

Hobbes on the Definition of a Legal Sphere: Clues from his Account of Crime and Punishment

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The paper:

In this paper, I argue that we can learn something about Thomas Hobbes's conception of the nature and autonomy of the legal sphere by examining his shifting definitions of 'crime' and 'punishment'. Doing so reveals that while over the course of his works he emphasises greater clarity and coherence in these concepts, and thus seems to insulate the legal sphere from sovereign interference, we should not take this to mean that the rule of law has the power to constrain sovereign action.