



# International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

## Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy: Fundamentals and current application in Vietnam

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### Article Info

**ISSN (online):** 2582-7138

**Volume:** 04

**Issue:** 02

**March-April 2023**

**Received:** 08-02-2023;

**Accepted:** 03-03-2023

**Page No:** 137-140

### Abstract

Thomas Hobbes was a prominent English philosopher who is known for his outstanding work on political philosophy. He was famous for his excellence in sovereign absolutism, but at the same time he also established some of the fundamental principles of European liberal thought. In addition, he also spent time in many fields such as history, geometry, theology, ethics, philosophy in general, and political science. As one of the typical philosophers of the modern period, Thomas Hobbes has had his signature ideas related to political philosophy. This study was conducted to understand the basic content related to political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes and its current application in Vietnam. Accordingly, the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes demonstrates the inalienable right of man; focus on natural rights; equal rights among people; establishing civil rights on the basis of social contract theory, his ideas on politics are not only one of the fundamental premises for modern democratic institutions, but also have significant implications. applied to the implementation and promotion of democracy within the framework of the Constitution and laws in Vietnam today, shown through: the issue of raising awareness and promoting democracy; focus on human rights; focus on monitoring and social criticism. The limitation of this study is that it has not yet analyzed the characteristics and limitations of Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy.

**Keywords:** political philosophy, politics, Thomas Hobbes, manipulate

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### Introduction

Thomas Hobbes (5 April 1588 – 4 December 1679) was an English philosopher, considered one of the founders of modern political philosophy. Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy is based on the social contract theory, the fundamental theory of modern democratic institutions. Thomas Hobbes' point of view not only reflects the spirit of the contemporary era but also has theoretical and practical significance, profoundly applied values in the implementation of democracy within the framework of the Constitution and laws in Vietnam. Currently.

### Research Methods

The article uses dialectical materialism and historical materialism in research and specific methods include: analysis, synthesis, logic and history.

### Techniques of use

The article uses research techniques and document analysis in Thomas Hobbes. (2019) <sup>[13]</sup> Leviathan. London, Anodos Books; related works on political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes; the issue of implementing and promoting democracy within the framework of the Constitution and laws in Vietnam today.

### Research question

Question 1: What are the contents of Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy?

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Question 2: What are the points of application to the implementation and promotion of democracy within the framework of the Constitution and laws in Vietnam today?

### Research purposes

The purpose of the article is to learn the basic content related to political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes and apply it in Vietnam today.

## 2. Results and discussion

### One, the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes: The Basics

Thomas Hobbes was born on 5 April 1588 in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, the son of a minister. His father left the family in 1604 and never returned, so a wealthy uncle paid for Hobbes' education at Oxford University. In 1608, Hobbes tutored William Cavendish, later earl of Devonshire. Hobbes served the Cavendish family all his life. In 1610, Cavendish and Hobbes traveled Europe together, passing through Germany, France, and Italy. After Cavendish's death, Hobbes switched careers, but later became a tutor to Cavendish's son. During these years he toured Europe twice more, meeting with leading thinkers such as the astronomer Galileo Galilei and the philosopher Rene Descartes. In 1651, his most famous works "Leviathan" or "The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil" were published. . For Hobbes, the only way for one to escape the natural state of fear and violence was to give up one's freedom and enter into a social contract with others to accept a centralized authority. Hobbes felt that monarchy offered the best kind of authority. He also argued that since the sovereign power is absolute, the king must also be the religious head of the nation. Accordingly, Hobbes expressed opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.

According to Thomas Hobbes, man is a unity between nature and society. But everyone has their own desires and needs. Everyone is selfish for their own interests that can trample all. Thomas Hobbes once said that man is a crueler and more cunning animal than wolves, bears, and snakes, which is also what pushes human society away from constant wars. Starting from the point of view of the natural state of man, Thomas Hobbes asserted that the more equal human innate ability is, the more unhappy it is when it comes out of this state and enters civil society. Because the struggle for survival is getting more and more difficult, everyone has to take care of their lives and lives and that is what motivates people to sign a social contract, and this is the basis for the State to export. presently. According to Thomas Hobbes, each nation in its development must pass through two stages: the natural stage, and the civil society stage (also known as the state stage). The state is the highest human creation can do. The state plays the role of regulating social development, punishing those who violate the common interests of everyone.

The inalienable rights of man, according to Hobbes' belief, are natural rights; while the modern concept of human rights is seen as rights granted by a divine Being. Hobbes declares that man is, essentially, a corrupt and unreliable creature, that he must always defend himself among his fellow human beings like beasts in the forest! Each individual always feels the need to close the door to prevent thieves from breaking in, even to put a wallet under the pillow to prevent thieves in their own family. Humans are not only depraved, but are also so quarrelsome and belligerent that, with the exception of

moments of respite between wars of words, they are constantly in conflict, side-by-side, and antagonizing each other.

According to Hobbes, the governing law of the behavior of all creatures is the law of the jungle, "the law of tooth and claw". With that fierce law, power creates right. In the jungle, the lion prioritizes taking what is within its power; then the other animals take their share one by one. Humans do the same, and if necessary, they even slaughter each other or enslave their fellow human beings. The law of nature allows each person, within his ability, to do things as he wants. Hobbes points out that, because humans have unequal physical abilities, weak individuals tend to gather in groups to defend themselves or to fend off powerful enemies. In addition, for Hobbes, the social contract is an essential means of establishing citizenship on the basis of the golden rule of arbitration and individuals obtain citizenship by accepting a community agreement. Community is built on certain principles.

In short, Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy embodies the inalienable right of man; focus on natural rights; equal rights among people; establish citizenship rights on the basis of social contract theory. His ideas on politics are one of the fundamental premises for modern democratic institutions.

### Second, apply to the implementation and promotion of democracy within the framework of the Constitution and laws in Vietnam today

For T. Hobbes, law has a relationship with freedom; freedom is inherent to people, innate to people; Law is necessary to ensure human freedom and human rights. The political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes not only contributes to creating the foundational premise for modern democratic institutions, but also has practical implications for Vietnam today in promoting democracy within the framework of the Constitution. and law. Shown by the basic points:

### Firstly, the issue of raising awareness and promoting democracy

Political democracy, democracy is a separate category in the political field. And democracy is a form of state, one of the forms of the state. Democracy is a universal social value. The history of democratic development in human society proves that each country has the right to choose an appropriate democracy, not necessarily to imitate the democracy of another country. The democratic regime of a country is suitable to the characteristics of history, culture, political and economic institutions... of each country, and at the same time needs to be constantly improved and developed. A preeminent and authentic democracy is only when it is chosen by the people themselves and the people's mastery, human rights, and citizenship are respected and protected. In Vietnam, the socialist rule of law state manages and operates the market economy, ensuring the right socialist orientation. In the socialist-oriented market economy, economic growth is always associated with ensuring fairness, realizing social progress, developing culture, developing people, aiming to improve material living standards. quality and spirit of the people. The process of democratization in the economic field is expanding. Develop diversified forms of ownership, economic sectors, types of enterprises... Fairness in distribution according to labor results, economic efficiency, and at the same time according to the level of capital contribution and other sources. resources and distributed

through the social security and social welfare system. The process of economic democracy expansion is closely related to the expansion of political democracy, the increasingly widespread and substantive exercise of political power by the people, through both indirect delegation and direct democracy.

### **Second, focus on human rights**

In Vietnam, the 2013 Constitution has 11 chapters and 120 articles. In which, the chapter on human rights, basic rights and obligations of citizens is the chapter with the most Articles, including 36 articles (from Article 14 to Article 49). This is an important chapter because when it comes to constitutions, it is about the relationship between citizens and state agencies. Human rights are stipulated in Chapter II of the 2013 Constitution, built on the basis of amending, supplementing and rearranging Chapter V of the 1992 Constitution (Basic Rights and Obligations of Citizens). Compared with the 1992 Constitution, the 2013 Amended Constitution added many provisions on human rights, basic rights and obligations of citizens. This is reflected in a number of key contents such as:

*First*, move the position of chapter "Basic Rights and Obligations of Citizens" from Chapter V of the 1992 Constitution to Chapter II of the 2013 Constitution. The change of the above position is not simply a change of position, but rather a change of perception. With the concept of upholding people's sovereignty in the Constitution, considering the people as the supreme subject of State power, human rights, basic rights and obligations of citizens must be determined in an important position, at the forefront of a Constitution.

*Second*, the new Constitution adds a number of new rights, representing a new step in the expansion and development of rights, reflecting the results of the renovation process in Vietnam in recent times. These are the right to life (Article 19), the right to donate human tissues, organs, and bodies (Article 20), the inviolability of private life, and the right to live in a healthy environment (Article 43). The recognition of these new rights is fully consistent with international treaties to which Vietnam is a member, demonstrating a growing awareness of human rights and affirming Vietnam's strong commitment to the implementation of these rights, human rights.

### **Third, focus on supervision and social criticism**

In Vietnam, the supremacy of the law is respected, all acts of organizations and individuals must comply with the Constitution and the law. Focusing on building and perfecting a synchronous, modern, feasible, open, transparent and fair legal system to suit the country's socio-economic development conditions and integration requirements. Extensive internationalization is imperative. Focusing on social criticism will bring positive results, promoting and expanding democracy, which is an important way to reach social consensus. Cultivate the habit of discussion and ensure freedom of expression to encourage individuals and organizations to participate in discussions on important national issues. Building a rule-of-law state of the people, by the people, for the people involves monitoring and social criticism. It is necessary to further improve the regulations on the people's right to supervise, the legal mechanism to ensure

that the people directly supervise the activities of civil servants and public employees, and organizations and agencies of the Party and State.

From the practice of implementing social supervision and criticism for many years in Vietnam, it has been shown that these activities only promote substantive effectiveness when closely following problems from the real life of the people. Therefore, social supervision and criticism should be concretized, not far from reality and implemented with practical activities, especially sticking to the same issues. In the context of complicated changes in the world and in the country, there are both favorable opportunities and challenges and difficulties, which require improving the effectiveness of supervision and social criticism. To do this, you need to focus on:

- Develop a legal mechanism to ensure the People's inspection and supervision of activities of Party and State agencies. Expand democracy, create conditions for the People to participate in social management, discuss and decide on important issues, strengthen the People's supervision activities.
- Ensure financial and material conditions for supervision. Mechanisms should be in place to attract and employ people who are truly virtuous, talented, courageous, daring and skilled in conducting supervision.
- Constantly raising people's awareness of the importance of social criticism. It is necessary to raise the people's political and legal consciousness through strengthening the propaganda, dissemination and education of the Party's guidelines and lines, the State's policies and laws, especially those of the Party and State. , guidelines, policies and laws on their right to monitor and criticize their society. In addition, it is necessary to raise the people's intellectual level and take specific measures to encourage and mobilize all classes of people to participate in dialogues with cadres and civil servants, and organizations and agencies of the Party and State. Equip the People with the necessary information and knowledge so that they can directly exercise their right to monitor and criticize the society.

### **3. Conclusion**

Thomas Hobbes is a famous English philosopher, pioneer of the natural law theory and a proponent of the idea of "social contract" (Social Contract theory). Besides being famous for his brilliant work on political philosophy, Thomas Hobbes is also famous for his excellence in sovereign absolutism, but at the same time he also established some of the basic principles of thought. European freedom. In addition, he also spent time in many fields such as history, geometry, theology, ethics, philosophy in general, and political science. As one of the typical philosophers of the modern period, Thomas Hobbes has had his signature ideas related to political philosophy. This study was conducted to understand the basic content related to political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes and its current application in Vietnam. Accordingly, the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes demonstrates the inalienable right of man; focus on natural rights; equal rights among people; establish civil rights on the basis of the social contract. His ideas on politics are not only one of the fundamental premise for modern democratic institutions, but also have practical implications for the implementation and promotion of democracy within the framework of the Constitution and the law. law in Vietnam today, reflected in:

the issue of raising awareness and promoting democracy; focus on human rights; focus on monitoring and social criticism. The limitation of this study is that it has not yet analyzed the characteristics and limitations of Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy.

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