Hobbes's Practical Politics: Political, Sociological and Economistic Ways of Avoiding a State of Nature

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Abstract

This paper offers a systematic analysis of Hobbes's *practical* political thought. Hobbes's abstract philosophy is rightly celebrated, but he also gave much practical advice on how to avoid disorder. Yet he is typically interpreted too narrowly in this respect, especially by those who only read him economistically. Other scholars supplement this economistic focus with sociological or political interpretations, but to my knowledge, no one stresses all three aspects of his thought. This paper thus examines each of Hobbes's practical proposals for avoiding corruption and a state of nature. Hobbes clearly uses economistic, sociological and political approaches, which involve shaping incentives, desires/preferences, and opportunities, respectively. This intentionally anachronistic framework helps us see further, highlighting Hobbes's rich and wide-ranging practical proposals for avoiding disorder – a crucial part of his theory.

Keywords

state of nature – corruption – education – anachronism – conflict

1 Introduction

Hobbes is usually read as an abstract political philosopher, and with good reason: this is the most impressive part of his theory. But he wrote far more on practical aspects of maintaining commonwealths, minimizing disorder, and averting a state of nature. Addressing Hobbes's proposals for avoiding conflict inevitably requires tackling his practical politics.

This side of Hobbes has had much less attention. John Plamenatz, while recognizing Hobbes's concrete intentions, even asserts that “Hobbes had virtually

nothing to say” about political/legal processes and “does not go into detail” about “what institutions” realize his theoretical principles.¹ Hobbes’s practical political thought is usually ignored or underplayed, with valuable exceptions.²

True, a number of scholars have discussed Hobbes’s practical political thought.³ However, these analyses have not been as systematic as that offered

1 John Plamenatz, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau*, ed. Mark Philp and Z. A. Pelczynski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83, 85.

2 As noted by Geoffrey Vaughan, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Political Education* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 1–6, and Charles Tarlton, “The Creation and Maintenance of Government: A Neglected Dimension of Hobbes’s *Leviathan*,” *History of Political Thought* 26 (1978), 307–8.

3 The most rigorous and extensive analyses of Hobbes’s practical politics are David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986); Deborah Baumgold, *Hobbes’s Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and S.A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes’s Leviathan: The Power of Mind over Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Other important analyses of Hobbes’s practical politics include Tarlton, “Creation and Maintenance,” 321–7; Mary Dietz, “Hobbes’s Subject as Citizen,” in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, ed. Mary Dietz (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1990); Geraint Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator: Thomas Hobbes’s National Curriculum,” *Paedagogica Historica* 34 (1998); Peter Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 38–9; Vaughan, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan*; Tom Sorell, “The Burdensome Freedom of Sovereigns,” in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, ed. Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004); Vickie Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 80–110; Perez Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 84–98; Teresa Bejan, “Teaching the Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Education,” *Oxford Review of Education* 36 (2010); Mikko Jakonen, “Thomas Hobbes on Fear, *Mimesis*, *Aisthesis* and Politics,” *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 12 (2011); Michael Krom, *The Limits of Reason in Hobbes’s Commonwealth* (London: Continuum, 2011); Susanne Sreedhar, “Duties of Subjects and Sovereigns,” in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hobbes*, ed. S.A. Lloyd (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Christopher Hallenbrook, “Defining the Office: Officium, Commodious Living and the Substantive Duties of Hobbesian Sovereigns,” paper delivered at American Political Science Association annual meeting, 29 August 2014; Quentin Skinner, “Hobbes and the Social Control of Unsociability,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. A.P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 432–3, 442–8; Gabriella Slomp, “The Inconvenience of the Legislator’s Two Persons and the Role of Good Counsellors,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 19 (2016); Tom Sorell, “Law and Equity in Hobbes,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 19 (2016), 36–40; Matthew Hoyer, “Obligation and Sovereign Virtue in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*,” *The Review of Politics* 79 (2017); and Teresa Bejan, “First Impressions: Hobbes on Religion, Education, and the Metaphor of Imprinting,” in *Hobbes on Politics and Religion*, ed. Laurens van Apeldoorn and Robin Douglass (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

here. To avoid just producing a long list of Hobbes's different proposals, as with Charles Tarlton's interesting but unsystematic account,⁴ we need some kind of framework. This paper thus examines three main practical techniques: sociological, political, and economic, involving desires/preferences, opportunities and incentives respectively.

Hobbes undeniably uses all three approaches. Yet most scholars miss his full breadth. Indeed, many scholars cover just one approach, reading Hobbes using *only* the assumptions and/or tools of modern mainstream economics – assumptions such as self-interest and incentive-based accounts of action, and/or tools such as rational choice and game theory. In Hobbes studies, this is often associated with writers like David Gauthier, Jean Hampton and Gregory Kavka.⁵

Narrowly economic interpretations have been criticized for getting Hobbes wrong or excluding too much.⁶ Yet they are still found in specialist studies of Hobbes.⁷ Hampton and Kavka still dominate some political scientists' understandings of Hobbes.⁸ Public choice theorists regularly offer economic analyses of the "Hobbesian jungle."⁹ In sociology, economic readings of Hobbes became widespread after Talcott Parsons's account of the

4 Tarlton, "Creation and Maintenance," 321–7.

5 David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 77–87; David Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 157–89; Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

6 Bernard Gert, "Hobbes and Psychological Egoism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28 (1967); François Tricaud, "Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature," in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, ed. G.A.J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 123; Tom Sorell, *Hobbes* (London: Routledge, 1986), 152; Stephen Holmes, "Introduction," in Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or The Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990), x–xl, xlix–l; Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 6–47; David van Mill, *Liberty, Rationality, and Agency in Hobbes's Leviathan* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 75–96; Raia Prokhovnik, "Hobbes's Artifice as Social Construction," *Hobbes Studies* 18 (2005).

7 E.g. Aaron James, "Hobbesian Assurance Problems and Global Justice," in *Hobbes Today*, ed. S.A. Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Peter Vanderschraaf, "Game Theoretic Interpretations," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hobbes*, ed. S.A. Lloyd (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Hun Chung, "Hobbes's State of Nature: A Modern Bayesian Game-Theoretic Analysis," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1 (2015).

8 Gary Cox and Matthew McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; second edition), 86.

9 E.g. Edward Stringham, ed., *Anarchy, State and Public Choice* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2005), *passim*.

“Hobbesian problem of order.”¹⁰ Parsons seriously misreads Hobbes,¹¹ but his interpretation remains influential.¹² Sociologists still caricature Hobbes economistically.¹³ So do scholars in international relations.¹⁴

Of course, Hobbes is economistic in many ways. But Hobbes specialists now typically supplement his economism with political or sociological perspectives. Unfortunately, they do not supplement his economism with political *and* sociological perspectives, to my knowledge. For example, Sharon Lloyd and Geoffrey Vaughan, leading analysts of Hobbes’s sociological/educational proposals, largely overlook his political/institutional ones. Lloyd extensively critiques narrow economism, as just noted, but after briefly discussing how divided/limited sovereignty affects disorder,¹⁵ she sidesteps institutional issues. So does Mary Dietz, who only discusses incentivizing and educating citizens.¹⁶ Vaughan even states that Hobbes “did not offer institutional solutions.”¹⁷ Paul Sagar emphasizes fear and private material benefits, and mentions sovereigns giving citizens “a good understanding” of reasons for obedience, but bypasses Hobbes’s institutional solutions for controlling pride.¹⁸ For Juhana Lemetti and Gabriella Slomp, Hobbes’s solution to ambition is education and incentives;

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- 10 Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory With Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* (New York: Free Press, 1949; second edition), 89–102, 314, 337, 402.
  - 11 Robert van Krieken, “The Paradox of the ‘Two Sociologies’: Hobbes, Latour and the Constitution of Modern Social Theory,” *Journal of Sociology* 38 (2002), 258–61.
  - 12 E.g. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 90–2, 336, 346, 449.
  - 13 E.g. Thomas Schwandt, *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (London: SAGE Publications, 2007; third edition), 10; Nate Breznau, “Economic Equality and Social Welfare: Policy Preferences in Five Nations,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 22 (2010), 459, 461.
  - 14 E.g. Harrison Wagner, *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), *passim*. For a broader critique of caricatures of Hobbes’s international political thought, see Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 432–56.
  - 15 Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 30–1.
  - 16 Dietz, “Hobbes’s Subject as Citizen,” 94–6.
  - 17 Vaughan, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan*, 24; see also 45, 49, and see too Geoffrey Vaughan, *Political Education in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 1997), 10.
  - 18 Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind: Sociability and the Theory of the State from Hobbes to Smith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 27–39.

opportunities go unmentioned.¹⁹ For Deborah Baumgold, by contrast, “Hobbes treats the problem of generating and maintaining coercive authority as a constitutional problem.”²⁰ This is true, but it is also an educational problem.

This paper thus confronts our preconceptions with a consciously anachronistic framework – economistic, political, and sociological, involving incentives, opportunities, and desires/preferences. Is anachronism legitimate, given its ahistorical nature?²¹ Quentin Skinner criticizes anachronisms for contaminating our understanding of authors’ beliefs. When investigating authors’ meanings, we have “a sacred duty” to use their “exact terminology,” otherwise we “inevitably” use distinctions they did not use, and then we “cease to report their beliefs.”²²

This warning is important. But anachronisms can be illuminating *if* we first read authors accurately. For example, Noel Malcolm depicts Hobbes as a “liberal illiberal,” casting new light on the debate over Hobbes’s liberalism, but only after first recovering Hobbes’s actual views.²³ Historically accurate scholarship comes first, anachronism second.

Too often, though, anachronism comes first, undermining historical accuracy. Narrowly economistic interpreters usually see in Hobbes only what they expect to see – just as Skinner bemoans.

Since such misconceptions are now rife, one way to challenge them is to reveal their shortcomings on their own terms – to show that Hobbes should be read economistically, politically and sociologically. Facing three options when we had assumed one or two may help us spot aspects of Hobbes’s practical politics which we had missed or misread.

Anachronistic frameworks can thus help us *avoid* errors: novel perspectives can challenge our prejudices, helping us think afresh about what authors wrote. Anachronistic categorizations remain risky, and my own framework

19 Juhana Lemetti, *Historical Dictionary of Hobbes's Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 35; Gabriella Slomp, “Glory, Vainglory, and Pride,” in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hobbes*, ed. S.A. Lloyd (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 131.

20 Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 82.

21 E.g. Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Volume 1*, 49–51, 60–1; Quentin Skinner, “Interview with Quentin Skinner” (by Petri Koikkalainen and Sami Syrjämäki), *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* 6 (2002), 57–8.

22 Quentin Skinner, “Surveying the *Foundations*: a retrospect and reassessment,” in Annabel Brett and James Tully, eds., *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 247.

23 Noel Malcolm, “Thomas Hobbes: Liberal Illiberal,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 4 (2016).

potentially misreads parts of Hobbes. But the benefits hopefully outweigh the costs.²⁴

Section 2 outlines the new framework of opportunities, desires/preferences, and incentives. Since a single paper cannot cover all of Hobbes's proposals for avoiding a state of nature and civil war, I detail Hobbes's wide-ranging solutions to *corruption*, a key cause of disorder. Section 3 summarizes Hobbes's ideas on corruption and averting a state of nature. Sections 4 to 6 analyze Hobbes's economistic, political and sociological proposals. Section 7 concludes with three reasons why this matters.

2 Opportunities, Desires/Preferences, and Incentives

I distinguish three main perspectives: political, economistic and sociological, focusing (respectively) on opportunities, incentives, and desires/preferences. This simplifies considerably, of course. Moreover, the terms are not entirely apt (see sections 2.1 and 2.2). But for heuristic purposes, this framework usefully captures three broad ways of exercising power, and highlights the narrowness of purely economistic Hobbes interpretations. Readers uncomfortable with the economistic/political/sociological terminology can reach the same conclusions by talking of incentives, opportunities and desires/preferences. (Note that my account of "economistic" and "sociological" approaches differs markedly from that given by Brian Barry.²⁵)

Political approaches take people as they are and shape actions by opening or closing opportunities, e.g. banning parliamentary debate. Economistic approaches take people as they are and avoid disorder by shaping actions via incentives, i.e. sticks and carrots. Sociological approaches do not take people as they are but make them as they should be, especially through education, by changing desires or preferences (Table 1).

These are not alternatives. For example, Jeremy Anderson and Corey Robin endorse sociological and economistic readings of Hobbes: governments must "appeal to our intellects as well as our fears," in Anderson's words.²⁶ Likewise,

24 For a broader defence of anachronism, see Adrian Blau, "Extended Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 58 (2019), 350–2.

25 Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 3–7.

26 Jeremy Anderson, "The Role of Education in Political Stability," *Hobbes Studies* 16 (2003), quotation at 103; Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28–9, 31–50.

TABLE 1 Political, economistic and sociological approaches

Approach	Take people as they are	Target	Mechanism
Political	Yes	Actions	Opportunities
Economistic	Yes	Actions	Incentives
Sociological	No	People	Desires/preferences

Pasquale Pasquino reads Hobbes as aiming “to modify the payoffs of the ‘religious civil war’ game,” i.e. “modify the preferences of citizens by modifying their religious beliefs.”²⁷

Nonetheless, to my knowledge no scholar explicitly tackles all three of Hobbes’s techniques for averting a state of nature and civil war. This paper’s key goal is to make Hobbes’s breadth explicit.

2.1 Opportunities

An opportunity is an action which an actor can take. The set of possible actions is the actor’s “opportunity set.” Politics today often involves increasing opportunities, but Hobbes mainly addresses removing something from an opportunity set – the simplest way to prevent it.

For example, “non-decision-making” means keeping options off the agenda, which stops other people making decisions: agenda-setters win by default.²⁸ If a parliament cannot vote on something, say, they cannot stop it by legislative means.

E.E. Schattschneider wrote that “organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out.”²⁹ This clearly matters for Hobbes, especially as regards religious issues: he wants to minimize religious conflict, reducing the prospects for religious disagreements

27 Pasquale Pasquino, “Hobbes, Religion, and Rational Choice: Hobbes’s Two Leviathans and the Fool,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2001), 414.

28 Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, “Two Faces of Power,” *American Political Science Review* 56 (1962); Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; second edition), 20–5.

29 E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America* (Boston: Wadsworth, 1975), 69; emphasis removed.

to create public discord.³⁰ Likewise, he wants to remove MPs' opportunity to counsel sovereigns without permission, a cause of much conflict (section 6).

We can desire things outside our opportunity set.³¹ Indeed, Hobbes bemoans people wanting mixed government despite its impossibility.³² Here, we cannot remove the opportunity for mixed government, since the opportunity is non-existent. Rather, we must tackle desires, preferences and/or incentives.

Why not discuss politics in terms of institutions? Because institutions affect opportunities *and* incentives. Parliamentary institutions, for example, make some actions possible and others impossible, *and* affect costs and benefits. But I want to keep these two things separate: we read Hobbes differently depending on whether we think he tries to make something impossible or just costlier, say. Again, though, readers who dislike "political" here can talk of "opportunities" only. What matters is what we study, not what terms we use.

2.2 *Desires/Preferences*

We must distinguish desires and preferences, which many writers blur. (My account is close to that of Philip Pettit.³³) Desires are absolute – how much we like something. I might like salty chips but, lacking a sweet tooth, dislike cookies. Preferences are relative: if I desire chips more than cookies, I prefer chips to cookies, other things being equal. Stating "I have a preference for chips," as if this preference exists in isolation, is a category error.

The desires/preferences distinction is especially helpful for Hobbes because of the crucial but controversial issue of preference change. Economists typically treat desires and preferences as unchanging.³⁴ But changing preferences need not imply changing desires.

Changing desires – how much one likes chips or cookies themselves – is possible.³⁵ The most extreme way is to change the people, e.g. killing people who

30 Laurens van Apeldoorn and Robin Douglass, "Introduction," in *Hobbes on Politics and Religion*, ed. Laurens van Apeldoorn and Robin Douglass (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–2.

31 Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; second edition), 4.

32 Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico* [henceforth *Elements of Law*], ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), chapter 27 section 7 [henceforth 27.7], p. 167.

33 Philip Pettit, "Preference, Deliberation and Satisfaction," in *Preferences and Well-Being*, ed. Serena Olsaretti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 137.

34 E.g. George Stigler and Gary Becker, "De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum," *American Economic Review* 67 (1977).

35 Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 110–40.

desire revolution. Less extreme, but difficult, is brainwashing, especially of children. Hobbes occasionally implies both techniques (see sections 4 and 6).

However, Hobbes mainly emphasizes changing immediate preferences, by correcting people's opinions about the consequences of manifesting their desires (see section 6). Our actions reflect our desires and beliefs; altering beliefs can influence actions even when desires are constant.³⁶ Imagine that a hurricane nears Florida, where I am about to go on holiday. I desire a Florida holiday more than staying at home, but I much more strongly desire not risking death. My actions change when the real choices become apparent. In other words, I always preferred being alive at home to risking death in Florida, but I did not know this was the actual choice.³⁷ Economics textbooks mostly put it differently, starting with immediate preferences over bundles of goods. (Note my reference above to changing *immediate* preferences: some economists would say the preferences themselves are not changed, only the information.)

Whatever we call it, for Hobbes it means the same technique, one he often uses.³⁸ Even if desires are constant, preferences and actions can change if beliefs change, i.e. by convincing people that their apparent, short-term goods undermine their real, longer-term interests.³⁹

The term "sociological" is not always apt, as with the Florida example. But it fits Hobbes's efforts to shape minds through upbringing and education, and contrasts with economic approaches taking people as they are and shaping actions via incentives.

2.3 *Incentives*

Incentives are an action's costs and benefits. We can incentivize actions by reducing costs and/or increasing benefits. For example, to create more doctors we could make medical school cheaper or give financial inducements to qualified doctors.

Strictly speaking, incentives are part of preferences: for example, whether someone prefers chips or cookies depends on how much she likes chips and cookies (desires) and any other costs and benefits (incentives). But I artificially present incentives as a separate category because we read Hobbes very

36 Keith Dowding, *Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 30.

37 Sven Ove Hansson and Till Grüne-Yanoff, "Preferences," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2006), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2006/entries/preferences/>, accessed 15 February, 2008.

38 Tomaž Mastnak, "Making History: the Politics of Hobbes's Behemoth," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. A.P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 589–91.

39 Adrian Blau, "Reason, Deliberation, and the Passions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. A.P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 209–16.

differently depending on how strongly we think he emphasizes carrots and sticks compared to changing desires/preferences. This paper therefore depicts desires and beliefs as internal, and costs and benefits as external.⁴⁰ For example, I may desire a big house (based on feelings internal to my brain) but cannot afford the cost (external).

Hobbes's psychology clearly caters for incentives. Deliberation involves emotional responses to our expectations of the consequences of actions we are considering. For example, someone thinking about committing a crime may have the following train of thoughts: "The Crime, the Officer, the Prison, the Judge, and the Gallows."⁴¹ If he fears punishment enough, he will not commit the crime. Unsurprisingly, Hobbes often uses this technique (see section 4).

3 Corruption and the State of Nature

I now "descend to particulars,"⁴² examining Hobbes's practical proposals for minimizing disorder. For ease of exposition, I sidestep Hobbes's different accounts of the state of nature.⁴³ I also talk dichotomously of society versus a state of nature even though Hobbes's account is more nuanced.⁴⁴ For example, civil war is only one manifestation of a state of nature. Although Hobbes fears civil war in particular, I mostly talk simply of "a state of nature."⁴⁵

Obviously, a single paper cannot cover all Hobbes's proposals for averting disorder. I thus address one key cause of disorder: corruption. This excludes such matters as international politics and most of Hobbes's prescriptions

40 For the distinction between internal and external motivations, see Bruno Frey, "How Intrinsic Motivation is Crowded Out and In," *Rationality and Society* 6 (1994), 334–6.

41 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), chapter 3 paragraph 7 [henceforth 3.7], p. 42 [p. 10 in the 1839 Molesworth edition]. N.B. References to the Latin *Leviathan* are also from the Malcolm edition. As is conventional, I maintain Hobbes's gender-language, to avoid glossing over his deeply gendered thought. I have removed Hobbes's italics.

42 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.7, p. 524 [177].

43 Tricaud, "Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature."

44 Ioannis Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy: The Rhetoric and Science in Hobbes's State of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 125–6, 229–30.

45 For further discussion, see Kinch Hoekstra's forthcoming monograph on Hobbes. As I read Hoekstra, he depicts the state of nature as a continuum (different degrees of state-of-natureness) with a threshold above or below which we talk of civil society or state of nature respectively.

concerning religion.⁴⁶ But corruption greatly concerned Hobbes, as with many classic thinkers, including Machiavelli and Bentham.

An earlier paper of mine comprehensively analyzed Hobbes's account of corruption.⁴⁷ Hobbes includes standard ideas of "political" corruption, which we would now define as the misuse of public office for private gain. But he also includes "cognitive" corruption, the distortion of mental processes, by faulty reasoning or improper attitudes.⁴⁸ Cognitive corruption differs from what Hobbes calls "sedition" – tax-avoidance, factional strife, encouraging civic unrest, civil war, etc.⁴⁹

Corruption in general, and cognitive corruption in particular, is central to Hobbes's account of disorder. Peace endures if we reason correctly and are emotionally disposed to accept our public duties and sovereign commands. But corruption often reigns alongside the sovereign and can dethrone him. Hobbes undoubtedly saw corruption as a major cause of England's troubles.⁵⁰ I will discuss three key types of corruption that worried Hobbes: corruption of legal processes, corruption of counsel, and corruption of the people. Like his contemporaries, Hobbes repeatedly condemns corruption of legal processes, which undermines the rule of law and fosters anarchy.⁵¹ Counsel was politically central in Hobbes's day: there were huge controversies over who should advise monarchs, but Hobbes saw standard models of counsel as destabilizing.⁵² Popular corruption was another widespread concern; Hobbes bemoaned not citizens' lack of virtue but their ignorance about their duties and sovereigns' rights. Overall, Hobbes mainly targets desires/preferences and incentives to stop popular corruption; opportunities, to stop corrupt counsel; and all three, to stop legal corruption.

46 Tom Sorell, "Hobbes on Trade, Consumption and International Order," *The Monist* 89 (2006); Travis Smith, "Forgiving Those Not Trespassing Against Us: Hobbes and the Establishment of the Nonsectarian State Church," in *Civil Religion in Political Thought: Its Perennial Questions and Enduring Relevance in North America*, ed. Ronald Weed (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 96–118.

47 Adrian Blau, "Hobbes on Corruption," *History of Political Thought* 30 (2009).

48 Blau, "Hobbes on Corruption," 601–4. For further reflections, including cognitive corruption in Machiavelli, Bentham and Mill, see Adrian Blau, "Cognitive Corruption and Deliberative Democracy," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 35 (2018).

49 Blau, "Hobbes on Corruption," 601, 603–4, 606, 614.

50 Blau, "Hobbes on Corruption," 601, 605, 608–11.

51 Blau, "Hobbes on Corruption," 608–11.

52 Joanne Paul, "Counsel, Command and Crisis," *Hobbes Studies* 28 (2015).

4 Incentive-based (Economistic) Proposals for Combating Popular and Legal Corruption

Hobbes's most obvious use of incentives for averting disorder is punishment. Punishment's aim is "terroure."⁵³ "Fear" is "the onely thing" that leads to obedience – except for people with "generous natures," as section 6 discusses.⁵⁴ (Note that fear involves being worried about future evils, not just being frightened.⁵⁵) Punishment's aim is "not to force a man's will but to form it, and to make it what he who fixed the penalty desires it to be," which is "the disposing of men to obey the Law."⁵⁶ As section 6 discusses, this could involve shaping desires/preferences, but the more straightforward interpretation involves incentives: showing men the costs of law-breaking will hopefully make their last deliberative appetite fear, such that they obey the law. Referring to forming a man's *will* presumably invokes deliberation. Hobbes wants consequences to be prominent in a man's mind, forming his will, and we admonish a criminal to show him "the good and evil consequences of his actions."⁵⁷

In general, then, punishment is a deterrent for Hobbes: "the end of punishing is not revenge ... but correction, either of the offender, or of others by his example."⁵⁸ The Latin *Leviathan's* Appendix is slightly different: "the purpose of lawful punishment is not to satiate people's anger against someone but, so far as possible, to prevent injuries, for the benefit of mankind."⁵⁹ Preventing injuries is compatible with correcting offenders or others; Hobbes may well envisage both, to stop crimes being repeated. Either way, Hobbes's ensuing comments clearly address incentives: "The natural law is eternal, divine, and written only in our hearts." Because few people "know how to look into their own hearts and read what is written there ... they learn from the written laws what things are to be done, and what avoided," and do/avoid these things

53 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 28.10, p. 486 [162].

54 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27.19, p. 464 [155].

55 Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy*, 102–3. See Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen* [henceforth *De Cive*], ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne, trans. Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 1 paragraph 2 [henceforth 1.2], p. 25.

56 Hobbes, *De Cive* 13.16, p. 152; *Leviathan* 28.9, p. 484 [162]; see also *Leviathan* 28.1, p. 482 [161].

57 Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), Volume 5, p. 191.

58 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.23, p. 542 [182].

59 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan*, p. 1202.

"in accordance with whatever will seem, from the punishments they foresee, profitable or harmful to themselves."⁶⁰

For deterrents to work, though, citizens must expect penalties to be applied. The commonwealth will be "dissolved" if "judges are corrupt," and if criminals do not fear punishment such that "false judgements, robberies and theft" flourish.⁶¹ Sovereigns must thus let citizens denounce corrupt judges in "free and open" ways, so sovereigns must "lend an ear" to these complaints, appoint special courts of inquiry if needed, and "use penalties to compel the judges they have appointed" to practice justice.⁶² Meanwhile, "penalties" raise the cost of being caught. So, Hobbes wants to incentivize citizens to publicize judicial corruption, and to incentivize judges by punishing corruption.

Incentivizing obedience requires more than fear: citizens should also like the status quo. I will sidestep Hobbes's important comments on religion and international relations, and address economic prosperity, not least because even narrowly economic interpreters mostly overlook this. Poverty "grieves and discontents the human spirit more than anything," and since the poor always blame governments, sovereigns should foster economic productivity, provide benefits where people are unemployed through no fault of their own, and avoid inequitable taxation by taxing consumption not income.⁶³ Contented citizens may still occasionally break laws but they will not be generally angry and oppose sovereigns. Interestingly, Hobbes does not just want economic prosperity: socio-economic and geographic-economic inequalities are also troublesome, if some groups or cities are far richer than others.⁶⁴ However, space precludes further analysis of background conditions, such as international peace fostering economic trade.⁶⁵

60 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan*, p. 1204.

61 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 28.6, p. 175; *De Cive* 13.17, p. 152; *Leviathan* 27.38, p. 478 [160]. *Leviathan* simply says "private revenges" will result; the Latin *Leviathan* adds "and, in the end, war" (Latin *Leviathan*, p. 478).

62 Hobbes, *De Cive* 13.17, p. 152; *Elements of Law* 28.6, p. 175.

63 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 28.5, pp. 174–5; *De Cive* 12.9, pp. 137–8; 13.10, p. 147; *Leviathan* 30.17, p. 538 [181]. For more on Hobbes's economic thought and its relation to his political thought, see Laurens van Apeldoorn, "'The Nutrition of a Commonwealth': On Hobbes's Economic Thought," in *History of Economic Rationalities: Economic Reasoning as Knowledge and Practice Authority*, ed. Jakob Bek-Thomsen, Christian Olaf Christiansen, Stefan Gaarsmand Jacobsen, and Mikkel Thorup (Dordrecht: Springer, 2017).

64 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 29.19 and 29.21, p. 516 [173–4]; *Behemoth* pp. 110, 276.

65 Tom Sorell, "Hobbes, Public Safety and Political Economy," in *International Political Theory after Hobbes: Analysis, Interpretation and Orientation*, ed. Raia Prokhovnik and Gabriella Slomp (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 42–3.

5 Opportunity-based (Political) Approaches for Combating Corrupt Counsel and Legal Corruption

Punishment is not just about incentives. Imprisoning someone, to the extent that this was an option in Hobbes's day,⁶⁶ would at least temporarily deny him law-breaking opportunities.⁶⁷ For extreme disobedience, Hobbes recommends temporary or permanent exile (being "cast out of Society"),⁶⁸ or even execution.⁶⁹ This too alters opportunities: lawbreakers cannot disobey if they are abroad or dead. Moreover, a man who "breaketh his Covenant, and consequently declareth that he thinks he may with reason do so, cannot be received into any Society," in which case he "perisheth."⁷⁰ In effect, this denies covenant-breakers future opportunities to break covenants. Obviously, though, my three categories are not exclusive: exile and execution also incentivize covenant-following, if potential miscreants fear exclusion and death.

As regards corrupt counsel, Hobbes's approach almost entirely involves opportunities, minimizing the risk of corrupt counsel even arising. In Hobbes's day, virtuous gentlemen were expected to counsel their monarch, using rhetoric.⁷¹ But Hobbes thought rhetoric made counsel self-interested and hence corrupt: far from bring virtuous, citizens offering rhetorical counsel were "corrupt Counsellours ... bribed by their own interest" – a delicious insult.⁷² Equally corrupt, we might say, were two other sets of emotions: the self-aggrandizing motivations that drove many gentlemen to want to give counsel, and feelings of envy and hurt when their counsel was overlooked. Hobbes even asserted that "the sole cause" of "our land's present civil wars" was that "certain evil men who were not asked for counsel thought that their own wisdom was less fairly valued and counselled the citizens to take up arms against the king."⁷³

66 On the gradual development of prisons in this period, see Paul Griffiths, "Introduction: Punishing the English," in *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500–1900: Punishing the English*, ed. Simon Devereaux and Paul Griffiths (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 21–5.

67 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 28.19, p. 490 [164].

68 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 15.17, p. 232 [76]; 28.21, p. 492 [164–5].

69 Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, ed. Paul Seaward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), p. 231.

70 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 15.5, p. 224 [73].

71 John Guy, "The Henrician Age," in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12–22.

72 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 25.1–9, pp. 398–402 [131–3]; quotation at 25.9, p. 402 [133].

73 Thomas Hobbes, *Critique Du De Mundo de Thomas White*, ed. Jean Jacquot and Harold Whitmore Jones (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1973) chapter 38 section 16, p. 424. I have modified the translation in Thomas Hobbes, *Anti-White: Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, trans. Harold Whitmore Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976),

A root problem, then, is ambition. Hobbes did not fear ambition “in and of itself,” writes Baumgold. “Institutionalized political ambition – that was what he feared.” He thus needed to avoid “institutional arrangements that give encouragement to political ambition.”⁷⁴ Interestingly, Hobbes here takes unruly passions as given. “Ambition and longing for honours cannot be removed from men’s minds, and sovereigns have no duty to attempt to do so.”⁷⁵ These passions must simply not be given a political outlet. Similarly, Ioannis Evrigenis notes that “pride could be neither ignored nor switched off. Rather, it had to be enlisted and flattered, so as to be prevented from interfering with Hobbes’s teaching toward peace.”⁷⁶ As Vickie Sullivan puts it: “Perhaps [Hobbes] cannot root out all ambition in human nature, but he certainly attempts to contain its ill effects.”⁷⁷

One solution is the type of polity itself. There is less corrupt counsel in monarchies: most citizens cannot participate in assembly politics and thus “lose the opportunity” for eloquent speeches of counsel.⁷⁸ But corrupt counsel may still arise. Hobbes thus makes four recommendations.

First, he addresses the institutional structure within a monarchy, giving assemblies’ counselling role to a new body. Men’s passions, while “moderate” as individuals, can “enflame one another” in assemblies, with rhetorical speeches fanning the flames and “setting ... the Common-wealth on fire.”⁷⁹ Counsellors should instead advise the monarch one-by-one; monarchs should receive no counsel at all rather than hear it from an assembly of jarring opinions, which Hobbes likens to playing tennis while being pushed around in a wheelbarrow.⁸⁰ He pointedly depicts deliberation in individual terms, as a decision-maker’s internal thought-process, not a group discussion. In group discussion, counsellors do not deliberate but merely furnish the monarch “with arguments whereupon to deliberate within himself.”⁸¹ Hobbes clearly dislikes large

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chapter 38 section 16, p. 476. See also Hobbes, *English Works*, Volume 8, pp. xvi–xvii; *Elements of Law* 19.5, p. 105; 27.12–15, pp. 169–72; *De Cive* 5.5, p. 71; 12.10, 138; *Leviathan* 17.10, p. 258 [87]; *Behemoth*, pp. 110, 252.

74 Baumgold, *Hobbes’s Political Theory*, 74, 78. On ambition and vainglory more generally, see also 71–4, 78, 122–4, and Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 35–44, 58–73, 85–96.

75 Hobbes, *De Cive* 13.12, p. 148.

76 Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy*, 19.

77 Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism*, 98.

78 Hobbes, *De Cive* 10.9, p. 122.

79 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 25.15, pp. 408–10 [135].

80 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 25.16, pp. 410–12 [136].

81 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 13.5, p. 76.

assemblies discussing important issues. This proposal reduces the opportunity for inflammatory rhetoric.

Second, rather than citizens ambitiously offering themselves as counsellors, sovereigns themselves should choose counsellors.⁸² Hobbes objected to parliamentarians ousting the Duke of Buckingham as Charles I's counsellor and trying to give counsel themselves. Interestingly, the Latin *Leviathan* puts more weight on counsellors' need for knowledge: to counsel on the most important issues, one must access the commonwealth's archives, copies of treaties, and officials' letters.⁸³ This involves opportunities too, assuming that sovereigns control who can access such documents.

Third, corrupt counsel is less likely without rhetoric: counsel should be dispassionate and impartial, helping the sovereign rather than promoting the speaker's interests, which fosters faction and sedition.⁸⁴ Clear reasoning nurtures peace; rhetoric corrupts reasoning and promotes disorder. Even *Leviathan*, more open to rhetoric than the *Elements* and *De Cive*, worries about parliamentary rhetoric's destabilizing effects. As regards opportunities, note Hobbes's language: deductive reason *ties* – binds – counsellors to seek the truth.⁸⁵ Rhetoric, by contrast, gives counsellors too much opportunity to pursue self-interest, potentially threatening peace. But more obviously, Hobbes is essentially telling sovereigns not to give parliamentarians opportunities for corrupt counsel, and to ban rhetoric among counsellors, making them use logic.

Fourth, and more generally, Hobbes attacks the very ideal of active citizenship, arguing in the subversively entitled *De Cive* ("On The Citizen") that good citizens need not enter public affairs. This makes corrupt counsel even less likely.

Inow turn to legal corruption. Hobbes made judicial neutrality a law of nature, encouraging sovereigns to institutionalize this: no one may judge disputes that concern their own interests, or if he has contractual bonds with parties in the case, or if he will benefit from a particular decision.⁸⁶ Such a judge "hath taken (though an unavoydable bribe, yet) a bribe; and no man can be obliged to

82 Hobbes, *De Cive* 6.18, p. 88; *Leviathan* 30.25, p. 546 [183–4].

83 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan* 25, p. 408.

84 Hobbes, *English Works*, Volume 8, xvi–xvii; *Elements of Law* 17.8, p. 96; 21.5, p. 120; 24.4, p. 139; 24.8, p. 140; 27.14–15, pp. 171–2; *De Cive* 10.10–15, pp. 122–5; *Leviathan* 19.4–8, pp. 288–90 [95–8]; 25.5–16, pp. 400–12 [132–6]; 30.25–27, pp. 546–8 [183–4].

85 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 25.6, p. 400 [132].

86 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 17.7, p. 95; *De Cive* 3.21, p. 52; *Leviathan* 15.31–2, p. 238 [78].

trust him,"⁸⁷ because he is "corrupted by human nature."⁸⁸ Hobbes likens such partial judges to the corrupt, self-bribed counsellors already described. Even if such corrupt counsellors give good counsel, they are no more good counsellors "than he that giveth a Just Sentence for a reward, is a Just Judge."⁸⁹

6 Sociological Approaches (Desires/Preferences) for Combating Popular and Legal Corruption

Hobbes's "sociological" approach is primarily educational, but I first consider punishment and counsel, discussed above. Section 4 noted that punishment's aim is "the disposing of men to obey the Law."⁹⁰ Although this probably involves incentives, "disposing" men might mean shaping desires, or more precisely, dispositions. Dispositions, or manners, are "men's inclinations toward certain things."⁹¹ Dispositions are neglected by most Hobbes scholars even though Hobbes wrote two whole chapters on them.⁹² His account of dispositions is not fully consistent, but roughly, a disposition is a bundle of desires: peaceful and warlike dispositions, say, foster different preferences i.e. orderings of desires.

This is presumably why people with "generous natures" obey the law without coercion even when breaking it would profit them.⁹³ This comment again weakens narrowly economic assumptions that Hobbes saw everyone as selfishly instrumentally rational. Also problematic for narrowly economic interpretations is Hobbes's acceptance that desires can change, especially children's.⁹⁴ Men are "made fit for Society not by nature, but by discipline [*disciplina*]."⁹⁵ Discipline disposes us to virtues such as gratitude, and against

87 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 15.32, p. 238 [78].

88 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan*, p. 239.

89 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 25.9, p. 402 [133].

90 Hobbes, *De Cive*, 13.16, p. 152; *Leviathan* 28.9, p. 484 [162]; see also *Leviathan* 28.1, p. 482 [161].

91 Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine*, in *Man and Citizen*, ed. Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), chapter 13 paragraph 1 [henceforth 13.1], p. 63.

92 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 11, pp. 150–62 [47–51]; *De Homine* 13, pp. 63–70.

93 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27.19, p. 464 [155]. Hobbes expands on this in the Latin *Leviathan*, pp. 464–5.

94 Hobbes, *De Homine* 13.3–4, pp. 64–5.

95 Hobbes, *De Cive* 1.2, p. 25. I have changed the Silverthorne translation's "training" to "discipline," following Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan," 619, and Quentin Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

virtues such as arrogance.⁹⁶ The initial arenas for discipline are the family, where the “first instruction of Children” occurs,⁹⁷ and schools: “it is by the rod that boys’ dispositions toward all things are shaped as parents and teachers wish.”⁹⁸ This implies that citizens could be habituated to like the law and obey it almost without thinking.

I am not denying Hobbes’s manifold incentive-based, economic proposals. But even when explicitly discussing how citizens weigh the costs and benefits of obedience, he supplements this by advocating educating citizens about real costs and benefits. Since “mens actions are derived from the opinions they have of the Good, or Evill, which from those actions redound unto themselves,” they will disobey laws if they think that “their obedience to the Sovereign Power, will bee more hurtfull to them, than their disobedience.”⁹⁹ The sovereign’s rights “cannot be maintained by any Civill Law, or terrour of legall punishment”: they must be “diligently, and truly taught.”¹⁰⁰ Hobbes clearly does not seek obedience through fear alone.

Here, Hobbes moves beyond shaping desires/dispositions to shaping preferences. As with section 2.2’s Florida example, this involves showing us the consequences of achieving our desires, helping us pick our real good. This means education, “the key to the maintenance of social order,” in Lloyd’s words.¹⁰¹ Hobbesian education has been considered in great detail by scholars such as David Johnston, Sharon Lloyd, Geoffrey Vaughan and Teresa Bejan, so rather than covering all aspects, I briefly consider education of reason, of opinions, and of emotions.

For Hobbes, correct reasoning led to true, Hobbesian conclusions. Popular corruption is less likely if people reason properly. The *Elements of Law* rejects education of the passions: Hobbes prioritizes reason over emotion and teaching over persuading.¹⁰² Reason could be educated in three ways. First, *De Corpore* was a direct instruction manual in clear reasoning. Second, Hobbes’s texts could improve readers’ political thinking indirectly, by exemplifying clear

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2018), 187; see similarly Hobbes, *Leviathan* “A Review, and Conclusion” [henceforth RC] paragraph 4, p. 1182 [389].

96 Dietz, “Hobbes’s Subject as Citizen,” 101–11; Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes*, 162–89.

97 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.11, p. 528 [178].

98 Hobbes, *De Homine* 13.4, p. 65.

99 Hobbes, *De Cive* 6.11, p. 80; *Leviathan* 42.67, p. 850 [295].

100 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.4, p. 522 [176].

101 Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 219.

102 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 13.2, p. 73; 13.7, p. 76.

reasoning. Third, even more indirectly, citizens should reason better if humanist training were reworked and religious superstition removed.¹⁰³

But teaching people to compute answers themselves is hard.¹⁰⁴ Hobbes thus puts far more emphasis on educating opinions, especially sovereigns teaching people their true interests, to help them choose real over apparent goods. Hobbes is pretty optimistic about educating uncorrupt citizens: "the Common-peoples minds, unlesse they be tainted with dependance on the Potent, or scribbled over with the opinions of their Doctors, are like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them."¹⁰⁵ (*Leviathan* often depicts education as "imprinting."¹⁰⁶ See also Hobbes's comments on "framing."¹⁰⁷) But "many Opinions, contrary to the peace of Mankind" are "deeply rooted" despite resting on "weak and false Principles."¹⁰⁸ People "imbued with no matter what opinions from boyhood retain the bulk of them [*plerumque*] even in old age."¹⁰⁹ Here, opinions cannot be changed by commands or threat of penalties; rather, we must expose men over time to "true doctrines conforming to their own understanding."¹¹⁰ It is "hard," but (implicitly) not impossible, "to weed out of men's minds such inveterate opinions as have taken root there."¹¹¹ Faulty opinions "which are gotten by education, and in length of time made habitual" can still be "taken away ... by time and education."¹¹² Presumably, though, some citizens will simply be scared into obedience until they die and are replaced by more dutiful citizens.

I will not detail which opinions to censor.¹¹³ What matters most is simply that Hobbes seeks both direct and indirect education – education of citizens

103 Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 26–218; Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 99–157.

104 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 5.17, p. 72 [21].

105 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.6, p. 524 [176].

106 Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan," 618; Bejan, "First Impressions," 54–5.

107 Christopher Scott McClure, *Hobbes and the Artifice of Eternity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 43.

108 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.14, p. 532 [179].

109 Hobbes, *De Homine* 13.3, p. 65; I have added "the bulk of" to Gert's translation, which omits *plerumque* – see Thomas Hobbes, *Opera Latina*, ed. and trans. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), Volume 2, p. 112. I thank Dirk Brantl for noticing Gert's oversight. See also *Elements* 10.8, pp. 62–3; *Leviathan* 32.4, p. 578 [196].

110 Hobbes, *De Cive* 13.9, pp. 146–7; *Elements of Law* 28.8, p. 176; Thomas Hobbes, *Writings on Common Law and Hereditary Right*, ed. Alan Cromartie and Quentin Skinner (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 2005), 12.

111 Hobbes, *English Works*, Volume 1, p. 2.

112 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 28.8, p. 186.

113 See *Elements of Law* 27.4–10, pp. 164–9; *De Cive* 12.1–8, pp. 131–7; *Leviathan* 29.6–14, pp. 502–8 [168–71]; but compare *Behemoth*, p. 188.

themselves, and of their teachers.¹¹⁴ Direct education includes the sovereign teaching the last five Commandments and instructing citizens about sovereigns' rights.¹¹⁵ Citizens must also learn precepts such as not doing to others what one would not want done to oneself.¹¹⁶ This education occurs mainly in churches – “a kind of civic Sunday school,” as Bejan writes.¹¹⁷ But lawyers had “infected” most of the gentry with their maxims and precedents, thought Hobbes, and made them think they knew the law better than the King.¹¹⁸ Hobbes recognized that significant legal reform was vital.¹¹⁹

Direct Hobbesian education thus involves showing people the consequences of their actions – almost literally. Men are short-sighted, so Hobbes wants them “to see a farre off the miseries that hang over them,”¹²⁰ revealing the desirable consequences of some things we dislike, and the undesirable consequences of some things we desire.¹²¹ Hobbesian education actually changes the images in people's heads.¹²²

This also fits Hobbes's approach to punishment, since laws have an educative component: “a law should plainly define ... the method of punishment, in order that the evil man should be deterred from evil-doing by the expectation of that punishment.”¹²³ Indeed, to stop legal corruption, “every Sovereign Ought to cause Justice to be taught,” showing citizens “the evill consequences of false Judgement, by corruption either of Judges or Witnesses,” which erodes

114 Vaughan, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan*, 42.

115 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.5, p. 522 [176]; 30.12–13, p. 530 [179]; see also 30.6–11, pp. 524–8 [176–8]; 46.12 p. 1060 [370]; *Behemoth*, pp. 127–8, 190.

116 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* 17.9, p. 96; *De Cive* 3.26, p. 53; 4.23, p. 65; *Leviathan* 15.35, p. 240 [79]. On Hobbes's conflicting framing of this precept, see Devin Stauffer, *Hobbes's Kingdom of Light: A Study of the Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 159, 227–8.

117 Bejan, “Teaching the *Leviathan*,” 618.

118 Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 266.

119 Alan Cromartie, “General Introduction,” in Hobbes, *Writings on Common Law*, xxxi–xlv, lxiii.

120 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 18.20, p. 282 [94].

121 Blau, “Reason, Deliberation, and the Passions,” 206, 209–16. See also Patrick Neal, “Hobbes and Rational Choice Theory,” *Political Research Quarterly* 41 (1988), 650–1, on education helping people to spot distant consequences, especially their own potential death.

122 Robin Douglass, “The Body Politic ‘is a Fictitious Body’: Hobbes on Imagination and Fiction,” *Hobbes Studies* 27 (2014); Blau, “Reason, Deliberation, and the Passions,” 211–2; see also Prokhovnik, “Hobbes's Artifice,” 83–92; Ioannis Evrigenis, *Fear of Enemies and Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 124.

123 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan*, p. 1202.

property rights and dissolves justice.¹²⁴ In other words, many citizens do not see how legal corruption places their apparent, short-term interest over their real, long-term interest: bribing judges or witnesses facilitates a state of nature. Explaining this to citizens – changing their preferences by clarifying the consequences of their desires – reduces legal corruption just as teaching similar doctrines reduces popular corruption.

I now address indirect education, involving Oxford and Cambridge universities, the “Fountains” of civil and moral ideas.¹²⁵ As Geraint Parry notes, *Leviathan* starts and ends by discussing universities, with repeated mentions in between.¹²⁶ Hobbes’s “trickle-down theory of education,” in Lloyd’s words,¹²⁷ involves most citizens learning civic duty from preachers, who learn it at university.¹²⁸ The universities were thus “the producers of the re-producers – the preachers and teachers.”¹²⁹ Accordingly, reforming universities would achieve “the civic education of the entire commonwealth.”¹³⁰ This may seem extreme but was fairly conventional, except the unusual view that sovereigns decide what universities teach, and the subtle but pointed attack on orthodox defences of universities.¹³¹

Universities used classical texts which equated democracy with liberty and monarchy with tyranny; reading these books was like “the biting of a mad Dogge” producing rabies.¹³² Hobbes’s view of university education was outdated,¹³³ but in his eyes the universities were like the wooden horse was to the Trojans, “infecting” students and citizens – the “coar of rebellion” before 1642,¹³⁴ and still fomenting discontent under Cromwell.¹³⁵ These “fits of Rebellion ... may easily be mended, by mending the Vniuersities [Universities],”¹³⁶ keeping

¹²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan* 30.12, p. 530 [179].

¹²⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan* RC.16, p. 1140 [395].

¹²⁶ Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator,” 713; *Leviathan* 1.5, p. 24 [4]; RC.16, p. 1140 [395].

¹²⁷ Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 197; see also 207, 219.

¹²⁸ Hobbes, *De Cive* 13.9, pp. 146–7.

¹²⁹ Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator,” 729.

¹³⁰ Bejan, “Teaching the Leviathan,” 609.

¹³¹ Richard Serjeantson, “Hobbes, the Universities, and the History of Philosophy,” in *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity*, ed. Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger and Ian Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 118–22, 127–30; see also 136–7 on the Latin *Leviathan*’s different account of universities.

¹³² Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 110; *Leviathan* 29.14, p. 508 [171].

¹³³ Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes*, 185.

¹³⁴ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 159; *De Cive* 12.13, p. 140; *Behemoth*, p. 183.

¹³⁵ Hobbes, *English Works*, Volume 7, p. 344.

¹³⁶ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 199.

university doctrines “pure ... from the Venime of Heathen Politicians,”¹³⁷ i.e. ancient Greek and Roman theorists. Teaching “absolute obedience” to laws was vital.¹³⁸ “First of all, therefore, the universities must be reformed.”¹³⁹ No “lasting peace” is possible otherwise.¹⁴⁰ The reformed universities will teach *Leviathan*, or a more accessible alternative, perhaps using the curriculum outlined in *Behemoth*.¹⁴¹ In Hobbes’s day, boys often went to university at 14 or 15, as Hobbes had; university reforms would affect younger people than today.

Overall, Hobbes seeks “not simply to contain subjects but to *reconstitute* them as citizens,” writes Dietz.¹⁴² Parry distinguishes “constructive” education, taking people as they are but pointing them in the right direction, and “reconstructive” education, reshaping people.¹⁴³ Hobbesian education fits both categories, but more the former (although not, as Parry claims, only the former¹⁴⁴). Hobbes wants us to grasp our real long-term interests and to see – again, almost literally – how pursuing short-term interests can cause a state of nature.

Does Hobbes want to educate passions themselves? For Richard Tuck, Hobbes seeks a wholesale “purging” of disruptive passions.¹⁴⁵ But vanity cannot be purged, being a direct result of desiring power after power.¹⁴⁶ A partial purging over time is possible: older citizens with disruptive passions will die, replaced by newer citizens educated more appropriately, as noted above. Ultimately, though, Hobbes’s psychology involves controlling passions, not removing them. He seems to depict passion as too strong to be controlled by reason,¹⁴⁷ preferring to fight passion with passion, especially with fear,¹⁴⁸ discussed above. (Again, note Hobbes’s wide-ranging approach: education works alongside incentives.) Meditation on the law, including reflecting on

137 *Leviathan* RC.16, p. 1140 [395].

138 Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 180.

139 Hobbes, Latin *Leviathan* 30, p. 533.

140 Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 183.

141 Hobbes, *Leviathan* RC.16, p. 1140 [395]; Hobbes, *English Works*, Volume 7, 335–6; *Behemoth*, pp. 182–3.

142 Dietz, “Hobbes’s Subject as Citizen,” 107.

143 Geraint Parry, “Constructive and Reconstructive Political Education,” *Oxford Review of Education* 25 (1999).

144 Parry, “The Sovereign as Educator,” 729–30.

145 Richard Tuck, “The Utopianism of *Leviathan*,” in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, ed. Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 134.

146 Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy*, 235.

147 Hobbes, *Elements of Law* Epistle Dedicatory, p. 19; 24.4, p. 139; *Leviathan* 19.4, p. 288 [96].

148 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27.19, p. 464 [155].

punishment and the effect of crime on society, might rectify one's crime-inclining passions.¹⁴⁹

The sovereign should also temper unruly passions by conjoining them with doctrines favouring peace not disobedience, especially by altering religious views.¹⁵⁰ Faulty religious doctrines were major causes of popular corruption. Educating sovereigns thus also helped avoid popular corruption, because of the huge impact sovereigns could have – positive or negative. *Leviathan*, which teaches sovereigns about their interests, may have been written partly for Prince Charles, the future King Charles II.¹⁵¹ As David Johnston notes, *Leviathan's* discussion of the sovereign's duties mostly involves educating opinion.¹⁵² The *Elements* and *De Cive*, which also have chapters on sovereigns' duties, can likewise be read as offering guidance for sovereigns.

Moreover, Hobbes wanted "to instil good social attitudes," fostering "a type of character well-suited to leading a peaceful way of life."¹⁵³ He is particularly worried about the aristocracy: "Hobbes leaves no doubt from which class the most troublesome are drawn," writes Vickie Sullivan,¹⁵⁴ and seeks "to deter elite conflict," notes Baumgold.¹⁵⁵ That said, he writes little about such crucial issues as how to "prevent the arrogant from behaving contemptuously, or persuade the vainglorious to offer charity instead of revenge," states Skinner.¹⁵⁶ Hobbes's approach is wide-ranging but not all-encompassing.

7 Conclusion: So What?

We cannot fully understand Hobbes's political theory if we only read him abstractly and ignore his practical proposals for avoiding corruption, disobedience, disorder and civil war. Hobbes's breadth here is typically understated. His wide-ranging efforts to avert disorder include desires/preferences, opportunities *and* incentives.

149 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27.33, p. 474 [158].

150 Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 99–157, 220–1.

151 Noel Malcolm, "General Introduction," in Volume 1 of Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 52–8.

152 Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 78–80.

153 Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes*, 187.

154 Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism*, 98; also 99–101.

155 Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 82.

156 Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes*, 188.

Hobbes uses several strategies because there are multiple people with a variety of characters, not just one kind,¹⁵⁷ or two as modelled by the more adventurous game theorists.¹⁵⁸ Hobbes must thus press many buttons – to incentivize ordinary people and political actors, to control opportunities, to shape desires and dispositions, to change the images in people's heads, to educate opinions and thus alter preferences, and to ensure we know that sovereigns will punish uncivic actions, promote judicial impartiality, and so on. Hobbes addresses institutions, including the type of polity as well as lower-level structures, procedures and powers. He stresses education, partly of reason but mainly of opinion. He sometimes takes dangerous passions as givens, countering them with stronger passions like fear, or removing opportunities for their political manifestation, but he also seeks to reconstitute the citizen body over time. This breadth is impressive.

Why does this matter? I offer three reasons: what Hobbes teaches us; understanding Hobbes comparatively; and understanding Hobbes in and of himself.

The first reason, what Hobbes teaches us, stems from his insight that citizens are diverse. This may seem obvious but we often forget it or gloss over it. Consider books with titles such as *Why Americans Hate Politics*, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, *Why Americans Hate the Media*, *Why Americans Choose War*, *Why Americans Don't Vote*, *Why Americans Still Don't Vote*, and *Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race*. These titles are enticing, but misleading.

Such language goes deeper than book titles. Consider the question of whether laptops in classrooms reduce student performance. One well-known experiment gave the same lecture to two groups of students, one with laptops open and one where laptops had to be closed. When tested on the lecture's content, "students in the open laptop condition perform[ed] significantly poorer than those in the closed laptop condition."¹⁵⁹ This is imprecise and misleading: the *mean* scores were different, but we learn nothing about variation around the mean.¹⁶⁰ Likewise, a computer scientist summarizing the experiment in the *New Yorker* wrote that "the disconnected students performed better."¹⁶¹ No: better *on average*.

157 Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, 132–50.

158 Chung, "Hobbes's State of Nature."

159 Helene Hembrooke and Geri Gay, "The Laptop and the Lecture: The Effects of Multitasking in Learning Environments," *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 15:1 (2003), 53.

160 Hembrooke and Gay, "The Laptop and the Lecture," 54.

161 Dan Rockmore, "The case for banning laptops in the classroom," *The New Yorker* 6 June 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>, accessed 2 August 2019.

But Hobbes's diversity point is crucial: would we expect everyone to respond to laptop bans in the same way? Might some students do *worse* under laptop bans? This seems plausible, and is consistent with the above differences in mean scores. Some readers of this article would still be comfortable banning laptops in such circumstances, some will not; but this question will not be asked if we only discuss how "students" perform. Good social science, recognizing diversity, permits better policy. Bad social science ignores diversity and can lead to illiberal policy.

The second justification of the anachronistic three-part framework is that it enables comparison between authors who use different terms. This is especially important given that few historical authors are explicit about their practical approach; they may not even be fully conscious of it. We may thus need anachronistic frameworks even to compare them. If we first try to read authors with historical accuracy, it is legitimate to then compare them on *our* terms, to highlight issues of historical importance.

Future research could thus examine economistic, political and sociological proposals by different historical authors. Hobbes is surely not unusual in using all three: Machiavelli and Bentham, likewise often read in narrowly economistic ways, do the same.

Some interesting historical trends might also be uncovered. I suspect that more optimistic civic republicans will emphasize sociological approaches, while those influenced by Machiavelli and (via Hobbes) Harrington will be broader. By contrast, the *Federalist*, so influential on modern ways of thinking about constitutions and institutions, is primarily political and economistic. James Madison himself later defended public education merely as "the best security against crafty & dangerous encroachments on the public liberty," and for creating more wise citizens to elect as representatives.¹⁶² (This reflects a longstanding concern of education for rulers, dating back at least to Confucius and Plato. It is also found in, and practiced by, Hobbes.) For Madison, education to counter disorder is only relevant for enslaved persons who had been emancipated.¹⁶³

Many later writers held a far more expansive view of education than Madison.¹⁶⁴ But over time, Madison's view has dominated: education is *for* citizens, rather than *making* citizens. Plato and Aristotle, by contrast, saw

162 James Madison, *Selected Writings of James Madison*, ed. Ralph Ketcham (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 308.

163 Madison, *Selected Writings*, 323.

164 See the chapters in Amélié Oksenberg Rorty, ed., *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1998).

“the education of citizen-rulers as a primary aim of the *polis*: it pervades every aspect of civic activity and it never ends.”¹⁶⁵

Hobbes, despite being modern in many ways, is closer to Plato and Aristotle than to us, education-wise. Unsurprisingly, narrowly economistic readers of Hobbes miss this part of his theory, but my anachronistic framework helps us compare historical authors. Again, then, anachronism can help historical understanding, not just hinder it – here, by highlighting originality and trends.

The third and most important justification of my anachronistic framework is simply that it helps us understand Hobbes better. If this article’s key substantive insight is that Hobbes is a wide-ranging practical political thinker, then this insight reflects the article’s key methodological insight: anachronism can help us see more in Hobbes. Far from distorting his position, it can even correct distortions, or at least oversights.

This article has not questioned economistic readings of Hobbes, only *narrowly* economistic ones. Hobbes can and should be read economistically, but we miss something important if we do not also read him sociologically and politically. Hobbes should be read abstractly, but we do not fully understand his political theory unless we also read him practically. After all, his focus is on “making, *and* maintaining Common-wealths.”¹⁶⁶

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165 Amelié Oksenberg Rorty, “The Ruling History of Education,” in Amelié Oksenberg Rorty, ed., *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1998), 3.

166 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 20.19, p. 322 [107]; emphasis added.