
THOMAS HOBBS' CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR THAILAND AND ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

The paper's objective is to analyze the concept of sovereignty in political philosophy with special reference to Thomas Hobbes for the purpose of understanding the changes facing Thai sovereignty from the origin of the modern state to the present time. Especially relevant is Hobbes' distinction between internal and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty can be used to understand the factionalism in Thai society resulting to the escalation of tensions since 2005. For the security of state, the Thai military staged a coup and has taken absolute power since 2014. External sovereignty can be used to understand the relation of the Thai state and the power of the ASEAN Community. This can itself be understood as a social contract for the maintenance of security in the same manner that Hobbes describes in state formation. This phenomenon results from the changing international system under globalization.

The Concept of Sovereignty

Hobbes' concept of sovereignty, which is related to his social contract theory, emerged in the 17th century. During this time, the development of the sciences created a separation of the nation state from religious beliefs and fostered a new realm of economic development.