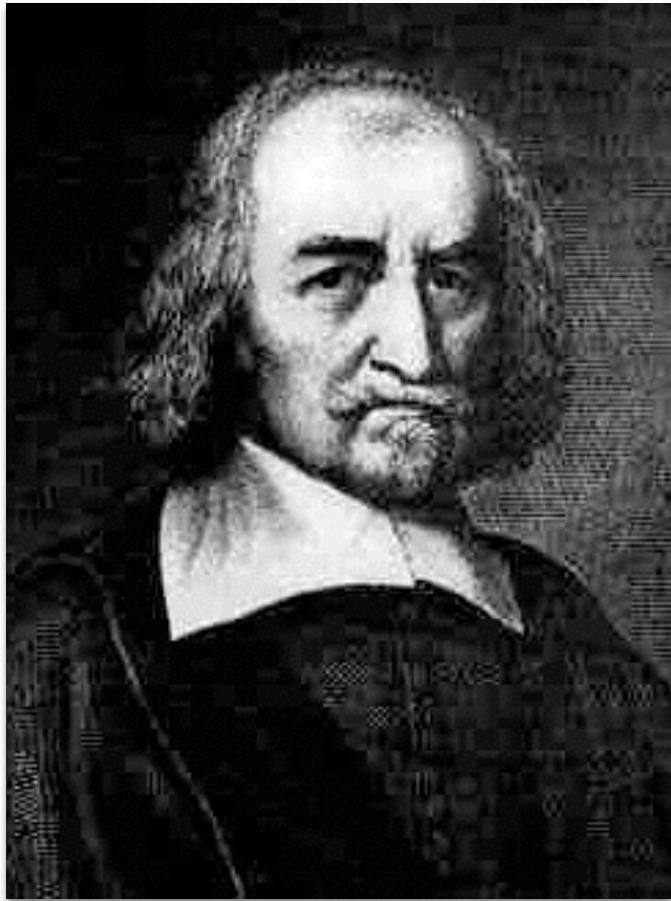
Would we be motivated to form into civil society?



Questions:

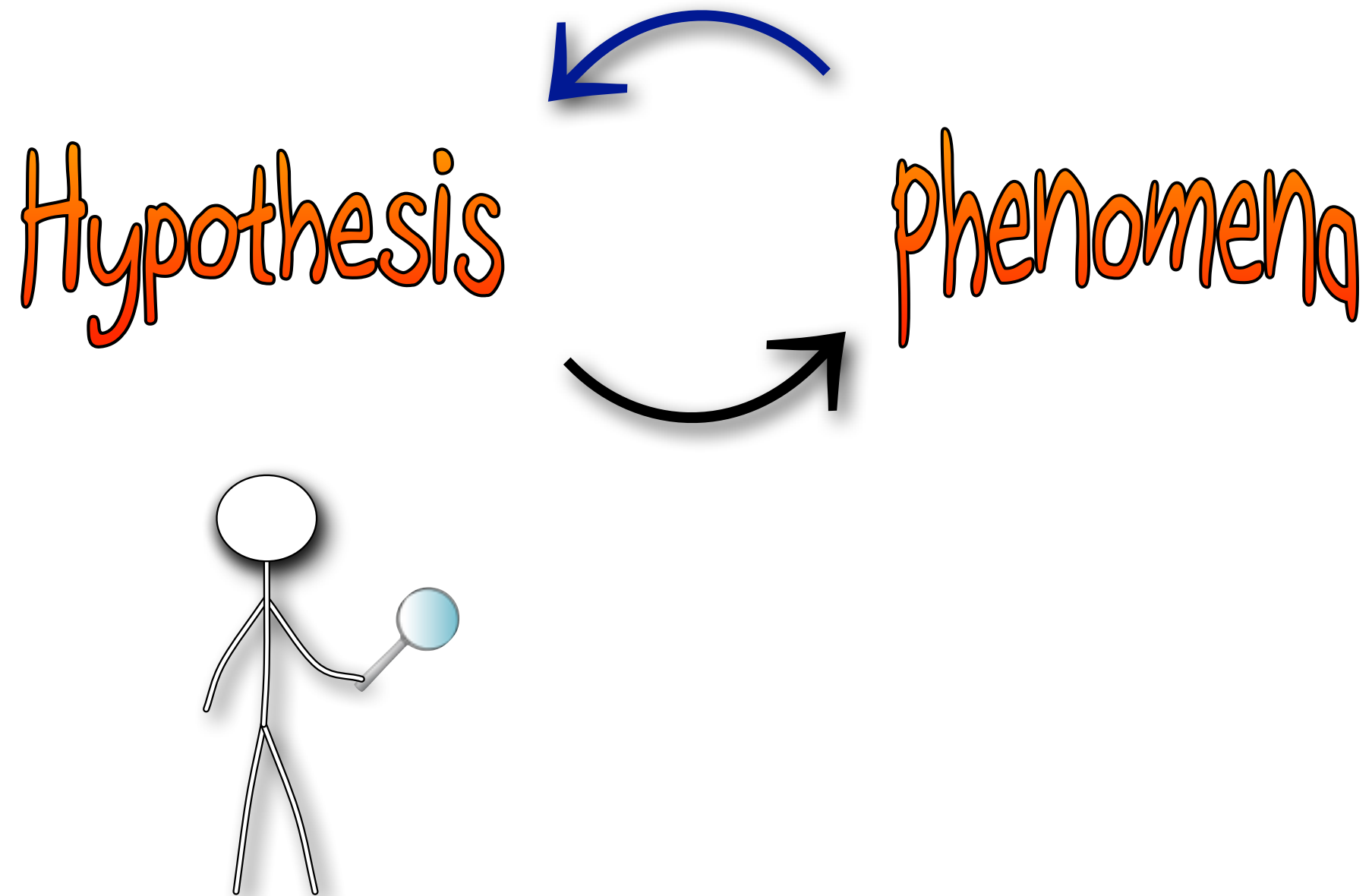
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Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

- British philosopher
- Oxford educated
- Exposed to the scientific method on his Grand Tour





## Philosophical Writing

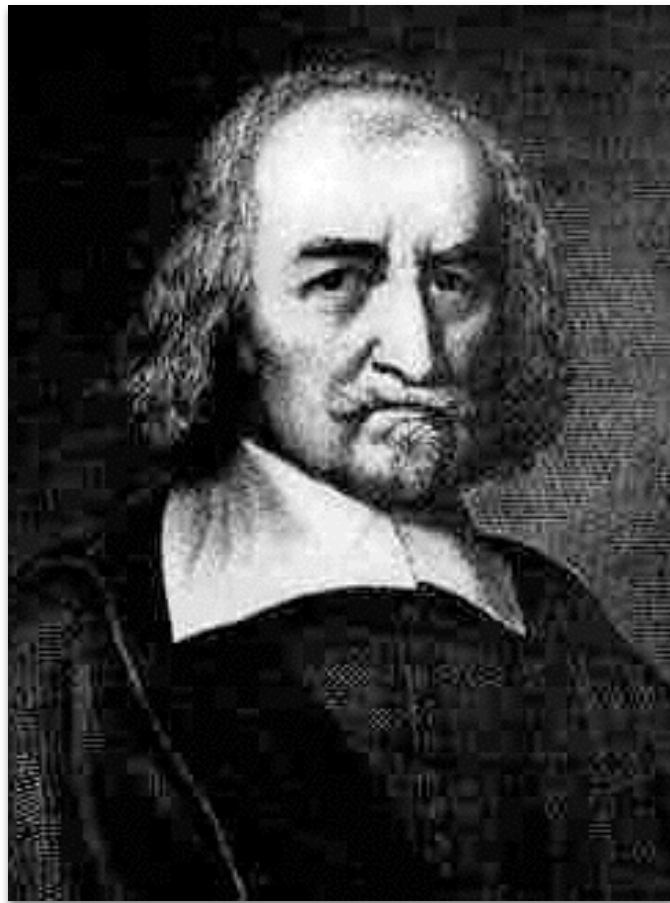


## Contradictions

## Religious Artifact

- Creed
- Church council
- Scripture
- Papal letter





Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

Philosophy has practical benefits

Philosophy contributes to humanity's material prosperity and to social peace and security

- The Spanish Armada 1588
- The Thirty Years war 1618
- The Anglo-French war 1626
- The English-Civil war 1642
- Overthrow of the monarchy

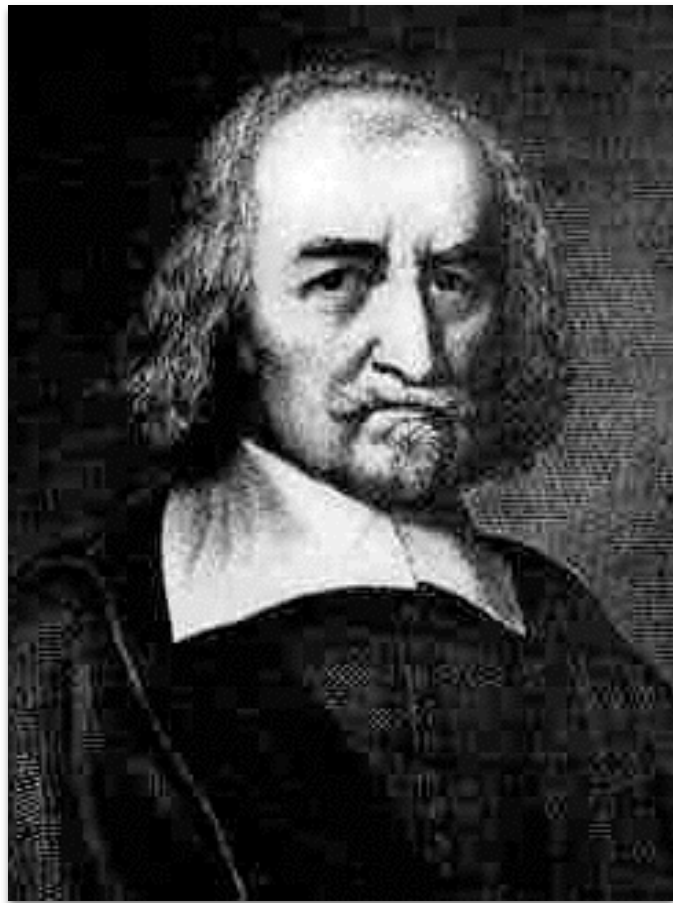


Hobbes was convinced that wars arise because we do not grasp what motivates us as political creatures

What is life like in the state of nature?

All people are equal!

Hobbes is not talking about  
physical or intellectual abilities



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

...yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he.

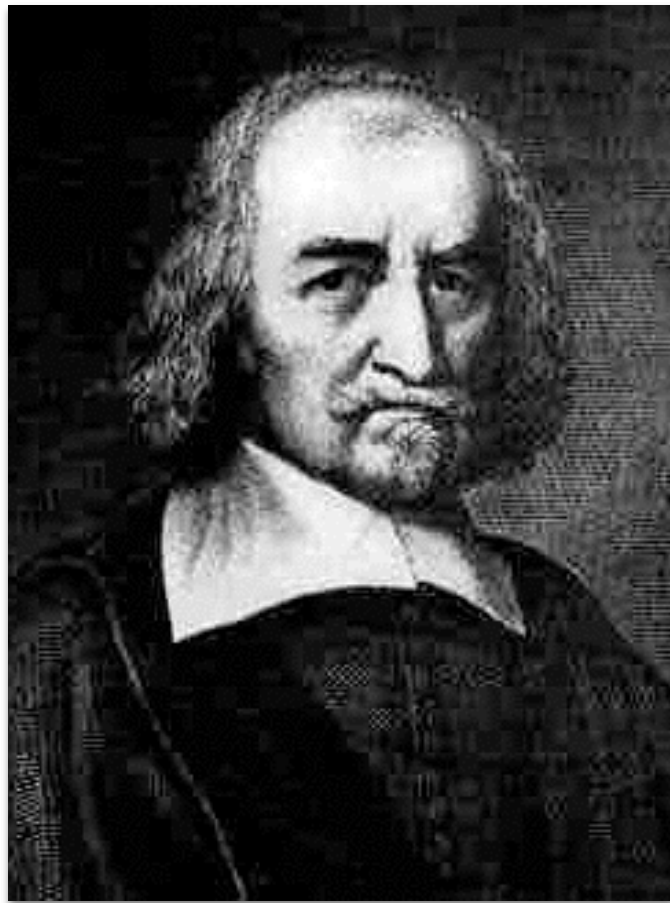
- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIII)

”

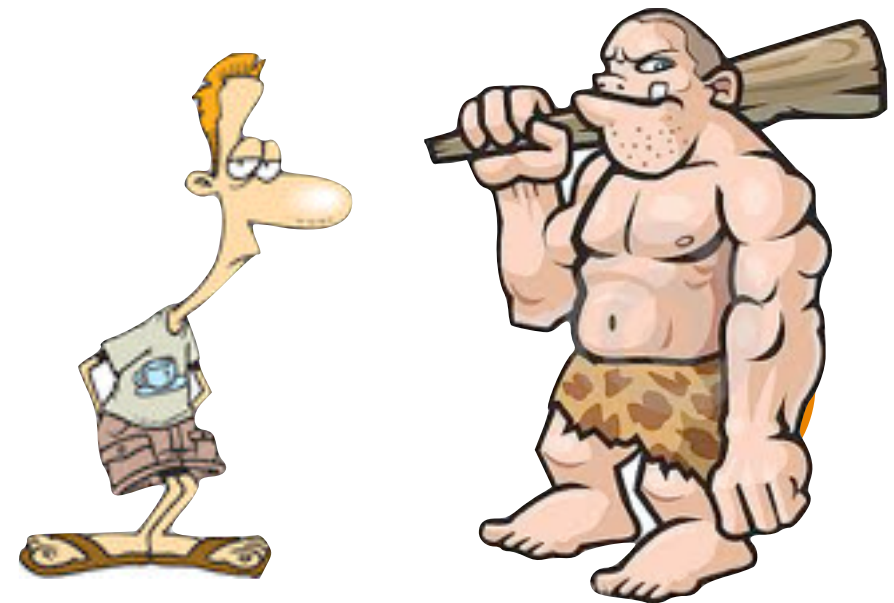


From this equality of ability,  
ariseth equality of hope in the  
attaining of our ends.

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIII)



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)





## 1) Competition

We cannot be content simply because we can never know what the future holds



## 2) Insecurity

Scarcity of resources and constant threat of attack thwart any sense of security

## 3) Glory

We want people to treat us how we think we should be treated

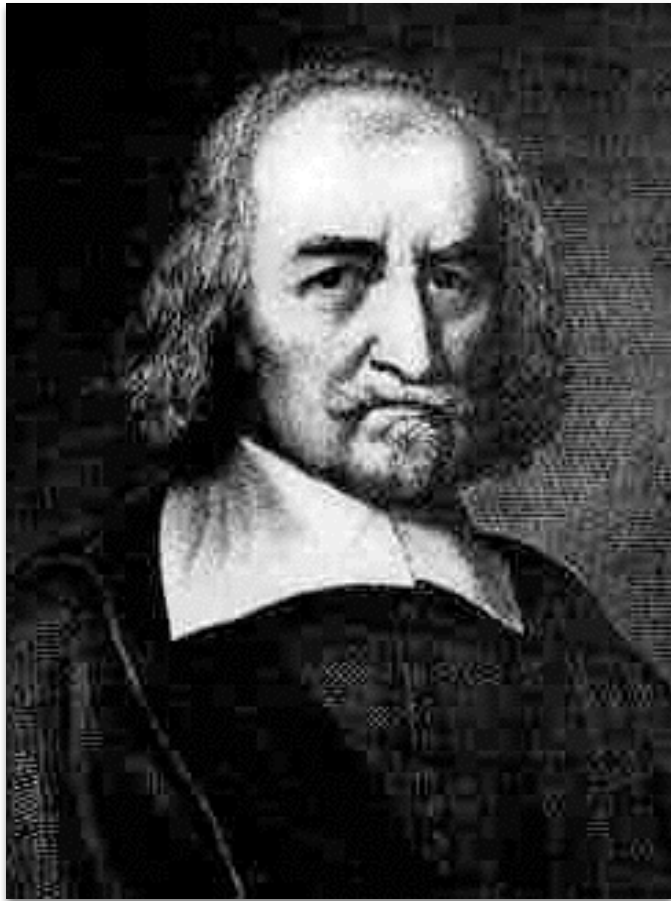
Confidence

+

Scarcity of  
Resources

=

Conflict



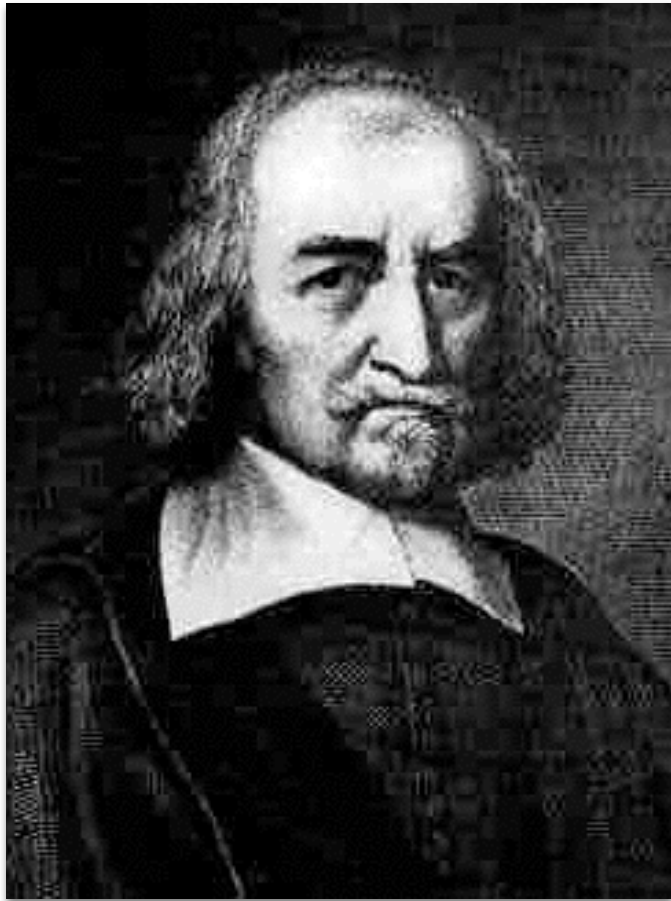
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

By Liberty, is understood,  
according to the proper  
signification of the word, the  
absence of externall  
Impediments...

- Hobbes, Leviathan (l. XIV)

”



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

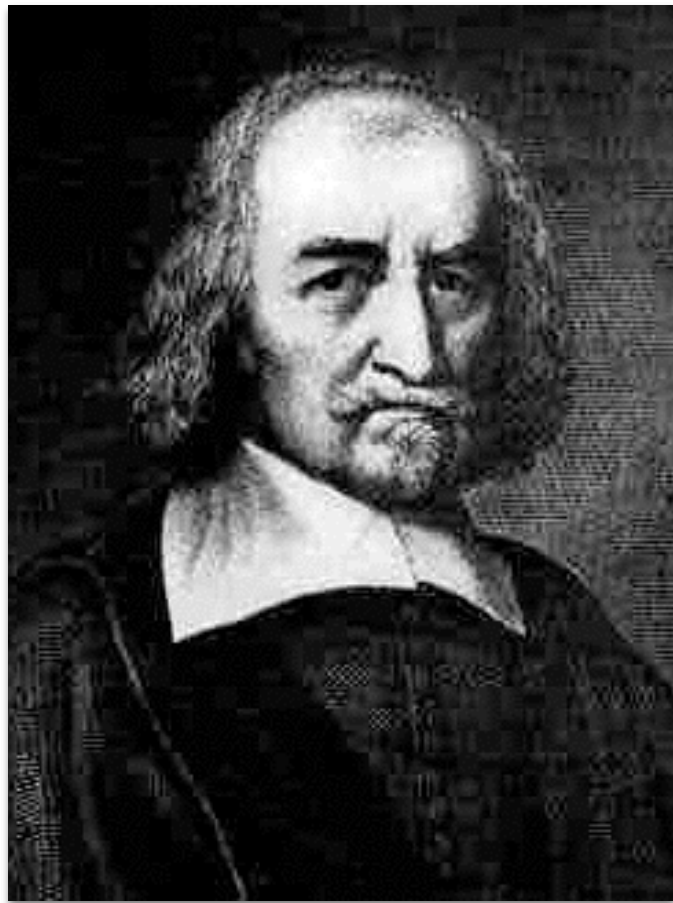
The Right of Nature...is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature...

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIV)

”

We can do whatever we want whenever we want wherever we want however long as we want

- We are bound by a law of nature
- It compels us to act in a way that maximizes self interest



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may see, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre.

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIV)

”

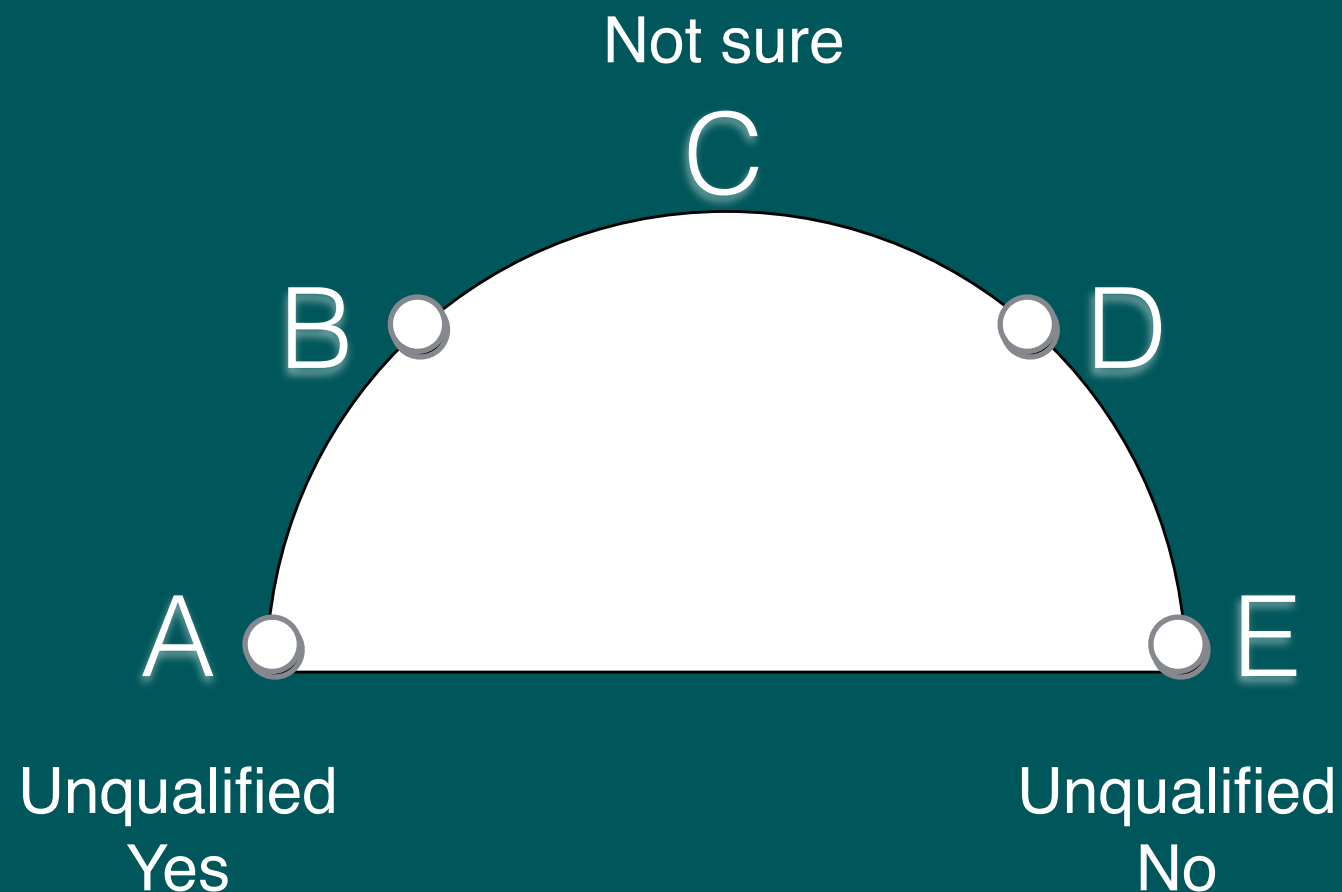


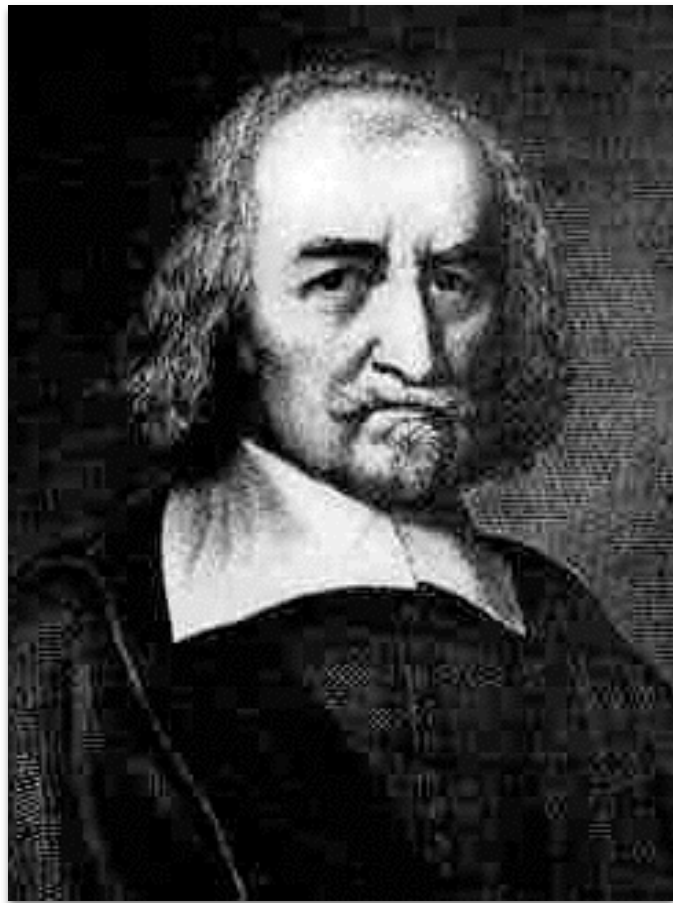


# Poll

## Question

Do you think it is possible to have private property in the state of nature?





Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man against every man.

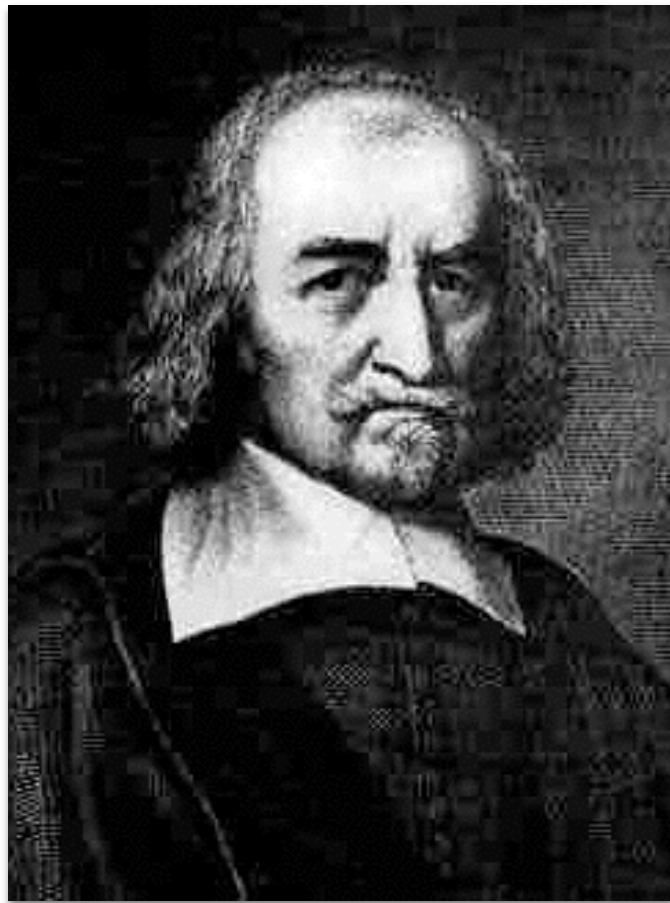
- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIII)

”

This is not necessarily a state of open warfare

But there won't be and can't be:

- commerce
- infrastructure
- education
- culture



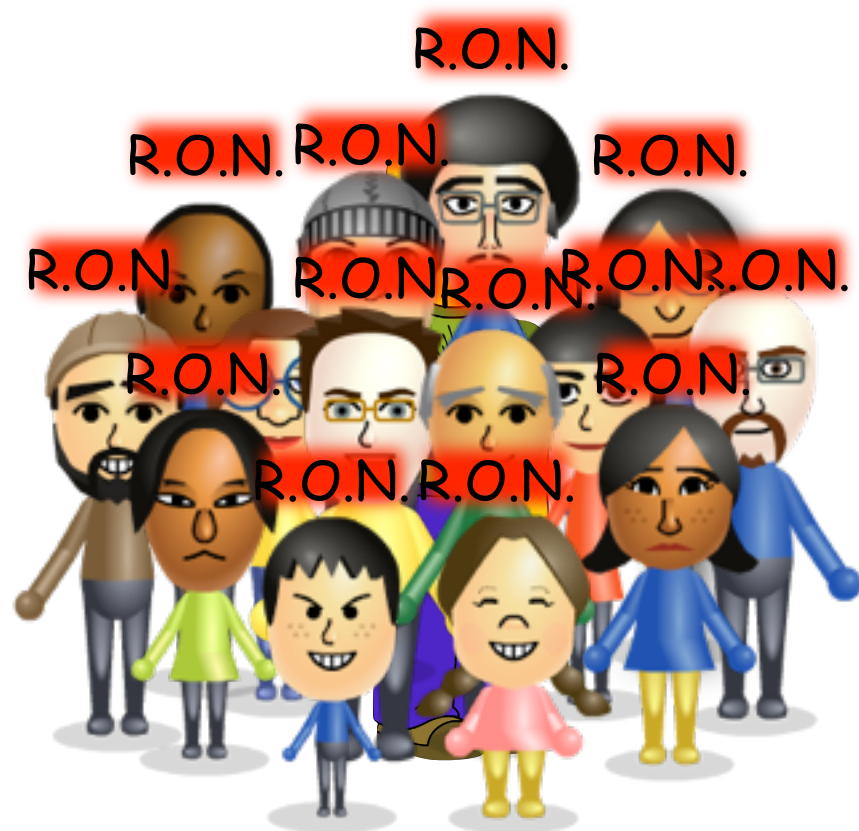
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

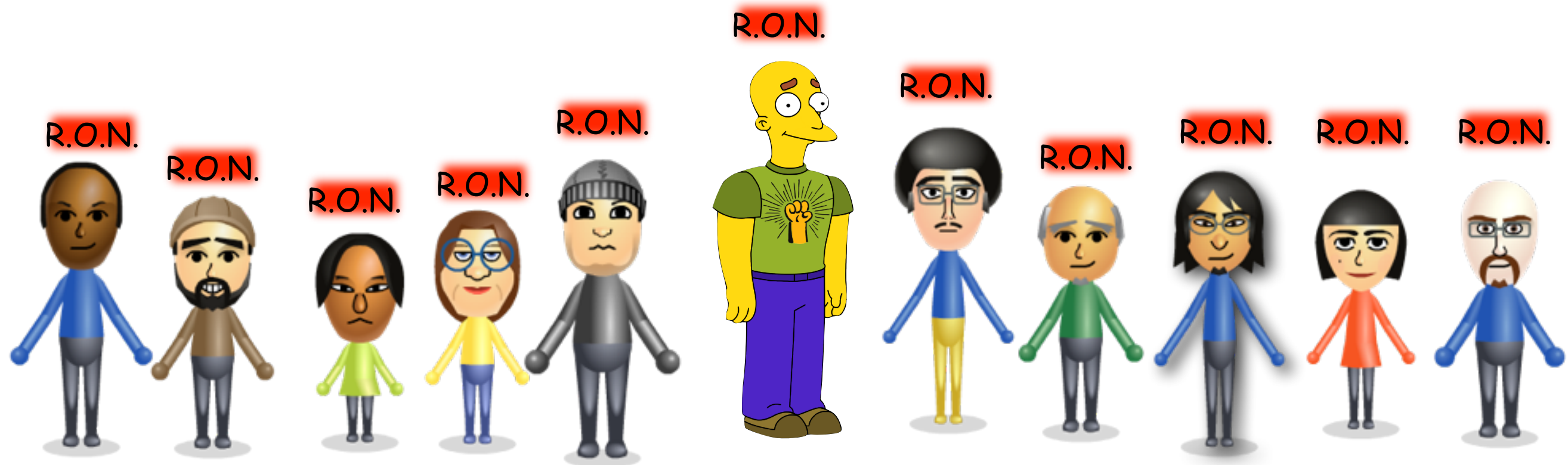
...that a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things: and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe.

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIV)

”



We make a pact:  
I'll give up my R.O.N  
if you give up your R.O.N







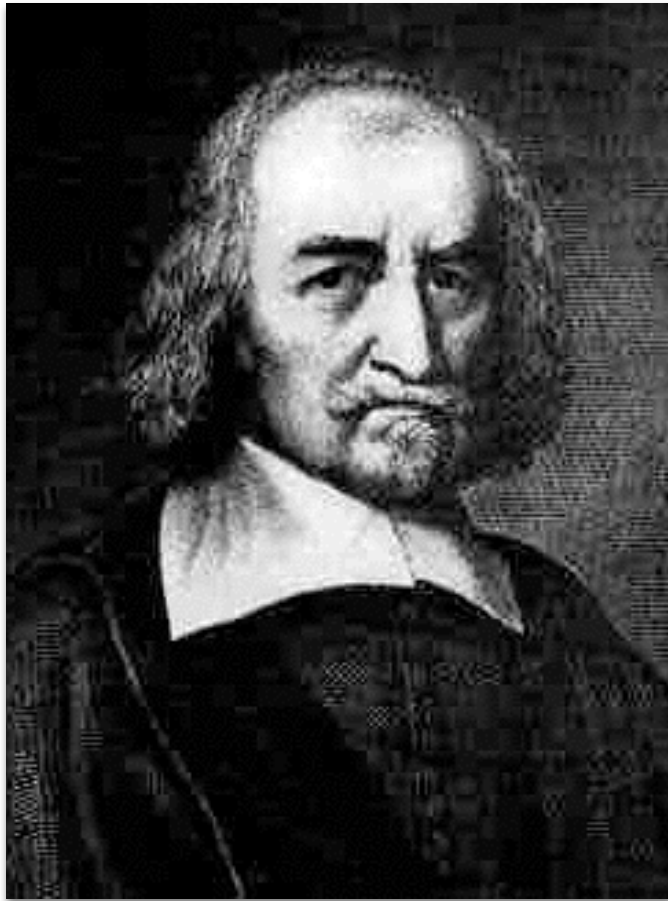
Russ Shafer-Landau

“

What's needed is a powerful person...whose threats give everyone excellent reason to keep their word.

- Text, p. 198

”



Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

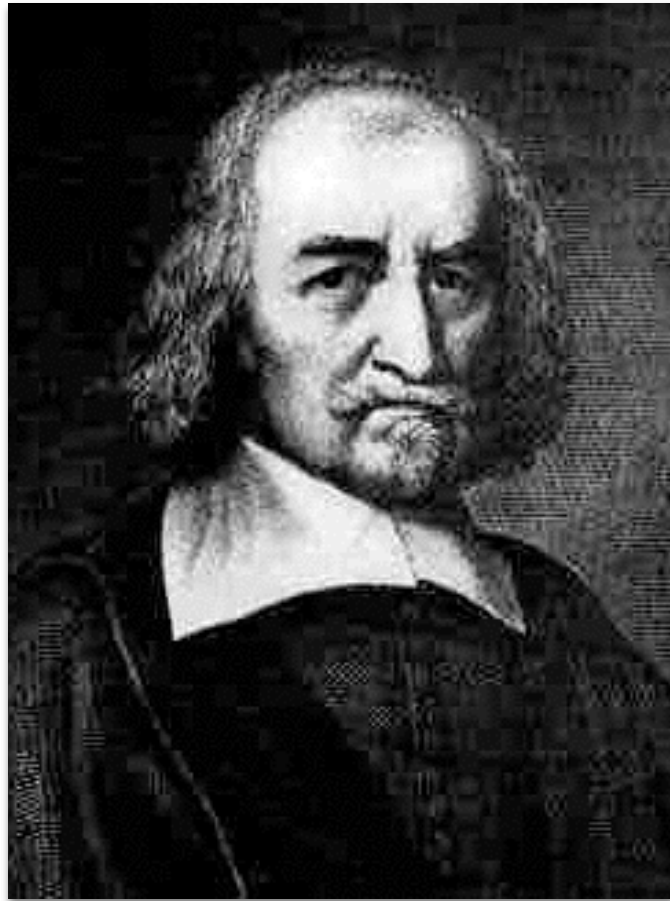
“

To lay downe a mans right to any thing, is to deuest himselfe of the liberty, of hindring another of the benefit of his own Right to the same.

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIII)

”





Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

“

For he that renounceth, or  
passeth away his Right, giveth  
not to any other man a Right  
which he had not before;  
because there is nothing to  
which every man had not Right  
by Nature...

- Hobbes, Leviathan (I. XIII)

”

- The sovereign is not created
- The sovereign is free from all obligation
- Social structure is now radically conventional
- Social structure is now voluntaristic





Russ Shafer-Landau

“

Starting with the assumption that we each are largely motivated by self-interest, and that it is rational to be that way, contractarianism tells us that we each do best for ourselves by agreeing to limit the direct pursuit of self-interest...

- Text, p. 194

”

“



Russ Shafer-Landau

...and accept a bargain that  
gets us a pretty decent life.

- Text, p. 194

”

Undermining social expectations may promote short term gains...but in the long term are not beneficial



# Poll

Undermining social expectations may promote short term gains...but in the long term are not beneficial

- A This is a conceptual claim
- B This is an empirical claim
- C I am not sure



		Me	
		(A) Lie	(B) Tell the truth
You	(A) Lie	1 , 1	3 , 0
	(B) Tell the truth	0 , 3	4 , 4

## Preference Ordering

4 A culture of trust

3 You have the advantage

1 Nobody believes anyone

0 You're the chump