

# Thomas Hobbes and International Relations: An assessment

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## Abstract

This article attempts to provide a correction to the exclusive realist interpretations of Thomas Hobbes. It makes the point that Hobbes is not as close to a realist understanding of international relations as it has been prevalently held. Given Hobbes's conception of man and the state of nature, the formation of Leviathan and the law of nature, it is here argued that Hobbes gives us a perception of international relations which is not always conflictual and comprises the adjustments of conflicting interests, leading to the possibility of alliances and cooperation in international relations.

*Keywords:* Man, the state, Leviathan, state of nature, law of nature.

## 1. Introduction

In International Relations (IR), Hobbes's politics has widely been considered to be providing a basis for the realist understanding of international relations<sup>1</sup>. Although Hobbes himself did not say much about the relations between states, in his words Leviathans or Commonwealths, his name, together with Machiavelli's, is cited almost in all treatments of what has come to be known as 'realism' in the academic IR. One may detect two ways in the use that the theorists of international relations have made of Hobbes's ideas. The first one is that Hobbes's theory of politics supplies a model of international

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<sup>1</sup> The origins of this article go back to the late Professor Muharrem Tünay's graduate class, *Classical Political Thought*, I attended in Fall 1987. I would like to record my thanks and commemorate his memory. An earlier version of this article has been published in *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (Summer 2006).

relations. The second one is that international relations do indeed seem to be similar to the relations among individual human beings that Hobbes depicts in the nature, or in the state of nature, which is a state of war. The students of IR have thus made use of Hobbes both in logical and descriptive terms.

As to the logical or model use, it is argued that the model Hobbes provided or the students of IR made of his writings is what has come to be called a realist model. Hobbes is seen as the central figure when it comes to the origins of realist school in IR. Furthermore, it is claimed that there are similarities and continuities between Hobbes's ideas and many realist scholars of IR in the twentieth century such as E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, to name but a few. In a widely read textbook of international politics we have been assured that the 'recent realist thinking derives especially from the political philosophies of the Italian theorist Niccolo Machiavelli and the English theoretician Thomas Hobbes' (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 1995: 22). Steven Forde is no less sure in arguing that Hobbes was 'the founder ... and a principal contributor' to the classical realist tradition (1992: 75). Identifying three traditions in modern international thought –namely realism, rationalism and revolutionism, Wight counted Hobbes among the great realists (1991: 17, 20). Beitz and Walzer have even taken the Hobbesian argument as constituting a 'paradigmatic case' for the realist students of IR, a paradigmatic case both of them want us to reject (Beitz, 1979: 8, 27-28; Walzer: 1977: 4). According to Hoffman, Hobbes's version of realism is the most radical formulation of that view and has a narrow focus (1981: 11, 14).

Continuities have been discovered from Hobbes's ideas to the writings of the twentieth century scholars. For instance, while Berki argues that there is continuity in 'the tradition of Realpolitik from Machiavelli and Hobbes to Thompson and Morgenthau' (1981: 142), Wight finds the basic arguments of Hobbes's *Leviathan* and E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* to be the same. For Wight, 'E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* ... is essentially a brilliant restatement of the Hobbesian themes' (1991: 6, 7; 1966: 121). Similarly, Bull considers Morgenthau's work as 'an attempt to restate the view of international relations contained in the works of Thomas Hobbes' and he further adds that Hobbes's views have been 'refurbished in the writings of E. H. Carr, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Morgenthau, Herbert Butterfield' (1981: 717, 719). Vincent and Hanson identify a distinct and recognizable 'Hobbesian tradition' in the twentieth century

international relations (Vincent, 1981; Hanson, 1984). No need to extend these examples. There seems to be a general conviction among many students of IR to regard Hobbes to be one of the forefathers of the realist model.

Hobbes is also used in order to describe the present international relations. It is a description derived from Hobbes's conception of the state of nature, the natural condition that men assumed to have lived before the establishment of body politic, Leviathan. In the state of nature, men lived without a common authority to keep them in peace and each man only took care of himself and there was the constant possibility of war. I shall deal with Hobbes's conception of the state of nature later. Let me first give some examples of how the students of IR depicted the present international relations similar to Hobbes's state of nature. The Hobbesian tradition, Vincent tells us, characterizes international relations as such: 'International politics is a struggle for power; war is inevitable in the international anarchy; there is no right and wrong, only competing concepts of right; there is no society beyond the state; international law is an empty phrase' (1981: 93). 'There is no such thing as international society' (Wight, 1966: 92; 1991: 32). 'No ethical standards are applicable to relations between states' (Carr, 1964: 153) 'International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power' (Morgenthau, 1960: 27) 'Coercion is and always has been inseparable from all politics' (Aron, 1973: 451). It is well-known that Waltz characterized international system as a 'self-help' system (1979). The epithet 'Hobbesian' is commonly used to designate the structure of international relations where there is the lack of authority and cooperation, disorder is rule and order is exception, the actors always try to maximize their own interests at the expense of the others and peace is temporary and can only come if there is a common or hegemonic power, or if the balance of power is maintained.

By letting Hobbes speak for himself, I shall argue that this so-called logical and descriptive account of Hobbes in IR does not do justice to him.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, I shall first review Hobbes's conception of man and based upon this conception his account of the formation of the Leviathan, that is, body politic or commonwealth. Then how Hobbes characterized international relations and

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<sup>2</sup> In presenting my argument, I shall mainly rely on Hobbes's *Leviathan*, published in 1651, which expresses his ultimate standpoint, though there may be some references to his two earlier political texts as well, namely *The Elements of Law* (1640) and *De Cive* (1642).

implications for IR of his politics will be reviewed. Finally I shall conclude that Hobbes, unlike Machiavelli whom could rightly be considered as a realist, may be considered as more of a rationalist than a realist.

## 2. Man and the state

Hobbes begins his account of the formation of the body politic, the state, with a conception of man. In the initial chapters of *Leviathan*, man is basically described as just one kind of animal. Yet he is an animal which is different from other animals, by his passions and reason. His passionate side is not really different from other animals. As in all animals, the passions of man push him towards the things that appear to be pleasurable and away from those things that appear to be painful. Man is thus drawn towards those things that give pleasure and retreated from those that give displeasure. This endeavour, 'when it is towards something which causes it, is called Appetite or Desire...And when the endeavour is fromward something, it is generally called Aversion' (Hobbes, 1651/1983: 23). This account of desire and aversion as imminent motions of man toward and away from something does not really differentiate him from other animals. However, it is significant for two reasons: First, Hobbes uses it when he defines the 'good' and 'evil'. In his words: 'But whatsoever is the object of any mans Appetite or Desire; that is it, which he for his part calleth Good: And the objects of his Hate, and Aversion, Evill' (Hobbes, 1651/1983: 24). There is thus no such thing good or evil as separate from their usage by man. The terms good and evil are relative and depend upon the persons who use them. It is contextual; nothing is inherently good or evil. Secondly, the account is remarkable in terms of depicting man as full of activity; man thus does not, as rightly observed by Forsyth, have a static 'essence' or 'being' (1988: 130). He is an active, assertive and dynamic being.

Although Hobbes characterizes man's passions to be animalistic, there is, he argues, one passion/desire that distinguishes man from other animals, namely curiosity, -the 'desire to know why and how'. Unlike other animals, man, by getting pleasure out of the continuous production of knowledge, was able to exceed the imminent pleasures (Hobbes, 1651/1983: 26) Curiosity together with reason distinguish man from other animals. Man has thus both passion and deliberation (1651/1983: 28) Man is drawn towards and away from the things, but he has got the capacity to calculate the effects of his motions. However, Hobbes makes it that 'the passions of men are commonly

more potent than their reason' (1651/1983: 98). Reason here means taking into account the rights of others, calculating the choices. Yet, man's passions, which by definition do not involve the rights of others, are more influential than his reason. This paves the way for his famous conception of the 'state of nature'.

On the way to constructing the concept of the state of nature, Hobbes makes some additional assumptions and observations about man. First comes man's the 'right of nature'. In his earlier works the right of nature is defined as man's natural underived right to all things: In *The Elements of Law* we read as follows: 'Every man by nature hath right to all things, that is to say, to do whatsoever he listeth to whom he listeth, to possess, use, and enjoy all things he will and can' (Hobbes, 1640/1969: 72). In *Leviathan*, the right of nature is defined as 'the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto' (1651/1983: 66). In both definitions what is common is that man has the right and capacity to decide what is right and good. The difference is that while in earlier works this right is vaguely linked to man's survival, in *Leviathan* man's right of nature is based upon the preservation of his own life. When Strauss argues that, for Hobbes, self-preservation is the only absolute right and all other rights derive from that right (1965: 12-13), he indeed makes the right point. To Hobbes, self-preservation is the basic right and the strongest desire of man and each man is capable of taking his own decisions and making distinctions between what is right and what is wrong. In other words individual is a sovereign being. It should here be noted that Hobbes's man does not just simply want to live, but he wants to live well. He has 'desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living' (1651/1983: 66).

The second assumption/observation Hobbes makes about man is that all men are naturally equal in terms of mental and bodily capacities. Men are physically equal in the sense that 'the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others'. Men are mentally equal in the sense that 'howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; Yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves' (1651/1983: 63). Hobbes acknowledges the differences between men both in terms of mental and bodily capabilities, yet for him these differences are not so considerable

given the basic equality he defined as such. If all men are equal and each man has a natural right to all things in order to preserve his life and have a good life as well, then, how is this guaranteed?

Man assures his survival and obtains a good life by his power and 'the power of a man...is his present means, to obtain some future apparent good' (1651/1983: 43). Hobbes argues that each man seeks for power not just to assure for his life and obtain a good life, but also to make it permanent. The 'object of mans desire, is not to enjoy once onely, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire'. Based on this, Hobbes boldly declares: 'So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death. And the cause of this, is not alwayes that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more' (1651/1983: 49-50). This is indeed the passage that led to the realist interpretation of Hobbes. Similar to man's endless and restless desire for power, states are assumed to be in a situation of constant struggle for power in the international arena. However, it should be kept in mind that the endless desire for power, in Hobbes's view, results from not the greedy and expansionist character of man, but from the fact that he does not feel secure with what he already has. It is obvious that the source of this feeling is the equality of men.

Based on such characterizations, it is widely argued that Hobbes conceives a common human nature (Hanson, 1984: 339), and man's nature is apolitical, asocial, in other words, selfish and self-interested (Strauss, 1965: 3). It is indeed true that Hobbes conceives a common human nature. In the Introduction of *Leviathan*, he speaks of 'the similitude of *Passions*, which are the same in all men, *desire, fear, hope*' and in the Conclusion, of 'the known naturall Inclinations of Mankind' (1651/1983: 2, 390). From the Introduction to the Conclusion, we are very often told common nature, common desire, common passions, and common fear of men. Although Hobbes conceives a common human nature as such, it must here be noted that his conception of man is not a static being; there is nothing inherent or essential in man, except the desire to preserve his own life and have a better life.

On the basis of such a conception of man, Hobbes builds his conceptualization of the state of nature. Since all individuals are

selfish, self-seeking and self-interested, each trying to promote his own self-fulfillment, and all have equal mental and physical ability; then, no one can be secure and as long as there is not a 'common power to keep them in awe' and to regulate their behavior, they would be in constant war. This situation, the state of nature, is really a state of war, 'a war of every man against every man'. It is worth to quote here the much-cited description:

'during the time men lived without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as if of every man against every man... the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary... In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by the Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitarity, poore, nasty, brutish and short... The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice... there be no Propriety, no Dominion, no *Mine* and *Thine* distinct; but onely that to be every mans, that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it' (1651/1983: 64-66).

This description of the natural condition of men before the establishment of a common power, i.e. the Leviathan, does not refer to a historical fact. It is not the actual fighting, but its constant possibility. Indeed Hobbes clearly states that 'there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this' (1651/1983: 65). The state of nature is then for Hobbes a logical postulate developed in order to account for the establishment of the body politic. Though it is not conceived as an actual situation, but a logical postulation, how Hobbes conceptualized such a condition has been the subject matter of a dispute among the students of politics. While some argued that Hobbes just reflected the 'anarchy of the market, which tends to be the form of all social relations in capitalist society' (Macpherson, 1965: 174); others disagreed with this view contending that the seventeenth century England did not have the characteristics of a capitalist market

society (Thomas, 1965: 236). No doubt it is true that Hobbes reflected his time. The seventeenth century England could not have had an anarchy of the capitalist market, however, it could certainly be characterized with an anarchy of the political, religious and economic crisis among various segments of the society, a crisis that culminated in the English Civil War of 1640s, which Hobbes himself experienced. At the end of *Leviathan*, Hobbes expresses these circumstances when he tells us that the book had been ‘occasioned by the disorders of the present time’ (1651/1983: 391). Moreover, Hobbes was very much familiar with the Classical Greek authors who had this notion of conflict before the government. As if echoing Hobbes’s conception of the state of nature, Plato, for instance, makes a general observation that ‘humanity is in a condition of public war of every man against every man, and private war of each man with himself’ (Plato, 1964: 626d). Similarly, when saying that competition, diffidence (mistrust) and glory are the principal causes of conflict in the nature of man (Hobbes, 1651/1983: 64), Hobbes clearly relies on Thucydides, for whom the motives of the Athenians to expand were fear, honour and interest (Thucydides, 1910: 49-50).<sup>3</sup> Whether he derived it from the observation of his time or the writings of classical authors, what is significant for Hobbes is that the state of nature is a conceptual tool to explain the emergence of the Leviathan. How does he do it or what makes men to leave the state of nature and establish a common power?

If each man ardently pursues his own interests, as they do in the state of nature, then, it leads to the destruction of the very basis of man’s interests, i.e. his life itself. In a war of every man against every man, given the mental and physical equality of men, man is doomed to self-destruction. Hobbes argues that the same passions that led men to the state of nature –fear of death and the desire for commodious living- get him out of it. This is the beginning of the way out of the state of nature. Then comes man’s reasoning capacity. The experience of the state of nature makes man to use his capacity for reasoning and this leads to the formulation of what Hobbes calls the ‘Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement’. The articles of peace are nothing but the laws of nature or the principles of the Natural Law, which men find out through his reason. The principles or articles are those which are required for the self-preservation and commodious living of men if they are to coexist (Hobbes, 1651/1983:

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<sup>3</sup> I must here note it that Hobbes translated Thucydides’s *History of the Peloponnesian War* to English.

66). The laws of nature are actually the laws of human co-existence. In chapters 14 and 15 of *Leviathan*, Hobbes lists nineteen of them and in the Conclusion he adds a twentieth. He sums up the laws of nature in the principle of 'doing to others, as we would be done to' (1651/1983: 87, 144).

Man's passions of the fear of death and the desire to live a good life and his reasoning capacity make man to seek for the way out of the miserable condition of the state of nature and to form the laws of co-existence. If man is capable of formulating and agreeing upon some rules of co-existence, then, why to create a commonwealth/Leviathan? First of all, the laws of nature do not abolish man's the right of nature. Secondly, Hobbes repeatedly makes it that covenants/contracts without a common power cannot be expected to be effective (1651/1983: 69-70, 74, 87)) When there is no common power with force and right sufficient to compel men to perform their contracts, the passions of men could easily lead to the breach of promises. Men therefore come together and give up their freedom and the right to govern themselves and submit to a sovereign, state, or society in return for the security of natural rights. By submitting a sovereign each man transfers his natural right to it - Leviathan. As seen, for Hobbes, the body politic is a means for the self-interest of man; it was deliberately created by men. The state is created in order to guarantee the conditions for man's survival and a peaceful better life. The Hobbesian state comes into being out of the dual need for security and welfare.

Here, the important thing is that the individual gives up his freedom and natural rights on the condition that others do the same. They come together and contract. Hobbes expresses this as such:

'I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assemble of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner. This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH, in Latin CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that Mortal God, to which we owe under the Immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Common-Wealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is inabled to forme the wills of them all, to Peace at home, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad' (1651/1983: 89-90).

This is how the Leviathan has been created. It is now better to note some points regarding the individual and the Hobbesian Leviathan –the state.

Firstly, for Hobbes, the individual is ontologically prior to the state/society. The state is deliberately constructed and it is an ‘artificial body’. The individual human being is, on the other hand, a real being, capable of deciding by and for himself. Here we see that Hobbes disagrees with Aristotle who considered the state to be prior to the individual and to be a natural, not a constructed, being. That Hobbes considered the individual as ontologically prior to the state is quite obvious from his writings. As Strauss pointed out (1965: 15), the contention that there had been a state of nature which antedated civil society clearly shows the primacy of the individual.

Secondly, the ground for the construction of society or the state is the individual self-interest. Society/state is conceptualized as a means to this end. Men created the state only because the state of nature was unbearable. The state was constructed in order to provide men with internal peace and protect them against the external enemies. Then, the legitimacy and *raison de’tat* of a state are based upon whether it fulfills these tasks. Men are expected to obey the sovereign/state so long as it is capable of delivering those services, namely conditions of a secure and peaceful life. Hobbes argues that if a sovereign is conquered by another sovereign, the individuals can withhold their obedience and transfer it (1651/1983: 116). When government does not possess sovereignty or has lost it, obedience is no longer required, because, without sovereignty, it can not protect the rights of its subject.

Thirdly, Hobbes Leviathan is sovereign, because man gives up his sovereignty in the formation of the state. Sovereignty is for Hobbes is both actual and contractual or legal. The state achieves sovereignty with the covenant of all men. Sovereignty of the state is just the projection of the natural right of man into the Leviathan. The ‘Libertie of the Common-wealth [is] the same with that, which every man then should have, if there were no Civil Laws, nor Common-wealth at all’ (1651/1983: 112). Individuals are supposed to obey the commands of the sovereign, if they are to peacefully co-exist. Though sovereignty is based upon the covenant, it must be actual, because, ‘Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all... For he that performeth first, has no assurance the other will performe after; because the bonds of words are too weak to

bridle mens ambition, avarice, anger, and other Passions, without the feare of some coercive Power' (1651/1983: 87, 70-1).

Hobbes sovereign has effective authority and it is therefore indivisible, no mix government, nor an autonomous church. The governor must be one, if there is more than one ruler, then, it may lead to factions and civil wars between 'the *Church* and the *State*, between *Spiritualists* and *Temporalists*, between the *Sword of Justice* and the *Shield of Faith*' (1651/1983: 252-253). However, for Hobbes, sovereignty is not absolute. Man had absolute sovereignty via his natural right, yet, even it had been limited by the very condition of the state of nature. The state's sovereignty is limited, not just by the existence of other states, but also by the covenant on which it is based. Individual natural rights constitute the basic constraints upon the Hobbesian sovereign. If a sovereign does not provide the protection of individual-natural rights or commands their violation, the individual has the right to disobey. In Hobbes's words: 'If the Sovereign command a man... to kill, wound, or mayme himselfe; or no to resist those that assault him; or to abstain from the use of food, ayre, medicine, or any other thing, without which he cannot live; yet hath that man the Liberty to disobey' (1651/1983: 114). This is the reason why some argued that Hobbes's sovereign is a weak one (Warrender, 1957: 317).

Finally, the chief purpose in the construction of the state is to assure peace. When presenting his description of the state of nature in his earlier work, *De Cive*, Hobbes writes that 'no man can esteem a war of all against all to be good for him' and tells us that the overriding purpose of his exposition is to show us 'the highway to peace' (1642/1836-45: 12). In his mature work, the fifth law of nature is declared to be '*that every man strive to accommodate himselfe to the rest*' and 'the fundamental Law of Nature... commandeth to *seek Peace*' (1651/1983: 78-79). Hobbes did not glorify the war as Hegel, for instance, later did.

To sum up so far, Hobbes's conception of man has it that man is the primary being in the world and the state/Leviathan is just a means to peace and interests of the individual. How about the relations between states, does he, as claimed, presents an anarchical and conflictual situation similar to the picture depicted in the realist school of IR? In other words, does he provide us with a means to international/world peace?

### 3. Relations between states

As already said, Hobbes did not write much about the relations between states. He basically dwelt on the domestic politics and tried to show the security and welfare to be obtained from constitutional order. Yet, he had enough reason to talk about international relations. Bull indicated that in Hobbes's time as in ours there were interdependence between civil conflicts and inter-state conflicts, foreign interventions in the civil conflicts and religious loyalties linking the parties across state frontiers (Bull, 1981: 718). In other words, the Hobbesian Leviathan was not in an isolated situation and took place together with other Leviathans. Hobbes himself was indeed aware of this international interactions and interdependences. In his history of the English Civil War, *Behemoth*, he mentions the links of various groups in England with those in Scotland, the Low Countries and France (Hobbes, 1680/1969: 144). His silence on the relations between the states may be explained by his primary interest in domestic politics. As well-known, until the twentieth century, none of the great political thinkers of the past devoted himself primarily to the study of international relations. Hobbes was by no means an exception.

However, he himself did depict international relations as a state of nature. The much-cited passage is worth to quote again:

'But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings and Persons of Sovereigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns, upon the Frontiers of their Kingdomes; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a postulate of War. But because they uphold thereby, the Industry of their Subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the Liberty of particular men' (1651/ 1983: 65).

This is one of those famous passages that led to what I have called the logical and descriptive uses by the students of IR of Hobbes's writings. When taken out in itself, this passage and the one about the state of nature, together with his emphasis on power could easily be interpreted in what is called the realist model. What is more, while he considers the state of nature between individual persons (interpersonal state of nature) to be a logical postulate, he takes the

state of nature between the states (international state of nature) as a factual situation.

It seems certain that Hobbes describes international relations just like the state of nature before the formation of the Leviathan. It could be argued that when Hobbes himself and especially those who made use of his writings in terms of the realist model derive the conclusion of international relations being a state of war, they apply the interpersonal state of nature to the sphere of international relations and make an analogy between the individual persons and states. With regard to this analogy, Hobbes provides textual support. In *Leviathan*, chapter 21, titled 'Of Liberty of Subjects', Hobbes attributes the states with the same rights as individuals had before the establishment of the Leviathan. In fact, it is this analogy between the individuals and the states, between the state of nature and international relations that constituted the basis for the realist interpretations of Hobbes. However, the analogy cannot be maintained for a variety of reasons.

First of all, although Hobbes described both the fictional interpersonal state of nature and the factual international state of nature to be a state of war of everyone against everyone, he put forward a significant difference between the two. While the interpersonal state of nature is unbearable, the international state of nature is bearable. In the interpersonal state of nature man has no culture, no industry, no art, no navigation, no civilization and his life is poor, solitary, nasty and brutish. But, in the international state of nature as the states uphold the industry of their subjects, then, individuals do not have the misery that they experience in the interpersonal state of nature. That is why Hobbes does not suggest the establishment of a world/international Leviathan. In order to escape from the misery of the interpersonal state of nature man gives up his right to govern himself and create a Leviathan. The mechanism for the establishment of peace is the establishment of a common power to keep human beings in awe. If the states in the international state of nature are like the individuals in the interpersonal state of nature, then, the logical conclusion of the analogy could have been the creation a world Leviathan in order to end the international anarchy. Indeed, Hobbes is criticized by the twentieth century realist Morgenthau (1960: 501) for not having followed the logical conclusion of the analogy. Indeed, the hegemonic stability argument of the twentieth century realists may be considered as the extrapolation of the Hobbesian Leviathan to the international system.

Secondly, the analogy cannot be maintained due to the differences between the individuals and the states. In the international state of nature, the entities (actors) in concern are not individuals, but states. As there is a difference between the real personalities (individuals) and institutional personalities (states), the question whether a conception of self-preservation for states could be advanced as it is for individuals (Beitz, 1979: 52) cannot easily be dismissed. Whose self-preservation is it any way, of the states or of the individuals within the states? Plus, do the states have the kind of life that individuals have? Let us agree with Heller that, in Hobbes's view, 'life' for the states is 'the maintenance of sovereignty -the 'artificial soul', which gives life and motion to the whole body'. And Death for states comes 'not when some critical proportion of its population or infra-structure is destroyed, but when force dissolves the commonwealth and 'there is no further protection of subjects in their loyalty' (Heller: 1980: 25-6). Nevertheless, there remains a difference between state sovereignty and individual sovereignty when it comes to the establishment of a common power. By sacrificing his sovereignty, the individual gains his security. But when state renounces its sovereignty (say, to a world government), instead of gaining security, its very existence is eliminated. This makes a great difference between interpersonal state of nature and international state of nature and thus there does not follow an international Leviathan.

A third reason why the analogy cannot be maintained can again be given via the difference between the individuals and the states. Hobbes's conception of mental and physical equality of men does not hold for the states. The states are stronger than individuals in the state of nature. As Vincent said, states are not 'vulnerable to a single deadly blow as individuals are; the death of the kings is not the death of kingdoms' (1981: 94). For Hobbes, the state of nature among men is intolerable because men are equal in the sense that the weakest can defeat the strongest. Such equality has never existed among states. 'Disparities in size and resources have been too great... [so that] the universal insecurity of individuals in the state of nature has... been absent in international relations' (Heller, 1980: 25). Moreover, Vincent argues that there is the possibility of order by strong states (1981: 95). In sum, since states are not equal, state of nature for them is not equally intolerable.

Finally, the analogy between the interpersonal state of nature and the international state of nature falls due to the differences regarding the constraints upon the individuals and the states. In the

interpersonal state of nature, man has the underived right of nature, absolute sovereignty conditioned only by man's being with others. However, the sovereignty of the state in the international state of nature is doubly conditioned. On the one hand, there are constraints resulting from the co-existence of states. On the other hand, there come constraints imposed by the natural rights of men. Despite the seemingly similar characterizations of the individuals and the states in some passages, given his basic arguments, it is fair enough to conclude that for Hobbes states are not as free as the individuals.

That the analogy between the interpersonal state of nature and the international state of nature -the core of the realist interpretations of Hobbes- cannot fully be held via Hobbes's overall argument and the empirical observation of the states, I think, sufficiently refutes the exclusivist realist categorization of Hobbes. Furthermore, a closer and more comprehensive look at Hobbes's conception of the state of nature rather than the famous selective descriptions taken out of Chapter 13 in *Leviathan* will reveal that, contrary to the prevalent view, even the conception of the state of nature does not exhibit the characteristics attributed to it by the realist school in IR.

At a first glance, Hobbes's state of nature really appears to be a war of all against all as he boldly declared. In the state of nature there is said to be no rules between individuals except the selfish and egoist wishes of each individual. Individual persons are said to live a self-centered life with no regard for, and without any grouping with, fellow men. This presents us a picture of men similar to billiard ball model of the realist school. However, Hobbes's overall argument makes room for the rules and allies in the state of nature.

Hobbes's state of nature is not fully lawless. First and foremost there are the rules of natural law. Laws of nature, which he calls the 'articles of peace', apply to both the state of nature and state of society/commonwealth. In the state of commonwealth men have, besides the laws of nature, laws of sovereign or civil laws. The laws of nature are not the laws issued by a sovereign as the case with the civil laws, but they are the laws found out by man's reasoning capacity. As I have already said he enumerated twenty or so laws of nature. Some of them are worth to cite here. The first law of nature for Hobbes is that '*every man ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, ... he may seek and use ... Warre*' (1651/ 1983: 67). It is clear that for Hobbes war is only a means of last resort. The second and third laws of nature are respectively stated as '*Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to*

*them*' and '*that men performe their Covenants made*' (1651/ 1983: 67, 74). In other laws of nature, for example, each man is advised to '*strive to accommodate himsefe to the rest; ... acknowledge other for his Equall by Nature; ... [and] look not at the greatnesse of the evill past, but the greatnesse of the good to follow*' in taking revenge (1651/ 1983: 78-80). As seen these are the rules of peaceful co-existence for multiple men, who are capable of erecting them by their reason. It is true, as already noted, the rules of natural law are not at all times effective due to man's proneness to breach them as a result of his passions. To make them effective one needs a common power, the need that leads to the construction of Leviathan.

Nonetheless, what this conception of the laws of nature, the laws that are valid at all times, tells us is that the state of nature is not devoid of common rules among men. Now, if international relations are conceived to be similar to the state of nature, then, men can make the rules of peaceful co-existence in the international system through their reason. And these rules as seen have a heavy emphasis on peace, very unlike the realist picture of international relations as a structural positioning of states within a lawless situation of constant struggle. Moreover, in his works Hobbes expressly identifies the laws of nature with the laws of nations. Earlier he wrote: 'For that which is the law of nature between man and man, before the constitution of the commonwealth, is the law of nations between sovereign and sovereign after' (1640/1969: 190). Later he confirmed: 'Concerning the Offices of one Sovereign to another, which are comprehended in that Law, which is commonly called the *Law of Nations*, I need not say any thing in this place; because the Law of Nations, and the Law of Nature, is the same thing' (1651/ 1983: 189). The rules of the law of nations are open to violation just like the rules of the natural law in the state of nature. As already stated, Hobbes did not suggest an international Leviathan to make the laws of nations being implemented. Like Rousseau (1970) and Kant (1969) later, he found an international Leviathan to be impractical (1651/ 1983: 87-88).

In the state of nature man does not live alone. He is not an isolated, atomistic being living by himself and his interactions with others are not like the clashing billiard balls. Although Hobbes says that there is no mine and yours distinction in the state of nature, the chief reason why the Leviathan is constituted to assure internal peace and defense against external enemies. If there are external enemies, this means that there has already been a distinction between us and them. He also speaks of confederacies. That shows that men have allies and groupings in the state of nature. In one of his early works,

Hobbes precisely states this: ‘And so it happens, through fear of each other we think it fit to rid ourselves of this condition, and to get some fellows; that if there needs must be war, it may not yet be against all men, nor without some helps. Fellows are gotten either by constraint or by consent’ (1642/1836-45: 12). In *Leviathan* he repeats: ‘In a condition of Warre, wherein every man to every man, for want of a common Power to keep them all in awe, is an Enemy, there is no man can hope by his own strength, or wit, to defend himselfe from destruction, without the help of Confederates’ (1651/ 1983: 75-76). Even before the construction of the proper state, man thus forms alliances and confederations. In Hobbes’s state of nature, there are not merely –as widely assumed– a multiplicity of individuals engaged in a war of all against all, but also security-communities of allies and confederations. It is not hence surprising that Hobbes considered that ‘Leagues between Common-wealths, over whom there is no humane Power established, to keep them all in awe, are not onely lawfull, but also profitable for the time they last’ (1651/ 1983: 124).

The state of nature is, then, to Hobbes, not merely a war of all against all as the famous Chapter 13 of *Leviathan* described. It includes both the rules of peaceful co-existence, i.e. the laws of nature, and the means and mechanisms for the realization of peaceful co-existence, i.e. the alliances and confederations. Forsyth very persuasively suggests that it would be better to differentiate the Hobbesian state of nature into two: a condition in which individual men are solely and entirely governed by self-directed passions (raw or bare state of nature), and a condition in which the laws of peaceful co-existence derived by reasoning are at work (state of nature modified by natural laws) (Forsyth, 1979: 197). The foregoing analysis supports such an argument.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that neither the analogy between the state of nature and international relations nor the conception of the state of nature as a war of all against all –the two major contentions through which Hobbes has been considered within the realist school of IR– can be justified on the basis of Hobbes’s writings. Hobbes’s man is not simply a passionate being, but has a reasoning capacity. Men can thus form alliances and unions and formulate the rules of peaceful coexistence. States too may form alliances and leagues and agree upon common rules, i.e. international law. As Navari rightly observed Hobbes belongs to the tradition of government by rules; unlike

Machiavelli who belongs to the tradition of government by men (Navari, 1982: 210). It is better to recall that Hobbes's first two laws of nature –hence laws of nations- dictated to seek peace as far as possible and to treat others as you wish to be treated. This is not the kind of discourse we see in realism.

Hobbes's political theory entails a journey from the state of nature to the state of society, from a state of war to a state of peace. This is an extremely radical transformation negating the status quo and establishing a totally different state of affairs. Very unlike of the realists! Hobbes does not speak of structural positioning of the units and he reifies neither the past nor the present, as realist thinking does. Hobbes's Leviathan is an artificial body existing for the security and welfare of man. The real actors are then individual human beings, not the institutions. His chief purpose is prevalence of peace and attainment of welfare. His radicalism and emphasis on peace are not usefully summarized by the realist discourse in IR. It is true there are here and there descriptions and statements which may be taken to place him within realist tradition together with Machiavelli. Yet, unlike Machiavelli whom can rightly be considered as a realist, as I have shown above, Hobbes can justifiably be taken to be closer to the rationalist or natural law tradition rather than the realist tradition.

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## Özet

### Thomas Hobbes ve Uluslararası İlişkiler: Bir değerlendirme

Bu makale Hobbes'un realist yorumlamalarını revize etmeyi amaçlıyor. Hobbes'un Uluslararası İlişkiler literatüründe yaygın şekilde kabullenildiği gibi bir realist kavramsallaştırmaya yakın olmadığı savunulmaktadır. Hobbes'un insan, doğa hali, devletin oluşumu ve tabii hukuk analizleri dikkate alınca; uluslararası ilişkiler algısının daimi bir çatışma durumundan çok, çatışan çıkarların uzlaşması haline ve dolayısıyla da ittifaklara ve dayanışmaya yer veren bir nitelik arzettiği gösterilmektedir.

*Anahtar kelimeler:* İnsan, devlet, Leviathan, doğa hali, tabii hukuk.