Abstract:
Political philosophy relies on three alternative types of theory to explain social order. The first, is order anarchy, built on the system of spontaneous Humean conventions. They are equilibria, self-enforcing or enforced by the participants’ own contingent strategies and involve no central, specialised enforcer. The second type is contractarianism. This paper contends that its name is a misnomer hiding a redundancy. The third type is social contract theory, where there is unanimous commitment to submit to non-unanimous collective choices of certain kinds or reached by certain rules. The paper suggests that social contract theories serve mainly to render acquiescence in political obedience more palatable.