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AUTHORITY AND POWER IN LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

This is chapter has outlined how we can use Hobbes’ political philosophy into today’s political world. The arguments given by Hobbes show their relevance even to the challenges and struggles of the politics exercised in the contemporary world. The use of power and authority by leaders today has come under much scrutiny and judgment. This is why the arguments of some scholars such as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau can guide our search for a good leader. In this chapter we are going to explain how diversifying the use of power and authority can be a great benefit to the roles of governance and leadership. The use of power is to enforce the social contract; and authority is there because the social contract mandates a leader to be in office. Therefore, power and authority is equivalent to making sure the leader is effective in his or execution of state duties. 

In addition, the concepts of power and authority cannot be exercised in the absence a society. There will be need for people to experience a reign of a sovereign when the contract is signed. This calls for the observance of the rule of law and respect of human rights. In this chapter, we are going to discuss on how a leader should be ready to apply the rule of law and respect of rights in his or her reign whilst executing the principles of authority and power. When a leader applies the rule of law he or she promotes justice, and when she or he respects human rights he or she dignifies humanity. This aspect leads us to have a good leader with qualities such empowering, leading, inspiring and sharing his or her vision with the citizens. The chapter ends with a critique highlighting how power a leader with power has control over the state of affairs.

4.1 Hobbes’ Reliance on Authority and Power for Governance

The ideas of Hobbes’ political arguments in relation to governance are vividly expressed in the way he describes the nature of man. As we have discussed in chapter two, for Hobbes the nature of man is egoistic in such a way that the state of nature becomes a period of uncertainty to the lives of man. It is this moment where there is need for man to provide what is necessary for his safety and security in the state of nature. The use of reason to escape such life will be indispensable in order to form a contract and have a civil state. The description which Hobbes gives in Leviathan chapter 13 portrays that “a life without government is not worth living.” There is an expression of a political system missing in the state of nature which necessitates for the formation of a social contract and later on the birth of a sovereign state.

In the governance of a sovereign state the elements of authority and power are to be reflected in the leadership of those mandated to govern. The usage of the elements mentioned above gives an opportunity for all people in a sovereign state to enjoy that which they have not realized in the state of nature. Hobbes believes that with people been inclined toward peace out of fear of death and desire for comfortable living; the best political system for this condition will be to govern them with absolute power. The interpretation of absolute power in the Hobbesian concept is the application of force on human affairs in order to get a good result and not with an ill-intended outcome. This makes Hobbes to rely on the usage of the elements of authority and power in order to establish the ultimate sovereign state. A state where all citizens are able to relate and not be afraid of their lives been in danger.

4.1.1 Authority in the Sovereign State

The argument of Hobbes when he explains the idea of authority in its relation to governance is laid in a challenging way. He first takes the course of asking where authority come from. This hypothetical question gives a basis for Hobbes on how he treats his arguments of authority in a sovereign state. The source of authority in a society emanates from a social contract which ushers in a sovereign. It is the social contract which brings forth the existence of an official agreement between two parties or more who are in need of security, peace and safety. The agreement can only be implemented if there is an overseer who receives and administers the contract without favor to all. This way of acting introduces a foundation of leadership in a sovereign state with surety of justice and peace. Hence James argues that “it is correct to say that sovereign authority owes its existence to a contract, but it cannot be instituted by degrees – it must be established in

whole measure, all at once, or not at all.” This shows that what has been agreed upon should be realized in the process of contractual implementation.

The life of those who live in a sovereign state is reflected from how people avoid in bringing back the activities found in the state of nature. Since the state of nature is a condition of conflicts and war, Hobbes believes that’s shows the absence of authority in this natural condition. The absence of authority in the state of nature makes the whole condition suitable to being abandoned. This is because those who escape this natural condition are seeking a civil society where instruments of governance will prevail. It is argued that “men are afforded an escape from this unhappy condition by the institution of civil society. Now the purpose of civil society is not to promote a good life as such or to guarantee the predominance of a few, given forms of predominance are made secure and righteous by law.” The argument illustrates on how the instituted civil society is able to remove the fears which are lived in the state of nature by providing security and safety. The realizations of civil society’s works are felt in the authority mandate to govern the sovereign state. Hobbes believes that fear is the basis that leads us to have civil society. When people are not sure of their livelihood, as in the state of nature, they tend to seek for alternative reasons for survival. Since the laws of nature for him are described as a precept or a general rule of reason that every man ought to endeavor peace; it is out of fear that we begin to reason and see the advantages of society. This makes reason to be dependent upon passions, upon fear, which becomes the first and most fundamental law of nature; to seek peace and follow it. Therefore the determination of seeking harmony and tranquility cannot come in a better way than to have a society with authority. The presence of authority in a society is the remedy to reduce and put it an end the tensions which rise from the conditions of the state of nature.

The one who has authority is a person or an assembly which has been entrusted with the agreements of the contract. Hence authority in a sovereign state is mandated to those with proper instruments of authority. According to Hobbes it is the right of doing an action which makes one to have authority or warrant. This is done by one having a license or commissioned to do so. The person with such obligation essentially becomes a sovereign with proper authority to enforce and be recognized by the society. Therefore the usage of authority in a civil society is there to maintain social order and bring out the desired peace by all.

4.1.2 Power in a Sovereign State

The presence of authority in a society transforms the atmosphere of scarcity and competition into order and peace. This explains that this creation of a social contract resulting in having a sovereign, endowed or possessed with absolute power, is sufficient to put an end to the condition of perpetual uncertainty, anxiety and unrest. Hobbes argues that when we are able to avoid the condition of anarchy experienced in the state of nature we have the power for societal control. This makes the chief causes of war (individual conflicts and egoistical judgments) kept under control with natural law followed and peace sought. According to Hobbes the result of this orderly society leads into a creation of an artificial person, that great Leviathan, called a commonwealth or state. Therefore, the creation of a state is the product of the consent of the people governed.

The Hobbesian theory shows that the sovereign in a state is only a representative of the people. As earlier mentioned the mandate of a sovereign falls into seeing to it that the social contract is observed, respected and enforce its powers on all citizens. The sovereign is there to ensure that what was agreed in the contract is observed by all and regulated by him. Hobbes illustrates that this type of power is important in bringing the fulfillment of the contract in a society. He argues that “the greatest of human powers is that which is compounded of the powers of most men, united by consent, in one person, natural or civil, that has the use of all their powers depending on his will; such as is the power of a commonwealth.” The power which is entrusted in one individual or assembly carries more authority of sincerity since it is realized in the contract. This makes such power to be used with authority of exhibiting unity from a well agreed contract.

Power which is found in a sovereign state is unlimited. The un-limitation of power in a state lies in how it used for governance and leadership. Since what we have discussed so far is that power is created in the common agreement of a social contract, Hobbes believes that the sovereign too is giving authority to execute powers that may be done as an individual. The sovereign is not the state but he is the guardian who applies measures to represent the will and intention of the contract. He is authorised or appointed to secure for the people the limited ends of peace and security. Therefore, according to Hobbes “the sovereign authority must be strong enough to deter the ambition of the strong who would plunder the weak, as well as the weak who would seek to deposit the powerful.” This shows that there must be a strong system to empower the sovereign with a consideration of how he relates to his subjects. All subjects are treated in accordance with the law and treated as such when the break it.

In addition, we realize that the usage of authority and power in a sovereign state hinges on the one mandate to govern the people. This governance is applied in accordance with what has been agreed upon in the social contract. The enforcement of the contract is monitored and regulated by the sovereign who aims at maintaining law and order. This maintenance of law and order is applied to with force and cohesion in order to avoid the chaotic experience of the state of nature. Therefore, Hobbes believes the sovereign should be the absolute ruler to enforce all that has been agreed in the contract. This is because the people have mandated him or her with transferring their rights to the sovereign; making this to be absolute and irrevocable.

4.2 Political Authority in Modern World

The understanding of political power and authority is not much different from how the modern philosophers use them to that of the contemporary scholars. There are features which highlight similar concepts of how power and authority should be understood in governance and leadership. The way power and authority is used in a sovereign state determines the system of governance of that nation. This understanding gives a lot of diversification on how power and authority should be applied to citizens in accordance with the law. Therefore the rule of law and not the rule of men becomes the centre of focus as a sovereign leads a state. This highlights the use or application of the rule of law in harmony with the values of the agreed contract.

Our world today has a lot of sovereign states with different ideologies and system of governance. This is aimed at promoting their values, culture and social life as a nation. Although this is the case, mostly the issues of power and authority become dominant areas for show casing who has more control within and outside the sovereign state. These two aspects (power and authority) of governance are mostly used in such way that citizens question who is in-charge of running the state. It is with this background that this section will discuss the importance of rule of law in relation to the governance of a sovereign state. We have to know that the liberty and rights of all citizens in a state are also cardinal for governance, hence the rule of law should be enshrined with the spirit of citizens at heart. This is explains why today most of the governments have the three arms of governance in order to ensure control and censorship of life in a state. In this case power is shared for sake of peace and order.

4.2.1 Rule of Law

The governance and leadership of a sovereign state lies in how its laws are founded in the constitution. The idea of the rule of law to prevail is by having a good understanding of what constitute a good constitution. This has led some scholars to argue that “the rule of law is often characterized as if it comprised rules of a game applied to everyone, serving to regulate most if not all forms of social, political, and economic activity.”

The control of a society is termed in the usage of the rules agreed upon by all to abide to. Hence the rule of law normalizes the activities of a state in all its sectors of governance. This argument shows that it is by having laws which can regulate society, are we able to experience good governance and leadership. The laws become tools for shaping a state to its best capabilities as an environment for better living.

The usage of the rule of law in a society makes it to have power to promote liberties and create order on how a state should be governed. This way of affairs upholds a system that protects the rights of citizens from arbitrary and abusive use of power by the government. The idea of being ruled by law comes into effect on condition that “those people who have authority to make, administer and apply the rules in official capacity do in fact administer the law consistently and in accordance with its tenor.” This justifies the idea of applying law without favour to those who hold official position in the state. Hence, there is need to apply the law for its intended purpose without fear. In this case the rule of law will reflect what the state and its citizen are pursuing; which is good governance and leadership. The application of the rule of law is done in order to experience a good state and happy citizens. Therefore, a good law must be put in place and promote the common good of the constitution. This should be done bearing in mind the desires and ambitions of citizens.

The concept of the rule of law should allow citizens to experience the orderliness which is not there in the state of nature. This is because in it there is a sense of stability and tranquility when it is followed to the later. The aspect of fulfilling what has been agreed in the rule of law becomes most of the citizens’ desires. It becomes a challenge when “people see law as an instrument of power to advance their personal interests or the interests or policies of the individuals or groups they support.”

This shows how the understanding of law has become more subjective than being objective. The spirit of the law should be to pursue objectivity in its application to all citizens. When the application of the law is done in fairness, there should be some aspect of order and peace.

The spirit of the rule of law should be able to bring the citizens to a common understanding and goal. This should be to see law as that which makes everyone equal before it. The way people are treated by the law will explain fully how their rights and duties are respected and observed. The aspect of law in this case will become the axis of controlling society in all areas. This will be in order to achieve fairness and justice. But some critics to this idea of law have argued that “rather than function to maintain social order and resolve disputes, as Hobbes suggested was the role of law, combatants will fight

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11 John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Philips, Political Theory, 317.
to control and use the implements of law as weapons in social, political, religious and economic disputes. Law will thus generate disputes as much as resolve them.” This illustrates on how law can become controversial in being applied to all with the aim of being fair to citizens. Although there will be disputes when law is applied in some cases, there is need not to forget the spirit behind the law; fairness and justice. When this is realized the common understanding of law will be at everyone’s mind and heart.

All in all, the concept of the rule of law reminds us that political authority is not exercised at one’s wish or desires. There should be an aspect of recognizing that each state is governed by laws to enhance justice, peace and harmony. This understanding of the rule of law will make citizens to respect those in leadership of the government. The citizens will become active participants in the running of the state affairs. When there is rule of law in a state, even the liberties and rights of everyone are respected and observed.

### 4.2.2 Liberty and Rights

The achievement of the rule of law brings the realization of citizens’ liberties and rights. When a state acknowledges the rights and liberties of each one, this is becomes the promotion of human dignity. This way of governing a society brings a sense of control and stability compared to the state of nature. Although Locke and Rousseau would dispute with idea of rights not being respected in the state of nature, we see in reality that when social contracts are done, liberties and rights are put into consideration. They become a factor in drawing up a constitution which will include the desires of most citizens. We should be aware that “under the rule of law all individuals are subject of the legal system. Therefore, all members of the political community are granted, in principle, an equal capacity of being holders of rights, and of performing acts bearing legal consequences.” This shows that by the mere fact of having the rule of law one starts to enjoy the rights in accordance with the duties at hand. The rights of an individual give him or her to experience the freedom and equity which is within that state.

The person who has freedom and rights is expected to have duties for the state and others. This reciprocal deed mandates a citizen to realize that rights are not just there to be attained and forgetting the duties one is bound to do. It is in having rights in a state does one exercise his or her freedom. This should remind us that according to Richard, “freedoms are never unlimited: my freedom ends where its exercise harms my neighbors as a group or individually.” The idea of exercising my rights, duties and freedom should be done with the diligence it deserves for all not be affected negatively. This will make citizens to have an attitude of respecting other people’s views and ideologies in order to co-exist in harmony and tranquility. One who acquires rights and freedom is duty bound to show some civil obedience. This is by cooperating and supporting how the government run the affair of state business. When a citizen reaches at this level of understanding his or her rights and duties, the state becomes a place to enhance community building, unity and development. Therefore the state under the leadership of a president or prime minister should be able to provide security, equity before the law and sustenance to all.

When the dreams and hopes of the citizens are realized in having liberties and rights, the state should be to articulate these fundamental aspects in its constitution. This will give an opportune moment for everyone to recognize that “all are equally free when laws protect everyone’s right to political participation and protect everyone’s right to own property, to speak their mind and to fashion good lives for themselves as long as they allow equal freedoms to others.” The whole aspect of this experience gives an allowance to citizens to appreciate the leaders chosen to govern them. This is because there is an element of goodwill by those in leadership to respect the people and execute their duties according to the law. We can understand this trait from some scholars who have argued that “the idea of leadership affirms the capacity of individuals to move, inspire and mobilizes masses of people so that they act together in pursuit of an end.” This shows how a leader should be ready to touch the lives of people by respecting their rights and making the people realize that it is them who have given him or her the mandate to lead them. In the end the quest to live in a state filled with articulated rights and liberties, will not be a challenge but a dream realized.

### 4.2.3 Leadership

Today the world has great challenges in having great leaders who would steer the rule of rule and respect the rights of all. This challenge has not been only to today but also in ancient and medieval times. Kings and queens have come and gone to rule monarchies and states but it has been a challenge passed on from one generation to the next. In the recent times we had many leaders as presidents or prime ministers who have tried to leave a great mark of leadership to their nations. This also has been a challenge which has continued to rip the modern politics of the first century. The depiction of chaos we witness in governance and leadership of some nations can be compared to what Hobbes called the state of nature. Most critics have argued that “neither Hobbes nor Locke invented this device of imagining a state of nature to develop from there a conception of a society organized with its own and appropriate form of government. It had been used by many political thinks before.” This understanding of having a search of good leader to govern a nation from chaotic

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13 Tamanaha, Law as Means to an End, 2.
16 Schmitt, An Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy, 10.
18 Schmitt, An Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy, 64.
experience has been there even in the ancient times of the Greeks: that is, Plato in Republic explains how to come up with a just city-state and just man whilst Aristotle in Politics Book III argues on the nature and forms of governments. These ancient philosophers’ arguments represent how in their times it was a challenge to have a good leader and best state.

The search to have great leaders is still a case we have to continue to advocate by illustrating the qualities which are suitable for good governance. These qualities are supposed to be looked at as a criterion to choose leaders among those who aspire to govern a state. They are ideas to be fulfilled by would-be president or prime minister. Since there is an aspect of surrendering one’s rights when a social contract is signed, a citizen should be aware to know to whom he is surrendering and entrusting his rights. The best way of doing such, will be to have an informed mind with what constitutes good leadership.

a) Empower Citizens

The vibrancy and dynamism of a state lies in the empowerment of its citizens. A great and good leader should be able to empower her or his people in all most sectors of the state affairs. This will give pleasure to each and every one who wants to see the country go to great heights. The whole idea of seeing people being empowered is to satisfy their hopes and dreams. These are the things they would have signed for in the contract which would have turned to be a constitution. And a good constitution should be able to protect the rights and dignity of the empowered citizens. This should be enforced by a leader who has come to understand the aspirations and goals of his governance. Some scholars have argued that a government should have a style of leadership which is guided by good reflections and choices. This will lead its elected leaders to fellowship with its citizens in all popular concerns and let the people participate in national matters. Those who are empowered have the probability to improve the standards of the nation, such as economic and social wise.

One of the rare great leaders to empower his nation was Julius MwalimuNyerere. He came up with an ideology of socialism combined with African culture values. This was where “he collectivized village farmlands, carried out mass literacy campaigns and instituted free and universal education. He also emphasized Tanzania’s need to become economically self-sufficient rather than remain dependent on foreign aid and foreign investment.” This empowerment process gave the Tanzanians to have an identity as a united family with a common goal; this is, in dealing with economic issues, tribal and racial unity. Nyerere synthesize well his ideology into a concept of Ujamaa (familyhood in Ki Swahili). Although Tanzania today cannot be termed as a power house in economics, their social and political lives had a lot of influence on a lot of African countries. This was the role they played as a state which wished to see another African state be liberated from colonialism.

b) Inspire Citizens

The desires of a good leader is to inspire his or her citizens in order to build a nation with a lot of people with bright ideas. The concept of inspiration in a leader comes with the choices he or she makes in the decisions of running a state. People will normally analyse the choices of a leader he or she is making in crucial moments. For example, some scholars argue that “prime minister leadership style – the leaders’ work habits, how they relate to those around them, how they like to receive information, and how they make up their minds – may, in part, be a reaction to situational imperatives or to the institutional structure in which they reside.” In this case, prime minister exercise his or her duties with caution in order to mediate state affairs with those within and outside the nation. It is by making good decisions and choices will such a person in that position will he or she be able to inspire the people.

The world can testify that such quality of leadership is possible in the modern era. This is aspect can be viewed on the role Kofi Annan played in mediating for peace in the 2007 Kenyan disputed elections. It was observed that he “played a crucial role in resolving the Kenyan election crisis that began in late December 2007, eventually brokering a power sharing agreement between the government and the opposition on February 28, 2008.” As a world figure who has been a leader for United Nations, Annan was able to inspire the parties involved that the can co-exist beyond elections. Although this role which Annan played can be disputed by critics, it gives a moment of inspirational decisions and choices. This is to show that our lives matter than some of the process we use to elect our leaders. Hence, those in leadership should make effective choices in order to build a nation for future generations to come.

c) Lead Citizens

The call to be leader invites for one to have courage to lead in front and not at the back. This is because the person inspiring to a great leader must lead by good examples. When a quality of leadership like this is discussed, it reminds us that to be a leader one has to have a good ethos. The person’s reputation should be in good standing with the society to have that command of authority. This is why it is argued that such a leader is an “individual who has the primary responsibility for the formulation and execution of policy, both home and abroad.” The role of being a leader in this case carries a lot of responsibility. This will be in the light of showing steadfastness in controlling the national affairs. Some scholars

19 Allport, Modern World Leaders, 10.
20 Amy McKenna, ed., The 100 Most Influential World Leaders of All Times (Britannica Educational Publishing: New York, 2010), 306.
22 McKenna, ed., The 100 Most Influential World Leaders, 349.
argue further on that “leadership completes the circuit between the individual and the mass and thereby alter history.” The whole idea here is to create a bond which is in unison with the state affairs. But this should be understood that the altering of history by some leaders may be for better or for worse. This is because when a leader a good rapport with his or her citizens, it does not always guarantee success.

Although today there is still a challenge to have a good leader, we still have examples to give of modern leaders. These have managed to excel beyond expectation of many critics. One of the leaders we can cite is the forty forth president of United States of America, Barrack Obama. After being in office for only eight months, Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009. This was for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples. The charisma of Obama highlights that his personality to lead did not only come from being a president; It from way back when he was a senator for State of Illinois. He became the icon for diplomacy and promoter of peace and democratic principles. The story of Obama shows that for one to be great leader you don’t need to be strong (physically) but being visionary and smart in thought. Hence a leader should do the right things in the right way.

d) Shared Vision

A true leader should be one who has a common vision with that of the nation. The purpose of this quality is to share the aspirations of people and strive for goals that society will benefit. These aspirations and goals should be executed diligently to serve the nation in honour and humility. This will make those in leadership to be aware that “no leader is infallible, and every leader needs to be reminded of this at regular intervals. Irreverence irritates leaders but is their salvation. Unquestioning submission corrupts leaders and demeans followers. Making a cult of a leader and a mistake. Fortunately hero worship generates its own antidote.” This shows that a great leader should be there to serve the people and share the vision of the nation; by executing his or her duties as expected by all. The desires of every leader should be to keep the citizens in the light of most national matters. There must be no secrecy in administering national duties by any leader. When there is transparency how national matters are handled by a leader, people will feel that they too participate in the state affairs. A vision or a goal cannot be realized now, but it must be shared for the benefit for all.

This modern world has experienced some leaders with visionary ideas and concept to share with their followers or the nation. There can be no better example to give than that of Martin Luther King Jr., who was one of the greatest American civil right activists. In his famous speech “I have a Dream” during an interracial assembly on August 28, 1963 at Lincoln Memorial, King uplifted the emotions of the multitude by reminding them that he faith one day, all men will be brothers. This shows how King had the impetus to share his desires and dreams with those people who wanted to see equal justice for all under the law. Although King had not seen his vision to fulfilment in his life time, today some of his wishes are held into high esteem. When a leader shares his vision there are those who are ready to carry on the burning desires.

All in all, we realize that these qualities we have discussed in this section point to the fact that a good leader has a lot to offer to the society. The expectations of people for one to be a good leader are mostly high. Citizens desire to see a nation which is in conformity with what they agreed for in the ‘social contract.’ These contracts should be kept and executed according to what had been agreed and endorsed in the first place. This is where good leadership is needed in accordance with the four qualities we have discusses above. When a leader empowers his or her people there is great satisfaction in most individuals. There is a sense of belonging to the values and goals of a nation. This will make a leader to inspire citizens because of his or choices in decision making when duty calls. Those inspired will be able to have the zeal to participate in national matters and build the nation for generations to come. If people are empowered and inspired by a leader, this means that they are being led well. This gives everyone a chance to exercise his or her rights and duties in the light of the vision and goals of the state.

4.3 Critique: A Leader with Power, Controls

The political ideas of Thomas Hobbes can be used into today’s politics. This can prove to be a more synthetic approach on how governance and leadership can be understood using the modern and contemporary thoughts. The concept of Leadership may have various analyses by critics from different generations. But what we have to know is that all different ideas on it try to offer a better solution on how a leader should manage a nation. The enthusiasm by philosophers over the years in trying to explain the challenges which have troubled humanity to come up with a better political society, has been consist in searching for the best possible solutions. This is why the arguments of Hobbes in chapter two of this thesis brings us to the similar passion of the early scholars. We would like to offer a solution to the challenges of human governance in relation to political societies.

The description of human nature by Hobbes gives us an understanding that man is naturally selfish. In chapter two, we see how he argues that this element in man should be controlled and tamed. We agree with Hobbes on this insight on the nature of man; man has that egoistic character in him. This shows how man wants to be the centre of attraction and focus. As Hobbes puts it, this becomes the recipe of confusion which becomes war against all. This is because each and every one in the state of nature wants to protect himself or

24Allport, Modern World Leaders: Jacques Chirac, 8.
25McKenna, ed., The 100 Most Influential World Leaders, 370.
26Allport, Modern World Leaders, 11.

27McKenna, ed., The 100 Most Influential World Leaders, 327.
herself from being attacked. There is competition of surviving for a better tomorrow and as the result everyone is living in fear. The state of nature which is described by Hobbes is not far from the reality of the modern world. A lot of experiences in some parts of the world are characterized by life of selfish motives. This has generated to people experiencing civil wars, migrating for better life, going through genocide, and joining religious extremists, so forth and so on. All this, is because of self-centeredness of man, wanting to be in a competitive life style and to be called the best.

According of Hobbes, life in the state of nature is nasty and brutish. This does not mean that those who live in this state are not aware of the natural law and their rights; they know well the preciousness of life. No wonder they are ready to defend themselves to the last breath using arms. But all this experience brings fear and uncertainties of life. This experience can be remedied by seeking the first law of nature; which Hobbes calls ‘seek peace and follow it’. The world today is witnessing many peoples and nations trying to have peace with another after civil wars and territorial disputes. Although man is egoistic in nature, he has another ability to reason and make peace. This faculty and potential is there but the challenge is how to tame man’s insatiable emotions. Hobbes’ suggestion is that everyone surrenders his or her rights in order to come up with a social contract. This contract will be monitored by either an assembly (executive) or a sovereign. The illustration Hobbes gives in relation to social contract is happening into today’s world of politics. There are a lot of agreements, referendums and contracts done in order to reach a meaningful way to surrender ones right. This process will normally come up with a constitution to follow as a nation or laws to respect as a society.

The major challenge comes on how to execute the terms and conditions which have been outlined in the social contract. As we have seen in our previous chapters, Locke and Rousseau do not agree with the way Hobbes suggests on how to deal with those who have formed a society out of state of nature. Locke and Rousseau argue that a social contract will make natural rights to be enforced by a consented government and live normally if the general will is followed. These understandings by these two scholars show that the concept of power and authority is controlled by the people. The people have the mandate to remove a leader who does not respect or follow the terms and conditions of the social contract. According to Hobbes the idea of power and authority when administering the social contract should be absolute. The government should be left to run the affairs of the state with full mandate which has been given to it. Although Hobbes might have been too resilient in his explanation of power and authority, the bottom line was to avoid the recurrence of the state of nature. Hence, using the Hobbesian political thoughts we come to see that a leader with power, controls the affairs of a nation.

We have to understand that the way Hobbes is using the concept of power is in an authoritarian character. The leader is in charge to execute all national duties without being disturbed by the people. This is because he or she has been entrusted to take of the state affairs. The way of explaining this kind of power and authority might be too self-centered to an individual or an assembly. Although Hobbes is aiming at making a society be peaceful by use of all means. When following the arguments above, the challenges comes in with whether a leader can make a mistake or not. The best answer to these challenges of leadership is that history reminds us that even great leaders have made mistakes before. This has been in their execution of national duties as one with all the powers. The political philosophy of Hobbes meant well in dealing with the egoistic elements of man. Hence his political definition of power can still be modified and used in justifying why absolute power is necessary for modern politics.

We have seen in chapter one that Lord Acton argues that ‘power corrupts, and absolute power corrupt absolutely.’ This saying has been used in many instances to justify the badness of power. What we have seen in this academic work is that man is a being who needs control because of his egoistic; and there is no better solution than to have strict measure in managing him in a society. In itself power is not bad, it depends with those who have it how they use it in their execution of duties. For example, drugs are you used for medication and if you take an overdose they is a reaction; vehicles are used for mobility but when one over speeds chances for a road traffic accidents are high. When we look at drugs and vehicles what they have done in other people’s lives, we cannot label them as bad. It is the responsibility of the user and not the vehicle or drug. This illustration applies to power, power is there as a tool to be used effectively by a leader. A good leader should learn how power should be used for the betterment of a state. The power learnt in this case will become knowledge to be applied in administering national duties. The knowledge acquired will manifest itself into qualities of a good leader for a nation. Therefore, a leader who leads, inspires, empowers and shares his or her vision with the people has the effective power. It is power which is absolutely and does not corrupt to mislead citizens.

CONCLUSION

Authority and power can be used for our great benefit into today’s modern society. The arguments which have been discussed in this chapter show that a new paradigm is needed in how we deal with our 21st Century politics. We cannot completely have a new shift of methods without getting some principles from classic scholars such Hobbes. This is why this chapter has used much of the Hobbesian political thoughts, in order to give a fresh viewpoint on why it is necessary to use authority and power to govern a state. The arguments from Hobbes have been used in such a way that we should realize that authority and power when served accordingly we have good governance and leadership.

This chapter acknowledges that some of Hobbes’ thoughts have been to the extreme in relation to governance. But the
spirit behind what Hobbes explains in his arguments centres on the egoistic character of man. There is need to have a powerful leadership in order to avoid the recurrence of the state of nature. Today’s world of politics is not far from the way things were in the time of Hobbes. There is a lot of disputes and tension among nations and people; this has called for good leadership. The best an aspirant to rule a nation can do, is to adhere to the social contract and be able to empower, lead, inspire and share his or vision with the people. Hence, this chapter ends with a critique in order to justify that in power and authority, a leader is able to control to the state affairs. A leader with political knowledge and will cannot be corrupted easily; this because she or he is enlightened beyond following egoistic elements.