

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q1(c)

State of Nature as State of War (Hobbes).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 1 · 10 marks · Political Theory

Political Theory: meaning and approaches.

Core demand of the question

- **Comment on the following in about 150 words:** State of Nature as State of War (Hobbes). (10 marks)

Revision summary

- **Hobbes's state of nature is a state of war:** a condition of known readiness to fight where there is no common power.

Competition, diffidence, and glory are the **three causes of quarrel**.

Natural equality of vulnerability makes pre-emptive violence rational.

The sovereign ends the war by monopolising judgment and force.

Locke, Mill, and constitutional democracy keep a common power and then limit it, which **Hobbes** refused as a right against the sovereign.

Introduction

Thomas Hobbes in Leviathan (1651) treats the state of nature as a state of war. War here is not only open battle. It is a known disposition to fight when there is no common power to keep all in awe.

Body**Why nature is war**

- **Hobbes starts from natural equality of vulnerability:** the weakest can kill the strongest by secret plot or alliance.
- **Three causes of quarrel follow:** competition for scarce goods, diffidence (fear of being attacked first), and glory (reputation).
- Without a common judge, each has a natural right to everything that seems necessary to self-preservation, including another's body.
- The result is continual fear and danger of violent death, and a life that cannot support industry, agriculture, or science.
- **Covenants without the sword** are words. Only a sovereign with effective power ends the war by monopolising judgment and force.

What the claim is not

- The state of nature is a logical reconstruction of life without political authority, not a dated anthropology of all tribes.
- **Locke** denied that nature is already war; he treated it as inconvenience without an impartial judge, and he kept a right of revolution.

- **Rousseau** treated unsocialised humans as not yet in Hobbesian war; war arrives with property and comparison.
- **Foucault** later studied power inside the ordered state, which **Hobbes** had pictured as the exit from war, not as war by other means.

Political use

- The argument justifies a strong sovereign, including in a commonwealth by institution, because the alternative is insecurity.
- Limited government after **Locke**, **Mill**, and **Dahl**'s polyarchy accepts the need for a common power and then binds that power by law, rights, and contestation.
- Indian public order clauses and the Union's duty to protect States against internal disturbance (**Article 355**) still assume that political authority exists to prevent a return to private force.

Flow diagram

State of nature -> Equal vulnerability
Equal vulnerability -> State of war
State of war -> Sovereign common power
Sovereign common power -> Peace and industry
Locke Mill -> Limits on that power

Conclusion

Hobbes identifies the state of nature with a state of war because equal vulnerability, competition, fear, and glory have no common judge. The sovereign is the exit. Later liberals keep the common power and add legal limits that **Hobbes** did not grant against the sovereign.

Facts & figures

Leviathan, 1651

Hobbes's main political work; the state of nature chapter treats war as a disposition, not only as battle.

Three causes of quarrel

Competition, diffidence, and glory, stated in Leviathan, chapter 13.

Covenants without the sword

Hobbes's formula that agreements lack effect unless backed by coercive power.

Article 355

Duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance.