would be no constitutional form of protection in place to defend individuals ‘against a common enemy, nor against the injuries of one another’

34. In essence, despite the fact that individuals would possess complete liberty to do as they please, they would be held back by the fear of others and the paranoia evoked by the absence of protection offered by political sovereignty. Meaning that fear of attack will prevent individuals from exercising their freedom. Therefore, the importance of an absolute political authority is connected to freedom within the state of nature as Hobbes explains that in order to receive protection from a common enemy or the ‘injuries of one another’, one must commit their ‘will’ to the existing political authority

35. This leads me on to explore the role of the absolute sovereign power as it is the natural characteristics of mankind, in having a constant desire for power, and the intensified competition within the state of nature which reinforces the importance of having strong political leadership within society.

On investigating the role of the sovereign power within the Leviathan, it is clear that the purpose of the text is to provide a convincing justification for political authority. As Skinner notes ‘Hobbes believed that in the Leviathan he had articulated a theory of political obligation capable of offering comfort to surviving royalists’. Hobbes presents the existence of an absolute political power as a solution to social conflict and a protector from foreign threats. Hobbes argues this through his social contract theory. He claims that all individuals within a society must submit their liberty to the absolute sovereign power:

‘I authorise and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner’

37. On this point, Hobbes provides a convincing justification for political authority as he notes that ‘in the act of our submission consisteth our obligation and our liberty’

38. In relating this understanding back to the liberal paradox stated earlier within this investigation, Hobbes shows that in the act of committing to political authority, individuals become free from fear and paranoia evoked by the state of nature. More importantly, we see that ‘the idea of consent as the only source of lawful government is fully compatible with a strong defence of absolute sovereignty and the duty of non-resistance’. Here Hobbes argues that the act of authorisation begins with the individual submitting their ‘will’ to the sovereign power to obtain protection from the state of nature and to direct our individual aims toward a common benefit. The natural characteristics outlined by Hobbes come as a result of our liberty (that is freedom from intrinsic on external restraint); leaving individuals with the freedom to pursue their desires and compete against others, this process then sets a strong

34 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, 1985, pg. 224
35 Ibid, pg. 227
37 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, 1985, pg. 227
38 Ibid, pg. 268