

The Role of Sociability in Political Philosophy

By

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Abstract

This dissertation identifies, and argues in support of, the fundamentally important role that accounts of sociability play in the project of political philosophy. I will show that assumptions about the nature of human sociability implicitly or explicitly underlie all theories of political governance. When theorists explain why a state is required (or in the case of anarchists, why a state is not required), they inevitably invoke claims about (i) the nature of humans' pro-social and anti-social traits, (ii) whether the balance of these traits is such that individuals are able to freely and successfully interact without state intervention; and (iii) whether and how the state can help address any imbalances of these traits that would undermine successful social interaction. While this general schema – what I call the “generic account of sociability” - is found in both early modern and contemporary political theories, early modern theorists were much more self-conscious and explicit about the role that sociability plays in their theories, whereas with many contemporary political theorists, this role has become hidden or obscured. I will argue that these assumptions must be made more explicit, and must be assessed more systematically both for their internal consistency and for their compatibility with contemporary scientific findings about human sociability. There are in fact a number of unresolved tensions and ambiguities within both early modern and contemporary political theories about how exactly assumptions of sociability underpin a justification of the state's existence. In this dissertation, I try to identify some of these key tensions and ambiguities, and offer some methodological suggestions for how political philosophy can make progress on this fundamentally important issue.

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I dedicate this dissertation to Mom, Dad, Liam, Robbie, and Ginger.

I love you all so much.

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Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Sociability within Contemporary Theories of Political Governance	10
The Sociability Hypothesis & Two-Stage Model of Justification	10
The Generic Account of Sociability	14
Associative Theories	19
Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Associative Theories	22
Fairness Theories	26
Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Fairness Theories	30
Natural Duty Theories	34
Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Natural Duty Theories	40
Additional Natural Duty Theories	44
Consent Theories	52
Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Consent Theories	53
Gratitude Theories	56
Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Gratitude Theories	58
An Important Outlier to The Dissertation Argument	59
Conclusion	61
Chapter 2: Pro-Social Theories and the Justifiability of the State: Hume and Kropotkin	64

Hume’s Account of Sociability & Theory of Political Governance	65
Complexity/Ambiguity in Hume’s Account of Sociability	77
Kropotkin’s Account of Sociability & Theory of Anarcho-Communism	86
Ambiguity in Kropotkin’s Account of Sociability	94
Conclusion	101
Chapter 3: Anti-Social Theories and the Justifiability of the State: Hobbes and Stirner	103
Hobbes’s Account of Sociability & Theory of Political Governance	103
Complexity/Ambiguity in Hobbes’s Account of Sociability	112
Stirner’s Account of Sociability & Theory of Individualist Anarchism	126
Complexity/Ambiguity in Stirner’s Account of Sociability	132
Comparison of Hobbes’s and Stirner’s Accounts of Sociability and Theories of Governance	140
Conclusion	143
Chapter 4: A Way Forward: Pinker’s Account of Sociability and the State	145
The Decline of Violence & Pinker’s Theory of Political Governance	148
Pinker’s Account of Sociability	175
Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification	194
Pinker’s Account of Sociability & Theory of Governance in Relation to the Dissertation	198
Further Critiques of Pinker’s Work	204
Conclusion	209
Conclusion	210
Bibliography	219

Introduction

The inspiration for this dissertation project came to me as I was walking through Union Subway Station in downtown Toronto. It was a weekday, around the time that everyone finishes work, and the station was exceedingly crowded and bustling. As I attempted to walk to the train, I was repeatedly bumped and jostled by individuals impatiently hurrying home. As I observed the people who surrounded me, I noticed a common theme. Everyone seemed to be looking down, rather than at each other, and were charging through the crowd without (seemingly) concern for anyone but themselves. My observation of agents' behaviour in Union Station sparked a question: if individuals are not naturally friendly and caring, how does this influence the requirements of the state in regard to its facilitation of successful interaction? If agents are naturally averse to living in large, dense societies, what form of state is necessary in order to ensure successful interaction among its citizens (for instance, what level of coerciveness is necessary for the success of such a task)? Furthermore, I wondered if the nature of agents' sociability changes in different circumstances. For instance, would agents perhaps be more prone to freely engage in successful interaction in smaller societies, requiring a less coercive form of state, or no state at all? At this point, I knew the topic I wished to pursue involved evaluating how accounts of sociability influence the creation of theories of governance, in specific regard to agents' tendencies towards/against successful interaction.

I began by evaluating ideas promoted by early modern political philosophers and classical anarchists regarding the nature of human societies. Such theories supplied stories of humankind's rise or fall from grace in relation to political societies, based on prominent and well-addressed accounts of sociability. I appreciated the ideas that such theories promoted,

however, I knew that I needed a larger range of opinions in order to arrive at an adequate answer to my queries. I consequently turned to contemporary theories of political governance, and was confronted by a surprising phenomenon. Almost none of the theories I evaluated provided substantial accounts of human sociability,¹ and furthermore, few of them acknowledged that their justifications of governance depended on assumptions about sociability. I was perplexed, as this method differed so greatly from the method of the thinkers I had evaluated before them.

At this point, I realized that I had discovered a problem in the literature. It did not make sense to me that thinkers who provided theories of political governance did not address the nature of the agents to whom their theories would apply. Theories of governance are theories regarding the organization of human beings in relation to specific goals. One of the most important goals according to which states are designed, I would argue, is the facilitation of successful interaction in society. How else could all those people in Union Station be induced to live peacefully among each other, if they seemingly possess no natural affinity towards the unknown others who surround them? Thus, my dissertation project was born. It is my goal in this dissertation to illuminate the fundamentally important role that accounts of human sociability play in theories of political governance.

¹ There are, potentially, several reasons why contemporary thinkers fail to address the accounts of sociability which underlie their theories. One of these reasons may be that they do not realize the significant role that such accounts play in influencing theories of governance. Another potential reason may be that they do not view exploring the nature of human sociability as a productive endeavour. Certain thinkers may possess this ideology because they interpret such explorations in relation to those of early modern thinkers, which were primarily engaged in in the context of pre-state societies. This form of exploration, certain contemporary philosophers may argue, is unproductive, as human beings have never lived in such a pre-state conditions (or, at least, have not for an exceedingly long time). To explore the potential nature of human sociability under such circumstances, they may therefore argue, is unhelpful in providing an accurate understanding of sociability. Whatever the motives, I will argue that this failure to articulate systematic accounts of sociability creates serious problems in contemporary theories of the state.

Accounts of sociability are fundamentally important to the project of political philosophy, I will argue, as they inevitably underlie theories of political governance, even when this role is not acknowledged. Accounts of sociability underlie such theories as they are, essentially, theories regarding the ordering of society, which is necessarily composed of human beings. How could a thinker promote a theory of societal organization, I argue, if they do not base their reasoning upon the nature of the agents to whom it will apply? Thinkers must possess an underlying conception of the nature of the agents to whom their theories will apply, otherwise, on what basis can they argue that the forms of governance they promote will succeed?

One of the state's most important tasks, I argue, is to facilitate successful interaction among agents in society. In this dissertation, I define successful interaction as that which is peaceful (specifically, lacking overt violence), with a successful society being characterized as one which is constituted by (predominantly) peaceful interactions. In one sense, this is a modest test of a "successful interaction", and as we will see, there are certainly other values we may hope to experience in our social interactions. However, peaceful interaction within society has a fundamental role as a necessary requirement for a minimally adequate quality of life for citizens. Unless agents are situated in conditions wherein they are safe from harm from others, they cannot be held to live minimally well. This is a result of the right to not be subjected to harm, which all individuals possess as a result of their equal moral status as human beings.

While successful interaction is a necessary requirement for agents' lives to be of minimally adequate quality, it is not the only requirement. There are, undoubtedly, additional requirements for individuals to have good or flourishing lives, such as adequate nourishment and shelter, access to healthcare, etc. The reason that I focus on peaceful interaction is that I hold that in order for any other aspects of a successful society to be addressed (for instance, justice),

interactions must be constituted by, at least minimally, a lack of violent conflict. It is implausible that, in a society wherein agents predominately engage in violence against each other, respect for human rights or natural duties (for example) can be enforced. Once agents interact peacefully with each other, additional considerations necessary to characterize society as successful can be addressed.

As we will see, this prioritization of questions of peaceful interaction has a long history within political philosophy. In order to bring this out, I propose that we think of political theories as (implicitly or explicitly) operating with a two-stage model of the justification of states. The first stage focuses on the justification for the *existence* of the state; the second stage focuses on the justification for the *authority* of the state. The first question which must be asked in regard to the justifiability of states is whether the existence of a state is held to be necessary in the first place, and what reasons underlie this determination. As we will see, the answer to this question invariably appeals to assumptions regarding the nature of human sociability. Whether the state is seen as necessary is intimately tied to theorists' beliefs regarding whether agents can freely facilitate successful interaction, specifically, whether they require state intervention in order to facilitate the necessary minimum levels of peace identified above. This is the first stage. Once the necessity for the state's existence is justified, we then shift to the second stage, and ask about the justifiability of the state's authority, including questions about the how state authority should be constrained by ideas of rights or justice or legitimacy.

As we will see, this two-stage model – and in particular, the idea that the first-stage justifiability of the existence of the state depends on assumptions of sociability – can be found across a wide range of historical theories of political governance. However, I will argue that this first stage is often skipped over too quickly by contemporary political philosophers. They jump

too quickly to second-stage considerations regarding the state's authority, without having adequately explained their first-stage assumptions about the state's existence.

I will argue that this tendency to skip quickly over the first stage is regrettable, and leads to a number of potential gaps and pitfalls. Insofar as the underlying assumptions about sociability are not made explicit, it is very difficult to test whether these assumptions are in fact empirically plausible and compatible with our best evidence about human sociability. Moreover, it is difficult to test whether the model of the state which is being proposed in fact "fits" the account of sociability. If the existence of the state is justified by the way it helps to secure peaceful interaction, either by promoting pro-social traits or impeding anti-social traits, then we need to know in some detail how exactly the state is promoting or impeding such traits. As we will see, contemporary political theorists too often simply gesture in passing at these issues, leaving us with an inadequate account of why the existence of the state is justified in the first place.

My project is a valuable contribution to the field of political philosophy, as it identifies the errors of certain theories of political governance in failing to appropriately address considerations of sociability. I explain the manner in which theories ought to incorporate accounts of sociability, and the necessary criteria of such accounts, which facilitates such theories' applicability to real-world deliberations regarding political governance.

Throughout my research for this dissertation, one discovery stood out to me in regard to the scene I confronted in Union Station which initially motivated the project. In the extensive reading that I engaged in regarding the accounts of sociability which underlie theories of political governance, I noticed that all thinkers promote accounts which posit agents as being capable of engaging in conflict as well as cooperation. Even thinkers who attempt to promote accounts which posit agents as being entirely oriented towards cooperation or conflict, in fact, promote

accounts which hold agents to be characterized (to a certain degree) by traits which lead to both types of interaction. This discovery surprised me, as it is common to divide political theorists into more “egoistic” and more “communitarian” schools of thought, as well as into pro-state and anti-state camps. As we will see, these broad labels may obscure as much as they reveal about how theorists understand the mix of pro-social and anti-social traits and their implications for the state. I expected much more variation and polarization between different thinkers’ accounts, given the significant differences between the forms of governance they ultimately defend.

This finding is significant, as it gives me hope in regard to societies today. Although individuals, for example, walking through a subway station to get home after a day of work do not appear to be oriented towards cooperation or solidarity with others around them, they do possess traits which can facilitate successful interaction, as is evident by the lack of constant conflict between agents in such situations. Furthermore, a common theme which appears in thinkers’ accounts is the idea that human beings are inherently social creatures insofar as we are, in fact, designed to live among others. Some thinkers claim even further that to live alone is the worst fate that can befall a person. Thus, although it may be troublesome to have to brave crowds on a commute home, it is reassuring to believe that living in society is, in fact, a fate which one ought to accept as a positive aspect of one’s life.

The idea that human beings require peace for their well-being, and that they are capable of both successful and conflictual interaction, may seem anodyne. However, as we will see, these ideas in fact have profound political implications which are not at all obvious or trite. I argue that all theories of political governance are, in fact, based on assumptions of sociability, insofar as the state is (in part) invoked or not invoked in regard to its role in facilitating successful interaction. This fact is often overlooked, as contemporary political theorists predominantly base their

theories on considerations which I argue ought to be addressed in the second stage of the justification of states (i.e. considerations of rights, duties, relationships, etc.), which may suggest that the relevant theory is not one in which assumptions of sociability matter. However, as I will demonstrate throughout the dissertation, all theories are, in fact, based on considerations of sociability, and thus, contemporary political theorists underestimate the influence of such assumptions on the justifiability of their theories.

Furthermore, this step from assumptions of sociability to justification of the state is actually complicated, and needs careful unpacking. As we will see in chapters two and three, thinkers who hold the same account of sociability often reach differing conclusions regarding the justifiability of the state, in part because they have different implicit assumptions about how the state facilitates a beneficial balance of pro-social/anti-social actions. Contemporary theorists, therefore, neglect to address a crucial step in their justifications of the state. Thus, my dissertation illuminates two important ways in which contemporary philosophical debates are misleading and incomplete.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides a review of a collection of major contemporary theories of political governance, supporting my claim that they all fail to adequately incorporate the assumptions of sociability upon which they are based into their justifications of the state. The second chapter evaluates the accounts of sociability and theories of governance put forward by David Hume and Peter Kropotkin. These thinkers' theories have been chosen because they are excellent examples of thinkers who seriously and thoughtfully construct their accounts of sociability, and who allocate them their fundamentally important role in justifications regarding the existence of the state. The evaluation of Hume's and Kropotkin's theories provides support for my claim that accounts of sociability play

fundamentally important roles in justifications of theories of political governance. This chapter illuminates that even within well-explained/addressed accounts of sociability, complexity and ambiguity can be discovered which potentially undermines the justifiability of the forms of governance promoted in relation to them. The aim of the third chapter is analogous to that of the second, however, it examines the accounts of sociability and theories of governance put forward by Thomas Hobbes and Max Stirner. Differing from the second chapter, the complexity and ambiguity which is present in the aforementioned thinkers' accounts is considered to undermine the justifiability of the forms of governance promoted in their theories. Finally, the fourth chapter evaluates Steven Pinker's work *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, which represents an example of how the project of political philosophy can successfully incorporate empirical data regarding the nature of human sociability. Pinker promotes an account of human sociability which is thoroughly explained and based on empirical evidence. This account inherently informs the justifiability of the existence of a specific form of governance which Pinker identifies: liberal democracy. Pinker does not, explicitly, argue for the justifiability of liberal democracy, but for its influence on certain reductions of violence. However, I argue that the structure of his work (i.e. presenting a well-explained account of sociability based on empirical evidence, in specific regard to its nature in relation to the state) can be used as a basis upon which arguments regarding the justifiability of the form of state he promotes, based on the relevant sociability assumptions, can be added, thus producing a theory of governance which can fulfill the first stage of justification.

The insights regarding the way that accounts of sociability can be interpreted and their connection to theories of governance, which will be gained throughout the dissertation, will aid in understanding the nature of human sociability within Pinker's account, and its relationship to

violence and the state. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of basing accounts of sociability on evidence from empirical fields will be illuminated, which will lead, in the conclusion, to an exciting prospect for the future of political philosophy.

Chapter 1:

Sociability within Contemporary Theories of Political Governance

The claim that justifications regarding the existence of the state ought to be based on considerations of human sociability, is certainly controversial. In this chapter, I will evaluate a range of contemporary theories of political governance, with the central aim of arguing that all of such theories are fundamentally based on considerations of sociability, and that these considerations ought, therefore, to be invoked in justifications of the existence of political governance. This chapter provides a helpful introduction to the dissertation project: to illuminate the important role that accounts of sociability play in justifications of theories of political governance.

While assumptions about sociability play a fundamental role in these theories, these assumptions are often left implicit and undefended. Accounts of sociability are rarely explicitly addressed or explained by the thinkers, and as such, the assumptions of sociability upon which their theories of governance are based are unclear. This is problematic, as the justifiability of theories of political governance is (in part) dependent on such assumptions. If forms of political governance are not appropriately modelled in relation to the accounts of sociability on which they are based, they cannot be held to be justifiable, as the state cannot then be assumed to be effective in (one of) its primary and important task(s): facilitating the necessary good of successful interaction between agents in society.

The Sociability Hypothesis & Two-Stage Model of Justification

I argue that the “full justification” of the state involves two stages: namely, justifying the state’s *existence* and justifying its *authority*. Many theorists implicitly or explicitly assume that the two stages of justification can be separated, and that ultimately it is only the second stage that matters. According to these theorists, the most important question is whether the authority of the state is justified, and this question can and should be assessed independently of the question of whether the existence of the state is justified. This view may originate from the current political circumstances that agents face in real life. Agents, in the real world, are situated in societies which are governed by a state that makes claims on them. Thus, when asked whether the state is justified, it is understandable that they will answer by calling on facts regarding the state itself, or the agents within the state as having duties/obligations to the state or others. These facts are closer to our experience than considerations regarding whether the existence of the state is justified, given that states do, in fact, currently exist and make claims on us. There may seem to be no point in asking whether the existence of the state is justified, given that states do exist, and hence that the more important question is whether the authority that current states possess is justified.

I argue that this method is erroneous, as it hides crucial premises about sociability. In particular, theories of governance rely on assumptions about sociability to determine whether humans require the intervention of the state in order for successful interaction to occur (which is a precondition of a minimally adequate quality of life). If agents do not require the intervention of the state to facilitate the good of successful interaction, the justifiability of the state’s existence is cast into doubt. When evaluating justifications of political governance, therefore, we must first attend to underlying accounts of sociability.

In the rest of this chapter, I show that all contemporary political theorists posit what I call the “generic account” of sociability (discussed below), which argues that, at least above a certain size, the balance of anti-social and pro-social tendencies within agents will undermine successful interaction without the active intervention of the state. This is a central – but not adequately recognized – step in the overall argument of all contemporary political theories, and I argue that we need to examine it carefully, before moving on to the second stage of justification, which focuses on evaluating the authority of the states whose existence is justified upon the generic account of sociability.²

In short, for a theory of political governance to be fully justified, both the existence and the authority of the state must be justified. This naturally raises the question of how the two stages are related to each other. In my view, the second stage can only be fulfilled if the first stage is fulfilled, and in that sense, the answer to the first stage constrains the second stage. However, the first stage does not fully determine the second stage: as we will see, different variants of the generic account of sociability in stage one can be combined with different accounts of authority/obligation in stage two. For example, the generic account of sociability does not predetermine the choice between natural duty and fair play accounts of obligation (and conversely, the choice of natural duty versus fair play does not predetermine any specific variant of the generic account of sociability).

Thus, my argument in the dissertation involves three steps. The first, labelled the “sociability hypothesis,” claims that all theories of political governance rely on accounts of

² To be clear, when arguing that the existence of the state must be justified, I am not referring to the historical or anthropological question of how states initially came into existence. I am not evaluating the circumstances of the origin of the state, nor do I think that theorists must provide a narrative regarding how states could initially arise. I am simply stating that the existence itself of the state must be defended, before tackling questions of authority and obligation.

sociability. In this chapter, I show that all the major theories of political governance promoted by contemporary theorists appeal to particular premises about sociability, although this is often only implicit.

Having identified the sociability hypothesis within each theory, we then proceed with the two-stage evaluation of the justifiability of the theory.³ Stage one evaluates the justifiability of the existence of the state and, in particular, asks whether a given theory's sociability account justifies the need for a state: that is, does the theory explain why the state is needed to successfully facilitate the good for which it is invoked, given the nature of the agents which it is designated to order. Stage one will be held to be successfully fulfilled if three tests are met: 1) the thinker explicitly acknowledges their reliance on the relevant sociability assumptions; 2) they defend their sociability assumptions (i.e. they give evidence or arguments supporting their account), and 3) they consistently apply such assumptions in their justifications of the state (i.e. the form of governance they promote is appropriately modelled in relation to the relevant account of sociability).

If stage one is fulfilled, we can then turn to stage two, focusing on the justification of the state's authority. From my research to date, it appears that the various accounts offered at stage two are not based primarily or exclusively on assumptions about sociability, but rather, on considerations regarding the nature of the state or the nature of political relationships. Such considerations could be, for example, the justice of the form of authority (as in natural duty theories of political governance), or the nature of the bonds between citizens (as in associative theories of political governance). Thus, while assumptions of sociability must be necessarily

³ Theories of political governance which hold the existence of the state to be unjustifiable do not require engaging in the second stage of justification. Because the aforementioned theories do not hold the existence of the state to be justifiable, there would be no state authority to evaluate.

invoked in justifications of the existence of the state, additional considerations, such as those based on association, fairness, etc., are required in order to justify the state's authority.

In the dissertation, I will not be endorsing any particular stage-two justification of the authority of the state. My project, instead, is to emphasize the importance of stage-one justifications of the existence of the state, and illuminate how they depend on sociability assumptions. To skip this step is a mistake. Theories which address stage two without first addressing stage one, risk taking the existing system of states for granted. Before we can evaluate specific claims to authority/obligation by existing states, we must first ask why we need states at all, and this requires us to engage with important but neglected questions regarding the nature of human sociability.

In this chapter, I will evaluate various contemporary theories of political governance which are based on considerations of association, fairness, natural duty, consent, and gratitude. I will argue that all such theories support the sociability hypothesis, however, none of them successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, by failing to meet one or more of the three relevant tests. I will evaluate a range of theorists within the schools of political thought mentioned above in order to provide support for my arguments, by illustrating that all the major contemporary theorists in political philosophy inherently invoke assumptions of sociability upon which their theories are based.

The Generic Account of Sociability

Throughout my evaluation of numerous and varying theories of political governance, I have observed a common trend in thinkers' characterization of human sociability. All political philosophers (based on the extent of my research thus far) hold a conception of sociability which

underlies their theories, which, specifically, posits agents as possessing traits which both facilitate and impede successful interaction (with different balances being promoted of the predominance of either type of trait). This is the case, I argue, even though certain thinkers misinterpret the accounts which they posit (i.e. they interpret their accounts as promoting agents as entirely pro-social or anti-social) or their accounts are misinterpreted by readers. I will label this account of human sociability as the “generic account”, which can be defined this way:

The generic account of sociability holds that (1) agents possess the capacity to engage in cooperative as well as conflictual interaction with other agents based on a combination of pro-social traits which facilitate successful interaction, as well as anti-social traits that impede it; (2) at least above a certain size or scale, the relative strength of pro-social and anti-social traits is such that cooperation is unlikely or impossible without the presence of a state to facilitate successful interaction.

The traits which are held to operate within the generic account of sociability vary between thinkers’ theories, however, they include traits such as altruism, solidarity, and sympathy (among traits which work to potentially facilitate successful interaction), as well as traits such as bias, greed, and vanity (among traits which work to potentially impede successful interaction). These traits will be respectively labelled “pro-social” and “anti-social” traits.

For many thinkers, the relative strength of the sociability traits depend on the size of the society. This is either because the motivational force of pro-social traits diminishes as societies grow in size, or because the motivational force of anti-social traits gains strength as societies grow, or both. Either way, the implication is that in small-scale societies, agents may be able to interact successfully without state rule. Such small societies are characterized, generally, as being comprised of face-to-face interactions, with agents being bound together by ties of kinship or affection. Once societies grow in size, however, and agents do not interact with one another as intimately or at all (most societies are large enough that agents do not interact with every

individual who composes them), this leads to changes in the motivational force of pro-social and anti-social traits which require that the state be invoked in order to facilitate successful interaction.

Not all defenders of the generic account of sociability hold this view that the state is not needed to facilitate cooperation in small-scale societies. However, they do all hold that the state is necessary to facilitate successful interaction in large-scale societies. Consequently, the generic account of sociability will be understood as an account which posits human beings as possessing traits which both facilitate and impede successful social interaction (pro-social and anti-social traits), as well as holding that the state is required to facilitate successful interaction in large-scale societies. The claim regarding the variation of the motivational forces of pro-social/anti-social traits in regard to societies of different sizes, therefore, will be held as a potential secondary claim which can be added to the generic account.

I would like, at this point, to clarify how I am using the terms “pro-social” and “anti-social”. I label traits of sociability as pro-social or anti-social depending on the consequences which result from agents’ engagement with them. If an agent acts on the trait of solidarity, for example, and successful interaction with others is produced as a result, the trait is labelled as pro-social. Conversely, if an agent acts on the trait of greed, and conflict with others results, it is labelled as anti-social. I wish to highlight, however, that traits of sociability are not held to be strictly characterized as solely pro-social or anti-social, as traits can be labelled as either within different circumstances, depending on the outcomes which result from them. For example, the trait of self-interest can generate both pro-social and anti-social consequences in different settings. The standard characterization of the trait of self-interest is that it is an anti-social trait, insofar as it leads agents to prioritize themselves over others, and to seek to advance their

interests at any cost (including the cost of harming others). However, as we will see, this characterization is misleading, as the trait of self-interest is highly complex, resulting in conflict and successful interaction within different circumstances. This indeed will be a fundamental point in our analysis of Hume's theory in chapter two, and Hobbes's and Stirner's theories in chapter three.

I should also clarify how I am using the term "traits". I hold traits to be capacities of an agent (for example, agents have capacities to engage in solidarity, greed, etc.), which may or may not be acted on. However, certain capacities possess an added element of motivational strength, and thus, can be seen not just as capacities, but as dispositions or inclinations. When I am discussing traits, therefore, I will be referring to capacities, and will explicitly highlight when such capacities possess the added element of motivational influence.

The generic account of sociability is important for several reasons. Firstly, it is significant that all political philosophers presuppose such an account in their theories of political governance, as this illuminates an interesting, underlying conception of human beings which pervades the field of political philosophy. That all political philosophers hold the same conception of the nature of human sociability is striking, and it is important to keep in mind when evaluating their differing works. Furthermore, and more importantly, the generic account predominantly leads to the justification of a specific form of political governance. This form of governance is one which possesses enough authority to prevent agents from acting on their anti-social traits, and to enforce punishment if they do, but is not overly-coercive. As agents are held to possess certain pro-social traits, which work to facilitate a certain degree of successful interaction, the state is not justified in claiming unlimited power. The relevant form of governance will, certainly, vary between theories (for instance, it will be more authoritative if the

relevant generic account emphasizes agents' anti-socialness, or less authoritative if it emphasizes agents' pro-socialness). However, the fact that the generic account is so widely held by thinkers, and leads to the justifiability of similar forms of governance, provides implicit support for the validity of such limited states.

Put another way, the generic account seems to preclude certain forms of governance, which rely on different accounts of sociability. Highly authoritarian states, for example, posit accounts of sociability which hold agents as being predominantly or entirely anti-social, and thus unable to freely facilitate an adequate level of successful interaction for society to function acceptably. Conversely, accounts of sociability which posit agents as being predominantly or entirely pro-social inform forms of political organization such as anarchism. Agents are held to freely interact successfully and thus the intervention of the state is not held to be necessary, rendering it unjustifiable. In the dissertation, I will explore thinkers who seem at first glance to endorse these more extreme views of humans as either uniformly anti-social or pro-social, and hence who defend more authoritarian or anarchist conclusions. However, I will argue that in fact, the generic account underpins their theories, and pushes them towards limited states.

That the generic account is posited in political philosophers' theories is important due to the forms of governance which cannot be justified in relation to it. Harmful and unjust states, such as totalitarian regimes and dictatorships, can be justified based on accounts of sociability which hold agents as unable to freely engage in successful interaction, as can horrific and unjust campaigns such as those of slavery and colonialism. If human beings are held to be unable to successfully organize society freely, their coercion and oppression by the state can be justified. My dissertation will highlight the prevalence of the generic account of sociability in all political philosophers' work, even those who do not realize they are promoting it, or whose work is

interpreted erroneously (i.e. held to not promote the generic account). This is a significant phenomenon to highlight, as such widespread, underlying intuitions regarding the nature of human interaction are important and necessary to examine in the quest for justice in the project of political philosophy.

Having explained my terminology, I now turn to an exploration of the main contending theories of political governance in contemporary political theory: namely, theories based on association, fairness, natural duty, consent, and gratitude. In each case, I will attempt to show that they do indeed invoke the generic account of sociability, with its assumptions about the balance of our pro- and anti-social traits, but that they rarely acknowledge their dependence on this view, let alone defend these assumptions. As a result, their theories are, in crucial respects, under-developed and under-argued.

Associative Theories

The first type of justification of political governance which will be evaluated in this chapter are those based on relationships of association. Key proponents of such theories include John Horton, Margaret Gilbert, Ronald Dworkin, and Samuel Scheffler. I will begin by outlining the main premises of associative theories of political governance. This exegesis is intended to be uncontroversial, as it is designed to reflect a widely shared understanding of the ideas within such theories. I will then provide arguments as to why I believe that such theories support the sociability hypothesis, specifically, by being based on the generic account of sociability. In doing so, I will illuminate an aspect of such theories which is not adequately recognized/addressed by the relevant theorists (or their commentators): the fundamental role that accounts of sociability play in justifying the existence of the state. I will then engage in an exploration regarding

whether the relevant theories successfully fulfill the first stage of justification (i.e. meet all three tests). The structure of this section of the chapter will be replicated throughout my explorations of theories of political governance based on considerations of fairness, natural duty, consent, and gratitude.

The central premise underlying associative theories of political governance is the fact that agents live within social circumstances, which generate special obligations to other members of the shared circumstances. Scheffler explains that agents possess certain basic duties towards others (for example, the duty not to inflict harm on others), however, agents may possess additional special duties based on the social circumstances in which they are situated. Individuals within groups, he explains, possess relationships to each other which generate special duties to these agents. Scheffler holds that many different types of groups generate special duties (e.g. voluntary groups, involuntary groups, etc.). As he states, “virtually any kind of group or personal relationship that has significance for the people it unites may be seen by them as giving rise to associative duties” (Scheffler 2001, 51). The state, within associative theories of political governance, is interpreted as a type of group, in which membership generates political obligation in citizens.⁴ The conditions of such membership, however, are not based on agents’ voluntary choices, but rather, on their situatedness within the group. That agents do, in fact, live within a state is enough, according to thinkers such as Gilbert, Horton, and Scheffler, to establish

⁴ At this point, the question regarding what defines a group (e.g. voluntary commitment, geographical proximity, etc.) will not be discussed at length. Thinkers such as Gilbert, for example, hold that the state ought to be understood as a group which generates political obligation in its members insofar as it is understood as a plural subject. As she explains, “social groups are plural subjects; plural subjects are constituted by joint commitments which immediately generate obligations” (Gilbert 1993, 126). The state is considered a plural subject, on Gilbert’s account, with membership being based on one’s participation (Gilbert 2006, 180). For the purpose of this chapter, however, it will simply be assumed that the state is a type of group wherein membership generates political obligation of the kind that associative theorists posit.

membership. Whether one acknowledges, accepts, or acts in accordance with this membership, is not relevant to the existence of the political obligation which is derived from it.⁵

Political obligation is generated, within associative theory, by virtue of the relationships between citizens in a state, insofar as an obligation to obey the laws of the state is owed to one's fellow group members in order to facilitate successful interaction. While the content of one's political obligation is directed towards the state (as the obligation entails submitting to its laws), one's moral obligation is due to one's fellow citizens, as it is the specific relationship that agents have in relation to each other which creates the moral imperative to obey the laws of the state.

A central critique of associative theories is that one cannot arbitrarily impose duties on another agent without their consent. This objection holds that it is a violation of the autonomy of individuals for duties (such as those of political obligation) to be cast on agents who do not voluntarily consent to them. In response to such criticism, Scheffler argues that not all duties are grounded in one's voluntary decisions (Scheffler 2001, 55). There are duties, Scheffler claims, which arise by virtue of the social circumstances one is situated within, regardless of consent. Such circumstances cannot be entered into or exited based on one's free will, and thus, they ground obligation to others in the shared circumstances regardless of whether the agent in question consents to such a state of affairs. The argument supporting associative accounts of political governance is further strengthened, Scheffler holds, through the intuitions agents feel regarding obligations towards those with whom they have relationships. That agents feel such

⁵ Thinkers such as Dworkin hold that political obligation entails that agents understand themselves as being bound by such obligation, if it is to be understood as generating fraternal obligations (those based on an acceptance and acknowledgement of one's obligation in regard to others in one's community) (Dworkin 1986, 201). However, for the purpose of this chapter, the contention regarding whether membership requires an interpretive aspect will not be addressed.

obligations indicates, Scheffler holds, the force of common-sense morality as grounding such obligations (Scheffler 2001, 64).

A critique of this counter-argument, which relies on natural intuitions regarding duties to one's associates, holds that the type of special relationship invoked in the argument is not analogously representative of the relationship between citizens and the state (Horton 2010, 174). The relationship between an agent and their family members is of a very different nature than the relationship between an agent and their state, and therefore feelings of duty, of the kind that Scheffler draws on, cannot be invoked in order to supply a justification of political obligation. While membership in certain non-voluntary groups, such as the family, may generate moral obligations, it is unclear whether societies such as the state, which are not "small, closely-knit, face-to-face groups" (Horton 2010, 174), can do so.

In response to the above critique, thinkers who support the associative theory of political obligation, such as Horton, argue that it is not the analogous nature of relationships to the state and one's family, but rather, the mere existence of such relationships and the moral relevance this holds regarding one's duties towards others within the same circumstances which create obligations (Horton 2010, 174). Specifically, political authority, according to Horton, is justified as a result of the good it provides to its citizens (successful interaction) (Horton 2010, 176-7), and agents' consequent requirement to obey the laws of the state is generated by virtue of their relationships to each other as members of a society which fundamentally requires this good (Horton 2010, 182).

Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Associative Theories

Agents in society possess duties of political obligation to each other by virtue of their relationships as members of the state, which entails that the proponents of associative theories of political obligation hold the state to be necessary to the facilitation of successful interaction between agents. If agents were seen as possessing solely pro-social traits, which facilitated successful interaction without external intervention, such thinkers would not argue that the state is justifiable. That agents are seen as requiring state intervention for successful interaction to occur presupposes a specific conception of the nature of human sociability. Horton provides a detailed explanation of his account of sociability:

[s]ome anarchists apart, it is almost universally accepted that if human beings are to live together for any length of time and have any prospect of worthwhile lives, at least in groups that extend beyond those that could be held together entirely by strong bonds of natural affection, there needs to be some reasonably effective regulatory body. The basis of the need for order and security, backed by coercion, is to be found in the many differences between people, differences of belief, temperament, morals and interests, which lead to conflict, suspicion, hostility, insecurity and sometimes, ultimately, violence. This is not to assume that human beings are naturally selfish or evil; but only that, on any plausible assumptions about human relations, there will always be contention, partiality, competition, dispute and, even among people generally well disposed to each other, problems of coordination. (Horton 2010, 176-7)

Horton alludes to the importance of group membership in agents' lives, stating that even non-voluntary groups, such as the state, are necessary for humans to lead worthwhile lives. As he states, "it certainly seems that not only are non-voluntary groups integral to social life, they can be (and often are) important sources of value for us" (Horton 2010, 174). Horton claims that in order for human beings to flourish (or as he puts it, lead "worthwhile lives" (Horton 2010, 176-7)), they must live in groups which are constituted by a minimal level of peace and justice, and that the state is required in order to facilitate this state of affairs. As Horton explains,

[w]ithout a body that establishes a set of common rules, which adjudicates their interpretation when there is disagreement and which, when necessary, enforces them by protecting people against their violation, there is no realistic, long-term prospect of a minimally secure, let alone prosperous, life together. If human beings are to flourish, on any remotely plausible account of what it is for them to flourish, certain minimal conditions must be established and maintained. Principally, there needs to be a recognizable and viable social order—some measure of predictability and security, some level of reliable expectations and some degree of trust, which enables people to have confidence in and to cooperate with each other to develop complex and stable social institutions and predictable patterns of behaviour. This, I claim, is the generic good of a polity. (Horton 2010, 177)

Horton claims that in groups that are larger in size than those held together by bonds of natural affection, the state is required in order to facilitate successful interaction. Human beings, on Horton's account of sociability, require successful social living in order to live worthwhile lives, however, they also possess traits which impede this state of affairs from freely coming about. Horton posits that anti-social traits result from agents possessing certain beliefs, temperament, etc. which differ from those of others, and this leads to conflict between agents. Horton does not claim that agents are inherently conflictual, or that the anti-social traits he posits entirely prevent successful interaction from coming about, however, he does hold that such traits impede it to a certain degree. It can be assumed that Horton holds that the anti-social traits he alludes to are not strong enough to impede successful interaction in the context of small societies, which are, as he describes, "held together entirely by strong bonds of natural affection" (Horton 2010, 176-7).

Horton, therefore, promotes a view of human sociability which is bounded insofar as successful interaction can occur without intervention from external coercive forces, however, only within certain contexts. Once societies grow in size, the anti-social traits which result from agents' differences become too prevalent for successful interaction to occur freely. This stipulation regarding the effect of scale on the prospects of uncoerced cooperation is common in

the literature. However, as we will see throughout the dissertation, it is rarely explained or defended in any depth. Horton does not provide an explanation of why he believes such traits are exacerbated when societies grow in size, however, it can be reasonably speculated that this occurs as a result of the larger number of agents with whom one may have differences. Thus, conflictual interactions based on such traits may occur more frequently than in small societies.

It is clear that Horton promotes the generic account of sociability, with the additional secondary stipulation regarding the size of societies in relation to the distribution of pro-social/anti-social traits. Thus, the sociability hypothesis is supported in Horton's theory, as it is inherently based on an account of human sociability. Horton's theory, however, fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet one of the three relevant tests. Horton meets the first test, as he acknowledges his reliance on sociability assumptions in his argument for the existence of the state. Horton explains that it is due to agents' traits of sociability that societies of a certain size can operate successfully without intervention from the state, and thus, the state is justifiably invoked in large societies based on its role of facilitating successful interaction. Horton, however, fails to meet the second test, as he does not defend the assumptions of sociability he posits. Horton provides descriptions of the pro-social and anti-social traits which agents possess, however, he fails to provide an explanation as to why the balance of such traits is affected by the size of society (and consequently affects the possibility of successful interaction). Finally, Horton meets the third test, as he consistently applies his assumptions of sociability in his justification of the existence of the state, by providing an explanation regarding the form of governance which would facilitate successful interaction in society. Horton stipulates that the state must be invoked in the context of large societies, and, it

must work to facilitate the conditions of political stability in which agents' pro-social traits can flourish and agents' anti-social traits are controlled.

Fairness Theories

One of the most famous justifications of political governance based on considerations of fairness is promoted by H.L.A. Hart in his paper titled "Are There Any Natural Rights?". Hart's principle of fairness⁶ follows as such: "when a number of persons conduct any joint enterprise according to rules and thus restrict their liberty, those who have submitted to these restrictions when required have a right to a similar submission from those who have benefited by their submission" (Hart 1955, 185). Hart states that special rights and obligations⁷ are created through schemes which possess certain qualities, with his principle of fairness being generated by what he defines as "schemes of mutual restriction" (Hart 1955, 185). The obligation to submit to political authority, and the corresponding right of others to such submission, is created as a result of the nature of political environments in which citizens must cooperate to facilitate the promulgation of public goods.

The types of goods promoted by schemes of mutual restriction are described by Richard Arneson as "public goods". According to Arneson, public goods are defined by the following characteristics: "1) a unit of the good consumed by one person leaves none the less available for others (jointness), 2) if anyone is consuming the good it is unfeasible to prevent anybody else from consuming the good (nonexcludability), and 3) all members of the group must consume the

⁶ I will ascribe the term "principle of fairness" to Hart's account of the political obligations which arise from considerations of fairness in schemes of mutual restriction.

⁷ The special rights and obligations that Hart identifies as arising from specific circumstances are differentiated from the "equal right of all [humans] to be free" (Hart 1955, 175), which Hart sees as a natural right.

same quantity of it” (Arneson 1982, 618). Pure public goods are characterized by the third condition listed above, which is an integral aspect of Hart’s principle of fairness. The nature of pure public goods is such that agents cannot choose whether to accept or reject the benefits they supply,⁸ as they are necessarily created and distributed in a manner which prevents agents from becoming recipients without extenuating hardship to avoid becoming so.⁹ The pure public goods in question are goods which can only be produced through, as Hart labels them, schemes of mutual restriction.

George Klosko further identifies that the public goods which generate political obligation through the benefits they supply are: “(1) worth the recipient’s effort in providing them, and (2) ‘presumptively beneficial’” (Klosko 1987, 355). Presumptively beneficial goods are those Klosko identifies as “necessary for a minimally acceptable life. In other words, they must be desired by rational individuals regardless of whatever else they desire” (Klosko 1987, 355). An example of such a public good is national defence (Arneson 1982, 619). As the public goods which have been identified can only be created and distributed through the collective action of agents within a state,¹⁰ and are highly important insofar as they are necessary for a minimally

⁸ The debate regarding the nature of accepting benefits is certainly a matter of contention. Thinkers promote varying requirements regarding what they believe acceptance of a benefit entails (for example, explicit consent, tacit consent, etc.), and consequently, what requirements are involved in the creation of obligations of political obedience based on the principle of fairness in regard to such benefits. It is unclear whether Hart believes one must voluntarily accept the benefits supplied by pure public goods in order for political obligation to be generated (Arneson 1982, 619). As such, I will assume that the mere enjoyment of the benefits of pure public goods is sufficient, within Hart’s theory, to generate political obligation.

⁹ Examples of the types of extenuating hardships to which I am referring could be the cost or inconvenience of moving to another state in order to avoid becoming a recipient of the benefits of pure public goods which are being supplied by one’s own.

¹⁰ Although it is possible that public goods can be produced even when a number of agents refuse to cooperate in schemes of mutual restriction, the production of such goods will be understood as only occurring successfully if the majority of agents in a community work cooperatively to produce them.

acceptable quality of life, the fact that citizens are recipients of the benefits of such goods entails, within Hart's theory, that obligations of political obedience are created in such citizens to support the schemes of mutual restriction which produce them.

Hart's principle of fairness rests on his belief regarding the natural right of agents to be free, as well as the creation of special rights based on the relationships of agents in schemes of mutual restriction. As all agents have a natural right to be free, and choose to relinquish part of this freedom when they submit to the laws of the state in order to support the scheme of mutual restriction which produces public goods, justice requires, Hart argues, that all agents in the relevant society act in a similar manner (Hart 1955, 190-1). As Hart explains, "the moral obligation to obey the rules in such circumstances is due to the co-operating members of the society, and they have the correlative moral right to obedience" (Hart 1955, 185). It would be unfair, according to Hart, for some agents to submit to a scheme of mutual restriction while others do not, as the benefits which are produced from such cooperation are distributed to all. Agents who do not submit to such schemes, while continuing to benefit from the submission of others, can be labelled as "free-riders". It is justifiable, according to Hart's theory, to coerce free-riding agents into submitting to political authority, in order to facilitate the scheme which provides the relevant public goods. The beliefs of agents within schemes of mutual restriction regarding the scheme, Hart holds, are irrelevant. Whether agents personally identify as members of the scheme, as well as their opinions regarding the scheme, do not affect the nature of the obligation that the scheme generates in individuals (Arneson 1982, 632).¹¹

¹¹ The question regarding the requirements which entail membership in a group (e.g. physical location, voluntary association, etc.) is highly controversial. I interpret Hart as holding the requirements for membership in a group to be implicitly derived by virtue of an agent's surrounding circumstances. Membership in social life, within Hart's theory is created through the circumstances of agents living together in social groupings. The members of one's society are

Hart argues that political obligations are created through the circumstances of agents living in cooperative schemes which produce public benefits. Although political obligation is based on the presence of the scheme of mutual restriction itself, Klosko argues that Hart's argument (regarding the principle of fairness as generating obligation) is supported by the sentiments of the majority of citizens regarding their obligation to the state. Agents in society, Klosko argues, possess feelings of obligation to the state which are described as being based, not on conscious conceptions of the principle of fairness as it applies to cooperative schemes, but rather, on implicit feelings of duty to others in society. Agents in society feel obligation to obey the state which is based on their assessment of the sacrifices others make through their submission to the state. Klosko labels this phenomenon the "fairness thesis" (Klosko 1987, 358). Although the fairness thesis does not act as a justification for the political obligation it addresses, Klosko states, it does identify an important aspect of the political obligations that agents possess, and implicitly feel they possess, in society (Klosko 1987, 358). Agents in society feel an obligation to obey the laws of the state because they see others sacrificing their freedom by doing so, and this observation generates a feeling of obligation to similarly sacrifice their own freedom through inherent feelings of fairness. The feeling of duty towards members of one's community is reflected in the principle of fairness, as the obligations created by the principle are owed (within Hart's theory) to other members of one's community (rather than the state).¹²

those with whom one lives in a common community. One example of such a society could be a group of agents who live together in a shared geographical location. The central reason that one would be interpreted to be a member of such a society, within Hart's theory, would be the fact that one lives among others in a specific location wherein others live as well.

¹² Klosko's claim, stating that the principle of fairness reflects the sentiments that citizens in society feel regarding their political obligation, is certainly controversial. Thinkers such as A. John Simmons, for example, reject the claim that citizens feel such an obligation towards others to obey the state. Simmons explains that if citizens feel an obligation to obey the state which is grounded in feelings of fairness, it is not due to the feeling that one must submit to the laws of

Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Fairness Theories

That agents feel implicit sentiments of fairness towards others illuminates an important assumption on which Hart's theory is based, which pertains to a specific conception of human sociability. As agents implicitly feel duties of fairness towards others in society (within schemes that fulfill the criteria explicated above), a conception of human sociability can be posited which holds agents to possess pro-social traits of solidarity, empathy, and justice, which possess strong motivational force.

Hart rests his justification of political obligation on the structure of society. Hart simply claims that schemes of mutual restriction exist, and as such, generate political obligation to other members of one's society. The morally relevant background conditions to the existence of such schemes (Hart's account of sociability), however, is neglected in his theory. Hart's theory rests on the premise that agents possess certain beliefs/feelings regarding fairness towards others, which are not identified or explained. It is, furthermore, simply taken for granted that agents act in certain ways in social interaction. It is these assumptions regarding the nature of sociability which ought to be invoked in Hart's justification of the existence of the state. It is a result of agents living in social circumstances, and the nature of human sociability within such

the state because others are doing so (and thus, it would be just for one to do so as well), but rather, to feelings of fairness resulting from the benefits that are provided by the state. Obligation within this paradigm would be felt to be owed to the state (rather than other citizens) as a result of the benefits it provides. Simmons holds that citizens do not feel obligations towards other citizens as a result of public benefits provided, as these goods are properly understood as being produced by the state in relation to one's own contribution to the production of such benefits. Simmons illustrates this phenomenon using the example of taxation. As he explains, "in democratic political communities, th[e] benefits [produced by the state] are commonly regarded as purchased (with taxes) from a central authority, rather than as accepted from the cooperative efforts of our fellow citizens" (Simmons 1979, 139).

circumstances, that the introduction of political governance is justifiable, and consequently, political obligation is generated.

Hart's theory presupposes that agents naturally live in societies with each other, and although Hart does not provide an explanation of how agents initially join with each other to create such societies, the fact that he does not address human life in any terms other than within social situations entails that he believes humans inherently require social living. This assumption reflects an important aspect of Hart's account of sociability, which is the importance of social life. Humans are inevitably social creatures, and this morally relevant detail ought to influence the justifiability of the existence of the state within his theory. Schemes of mutual restriction solely exist because agents inevitably live together in social circumstances (which precede any specific structures of social organization). It is because agents require the creation of certain public goods for an acceptable quality of life, and the fact that the circumstances in which the schemes required to produce such goods do not (primarily) come about freely (due to the nature of human sociability), that the existence of the state ought to be justified within Hart's theory.

Hart premises his justification of political governance on the understanding that agents live together in situations wherein they restrict their freedom in order to benefit others. Hart holds that such situations can come about freely without intervention from the state, however, they can only be successful if certain conditions are met. As Hart explains, "only a small community closely knit by ties of kinship, common sentiment, and belief, and placed in a stable environment, could live successfully by...a regime of unofficial rules" (Hart 2012, 92). That communities which are self-governed (governed through informal social means rather than through the coercive power of the state) can only exist successfully if these conditions are met, illuminates important aspects of Hart's conception of sociability. Hart, it seems, holds agents to

possess traits which lead to successful interaction, however, their effectiveness is limited to certain environments. Once societies grow in size, it seems, such pro-social traits lose their motivational strength, and the state must be introduced to remedy these deficiencies and facilitate successful interaction.

The laws that a small society, governed through social means, must necessarily possess, Hart holds, are those which contain “restrictions on the free use of violence, theft, and deception to which human beings are tempted but which they must, in general, repress, if they are to coexist in close proximity to each other” (Hart 2012, 91). In such communities, Hart explains, laws are obeyed freely by the majority of agents, as the community would fail to operate successfully if such were not the case. Once societies grow to a certain size, however, or fail to meet the listed requirements, the pro-social traits which facilitate agents’ adherence to such laws and successful interaction are rendered insufficient to order society. Problems will arise, Hart argues, in regard to: 1) overall acceptance of the laws as common standards of acceptable behaviour (as the consensus regarding which laws are accepted will be weakened), 2) the procedure for laws to be changed (there will be no centralized, accepted method for doing so), and 3) the effectiveness of enforcing the laws (there will be no consensus regarding whether a law has been violated) (Hart 2012, 92-3).

It is clear, at this point, that Hart promotes the generic account of sociability, with the additional proviso that the motivational power of pro-social/anti-social traits varies in regard to the size of societies. Hart holds the problems identified above as arising from the circumstances of growing societies, which illuminates that Hart holds humans to possess traits which impede successful interaction, in addition to those which facilitate it. These traits can be assumed to be ones which lead agents to be more concerned with their own interests than the interests of others

in society. This is evident through Hart's prediction that in societies which differ from the small society he describes, agents will be more inclined to reject communal deliberations and ideas (regarding the laws of society), and be more inclined to act in a manner which is oriented towards the self rather than towards the good of others. Hart identifies a number of such (anti-social) selfish traits, which are the inclinations of human beings towards violence, theft, and deception (Hart 2012, 91). Such traits must be controlled, Hart holds, in order for agents to live successfully among one another. These traits can be controlled through voluntary social regulation, however, in societies which do not fulfill the requirements of the small society he describes, they must be controlled through the laws of the state.

Whether it is primarily the size of societies which facilitates the exacerbation of agents' anti-social traits, or whether the augmentation of such anti-socialness is dependent on the other factors he describes (i.e. that the society must be based on ties of kinship, etc.), is unclear. Furthermore, it is unclear whether, in the circumstances of societies growing in size, it is solely the case that agents' anti-social traits are augmented, or whether the motivational strength of agents' pro-social traits are correspondingly diminished. What is clear, however, is that Hart holds that in any society which differs from the small society he describes, voluntary adherence to laws cannot be reliably secured due to the anti-social traits that humans possess, and therefore, the coercive power of the state must be invoked in order to facilitate successful interaction in society.

Thus, the sociability hypothesis is supported in Hart's theory of political governance. Hart bases his theory on a conception of human sociability which posits the state to be necessary in facilitating successful interaction between agents in societies which differ from the type he specifies. Hart's theory, however, fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it

does not meet any of the three relevant tests. Firstly, Hart fails to acknowledge his reliance on sociability assumptions in his justification of the state, as he justifies political obligation on the principle of fairness within schemes of mutual restriction, instead of addressing the considerations of sociability pertinent to the existence of such schemes in the first place. Secondly, Hart fails to defend the assumptions of sociability upon which his theory is based. While he briefly mentions that agents are only able to live successfully without intervention from the state in small societies, he fails to specify, in adequate detail, the traits of sociability which facilitate this state of affairs. Finally, Hart fails to consistently apply his assumptions of sociability in his justification of the state, as he does not provide a description of the form of governance which would be adequately modelled in accordance with the account of sociability he posits. While Hart stipulates that the state is justifiably invoked in societies which exceed a certain size, he does not provide an explanation of the form of governance which would successfully manage agents' pro-social/anti-social traits, in order to facilitate successful interaction.

Natural Duty Theories

A third category of theories of political governance are those based on ideas of natural duty. Such theories are characterized by their reliance on claims regarding duties found in nature, in order to provide justifications of political governance. It is pertinent to evaluate natural duty theories following fairness theories, as they seem to work to remedy the problem I have just identified in fairness theories. As we have seen, fairness theories provide theories of political obligation based on schemes of cooperation, but do not adequately explain why the state is necessary for such schemes. Thus, they fail to identify the considerations upon which the

existence of the state ought to be justified, which are the relevant considerations of sociability. Natural duty theories can be seen as remedying this error, by providing reasons why states are brought into existence, and why agents have consequent obligations to obey such states, which are not reliant on already existing schemes of social organization. States exist, it is argued within such theories, due to natural duties that human beings are held to possess. I will argue, however, that natural duty theories in fact suffer from the same flaw as associative and fairness theories, in the sense that they rely on, but do not defend, core assumptions about sociability which explain why the state is invoked in the first place.

In this section of the chapter, I will focus on John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness as developed in his work *A Theory of Justice*, as an example of justifications of political governance based on considerations of natural duty.

Rawls outlines his theory of justice as fairness within the context of a situation of hypothetical consent. Rawls presents the hypothetical situation of an agent in the "original position" (in circumstances prior to state rule), who is about to enter into a state and must choose the principles according to which the state will be ordered. The agent in the original position is behind a "veil of ignorance", insofar as they do not possess knowledge of any particular facts pertaining to what their position will be within the state (Rawls 1999, 118). Rawls introduces the hypothetical scenario of the original position in order to support his two principles of justice as the most just to order the state.

Rawls's two principles of justice are stated as follows: "[f]irst: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions

and offices open to all” (Rawls 1999, 53). Rawls uses the hypothetical situation of the original position to support his two principles as the most just to order society, by virtue of the fact that an agent in the original position is ignorant as to which position they will hold in the state. As agents do not possess knowledge of their particular qualities, they are unable to choose principles to order society which will advantage them based on biased considerations. Thus, as agents are ignorant in regard to their future place in society, they will choose principles which maximize the amount of benefit, and minimize the amount of harm, that every agent will receive from such principles. Because the two principles of justice facilitate the best possible state of affairs for all agents in society, agents in the original position would choose the two principles of justice to be used to order the state.

The two principles of justice, Rawls holds, are those “which rational persons concerned to advance their interests would accept in [a] position of equality to settle the basic terms of their association” (Rawls 1999, 102). The two principles are fundamentally social in nature, insofar as “they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation” (Rawls 1999, 4). In justice as fairness, society is conceived as “a cooperative venture for mutual advantage. The basic structure [to which the two principles apply] is a public system of rules defining a scheme of activities that leads men to act together so as to produce a greater sum of benefits and assigns to each certain recognized claims to a share in the proceeds” (Rawls 1999, 73-4). Such cooperation is necessary, on Rawls’s view, for the production of primary social goods, which he defines as:

things which it is supposed a rational man wants whatever else he wants. Regardless of what an individual’s rational plans are in detail, it is assumed that there are various things which he would prefer more of rather than less. With more of these goods men can

generally be assured of greater success in carrying out their intentions and in advancing their ends, whatever these ends may be. The primary social goods, to give them in broad categories, are rights, liberties, and opportunities, and income and wealth. (Rawls 1999, 79)

Such primary goods (as opposed to natural primary goods, such as health, vigour, intelligence, and imagination) (Rawls 1999, 54) are necessarily social goods, Rawls argues, in “connection with the basic structure; liberties and opportunities are defined by the rules of major institutions and the distribution of income and wealth is regulated by them” (Rawls 1999, 79). As primary social goods influence the quality of agents’ lives in a fundamental way, it is essential that the institutions which determine their distribution do so in a just manner. The two principles of justice are used to regulate the division of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation, which is necessary due to the circumstances of justice (described below) in the production of primary social goods. As the two principles of justice would be chosen from a position of equality in the original position, Rawls argues, they are the most just to regulate the basic structure of society which fulfills this task.

The production of primary social goods is an inherently social phenomenon due to the circumstances of justice, which Rawls describes as “the normal conditions under which human cooperation is both possible and necessary” (Rawls 1999, 109). Society, conceived as a “cooperative venture for mutual advantage” (Rawls 1999, 73-4) in the production of such goods, however, is characterized by conflict, as well as cooperation. As Rawls explains, “[t]here is an identity of interests since social cooperation makes possible a better life for all than any would have if each were to try to live solely by his own efforts. There is a conflict of interests since men are not indifferent as to how the greater benefits produced by their collaboration are distributed, for in order to pursue their ends they each prefer a larger to a lesser share” (Rawls

1999, 109). That cooperation in society is needed to produce primary social goods, and that interaction in society is characterized by conflict as well as cooperation, leads to the requirement of the principles of justice in order to ensure mutual advantage between agents in the cooperative scheme.

Enforced principles are needed in order to facilitate the just creation/distribution of primary social goods due to the background conditions of the circumstances of justice. Rawls explains:

[t]hese conditions may be divided into two kinds. First, there are the objective circumstances which make human cooperation both possible and necessary. Thus, many individuals coexist together at the same time on a definite geographical territory. These individuals are roughly similar in physical and mental powers; or at any rate, their capacities are comparable in that no one among them can dominate the rest. They are vulnerable to attack, and all are subject to having their plans blocked by the united force of others. Finally, there is the condition of moderate scarcity understood to cover a wide range of situations. Natural and other resources are not so abundant that schemes of cooperation become superfluous, nor are conditions so harsh that fruitful ventures must inevitably break down. While mutually advantageous arrangements are feasible, the benefits they yield fall short of the demands men put forward.

The subjective circumstances are the relevant aspects of the subjects of cooperation, that is, of the persons working together. Thus while the parties have roughly similar needs and interests, or needs and interests in various ways complementary, so that mutually advantageous cooperation among them is possible, they nevertheless have their own plans of life. These plans, or conceptions of the good, lead them to have different ends and purposes, and to make conflicting claims on the natural and social resources available. Moreover, although the interests advanced by these plans are not assumed to be interests in the self, they are the interests of a self that regards its conception of the good as worthy of recognition and that advances claims in its behalf as deserving satisfaction. I also suppose that men suffer from various shortcomings of knowledge, thought, and judgment. Their knowledge is necessarily incomplete, their powers of reasoning, memory, and attention are always limited, and their judgment is likely to be distorted by anxiety, bias, and a preoccupation with their own affairs. Some of these defects spring from moral faults, from selfishness and negligence; but to a large degree, they are simply part of men's natural situation. As a consequence individuals not only have different plans of life but there exists a diversity of philosophical and religious belief, and of political and social doctrines. (Rawls 1999, 109-110)

Rawls holds, therefore, that the circumstances of justice require the implementation of theories of justice in order to regulate the creation/distribution of primary social goods which are produced through cooperation in society, which are fundamentally necessary to agents' lives.

As is evident from the explanation of the role of theories of justice in regulating cooperative efforts between citizens in the production of primary social goods, it is of fundamental importance that agents comply with the laws of the state which work to facilitate a successful distribution of the benefits and burdens of cooperation in society. The state, on Rawls's account, is morally justifiable due to its necessary role in facilitating successful cooperation between agents in the production of primary social goods, if it is structured in accordance with the two principles of justice. Agents have a moral requirement to obey the laws of a just state, on Rawls's account, based on the natural duty of justice. As Rawls explains, this fundamental natural duty "requires us to support and to comply with just institutions that exist and apply to us. It also constrains us to further just arrangements not yet established, at least when this can be done without too much cost to ourselves. Thus if the basic structure of society is just, or as just as it is reasonable to expect in the circumstances, everyone has a natural duty to do his part in the existing scheme" (Rawls 1999, 99). If the political authority of a state is morally justified in regard to the requirements stipulated by the two principles of justice, therefore, agents in the state have a moral requirement, based on the natural duty of justice, to obey its laws.

In short, the duty of justice is derived from the role of the state in facilitating successful interaction in society, as such interaction is necessary for each individual's quality of life to be raised to an acceptable quality. Rawls holds agents to be bound to comply with the laws of a just state as a result of the natural duty of justice, due to the fact that this duty allows the assurance

problem to be overcome. The assurance problem highlights the difficulty in maintaining stability in society when agents possess tendencies to avoid contributing their required shares in cooperative schemes based on considerations of self-interest (Rawls 1999, 295), as well as apprehension regarding whether others are contributing their required shares (Rawls 1999, 296). If the moral requirement to comply with the laws of a just state were based on voluntary actions, this would facilitate political instability (as adherence by all citizens to the laws would not be guaranteed) (Rawls 1999, 296). The natural duty of justice overcomes this problem by constituting the moral requirement to obey the laws of a just state as a natural duty, and thus, applicable to every agent in a just state regardless of their voluntary action.

Political stability is a valuable good, Rawls holds, as it allows mutually advantageous schemes of cooperation between citizens to be created and executed successfully. One of the main traits of sociability, which Rawls holds allows agents to have trust in one another, and which allows cooperative action to be executed successfully and facilitates social stability, is the sense of justice that agents are held to possess (Rawls 1999, 125), and agents' awareness of others' capacity for a sense of justice. As agents are aware that each possesses a capacity for a sense of justice, and that this sense of justice will facilitate their adherence to the principles of justice, trust within society can be generated (Rawls 1999, 125). Such trust is beneficial, as it allows for cooperative arrangements for mutual advantage to be generated. If agents believe that others are likely to adhere to the rules of a cooperative scheme, they are more likely to contribute to that scheme themselves.

Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Natural Duty Theories

As we have seen, Rawls bases his justification of political governance on the duty of justice. That the state is invoked in his theory, however, is due to its role in facilitating the production/distribution of primary social goods. Agents are assumed to be unable to facilitate the production/distribution of such goods themselves, due to the nature of their sociability. Rawls's justification of the existence of the state, therefore, ultimately rests on the nature of sociability which is posited in his theory, which necessitates the invocation of the state for the aforementioned task. In the following section of the chapter, I will identify several of the assumptions of sociability which are implicitly posited in Rawls's theory, in order to show that he too presupposes the generic account of sociability.

It is important to note that Rawls does not provide a clear, unambiguous account of the traits of sociability he holds agents to possess. Such considerations must be identified and interpreted by the reader, in order to form an adequately comprehensive understanding regarding the nature of sociability which underlies his theory. I argue that Rawls holds agents to possess traits which both facilitate and impede successful interaction (thus promoting the generic account of sociability). Among the traits explicitly mentioned by Rawls, those which could work to potentially facilitate successful interaction are: reciprocity (Rawls 1999, 88), fraternity (Rawls 1999, 90), fairness (Rawls 1999, 95), fidelity (Rawls 1999, 95), mutual respect (Rawls 1999, 95), beneficence (Rawls 1999, 95), and a sense of justice (Rawls 1999, 125). Furthermore, Rawls illustrates that agents possess the trait of cooperation. This trait in agents, although not stated outrightly, is evident from the fact that Rawls promotes the notion of society as a "cooperative venture for mutual advantage" (Rawls 1999, 73-4). This description necessarily requires that agents possess the capacity for cooperation, otherwise such a society would be beyond the bounds of possibility.

Rawls states that the difference principle¹³ reflects the pro-social traits of reciprocity and fraternity. The difference principle, he explains, provides evidence of the trait of reciprocity through the following reasoning, which Rawls posits agents in society would engage in:

[t]he more advantaged, when they view the matter from a general perspective, recognize that the well-being of each depends on a scheme of social cooperation without which no one could have a satisfactory life; they recognize also that they can expect the willing cooperation of all only if the terms of the scheme are reasonable. So they regard themselves as already compensated, as it were, by the advantages to which no one (including themselves) had a prior claim. They forego the idea of maximizing a weighted mean and regard the difference principle as a fair basis for regulating the basic structure. (Rawls 1999, 88)

Furthermore, the difference principle provides evidence of the trait of fraternity, as it illuminates the ideal “of not wanting to have greater advantages unless [they are] to the benefit of others who are less well off” (Rawls 1999, 90).

One can infer, however, that Rawls also recognizes certain anti-social tendencies, in his claim that agents are strongly motivated by the trait of reciprocity. This trait, Rawls explains, constitutes the “tendency to answer in kind” (Rawls 1999, 433), and “is a deep psychological fact” (Rawls 1999, 433) of human sociability. Although Rawls posits that agents are capable of altruism, the role of reciprocity, within his theory, can be interpreted as alluding to the fact that agents possess a limited willingness to facilitate the interests of others, without assurance that their interests will be correspondingly furthered.

The above inference regarding the boundedness of agents’ pro-socialness, is supported by critiques of Rawls’s theory provided by thinkers such as Will Kymlicka and Martha C. Nussbaum, who argue that Rawls limits the scope of justice to solely those agents who are able

¹³ The difference principle is stated as follows: “the higher expectations of those better situated are just if and only if they work as part of a scheme which improves the expectations of the least advantaged members of society” (Rawls 1999, 65).

to fully cooperate. Rawls's theory is interpreted as applying in the "fundamental case", which posits agents (subject to the principles of justice) to possess equal cognitive and physical capacities (Kymlicka 1990). Nussbaum claims that Rawls's theory promotes the idea of cooperation for mutual advantage (Nussbaum 2006, 61-2), insofar as it demands reciprocal cooperation from others in order for the principles of justice to apply in such interactions. This limits the scope of justice, as it excludes agents who are unable to cooperate with others in society (Nussbaum 2006, 108-9).

Within this characterization of Rawls's account of sociability, agents are interpreted to possess the trait of anti-social self-interest which strongly motivates their actions. One can interpret that agents are not primarily oriented towards cooperation unless they are rewarded (through reciprocity) for such actions, alluding to the limits of human cooperation.

It is, at this point, relevant to note the role that the trait of self-interest plays in Rawls's account. Rawls holds the trait of self-interest to be both pro-social and anti-social in different respects. Self-interest is held to facilitate successful interaction, Rawls holds, as agents are motivated to engaged in mutually beneficial cooperative schemes in order to produce primary social goods. Self-interest, however, impedes successful interaction, insofar as agents desire to acquire more primary social goods than others in order to advance their interests, and can be assumed, therefore, to possess tendencies to take advantage of others' efforts in the cooperative scheme (which produces such goods) when possible.

Thus, Rawls's theory supports the sociability hypothesis, as it is based on an account of human sociability. Rawls holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits, and thus, promotes the generic account of sociability. Rawls's theory, however, fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, Rawls fails

to acknowledge his reliance on his sociability assumptions in his justification of the state. Rawls argues that the duty of justice justifies political governance (of the kind he describes (based on the two principles of justice)), however, he fails to address why the state is held to be necessary in the first place. The state is posited to be necessary to facilitate successful interaction in society, in order to facilitate the production/just distribution of primary social goods, which implies that agents are unable to facilitate such a state of affairs freely due to the nature of their sociability. Thus, the state's existence ought to be justified upon the considerations of sociability which render it necessary to be invoked, whereupon the duty of justice can be posited. Secondly, Rawls fails to defend his assumptions of sociability, as he does not explicitly explain which traits of sociability comprise his account, or provide a description of their nature/their influence on the nature of interaction in society. Rawls simply promotes a theory which justifies the existence of the state, but does not explain the considerations of sociability which render it necessary. Finally, Rawls fails to consistently apply his assumptions of sociability in his justification of the state, as he does not provide an explanation regarding why the form of state he promotes is modelled in appropriate accordance with the account of sociability he holds (i.e. how it is designed to manage the relevant traits of sociability in order to facilitate successful interaction).

Additional Natural Duty Theories

In addition to Rawls, there are other prominent theorists who provide justifications of political governance based on natural duties. Such thinkers include Jeremy Waldron, Christopher Heath Wellman, and Anna Stilz. Due to considerations of space, I will not discuss their theories in detail. However, I argue that they all support the sociability hypothesis, as they are based on specific accounts of human sociability.

In his work “Special Ties and Natural Duties”, Jeremy Waldron promotes his theory of political governance based on the natural duty of justice. Waldron defines the natural duty of justice as the duty to establish and sustain just institutions (Waldron 1993, 29), due to the fact that agents have a moral duty to escape the state of nature. Following Kant, Waldron construes the state of nature as characterized by conflict and violence regarding the possession of resources (Waldron 1993, 14). Agents, within such circumstances, are motivated by an interest in furthering their well-being, and are uncertain about their safety in regard to others. Thus, they hold that they are free to act however they believe is best or just (Waldron 1993, 14). Such a state of affairs promulgates anxiety based on the unpredictability of whether violence will ensue, which impedes agents from living a decent life (Waldron 1993, 22).

“Political institutions”, Waldron explains, “are capable of making things better in this regard: they can mediate and arbitrate disputes, they can develop practices of impartiality, and they can collect together sufficient force to uphold their determinations. There is therefore a clear moral interest in their establishment” (Waldron 1993, 22). Waldron argues, therefore, that if agents are situated in close proximity to others, they possess a moral obligation to create and support institutions which facilitate justice (i.e. those which successfully remedy the problems of social conflict present in the state of nature) (Waldron 1993, 22). The agents with whom one ought to enter political society, are those “immediately adjacent to [them], those with whose interests [their] resource use is likely to pose the most frequent and dangerous conflicts” (Waldron 1993, 15).

Waldron argues that conflict arises between agents due to the fact that they possess varying conceptions of the demands of justice, and thus, even agents who are trying to facilitate justice in good faith will end up in conflict with others (Waldron 1993, 22). Such conflict,

Waldron argues, also arises between institutions of governance if more than one are situated within a territory (Waldron 1993, 22-3). The conflict between institutions is morally problematic, as the violence which results is more severe than that which occurs between individual agents, due to the fact that it is better organized, and the relevant parties possess more power/resources to defend their stances (Waldron 1993, 22-3). For this reason, Waldron argues, it is a moral requirement that agents join and support one common institution of governance (Waldron 1993, 22).

Waldron states that “justice is partly a matter of cooperation” (Waldron 1993, 23). As such, “an organization that is just, effective, and legitimate (in the sense of being singled out as *the* salient organization for this territory) has *eo ipso* a claim on our allegiance” (Waldron 1993, 27). By holding that states can, in fact, facilitate the resolution of problems of social coordination, Waldron implicitly holds agents to possess pro-social traits which allow for successful cooperation. Such traits could be, for example solidarity or sympathy (which flourish in conditions of security facilitated by the state). Additionally, however, since Waldron posits that agents do not engage in successful interaction within the state of nature, agents must necessarily be held to possess anti-social traits such as greed and (anti-social) self-interest (for example) which would facilitate conflict. Thus, as Waldron alludes to the fact that agents are held to possess traits which both facilitate as well as impede successful interaction, I consequently interpret that Waldron implicitly invokes the generic account of sociability.

Waldron’s theory supports the sociability hypothesis, therefore, as it is based on an account regarding the nature of human sociability. However, it does not successfully fulfill the first stage of justification as it fails to meet one out of the three relevant tests. Firstly, Waldron fails to acknowledge his sociability assumptions in his justification of the existence of the state,

as he bases his justification of governance on the duty of justice, rather than the relevant considerations of sociability which necessitate the introduction of the state. Waldron, however, meets the second test, as he adequately defends his sociability assumptions. Waldron provides an explanation of the nature of agents' anti-social traits in the state of nature, and alludes to agents' pro-social traits in regard to the possibility of cooperation within the state. The third test, furthermore, is met, as Waldron specifies that for the state to be justifiable it must consist of one single institution of governance, which would work to facilitate successful interaction by resolving problems of social coordination.

In his work *Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?*, Christopher Heath Wellman justifies political governance based on the samaritan duty of easy rescue. Political governance is justifiable, he claims, as “(1) political states supply crucial benefits, (2) these benefits would be unavailable in the absence of political states, and (3) states can render their services without imposing unreasonable costs upon those they coerce” (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 5-6). Wellman argues that the state provides crucial benefits insofar it rescues agents from the perilous conditions of the state of nature (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 31). In the state of nature, agents are subject to a “horribly chaotic and perilous environment where one...lack[s] the security necessary to pursue meaningful projects and relationships”, and within which, for the majority of agents, “it [is] virtually impossible to live a rewarding life” (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6). Such circumstances are inevitable, Wellman argues, unless agents live in “a very close-knit, face-to-face community where everyone knows each other and is invested in the group as a whole”, which, he adds, “almost none of us does” (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6).

Wellman explains that the problematic conditions regarding interaction between agents in the state of nature do not result from agents being inherently evil. Wellman holds that the actions

of even “well-meaning, rational people” (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6) inevitably lead to such conditions in the state of nature, due to the fact that there is no state to “establish, enforce, and adjudicate a clear and uniform set of rules that everyone must follow” (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6). The majority of agents within the state of nature, Wellman explains, would refrain from violating the rights of others regardless of the lack of state authority. However, some agents would, in fact, be motivated to do so, based on the fact that there is no authority present to execute punishments for such acts (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6). Thus, the problematic social conditions of the state of nature would primarily result due to the lack of stability and peace between agents (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6). The state, therefore, provides the crucial benefit of preventing such conditions from coming about through its legislative, executive, and judicial functions (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 10-1).

I hold that Wellman promotes the generic account of sociability, with the additional secondary claim regarding size of societies. The state is necessary, and thus justifiable, within his theory, as a result of the social problems which would occur in the state of nature due to certain traits human beings possess. Although he does not explicitly state what such traits are, they parallel (anti-social) self-interest (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 7-8), bias (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 8-9), and vengeance (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 8-9). Wellman, however, does not hold humans to be entirely constituted by such traits. He alludes to the possibility that agents, in small societies such as the one described above, would engage in successful interaction in the absence of state authority (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 6). Such a statement implies that agents possess traits which facilitate successful interaction. Wellman does not explicitly state what such pro-social traits would be, however, they may be traits such as solidarity, sympathy, altruism, etc. Such traits are only effective, within Wellman’s theory, in small/intimate societies,

and thus, in larger societies (where such traits apparently lose their motivational force or are overwhelmed by agents' anti-social traits) political governance is justifiable as it works to facilitate successful interaction between agents.

Wellman argues that one exclusive state is required in order to facilitate successful interaction among agents. If such is not the case, agents are unlikely to voluntarily provide allegiance to one common institution of authority,¹⁴ and this, consequently, would lead to the creation of multiple institutions within a given society (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 14-5). The presence of multiple institutions of authority would be problematic given the anti-social traits that agents possess which impede successful interaction. If such traits work to generate conflict between individual agents, it can be extrapolated that they similarly work to generate conflict between institutions of authority within a state. Such conflict would undermine the state's project of facilitating successful interaction between citizens, as there would be no single overarching authority to enforce legislative, executive, and judicial functions (Wellman and Simmons 2005, 15-6).

Wellman's theory, therefore, supports the sociability hypothesis, as his theory of governance is based on the generic account of sociability, with the additional secondary claim regarding size of societies. However, his theory fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet one out of the three relevant tests. Wellman meets the first test by acknowledging his reliance on sociability assumptions in his justification of the existence of the state. Wellman argues that life in the state of nature would be conflictual and perilous for agents (due to the nature of their sociability), and thus, the state is justifiable as it rescues agents from

¹⁴ I am using the term "institution of authority" in my exploration of Wellman's theory to denote systems of governance which are not political in nature, such as the private protection agencies to which Wellman refers in his work.

such conditions. However, Wellman fails to meet the second test, as he does not defend the assumptions of sociability he posits. While Wellman addresses the conditions of the state of nature, he does not provide an adequately detailed description of the traits of sociability which facilitate this state of affairs, and how/why they change between societies of different sizes. Finally, Wellman meets the third test, as he provides a description of the form of governance whose existence is justifiable, insofar as it must be comprised of one institution of authority, create and enforce stable social conditions, and not impose unreasonable demands on its citizens.

In her work *Liberal Loyalty: Freedom, Obligation, and the State*, Anna Stilz argues that the natural duty of justice, understood as the duty to respect agents' equal right to freedom-as-independence, is a duty that fundamentally requires the state for its successful execution, and thus, the state is justifiable (Stilz 2009, 87). Stilz argues that the state is necessary to facilitate the fulfillment of the duty of justice for two reasons: "first, [its] precise content requires specification in terms of positive law, since the value of external freedom is indeterminate with respect to our acquired rights...[and,] [s]econd, th[e] additional specifications cannot be defined and imposed by private persons, but must be imposed by public institutions if they are to be compatible with our independence from others' domination and control" (Stilz 2009, 87). In order for the state to successfully execute this task it must be ordered democratically, wherein "all those who are bound by the decision have an equal input, and take one another's interests into account in their voting" (Stilz 2009, 87). This political structure is necessary in order to ensure that agents are only required to submit to authority which reflects their autonomous wills (Stilz 2009, 87-8).

The necessity of the state in facilitating the natural duty of justice reflects the assumptions of sociability present within Stilz's theory. Stilz implicitly assumes that agents

possess traits which facilitate cooperation with others, as well as those which facilitate conflict (thus, promoting the generic account of sociability). Stilz's argument, based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory of the ideal citizen in his work *Emile*, holds that agents possess rationality which allows them, through their observance of themselves as holding equal moral status as others, to "understand the role of democratic institutions in guaranteeing their own freedom", and allows them to "be capable of formulating common interests because their amour propre allows them to engage in a kind of reciprocal perspective-taking" (Stilz 2009, 129). Such "reflective identification" (Stilz 2009, 129) can only take place within conditions of secured equality (i.e. under the authority of the state), otherwise anti-social traits such as insecurity regarding personal safety, and uncertainty regarding one's power in relation to others', will lead agents to engage in a struggle for supremacy (Stilz 2009, 128).¹⁵

As the conditions necessary for the duty of justice to be executed require the intervention of state authority, due to traits agents are assumed to possess which facilitate as well as impede successful interaction, it is clear that Stilz's theory supports the sociability hypothesis. Stilz's theory fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, however, as it fails to meet two out of the three relevant tests. Firstly, Stilz fails to acknowledge her reliance on sociability assumptions, as she justifies the existence of the state in regard to its role in facilitating the execution of the duty of justice, rather than addressing the considerations of sociability which require the state to intervene in order to create the social conditions in which this duty can be executed. Secondly, Stilz fails to defend the assumptions of sociability upon which her theory is based, as she doesn't provide descriptions of the relevant traits which render the existence of the state necessary. Stilz does, however, meet the third test, as she promotes a form of governance

¹⁵ Stilz's argument regarding the development of reflective identification can be found in *Liberal Loyalty: Freedom, Obligation, and the State*, on pages 115-130.

(democracy) which is modelled in accordance to the nature of sociability as it can be inferred from her theory (in regard to agents' ability to use reason, take others' perspectives, and engage in cooperation).

Consent Theories

At this point, I will briefly examine consent theories of political governance. Such theories are characterized by their reliance on the consent of the governed as justification for the existence of political governance. I will examine Harry Beran's version of consent theory in his work *The Consent Theory of Political Obligation*, as a representation of the ideas regarding political obligation found in this school of thought.

In his work, Beran argues that within the framework of liberal democratic political philosophy, consent must be the basis of political authority and obligation (Beran 1987, 26). Beran explains that within democratic liberalism, agents are conceived of in a specific manner which necessitates their consent in order for political authority to be justified. As he explains, “[d]emocratic liberalism...assumes that biologically normal adults satisfy certain minimal conditions of rationality in belief and action; that they, therefore, have the ability to review their beliefs and goals in the light of reasons, to make decisions appropriate to these beliefs and goals and to act on them in order to influence the way the world goes. Such persons are responsible for what they make of themselves and for what they do to others” (Beran 1987, 26). Agents possess the capacity and right to self-determination, as well as the ability to make valid moral agreements with others (Beran 1987, 27). As agents possess the capacity and right to determine the course of their life, they can only be subjugated to the laws of the state if they themselves consent to such subjugation. As Beran explains, “the most important claim of consent theory is that political

obligation and authority must be created by a voluntary act of the individual under political obligation” (Beran 1987, 30).

Consent is given to the state as an “artificial person”, and consists in “accepting membership in the state” (Beran 1987, 31). Such consent can be express or tacit (Beran 1987, 28). Beran explains the reasoning which underlies the agreement to obey the state: “(1) In accepting membership in a rule-governed association one agrees to obey the rules of the association. (2) In agreeing to obey the rules of an association one assumes an obligation to obey these rules. (3) The state is a rule-governed association. Therefore, (4) In accepting membership in a state one assumes an obligation to obey the law of the state” (Beran 1987, 29).

Beran explains that obligations can be both naturally and artificially derived, and thus, a theory of political obligation is only plausible if it “acknowledges both self-assumed and natural obligations to obey the state” (Beran 1987, 27). Self-assumed obligations to obey the state are created through the consent of agents to the authority of the state. Natural obligations to obey the state, however, are derived from the state’s role in helping to facilitate “liberty, justice and human welfare” in society, consequently promoting the interests of the citizens it rules over (Beran 1987, 26). Beran explains that, “[f]rom the assumption that the state can be useful for the promotion of liberty, justice and welfare and the assumption that there are natural obligations, it follows that there can be natural obligations to obey the state. Moreover, insofar as the state is necessary for the promotion of these values, political authority is morally justified” (Beran 1987, 27).

Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Consent Theories

Beran's theory, I argue, supports the sociability hypothesis, but fails to fulfill the first stage of justification (by failing to meet all three of the relevant tests). Beran's theory supports the sociability hypothesis due to the fact that it is based on conceptions regarding the nature of human sociability. The fact that Beran holds the state as facilitating the necessary goods of liberty, justice, and welfare, illuminates his belief that agents possess traits which both facilitate as well as impede successful interaction. Beran states that

[m]any liberal democratic theorists assume that persons are primarily motivated by enlightened self-interest. This assumption, however, is false and consent theory is better grounded in the more realistic assumption that persons are neither perfectly self-interested nor completely altruistic. People can, and often do, act from the moral point of view, i.e. in a way that takes into account the interests of others as well as their own, even if to do so is, at times, against their long-term self-interest. (Beran 1987, 27)

Beran believes that agents are not entirely driven by anti-social traits, as they possess traits which lead them to seek to promote the good of others as well as their own. However, the fact that Beran holds that the state is necessary to the promotion of the goods of liberty, justice, and welfare, leads to the consequent belief that agents would not be able to successfully facilitate this state of affairs without intervention from the state.

Beran explains that “[c]onsent theory must take a sufficiently optimistic view of human nature and the circumstances people find themselves in, to give self-assumed reasons for political obedience a significant place in a theory of justified political obedience” (Beran 1987, 44). Beran's version of consent theory, he holds, upholds this optimism regarding human sociability, as it advances “a theory of justified political obedience in which consent does make a difference as to whether obedience is morally required” (Beran 1987, 45). As Beran holds a conception of sociability which promotes the belief that agents are able to engage in successful interaction (to a

certain degree) without intervention from state governance, he can reasonably include, within such a framework, room for voluntary consent to the state.

Beran, however, mischaracterizes the account of sociability on which his theory rests, as he emphasizes agents' pro-social traits while ignoring their anti-social traits. Beran explicitly states that human beings, within his theory, are held to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits, and thus, he can be interpreted as promoting the generic account of sociability. As such, it can be inferred that the state is, in fact, necessary to facilitate an adequate quality of life for its citizens. By ignoring the anti-social traits of sociability which are present in his theory, Beran mistakenly justifies his theory of political governance on both the consent of the governed, as well as the state's role in facilitating necessary goods in society. Beran, I argue, ought to instead justify the existence of the state on the account of sociability which underlies his theory, as the relevant account leads to the requirement of the invocation of the state to facilitate the promulgation of necessary goods (which then, consequently, leads to considerations of consent (which would be evaluated in the second stage of justification in regard to the state's authority)).

Thus, Beran's theory fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, Beran fails to sufficiently acknowledge his reliance on sociability assumptions in his justification of the existence of the state, as he justifies political governance equally on the consent of the governed and the role of the state in facilitating necessary goods (the necessity of the state in doing so being required by virtue of the nature of agents' sociability). Secondly, Beran fails to defend his sociability assumptions. While Beran states that agents are neither entirely pro-social nor anti-social, he does not provide an adequate explanation regarding the relevant traits of sociability which facilitate/impede successful interaction in society. Finally, Beran fails to consistently apply the relevant considerations of

sociability in his justification of the existence of the state, as he fails to provide an explanation of the form of governance which would facilitate successful interaction, in relation to the traits of sociability which are posited in his account. Beran solely states that such governance must possess the consent of the governed for it to be justifiable, as well as facilitate the interests of its citizens, however, this claim does not address the form of state which is needed in regard to the considerations of sociability which render it necessary to be invoked in the first place.

Gratitude Theories

A final type of theory of political governance which will be briefly examined is gratitude theory. Such theories justify political obligation based on the benefits the state provides, and the gratitude that citizens owe as a result. I will evaluate A. D. M. Walker's theory of political obligation in his work "Political Obligation and the Argument from Gratitude", as a representation of gratitude theories.

Walker argues that the political obligation citizens hold is not a result of them holding a special type of obligation-generating relationship with the state (such as that between a parent and child), nor is it a type of obligation which holds agents as being required to return a benefit received (Walker 1988, 193-4). Rather, the form of gratitude which is required from citizens, in regard to their state, is constituted as a "set of attitudes" involving appreciation of benefits, as well as goodwill and respect toward benefactors (Walker 1988, 200). As Walker explains, "goodwill for a benefactor requires one (a) to help him if he is in need or distress and one can do so at no great cost to oneself; (b) to comply with his reasonable requests; (c) to avoid harming him or acting contrary to his interests; and (d) to respect his rights" (Walker 1988, 202). It is principle (c) which grounds political obligation within Walker's theory. Walker explains the

reasoning underlying the gratitude owed to the state: “(1) The person who benefits from X has an obligation of gratitude not to act contrary to X’s interests. (2) Every citizen has received benefits from the state. (3) Every citizen has an obligation of gratitude not to act in ways that are contrary to the state’s interests. (4) Noncompliance with the law is contrary to the state’s interests. (5) Every citizen has an obligation of gratitude to comply with the law” (Walker 1988, 205).

Walker holds the state to be a form of association, which he describes as “a collection of individuals organized for the achievement of certain aims within a legal and political framework, [and thus he] understand[s] claims about the state as claims about individuals or groups of individuals insofar as they play a part within this framework” (Walker 1988, 196). Obligations to the state are thus owed to agents’ fellow citizens, insofar as they collectively constitute the state. While the content of one’s political obligation, within Walker’s theory, is directed towards the state as a form of legitimate governance,¹⁶ the moral component of one’s obligation is directed towards one’s fellow citizens (as it is citizens who comprise the state, and who are properly moral agents [with “moral agents” being interpreted as agents possessing the capacity, or potential capacity, for morality]).

The state provides benefits to its citizens, Walker holds, as it facilitates cooperation between agents, which leads to the production of goods that are necessary for an acceptable

¹⁶ Walker explains that “the state is not to be identified with the government. Acceptance of the argument from gratitude does not commit us to viewing political obligation, in the manner of Socrates, as essentially a relationship between “rulers” and their subjects. The obligation is owed by citizens to their fellow citizens collectively rather than to the government” (Walker 1988, 196). However, I hold that the state must be defined, to a certain degree, as a form of legitimate governance, otherwise it would not be capable of providing the benefits which lead to the obligation of gratitude on the part of its citizens (i.e. the facilitation of successful interaction in society in order to facilitate the creation of necessary goods). The state cannot be interpreted as simply a collection of agents with no coherent method/power of governance which can be applied to its constituents, as this would be incompatible with the role that it is assigned in Walker’s theory.

quality of life (Walker 1988, 207). Although Walker argues that the state provides the benefit of facilitating the creation of necessary goods, he notes that “the fact that citizens receive significant benefits from the state does not mean that they cannot suffer harm or injustice at its hands, or that, overall, they might not fare better as citizens of another state or outside the jurisdiction of any state” (Walker 1988, 208). However, it can be inferred from Walker’s explanation of the necessity of the state, that it would be unlikely for the potentially harmful effects of state rule to cause more harm than benefit for its citizens.

Evaluating the Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification in Gratitude Theories

Walker explains that “[t]he argument from gratitude...suggests a view of political communities as communities whose members are, or should be, bound to one another by ties of goodwill and respect” (Walker 1988, 210-1). This claim, however, regarding the pro-social nature of society is ambiguous. Walker claims that society either *is*, or *ought to be*, associated by sentiments of goodwill and respect, however, he does not specify which of these is, in fact, the case in the majority of societies. Whether Walker holds that agents predominantly possess pro-social traits, such as goodwill and respect for others, or whether he believes that they either do not possess such traits or that other, unspecified, anti-social traits may possess stronger motivational force in agents, is unclear. Walker holds that the state is not responsible for facilitating the creation of all goods which increase the quality of agents’ lives, suggesting that agents possess a certain number of pro-social traits (such as, perhaps, the capacity for cooperation or altruism) which facilitate the relevant state of affairs without requiring external intervention from state authority. However, he does provide a theory of political governance, which itself posits, to a certain degree, the state as necessary to facilitate an adequate quality of life for agents in society.

It is clear that Walker's theory reflects the generic account of sociability, as he implies that agents possess traits which both facilitate and impede successful interaction. Walker's theory, thus, supports the sociability hypothesis, as it is based on considerations of sociability. Walker's theory fails, however, to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, Walker fails to acknowledge his reliance on assumptions of sociability in his justification of the existence of the state, as he justifies the authority of the state on its role in facilitating the creation of necessary goods, thus failing to identify why the state is necessary in the first place (as a result of agents being assumed to be unable to facilitate such a state of affairs without such intervention). Secondly, Walker does not defend his sociability assumptions. While Walker explains that his theory suggests a pro-social conception of society, based on goodwill and respect, it unclear whether he holds this to actually be the case, and furthermore, he doesn't explain the relevant pro-social/anti-social traits which comprise human sociability. Finally, Walker does not consistently apply his sociability assumptions in his justification of the state, as he fails to provide an explanation regarding the form of governance which would effectively facilitate successful interaction between agents, in relation to the nature of their sociability. Walker simply justifies state authority based on its role in facilitating the creation of necessary goods, without providing an explanation regarding form of state which would successfully order society to do so (based on the nature of human sociability which renders it necessary to be invoked).

An Important Outlier to the Dissertation Argument

At this point, I would like to identify a thinker who represents an important outlier to the claims I argue in support of in the dissertation. Robert Paul Wolff is an anarchist thinker who does not

base his theory regarding the unjustifiability of political governance on considerations of human sociability. Wolff explicitly argues that political authority is unjustifiable due to the fact that it violates the autonomy of the individual. As Wolff explains,

[t]he defining mark of the state is authority, the right to rule. The primary obligation of man is autonomy, the refusal to be ruled. It would seem, then, that there can be no resolution of the conflict between the autonomy of the individual and the putative authority of the state. Insofar as a man fulfills his obligation to make himself the author of his decisions, he will resist the state's claim to have authority over him. That is to say, he will deny that he has a duty to obey the laws of the state *simply because they are the laws*. In that sense, it would seem that anarchism is the only political doctrine consistent with the virtue of autonomy. (Wolff 1970, 18)

Wolff's theory represents an outlier to the argument I develop in the dissertation, as it is inherently based on the autonomy of the individual, rather than considerations of sociability. This method differs greatly from all other thinkers' theories of governance, which are either explicitly or implicitly based on considerations of sociability. Wolff does not promote or invoke a conception of human sociability, and thus, his theory cannot be held to support the sociability hypothesis.

That Wolff does not promote or invoke a conception of sociability raises the question of the nature of interaction between agents in his theory. Would interactions be cooperative or conflictual? Wolff does not say, in part because he refrains from taking a stand on the nature of human sociability. But this approach, I would argue, is difficult to accept, given the important implications that the nature of interaction has on the quality of agents' lives. If Wolff respects the individual by defending their autonomy, how are considerations of sociability not held to be fundamentally important in his theory? Wolff, I hold, must either subscribe to the generic account of sociability, and erroneously neglects to address the important implications this account would potentially have on the justifiability of his theory (as political governance may be

needed in order to facilitate successful interaction, and thus, be justifiable), or he assumes an account of sociability which holds agents as interacting successfully in the absence of the state, which overcomes the posited challenge to his theory. Either way, he fails to address and explain the account of sociability on which his theory is based. Thus, although I recognize that Wolff represents an outlier to my dissertation argument, I argue that by neglecting to address considerations of sociability, Wolff's theory is unpersuasive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as I have illuminated through an evaluation of multiple contemporary theories of political governance, all such theories support the sociability hypothesis, however, they fail to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification by failing to meet one or more of the three relevant tests. Assumptions regarding human sociability underlie theories of political governance, however, they are inconsistently acknowledged, defended, and applied in justifications of the existence of states.

Accounts of sociability should play a more prominent role in the justification of forms of political governance. This claim will be further defended and illustrated in the following two chapters of the dissertation. In the second chapter, I will examine two accounts of sociability which hold humans to possess predominantly pro-social traits (namely, Hume and Kropotkin), and how this influences their justifications of political governance. In the third chapter, I will examine two accounts of sociability which hold humans to possess predominantly anti-social traits (namely, Hobbes and Stirner), and how this influences their justifications of political governance.

As we will see, the theories of Hume and Kropotkin are based on similar accounts of sociability, but they reach differing conclusions regarding the forms of governance which are consequently justifiable. Similarly, Hobbes and Stirner start from similar accounts of sociability yet reach different political conclusions. These theories are important to evaluate as they provide an illustration of how accounts of sociability (even those with similar characteristics) can influence the justifiability of forms of states in different ways. Furthermore, the evaluations of the accounts of sociability and forms of governance put forward by Hume, Kropotkin, Hobbes, and Stirner provide illustrations of theories of governance which are informed by (apparently) robust and well-explained accounts of human sociability. Such theories, therefore, overcome the failures identified in contemporary theories of governance to acknowledge the role that accounts of sociability play in justifications of governance. The theories promoted by the aforementioned thinkers have been chosen for analysis, due to the fact that they provide illustrations of how even detailed and thorough accounts of sociability can possess underlying complexity/ambiguity which potentially affects the justifiability of forms of political governance.

In this chapter, I have argued for the importance of the fulfillment of the first stage of justification through evaluations of theories which provide justifications of governance. There is, however, a school of thought in political philosophy which opposes this position, by holding that (political) governance can never be justifiable, regardless of its form. This school of thought is labelled as anarchism. In the following two chapters, I will evaluate theories supporting the unjustifiability of political governance put forward by the anarchist thinkers Peter Kropotkin and Max Stirner. This evaluation of anarchist thinkers will be helpful to the dissertation, as they provide important, contrary stances to the claims made by thinkers who justify political governance, while analogously being based on inherent considerations of sociability. I have

chosen to focus on the two aforementioned anarchist thinkers, as they promote opposing, influential conceptions regarding the nature of human sociability. While Kropotkin promotes a conception of sociability which posits agents to possess predominantly pro-social traits, Stirner promotes a conception of sociability which posits agents to possess predominantly anti-social traits. It will be informative to evaluate the arguments regarding the unjustifiability of political governance promoted by these thinkers, as they rest on very different conceptions of human sociability, and will therefore provide a helpful illustration as to how such conceptions do influence, and ought to influence, theories of governance.

Chapter 2:

Pro-Social Theories and the Justifiability of the State: Hume and Kropotkin

In the first chapter, I argued that while all major contemporary theories of political governance implicitly invoke assumptions regarding the nature of human sociability, only a minority of such theories explicitly justify the existence of the state on them. That such thinkers do not explicitly base their justifications of the existence of the state upon such considerations, results in many important, unanswered questions regarding the nature of human sociability which they posit, and why the introduction of the state is held to be necessary in the first place. The majority of contemporary theorists, furthermore, do not address or adequately explain the accounts of sociability which underlie their theories. Such thinkers simply assume a conception of sociability which posits anti-social traits to possess a certain level of motivational force in relation to the motivational force of agents' pro-social traits (which, in certain cases, differs in regard to the size of societies), which consequently leads to the necessity of the state in facilitating successful interaction. The relative motivational strengths such traits hold, however, and their varying balances in relation to the size/type of societies, is not explained.

Interestingly, earlier political thinkers were often much more explicit and systematic in addressing and explaining the accounts of sociability upon which their theories are based. In this chapter, I provide an evaluation of the theories of political governance (in Kropotkin's case, rejection of governance) put forward by David Hume and Peter Kropotkin, which are based on accounts of sociability which hold agents to possess predominantly pro-social traits. Both Hume and Kropotkin promote the generic account of sociability (emphasizing the pro-social traits

which agents possess), with the additional secondary stipulation regarding the size of societies in relation to the motivational force of pro-social/anti-social traits.

Evaluating the accounts of sociability promoted in Hume's and Kropotkin's work is particularly interesting due to the fact that both thinkers promote accounts which hold agents to possess predominantly pro-social traits, however, they draw differing conclusions regarding the justifiability of political governance. That thinkers are able to draw differing conclusions regarding the justifiability of political governance from similar accounts of sociability supports my claim that it is of fundamental importance to carefully evaluate accounts of sociability which underlie theories of political governance, and assess whether the corresponding theories address them and are appropriately modelled in accordance with them.

Hume and Kropotkin provide detailed explanations of their accounts of sociability, and the manner in which they inform the forms of governance which are justified based on them. I will, however, show that even though such thinkers engage in a sustained attempt to explain their accounts of sociability in regard to the justifiability of the state, such accounts are, nonetheless, complex and ambiguous.

Hume's Account of Sociability & Theory of Political Governance

In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume puts forward his conception of sociability, holding humans as predominantly pro-social. The following section of the chapter will present information from Hume's work (predominantly, his *Treatise of Human Nature*), which is helpful in illuminating his account of human sociability and theory of political governance.¹⁷

¹⁷ My exegesis of Hume's account of sociability and theory of political governance draws on Paul Sagar's exposition on this topic in his work *The Opinion of Mankind*, as I find his interpretation compelling.

The basis of Hume's account of sociability is a belief regarding the natural propensity of human beings to engage in successful social interaction. While Hume holds that agents possess a natural desire and capacity for successful interaction, he does not argue that this is based on a natural love for humankind (of the kind which is separate from the benefits others can provide, or their relation to oneself)¹⁸ (Sagar 2018, 49). To support this claim, Hume highlights the natural desire for sexual procreation which is evident among agents. If there existed a natural love for humankind which drove the desire for social interaction, Hume claims, it would be as evident as the desire for reproduction. This is not the case, Hume argues, as it is clear that humans' dispositions towards each other vary. As Hume states, "[m]en's tempers are different, and some have a propensity to the tender, and others to the rougher, affections: But in the main, we may affirm, that man in general, or human nature, is nothing but the object both of love and hatred" (Hume 1739, 3: 45). It is not, therefore, an inherent love for other human beings which allows for successful social interaction to occur, on Hume's account, but rather specific psychological and physiological traits.

Although agents do not possess a natural love of humankind, they unfailingly act to form societies. Hume claims that the activity of forming societies must be a human necessity, as proven by the uniformity of experience which can be observed (Sagar 2018, 52). This phenomenon is posited to be a result of the needs of the body and mind, which are satisfied through successful social interaction. The needs of the body, Hume states, are satisfied through successful social interaction insofar as cooperation leads to success in raising offspring, as well as relief from the inconveniences of solitary life (Hume 1739, 2: 224-5). It can be speculated that

¹⁸ Ambiguity is present, in Hume's work, regarding agents' love of humankind. Hume, it seems, holds that no natural love of humankind exists in agents upon which sociability is based, however, he argues that such a love can become an aspect of sociability once communities evolve into large-scale commercial societies (Finlay 2007, 108-109).

such inconveniences would consist of external threats, such as animal predators, difficulty in acquiring sustenance, etc. Such inconveniences are remedied, Hume claims, once sexual partners join together in reproduction, and then work cooperatively to raise their offspring. Agents are drawn towards reproduction due to their natural desire for affection and society. Once agents engage in procreation and family groupings are created, the utilitarian benefits of social interaction follow (Sagar 2018, 52).

The aforementioned benefits involve goods pertaining to both the body and the mind. The goods pertaining to the body are identified above. It is of particular interest, however, to highlight Hume's belief that social interaction works to provide additional benefits to the mind. The fact that Hume claims society provides benefits to the mind exposes an important aspect of his account of sociability, which is that humans possess a certain level of desire for social interaction. Although this desire is not a product of an overall love of humankind for its own sake, humans possess a natural desire, and therefore a natural requirement, for social life. The psychological need for social interaction is not contingent on the utilitarian benefits that society provides, but rather, is based on a desire to be among others for the sake of interaction itself (Sagar 2018, 51). As Hume explains,

[i]n all creatures, that prey not upon others, and are not agitated with violent passions,¹⁹ there appears a remarkable desire of company, which associates them together, without any advantages they can ever propose to reap from their union. This is still more conspicuous in man, as being the creature of the universe, who has the most ardent desire of society, and is fitted for it by the most advantages. We can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer. (Hume 1739, 2: 153-4)

¹⁹ I will interpret the term "passion", which Hume uses, as denoting what I label as "traits".

Hume posits agents to possess traits which create opportunities for them to engage in (necessary) successful interaction, the most important of which is the psychological trait of sympathy. The trait of sympathy involves the reproduction of another's emotion in oneself. As Paul Sagar explains, "sympathy refer[s] to the transforming of the 'idea' of another's emotive state into an 'impression', literally entering into [one's] sentiments. The minds of men [in this regard, are] 'mirrors' to each other, reflecting passions back and forth" (Sagar 2018, 51). It is through the trait of sympathy, not a love of humankind, that agents are able to compassionately relate to one another. As Hume explains,

[i]n general, it may be affirm'd, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourself. 'Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible, creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours: But this proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no proof of such an universal affection to mankind. (Hume 1739, 3: 44)

The pleasure or joy (for example) an agent feels does not necessitate that individuals around them be angry or jealous. According to Hume, agents can relate to each other in a way whereby an agent who is not experiencing (for example) a pleasant or joyous state can share in the pleasure or joy of another, and therefore benefit. Thus, agents' experiences of certain states, such as happiness, success, economic prosperity, etc., do not necessarily lead to conflict between individuals. Furthermore, because agents experience the states of others, they are unmotivated to cause pain in others as they will share in such pain themselves.

Hume's idea of sympathy, and its resulting consequences for interaction, stands in stark opposition to the idea of glory-seeking which is put forward by Thomas Hobbes.²⁰ Hobbes

²⁰ Hobbes's account of sociability and theory of political governance will be evaluated in chapter three.

contends that the trait of glory-seeking pertains to agents' evaluation of themselves as superior in comparison to others. However, the problem with such a trait, according to Hobbes, is that "glory is like honour, if all men have it, no man hath it, for they consist in comparison and precellence" (Hobbes 1949, 24). As agents are fundamentally driven by glory-seeking, and the nature of glory is such that it cannot be acquired unless the glory of others is nullified, humans are in a constant state of conflict with each other in the attempt to satiate their need for glory.²¹ Hume's emphasis on the trait of sympathy allows him to situate his account of sociability in opposition to that of Hobbes.²² As humans possess sympathy, which allows them to share in and derive benefits from the states others experience, agents are not in constant conflict in an effort to secure for themselves a state (e.g. glory) which must be acquired at the expense of the same state in others. While agents seek certain states for themselves (e.g. financial prosperity), sympathy ensures that such a pursuit does not necessarily lead to conflict, as desirable states are

²¹ The trait of glory-seeking is not the sole cause of conflict between agents in Hobbes's account. In the *Leviathan*, Hobbes lists "three principall causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory" (Hobbes 1651, ch.13).

²² Certain thinkers, such as Russell Hardin, argue that the contrasts between the assumptions regarding human sociability promoted by Hume and Hobbes are not as serious as I claim. As Hardin states, "Hume and Hobbes share the view that universal egoism, which is merely welfarism at the individual level, can be channelled by government to produce universal welfare and that egoists, for their own benefit, would therefore want government...Both philosophers also claim that most people are egoists, so that their prescription should apply to real societies. It would not apply if insufficiently many people were motivated by egoism" (Hardin 2007, 105-106). This exposition, however, diminishes the force and importance of the trait of sympathy in Hume's account, which I believe leads to it being starkly contrary to Hobbes's account. While Hume does, certainly, hold that humans possess the trait of self-interest (and thus all agents are, to a degree, egoists), he claims that this trait is complemented by the trait of sympathy insofar as political governance is generated from the force of both traits (as will be explained below). Additionally, since the trait of self-interest is only exacerbated (to the degree where it impedes successful interaction) when wealth is introduced into society, I hold that the base nature of human sociability which Hume promotes is one of peace, based on the propensity towards successful interaction which is facilitated by the trait of sympathy.

not mutually exclusive.²³ Hume provides an example of wealthy individuals. Agents share in the states of the wealthy through sympathy by “imagining the pleasures that riches and power [bring,]...[transforming] this idea into a pleasant sensation of their own, and [are] led to esteem, rather than resent and attack, superiors” (Sagar 2018, 51).

Hume’s account of sociability includes pride as a human trait, however it is not allocated the importance in human motivation as vainglory-seeking (analogous to pride) in Hobbes’s account. In Hume’s account, pride is solely one of “four central ‘indirect’ passions alongside humility, love, and hatred” (Sagar 2018, 50). Within Hume’s account, pride is not an inherently conflictual passion, and is pleasant in how it is cultivated as well as in its possession. Pride can, in fact, lead to love in other agents (Sagar 2018, 51). Hume does not hold that humans are never conflictual, as agents can certainly engage in passions such as malice or envy towards each other. However, such passions are situated in submission to the central indirect passions attributed to human beings (pride, humility, love, and hatred), and engagement with them, according to Hume, are rare instances which deviate from normal human behaviour (Sagar 2018, 50).

Initial human societies, born out of sexual reproduction, convey utilitarian benefits to the agents involved. It is for this reason, Hume claims, that agents continue to engage in social living once the offspring of such arrangements reach adulthood (Sagar 2018, 52). Hume’s account of sociability, however, is bounded insofar as it holds that successful interaction, based solely on the realization of the advantages of social living, as well as the trait of sympathy, can only occur among a limited number of agents. In small groups, sympathy facilitates the stability of social

²³ Hume does hold that conflict can occur between agents, however, that it is not based on jealousy/resentment regarding the relative distribution of certain states (for example, that certain agents possess wealth and others do not). Rather, conflict between agents, within Hume’s account, is caused by agents comparing the states of others with their own, and arriving at an unfavourable conclusion regarding the states they possess compared to others’. Such occurrences, however, are held to be rare (Finlay 2007,107).

life by providing a means of identifying oneself with one's peers, which facilitates mutual support (or minimally, amicability) rather than animosity. The scope of sympathy, however, solely extends to those in one's immediate environment. The motivational strength of the trait of sympathy is diminished the farther removed one is situated from the recipients of the trait. Large societies, therefore, within Hume's account, cannot operate successfully based solely on the trait of sympathy.²⁴

Agents, furthermore, are held to possess certain anti-social traits which work to impede successful interaction. As Hume explains, "however the circumstances of human nature may render an union necessary, and however those passions of lust and natural affection may seem to render it unavoidable; yet there are other particulars in our *natural temper*, and in our *outward circumstances*, which are very incommodious, and are even contrary to the requisite conjunction. Among the former, we may justly esteem our *selfishness* to be the most considerable" (Hume 1739, 3: 53-4). Hume claims that humans are not irrevocably selfish, but that they possess certain anti-social traits, in addition to the aforementioned pro-social traits (such as sympathy, reproductive drive, desire for interaction, etc.).

It is clear, at this point, that Hume promotes the generic account of sociability, as he holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits, with the added secondary claim regarding the differing motivational strengths that such traits are held to possess within different sizes of societies.

Hume's explanation regarding how small communities transform into large-scale economic societies rests on his assumption that the primary impediment which limits the natural bonds of sociability is agents' self-interest. As stated above, humans initially enter into social

²⁴ The precise size at which the trait of sympathy is no longer sufficient to facilitate successful interaction is unclear. I return to this below.

interaction due to the natural desire to procreate, and, on realizing the advantages of social living, choose to continue to engage in group-living. As agents continue to live in society, material wealth increases by virtue of agents' combined efforts in creating and distributing the necessary goods for survival. The introduction of wealth, however, serves to initiate and facilitate competition between agents for such goods (Sagar 2018, 54).

Although Hume holds that agents possess traits which facilitate successful social interaction, such as sympathy, he also posits that they possess traits which would impede such interaction. Several passions which may interfere with successful interaction, Hume holds, are vanity, pity, love, envy, and revenge, among others (Sagar 2018, 55). These passions, however, are not forceful enough to necessarily undermine successful social living overall. The trait which may work to do so, Hume holds, is self-interest. It is important to note that Hume does not hold agents as excessively self-interested (Sagar 2018, 54). Although agents possess the trait of self-interest, and this trait poses the risk of undermining successful interaction, they are not primarily driven by it. As Hume states, “[s]o far from thinking, that men have no affection for any thing beyond themselves, I am of opinion, that tho’ it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet ’tis as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not over-balance all the selfish” (Hume 1739, 3: 54).

Once wealth is introduced as a result of social living, the trait of self-interest facilitates competition. Agents compete with each other in order to secure goods for themselves, as well as to increase the welfare of agents with whom they have relationships. The competition which ensues threatens to destroy the successful operation of society, as the security of possessions is jeopardized (Sagar 2018, 55). If agents are motivated to acquire goods for specific groups of agents (e.g. themselves and their loved-ones), all agents who are not members of these groups

are at risk of having their possessions stolen. If all possessions are at risk of being reappropriated, the advantages that the production of such possessions facilitate are nullified (Sagar 2018, 55).

Hume holds that the remedy to the problems caused by the trait of self-interest is the virtue of justice. This virtue, according to Hume, is artificial, but arises naturally in society. The virtue of justice is natural, according to Hume, as it is based on agents' natural passions, rather than imposed on agents (from external forces) and contradictory to their nature. The virtue of justice, while being based on natural passions, is not created naturally, however, as "our natural uncultivated ideas of morality, instead of providing a remedy for the partiality of our affections, do rather conform themselves to that partiality, and give it an additional force and influence" (Hume 1739, 3: 57-8). "The remedy, then", Hume explains, "is not deriv'd from nature, but from *artifice*; or more properly speaking, nature provides a remedy in the judgment and understanding, for what is irregular and incommodious in the affections" (Hume 1739, 3: 58). Thus, although the virtue of justice is based on agents' natural passions (self-interest), it is artificially created through agents' reason in order to overcome the problems which arise from such passions.

The virtue of justice both solves the problems caused by self-interest, as well as comes about as a result of self-interest (Sagar 2018, 56). Agents in society realize that their interests are promoted when the security of possessions is enforced, and therefore refrain from violating the claims of others to their possessions, with the desire that other agents will reciprocally respect their claims to their own possessions. Such action takes the form of a compact, through which the artificial virtue of justice arises (Sagar 2018, 56). The natural obligation to this virtue is derived from the self-interested benefits it provides to agents. This natural obligation, however,

evolves into a moral obligation as a result of sympathy. As adherence to the virtue of justice causes pleasure in agents, and similarly, violations cause pain, in conjunction with the pleasure which is attached to the idea of a peaceful and just society, and the uneasiness produced by the idea of such a state of affairs being disrupted, the trait of sympathy in human beings leads them to transform the natural virtue of justice into a moral virtue to be obeyed for reasons independent of its utilitarian benefits. As Sagar explains, “[t]he artifice of justice ha[s] to supervene on natural materials” (Sagar 2018, 57), as it is agents’ sympathy which inherently informs the creation of the moral notions of justice and injustice.

Thus, due to the trait of sympathy, the natural virtue of justice (based on agents’ self-interest) becomes a moral virtue (based on agents’ sympathy), which facilitates stronger adherence to its dictates. As individuals’ claims to possessions are more strictly protected, the notion of property (its possession, just transfer, etc.) is consequently able to be introduced. Once property is introduced, “humans [can] practice socially regulated, utility-promoting reciprocal interactions for the exchange of possessions, putting them on a trajectory toward not just large and lasting society, but economically advanced civilization” (Sagar 2018, 57).

The virtue of justice, as well as the trait of sympathy, are not sufficient, however, on Hume’s account, to regulate large-scale societies. The virtue of justice facilitates increasing material prosperity which leads to the growth of societies, and as societies grow in size, the stabilizing strength of the trait of sympathy loses force. Sympathy is dependent on agents being able to identify and reproduce another’s emotions in themselves, and the growth of society leads to increased disassociation between agents. As agents become further separated and less intimately engaged with each other, they lose the ability to effectively sympathize with the emotions of others, which leads to the increased risk of violations of the virtue of justice. Such

violations would become a potential threat in society, as agents would not be able to sympathize with the unknown agents who would suffer harm as a result of their violations (in regard to the moral obligation to justice), as well as that violations would not necessarily impede their own utility (in regard to the natural obligation to justice). As societies grow in size, the utilitarian reasons for adhering to the virtue of justice become insignificant as increased material wealth and abundance negate the direct harms that one might suffer if they violate the virtue of justice, providing increased appeal for the immediate advantages of such violations (Sagar 2018, 58).

The increased risk of violations of justice threatens the destruction of society overall. Although individual violations may not facilitate such a collapse, they prevent successful cooperation from occurring between agents if they are prevalent throughout society. As Hume explains, “[y]our example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity, by shewing me, that I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone shou’d impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others” (Hume 1739, 3: 134-5). Agents, in such a society, would observe others violating the virtue of justice and would, in turn, do so as well, in order to prevent themselves from becoming disadvantaged by continued adherence.

The solution to this predicament, according to Hume, is the institution of government. A magistracy is introduced in society, in which certain agents are charged with the task of facilitating adherence to the conventions of justice, who are supported in doing so through the consent of the populace (Sagar 2018, 58). Rules of justice are created, with attaching punishments for violations. Self-interest is once again invoked in order to facilitate adherence to the conventions of justice, through agents’ desire to avoid punishment and benefit from the advantages produced through social life. Governments are then introduced, not as a result of

conflict within societies, but rather, conflict between societies (Sagar 2018, 58). As societies grow larger, and accumulate increasing wealth as a result of the introduction of the magistracy, they become targets of attack from other societies.

Wealth, Hume holds, inevitably causes conflict both within, and external, to societies. Societies seek to acquire the wealth of other societies, and agents within societies are consequently liable to engage in conflict for the possession of such wealth when faced with an external threat (Sagar 2018, 58-9). In times of war, governments are introduced in order to regulate internal peace, as well as to coordinate protection from external threats. As the advantages of such rule become evident (e.g. “orderly and hierarchical rule in the administration of justice, the stability of property, and the different ranks supervening on both” (Sagar 2018, 59)), they are retained in conditions of peace. The natural obligation to government is derived from the utilitarian benefits it provides to agents, and analogously to the development of the virtue of justice, develops into a moral obligation as a result of the trait of sympathy (Sagar 2018, 59).

Hume’s theory of political governance, therefore, supports the sociability hypothesis, as it is based on an account of human sociability: the generic account, emphasizing agents’ pro-socialness. Hume’s theory, furthermore, successfully fulfills the first stage of justification, as it meets all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, Hume acknowledges the role that assumptions of sociability play in his theory, as the existence of the state is justified in regard to specific aspects of his account (i.e. the traits of sympathy and self-interest). Political governance, within his theory, is invoked in regard to the augmentation of the trait of self-interest, which occurs once wealth is introduced in society and it grows in size, and the diminishing motivational force of sympathy. Secondly, Hume adequately defends his sociability assumptions, as he provides an

adequate explanation of the relevant traits. Finally, Hume consistently applies his sociability assumptions in his justification of the existence of the state, as he appropriately models the form of governance promoted in accordance with his account of sociability (for instance, the state is only invoked once societies reach a certain size, it is designed to mitigate the problematic consequences of the trait of self-interest, etc.).

Thus, Hume's theory of political governance is held to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification. In the following section of the chapter, however, I will highlight some complexity and ambiguity which can be identified in Hume's account of sociability, and which challenges the justifiability of the form of governance he promotes.

Complexity/Ambiguity in Hume's Account of Sociability

Complexity in Hume's Account: Self-Interest

Firstly, briefly, I would like to highlight a complexity within Hume's account of sociability regarding the trait of self-interest. It ought to be evident, at this point, that Hume characterizes the trait of self-interest as both pro-social and anti-social at different times in the exposition of his theory. Self-interest is held to be anti-social insofar as it facilitates conflict through competition for material goods. Self-interest, however, also works to facilitate successful interaction, insofar as it leads agents to cooperate to create compacts which create the artificial virtue of justice. Self-interest, furthermore, facilitates successful interaction within the state, as agents are induced, through this trait, to abide by the conventions of justice.

Self-interest and sympathy are posited to be the two central traits, possessing the strongest motivational force, in Hume's account of sociability. Sympathy is, clearly, a pro-social trait. Self-interest can be seen as equally a pro-social and anti-social trait. Taken together,

Hume's account of sociability is a version of the generic account which emphasizes agents' overall pro-socialness.

Ambiguity in Hume's Account: Size of Societies

One area of ambiguity present within Hume's account of sociability concerns the variation in the motivational strengths of agents' pro-social and anti-social traits between small-scale and large-scale societies. Hume accords strong motivational force to the trait of sympathy which facilitates successful interaction among agents. However, as wealth increases, and societies consequently grow in size, sympathy is rendered insufficient to facilitate successful interaction without intervention from artificial phenomena, and thus, the virtue of justice, and then the state, are introduced to do so.

The precise size of society, however, which renders the trait of sympathy insufficient to facilitate successful interaction, is left undefined. Presumably, such a society would be large and wealthy, in which agents do not know all the other agents or do not frequently interact with them, so that violations of the virtue of justice would be (seemingly) insignificant. However, the apparently simple connection which Hume presents between the growth of society and the loss of sympathy's motivational force can be questioned.

The aforementioned ambiguity leads to two questions regarding the nature of human sociability within societies of different sizes: 1) what are the criteria which determine how large a society can grow before the state must be invoked, and 2) why does such growth (at a certain point) impede agents' ability to engage in successful interaction? The second question will be addressed in the following subsections of the chapter, with Hume providing two possible

answers: 1) free-riders, and 2) the nature of the trait of sympathy (as dependent on physical proximity). As will be illuminated, I hold that neither provides an adequate explanation.

The state, within Hume's account, is introduced once societies grow to a certain size and possess a certain level of wealth, which causes them to be subject to external threats from other societies. The state is introduced in such circumstances in order to coordinate protection from such attacks, as well as to adjudicate between internal conflicts over wealth. Many questions remain unanswered, however, regarding the circumstances surrounding such a state of affairs. For instance, how severe do external threats to a society have to be in order to require/justify the introduction of the state to coordinate protection? Similarly, how severe do internal conflicts over wealth have to become in order to necessitate the introduction of the state in order to adjudicate between agents' claims? If such questions remain unanswered, the state could be invoked at an incorrect time. That the state could be invoked at an incorrect time could lead to the consequences of agents having their freedom imposed upon by the state when it is not necessary, leading to violations of freedom, or the state not being invoked at a time when it is properly needed, leading to agents having their rights violated due to a lack of necessary protection. The uncertainty regarding when it is necessary for the state to be introduced, within Hume's theory, leads to uncertainty regarding when the state's existence can be justifiable.

Ambiguity in Hume's Account: Free-Riders

Another ambiguity posited in Hume's account of sociability, relates to his characterization of the trait of sympathy in connection to his discussion of free-riders. Hume holds that free-riders are an impediment to the successful operation of societies, as they impede cooperation based on considerations of self-interest and justice. Once wealth is introduced in societies as a result of

social living, and agents' self-interest is augmented, agents become competitive in the acquisition of goods. Within this competition, there exists a possibility that certain agents will attempt to reap the advantages of cooperation without contributing their required share of labour (labelled as free-riders). That free-riders could exist in society is not desirable to agents (as they could be taken advantage of, insofar as they would contribute their required share in the cooperative scheme while free-riders would benefit from such efforts and neglect to contribute theirs), and thus, the virtue of justice is invoked in order to prevent such a state of affairs from coming about. A natural obligation to the virtue of justice is created in agents based on their self-interest (due to the fact that they do not, for their own sake, wish for free-riders to exist within society), which is then transformed into a moral obligation based on considerations of justice. As societies grow in size, further institutions, such as the magistracy and state, are introduced in order to prevent free-riders from operating in society.

The ambiguity I posit within Hume's account of the free-rider problem relates to the function of the trait of sympathy. Hume posits that because the trait of sympathy allows agents to share in the states of others, and derive pleasure from such states, the success of others does not entail that conflict ensues in society (due to, for example, agents being jealous of such states). In the case of free-riders, why then does Hume hold that they would prevent cooperation from occurring (i.e. cause conflict) due to agents being angry/resentful of them? It is plausible to assume that free-riders are pleased with their being able to reap the benefits of cooperation without having to contribute to such cooperation. Why then, if sympathy allows agents to enjoy

the states of others, would agents in society (who are not free-riders) be resentful of such agents, rather than enjoying with them the pleasant states they are experiencing?²⁵

This ambiguity is important as the prevention of free-riding in society is one of the reasons why institutions such as the virtue of justice, and then the state, are introduced and justified. If the potential conflict resulting from free-riders would be prevented by the trait of sympathy, then the existence of the state cannot be justified upon the nature of human sociability. Thus, the ambiguity in Hume's characterization and application of the trait of sympathy in regard to free-riders in society weakens one of the bases upon which he justifies the existence of political governance.

Ambiguity in Hume's Account: Sympathy

I would like to point out a further, more serious, ambiguity within Hume's account of sociability, regarding the trait of sympathy. Hume holds that the trait of sympathy is dependent on agents' physical proximity, insofar as the agent engaging in sympathy must be able to observe another's emotion and reproduce it within themselves. Sympathy facilitates successful interaction, as agents are able to share in others' pleasant states, and are unmotivated to cause harm to others because they will share in their pain. Hume argues that once societies grow in size, and agents are disassociated from each other, the trait of sympathy is no longer sufficient to facilitate successful interaction as agents are not able to share in the states of others, eventually leading to

²⁵ I am referring to instances of free-riding which don't impose additional costs on others. In cases where the actions of free-riders impose costs on the cooperating members of society, it is reasonable to assume that agents would be resentful of such free-riders. However, in cases where the actions of free-riders do not impose any additional cost to cooperators (such as, for example, instances where the fulfillment of a task can be successfully executed by the majority of agents in a society), it is less clear why Hume would hold free-riders as presenting a challenge to the successful operation of society.

the implementation of the virtue of justice, and then the state, in order to successfully regulate large-scale societies. “Precisely because it [is] not a general goodwill to all humanity, but only a particular capacity to share the sentiments of specific others”, Sagar explains, “sympathy [cannot] explain the origin of justice” (Sagar 2018, 94).

This characterization of the trait of sympathy, I argue, seems implausible. It is implausible that the trait of sympathy could hold such strong motivational force but solely be effective in cases of intimate interactions. If sympathy plays such a large motivational role in agents’ behaviour towards others, is it not plausible that agents possess a corresponding understanding regarding the reasoning behind this trait and why it occurs? Would agents not understand that the reason they are able to identify and share in the states of others is because all human beings are equal, and thus, when observing/sharing in another’s state, it is equivalent to understanding that oneself could be in the same situation and the results of such a situation would be equivalent? Would this understanding, regarding the equality of agents, not lead to a component of the trait of sympathy being based in reason, thus allowing it to be applied to agents who one does not have intimate interactions with, or does not know personally? If such were the case, the trait of sympathy would facilitate successful interaction between agents even when societies grow in size and agents become disassociated from each other.

Uncertainty in Hume’s Theory: Justifiability of Political Governance

It is important to identify the above ambiguity regarding Hume’s characterization of the trait of sympathy, as the diminishing motivational force of this trait as societies grow in size is one of the primary bases upon which the existence of the state is justified within his theory. If one were

to posit an understanding of the trait of sympathy analogous to the one I have proposed above, the consequences regarding when the state may be justifiably invoked may alter.

If sympathy is based partly in reason, it can in principle be applied to an infinite number of agents. If sympathy extends to all agents (even those who are removed from the agent engaging in sympathy), and thus facilitates successful interaction within societies larger than Hume posits, the state may not be necessary to facilitate successful interaction. I will return to this speculative possibility in chapter four.

It is important to note that the trait of self-interest is a relevant factor which is held to contribute to the requirement of the introduction of the state, as the introduction of wealth augments this trait in agents. The motivational force of the trait of sympathy, therefore, stands in relation to the motivational force of the trait of self-interest, as these two traits both characterize the nature of sociability, which informs the justifiability of political governance. The trait of self-interest, Hume posits, exists in humans, but does not impede successful interaction until wealth is introduced. In small societies which possess the initial stages of wealth, agents' interactions are characterized by both self-interest and sympathy, however, the trait of self-interest possesses enough motivational force to impede sympathy's facilitation of successful interaction. As societies grow, however, as wealth is increased, Hume does not stipulate that the trait of self-interest continues to gain motivational force, but rather, the motivational force of sympathy diminishes. If the revised characterization of sympathy is assumed, the relationship between the relative motivational forces of self-interest and sympathy in small societies may not change, as the supremacy of the force of self-interest over sympathy (once it is initially augmented by the introduction of wealth) would be the same as it is posited in Hume's account. However, once societies grow in size, the necessity of the institution of the state may alter.

Hume's account holds that the virtue of justice is sufficient, within small societies, to successfully regulate interaction. It is only once societies grow, and sympathy loses force, that the state is consequently necessary, and thus justifiable. Within the revised account of sympathy, however, it would be posited that the state would never be required to facilitate successful interaction, and thus, never be justifiable. Within such circumstances, it could be interpreted that the relative motivational forces of the traits of self-interest and sympathy would remain the same between small intimate societies and large-scale societies, as the trait of self-interest would not be held to gain motivational force (this claim is not changed from Hume's account), and the trait of sympathy would not be held to lose motivational force. Thus, the virtue of justice could be assumed to successfully regulate societies as they grow in size, as the relationship between the motivational forces of such traits would remain the same. The ambiguity regarding the nature of the trait of sympathy within Hume's account of sociability, therefore, is significant as it leads to uncertainty regarding the justifiability of the existence of the state. On the revised characterization of the trait of sympathy, the state would not be posited to be necessary to facilitate successful interaction (as the virtue of justice would be sufficient to do so in relation to the motivational forces of the traits of self-interest and sympathy), and thus, its existence would not be justifiable.²⁶

²⁶ I wish to note that a further implication of the re-characterization of the trait of sympathy would be that the potential of external threats to society would not lead to the requirement of the intervention of the state. The revised trait of sympathy would temper agents' desire to attack other societies in order to acquire their wealth. Thus, although agents would still possess the trait of self-interest, which would certainly lead them to desire the wealth of other societies (to a certain degree), since the trait of sympathy would not be held to decrease in motivational force, it can be posited that the virtue of justice would be sufficient to mitigate such conflicts (as the traits of self-interest and sympathy would be held to apply equally to all agents regardless of the intimacy of the connection between agents or societies, and thus, the virtue of justice would be effective in facilitating successful interaction both within societies and between societies).

The above proposal regarding the re-characterized nature of sympathy is solely based on my speculation regarding the manner in which the trait of sympathy can be interpreted in Hume's account, and thus, it cannot be attributed to Hume. Hume may, in fact, reject such a characterization of sympathy, based on his beliefs regarding the relationship between the passions (the trait of sympathy being held as a passion) and reason. As he states in his *Treatise*, "[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (Hume 1739, 2: 248). Thus, Hume may reject the proposed role of reason in the trait of sympathy, holding that the initial requirements posited for sympathy (that agents must be in close proximity to one another) would outweigh any motivational force of an aspect of reason.²⁷ My aim in engaging in such speculation, therefore, was to illustrate how the reinterpretation of such a trait in his account can undermine his argument supporting the justifiability of the existence of the state.

In short, while Hume's account of sociability and its role in justifying the existence of the state is unusually explicit and thoughtful, it is not without problems. Whether Hume's account of

²⁷ Hume famously holds that reason cannot give rise to any actions of the will, and furthermore, cannot oppose or interfere with passions (Hume 1739, 2: 246-247). This does not preclude my suggestion, however, that the passion of sympathy can include a component of reason which works to augment its motivational strength. The aspect of reason I posit in the re-characterized trait of sympathy does not work to interfere with the engagement of sympathy (for instance, sympathy between individuals who are in close proximity to one another would still be engaged in through reproduction of the others' state), but rather, extends the scope of sympathy by adding further means through which it can be engaged in. Once the scope of sympathy through intimacy is exhausted, reason can be invoked to continue to expand the scope of agents to which sympathy can apply. Reason would not be held as the origin or foundation of sympathy, but rather, would be interpreted as a secondary feature of the trait. Although I hold that the re-characterized nature of sympathy is plausible, I will not provide an extended defence of this idea, as the purpose of this exploration is to illuminate the relationship between Hume's account of sociability and his justification of the existence of the state.

sociability in fact supports his arguments about the existence of the state depend on a number of questionable assumptions about self-interest, free-riders, and sympathy in different contexts.²⁸

Kropotkin's Account of Sociability & Theory of Anarcho-Communism

Peter Kropotkin, known as the anarchist prince (Peterson 2013, 190), was a Russian social anarchist who advanced the theory of anarcho-communism, the most detailed description of which is found in his work *The Conquest of Bread*. In *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin provides an illustration of the anarchistic communist society he supports as the most beneficial social arrangement for humankind based on our pro-social nature. The following section will present information from Kropotkin's work, which is helpful in illuminating aspects of his account of human sociability and theory of political governance.

As an anarchist, Kropotkin rejects the governance of the state and calls for its immediate abolition (Kropotkin 1995, xv). Kropotkin rejects all forms of political governance, not solely the capitalist system which was pervasive during his lifetime. Kropotkin believes that the state is an instrument of subjugation, and feeds off the injustices and inequalities that pervade capitalist society. Once the state is removed, Kropotkin believes, human beings will organize society in a much more equitable manner due to their inherently pro-social nature. As Kropotkin explains,

²⁸ Although I will not include the re-characterized trait of sympathy in Hume's account of sociability, I wish to note that the re-characterization of the trait I have promoted is not implausible within the context of his account. Hume, in fact, seems to implicitly invoke a component of reason within the trait of sympathy in his explanation regarding how sympathy creates moral obligation to the virtue of justice. Sympathy creates moral obligation to the virtue of justice, Hume states, as agents become aware of the pain that violations of the virtue cause others, and understand that all agents have an interest in living in a peaceful society, and thus, reason (seemingly) dictates, due to the equality of agents and their equal right to well-being, that they ought not violate the virtue of justice.

[t]hings are arranged more easily and more satisfactorily without the intervention of the State. And in studying the progress made in this direction, we are led to conclude that the tendency of the human race is to reduce Government interference to zero; in fact, to abolish the State, the personification of injustice, oppression, and monopoly....We can already catch glimpses of a world in which the bonds which bind the individual are no longer laws, but social habits—the result of the need felt by each one of us to seek the support, the co-operation, the sympathy of his neighbours. (Kropotkin 1926, 29-30)

Kropotkin believes that societies based on mutual aid and cooperation are not only the most beneficial arrangements for humankind, but that tendencies towards such societies already exist in current societies, which makes the advancement of anarcho-communism inevitable. Kropotkin rests this belief on his view of humans as inherently pro-social beings, who are tended towards engaging in pro-social mutual aid rather than interpersonal competition. Since human tendencies are naturally directed towards the formation of anarcho-communist societies, Kropotkin argues, it is evident that this form of society expresses the most natural needs of humankind as a social species, as opposed to the individualism and competition which is facilitated by state governance (Kropotkin 1995, xviii). Human beings are not inherently conflictual, but rather, “as soon as their interests do not absolutely clash, [they] act in concert, harmoniously, and perform collective work of a very complex nature” (Kropotkin 1926, 120). The only barrier preventing voluntary agreements from turning into overall free societies is the state and capitalism (Kropotkin 1926, 31-2).

Through the creation of his anarcho-communist theory, Kropotkin establishes his philosophical position in opposition to individualist anarchists such as Max Stirner (whose theory will be discussed in chapter three). Both forms of anarchism (social and individualist) make claims regarding the requirements for human flourishing. Social anarchists hold that humans are inherently pro-social beings, and therefore flourishing can only occur within a community. Individuals share an identity with their community, and thus, collective goods lead

to the good of the individual. As social anarchists hold that individuals flourish within communities, they hold that human beings can only experience autonomy and freedom within such groups. Conversely, individualist anarchists hold that humans are autonomous agents, and therefore flourishing requires that they live and be treated as such. Human autonomy and freedom, individualist anarchists hold, is not found in collective membership. Individualist anarchists do not believe that individuals share any identity with communities, and therefore reject the notion of social/communal goods (Fiala 2017).

The anarcho-communist society Kropotkin presents in *The Conquest of Bread* is fundamentally dependent on his account of human nature as inherently pro-social developed in *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. Kropotkin holds that society is the natural state of humankind (Morland 1997, 131), and that human beings possess pro-social traits. As Kropotkin states in *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*,

[L]ove, sympathy and self-sacrifice certainly play an immense part in the progressive development of our moral feelings. But it is not love and not even sympathy upon which Society is based in mankind. It is the conscience— be it only at the stage of an instinct— of human solidarity. It is the unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man from the practice of mutual aid; of the close dependency of every one's happiness upon the happiness of all; and of the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the rights of every other individual as equal to his own. (Kropotkin 1914, xiii-xiv)

Among pro-social traits such as love, sympathy, and self-sacrifice, Kropotkin illuminates a deep pro-social human trait (instinct) of mutual aid and association with others which he labels *sociability proper* (Kropotkin 1914, 54-5). As the instinct towards cooperation and association is ingrained in human beings, and possesses strong motivational force, humans will always tend towards social organizations which are driven by pro-social traits.

The social arrangement which most accurately embodies humans' pro-social instincts, Kropotkin holds, is anarcho-communism. There is a tendency present, even in (anti-social) egoistic societies, Kropotkin argues, for individuals to think of themselves as bound to the community as a whole. Agents are inclined to measure what each individual ought to receive not as compensation in accordance with their labour, but rather, based on the fact that they are a member of the community (Kropotkin 1926, 26). It is evident that people are primarily bound to each other not due to the laws of the state, but through social habits (Kropotkin 1926, 30). Individuals within a community possess a tendency to care for each other and satisfy each other's basic needs. As the ability to do so increases by virtue of scientific advances in the means of production, so too does the tendency to use these advances to aid others in achieving well-being (Kropotkin 1926, 28). When anarcho-communism is inevitably enacted, the natural tendency of individuals to aid each other will become the principle of social life (Kropotkin 1926, 28).

In *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin argues that humans are social creatures and that pro-social mutual aid has been the most prominent driving force in the history of human evolution. Kropotkin wrote *Mutual Aid* as a response to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution presented in his works *Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Darwin's theory of evolution emphasizes anti-social egoistic competition between individuals within a species as the driving force behind evolution. In Darwin's theory, natural selection operates between members of a species, driving the evolution of the species through sexual fitness.²⁹

²⁹ Although Darwin emphasizes individual competition in his theory of evolution, Kropotkin argues that, in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Darwin indicates that mutual aid is, in fact, a driving force of evolution in addition to competitive struggle (Morland 1997, 132). Kropotkin's work is not a response to Darwin specifically, therefore, but rather to Hobbesian interpretations of Darwin's work as found in the writings of evolutionary theorists

Kropotkin, in contrast, emphasizes that evolution is based primarily on pro-social mutual aid, rather than anti-social competition.³⁰ Kropotkin holds that natural selection operates at the level of species, with evolution being driven through the adaptation of pro-social traits. The struggle for survival occurs between a species and their environment, as opposed to between individual members of a species (as Darwin argued). Species that develop pro-social traits, Kropotkin argues, have a better chance of survival than those that do not, and therefore, human evolution is based on solidarity and cooperation rather than anti-social egoism. Kropotkin argues that humans are inherently social beings who develop increasingly complex pro-social traits. Kropotkin points out that humans, as social beings, possess a need to associate with others, as well as a love of society for society's sake (Kropotkin 1914, 54-5). Humans did not create society, Kropotkin holds, but rather society is the natural state of humankind (Morland 1997, 131). Kropotkin promotes the idea that the base nature of human beings consists of "communities working together to meet common ends" (Glassman 2000, 395).

In *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin illustrates how the account of human sociability he expounds in *Mutual Aid* will translate into a utopian society. The anarcho-communist revolution, he explains, will occur due to the effort of citizens, and will consist of a system of voluntary cooperation and free association based around the communal ownership of both the means and ends of production. Kropotkin claims that, due to the scientific advancements of modern time, goods needed for survival are already produced in excess amounts. Society, therefore, can be

such as T.H. Huxley (Miller 1983, 330). At the end of the nineteenth century, such Hobbesian interpretations of Darwin's work were, Kropotkin argued, used to support the promulgation of laissez-faire capitalism (Morris 2004, 134). Hobbesian views of Darwin's work "were interpreted as ethical principles to sanction 'cut-throat' economic competition, social inequalities, and a rampant individualism" (Morris 2004, 134).

³⁰ Kropotkin does not claim that mutual aid is the only factor in evolution. Although competition is a factor of evolution in addition to mutual aid, mutual aid is held to be a more important driving force in the evolution of a species (Morris 2004, 137).

arranged so that each person is only required to work approximately five hours a day to contribute to the creation of goods necessary to secure the well-being of every member of society. In this society, goods will be distributed freely based on the principle “from each according to his means, to each according to his needs” (Morris 2004, 46).

In promoting the strong motivational force of the trait of mutual aid, Kropotkin does not claim that human beings are inherently peaceful. Kropotkin, in fact, highlights several anti-social traits which lead to conflict between individuals. One of such traits is the will to acquire power, which leads individuals to seek to dominate each other (Morland 1997, 150-1). It is this desire for power which leads Kropotkin to reject all forms of governance. In the organization of society in *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin emphasizes that all decisions must be arrived at collectively, as the creation of boards, committees, or “any form of officialism” breeds anti-social egoism in individuals (Kropotkin 1926, 78). Furthermore, Kropotkin identifies that a small minority of individuals are irrevocably anti-social. “There are individuals in our societies”, he states, “whom no great crisis can lift out of the deep mire of [anti-social] egoism in which they are sunk” (Kropotkin 1926, 78).

As Kropotkin explains, “when all is said and done, some inequalities, some inevitable injustices, undoubtedly will remain...The question, however, is not whether there will be injustices or no, but rather how to limit the number of them” (Kropotkin 1926, 78). Kropotkin promotes organizing society in a manner which operates according to, and nurtures, agent’s pro-social traits. While Kropotkin holds that human beings possess certain anti-social traits, he holds that an anarcho-communist society will not be undermined by them. Such a society will be ordered so as to minimize anti-social tendencies, and if they are not eliminated completely (which Kropotkin states is the case due to the irrevocably anti-social nature of certain

individuals), the efforts of anti-social egoists will be thwarted by the actions of the majority of individuals acting on their pro-social traits (Kropotkin 1926, 86).

Kropotkin believes that society is more easily and more effectively organized through voluntary agreements than through state governance, and thus, the state is unnecessary and harmful (Kropotkin 1926, 29). This belief indicates an important aspect of his account of sociability, which is the emphasis on the strong motivational force of the pro-social trait of cooperation. Individuals acting voluntarily, he holds, will organize and execute the anarcho-communist revolution that humankind is inevitably tended towards. Furthermore, the voluntary agreements made within the anarcho-communist society, once it is established, will be more easily created, and more effective, than any created through state governance.

One question which may arise, however, addresses the scope of the trait of cooperation. Kropotkin indicates that in the anarcho-communist revolution, societies will move away from large unified states towards the creation of small independent territorial units (Kropotkin 1926, 29). As Kropotkin explains, once the anarcho-communist revolution occurs, “[t]he independence of each small territorial unit becomes a pressing need; mutual agreement replaces law in order to regulate individual interests in view of a common object—very often disregarding the frontiers of the present States” (Kropotkin 1926, 29). It can be assumed, therefore, that Kropotkin believes that cooperation can only occur in a limited context. Kropotkin does not state that in the anarcho-communist revolution the size of the original community (that which existed under the state) will remain the same, with the only difference being that it is organized through voluntary cooperation rather than state governance. This omission by Kropotkin indicates his belief that once society becomes dependent on voluntary association/cooperation, it must divide into smaller communities. Human pro-socialness, it seems, is bounded insofar as successful

interaction will not freely occur in societies which exceed a certain size. This ambiguity in Kropotkin's account will be explored in greater detail in the following section of the chapter.

Two key pro-social traits present in Kropotkin's account of sociability are acceptance and toleration. Kropotkin's account seemingly involves the acceptance and toleration of anti-social traits in others. When discussing the problem of free-riders in society, Kropotkin suggests that such agents will be tolerated. Free-riders will suffer in their personal relationships with others, he holds, but will not necessarily be excluded from the community (Kropotkin 1926, 146-7). That such individuals are tolerated within a society identifies an interesting aspect of Kropotkin's account, which is the willingness to engage in social life with agents who act on their anti-social traits. Such toleration illuminates a corresponding aspect of sociability, which is the acceptance of agents as they are. That agents who act anti-socially are tolerated indicates that sociability, within Kropotkin's account, involves willing interaction with agents however they may be constituted (either anti-socially or pro-socially). A discussion regarding the plausibility of Kropotkin's view of free-riders will be presented in the following section of the chapter.

It is clear, at this point, that Kropotkin promotes the generic account of sociability, with the additional secondary claim regarding the size of societies in relation to the motivational strengths of pro-social/anti-social traits. In the generic account promoted by Kropotkin, emphasis is placed on the pro-social traits he holds as fundamentally constituting the nature of human sociability. Kropotkin's theory of political anarchism in the form of anarcho-communism, therefore, supports the sociability hypothesis, as it is based on an account of sociability. Kropotkin's theory, furthermore, successfully fulfills the first stage of justification, as it meets all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, Kropotkin acknowledges his reliance on sociability assumptions in supporting the unjustifiability of the existence of the state, as he explicitly

explains that the state is unnecessary and harmful based on the nature of sociability as he posits it. Secondly, Kropotkin adequately defends such assumptions by providing a thorough and explicit description of human sociability as predominantly pro-social. Finally, Kropotkin consistently applies his sociability assumptions when promoting his argument regarding the unjustifiability of the existence of the state, as he provides a detailed explanation regarding why and how the state is unnecessary and harmful in relation to his account of sociability, and furthermore promotes his theory of anarcho-communism as an example of a form of social organization which is appropriately modelled in relation to his account.

Ambiguity in Kropotkin's Account of Sociability

Ambiguity in Kropotkin's Account: Boundedness of Pro-Socialness

A significant ambiguity present within Kropotkin's account of sociability pertains to his characterization of sociability in relation to societies of different sizes. Kropotkin claims that once the anarcho-communist revolution occurs, societies will revert from large-scale communities into small, independent units. He explicitly states that this will not only occur, but that it will, in fact, become a highly important task. This unexplained claim, I argue, highlights an ambiguous aspect of Kropotkin's account of sociability, regarding how truly pro-social agents are held to be.

Uncertainty in Kropotkin's Theory: Unjustifiability of Political Governance

I will explore the aforementioned ambiguity in Kropotkin's account in comparison to Hume's account of sociability and theory of political governance. This method will aid in the exploration of the relevant ambiguity, as well as illustrate the similarities and differences that can be found

between accounts of sociability if they are evaluated in detail. It is clear, from the exposition of Kropotkin's account of sociability, that Kropotkin characterizes agents as primarily interacting successfully, and able to successfully regulate society themselves (i.e. without interference from external authority). Conversely, Hume's view holds that humans solely interact successfully with each other to a limited extent. The trait of sympathy (within Hume's account) facilitates successful interaction within small societies, however, once wealth is introduced, the trait of self-interest is augmented while the motivational strength of sympathy is diminished. With regard to the above claims, it is important to note a similarity within Kropotkin's and Hume's views. Kropotkin claims that agents successfully regulate interaction in society, however, once the anarcho-communist revolution (inevitably) occurs, societies will move away from large groups and form small independent units. The fact that Kropotkin makes this claim indicates that he may, in fact, hold human pro-socialness to be limited in its application. Human pro-socialness according to Kropotkin, seems to be bounded, insofar as successful interaction will not freely occur in societies which exceed a certain size.

Kropotkin's view on this question is difficult to pin down. It is possible that he holds that anarcho-communist societies would revert to small groupings for pragmatic reasons. He states, for example, that once the anarcho-communist revolution occurs, international trade will cease. Cities and territories will consequently be forced to produce necessary goods themselves (Kropotkin 1926, 188), he holds, as "his economic ideas depend very largely on local self-sufficiency" (Miller 1983, 335). "The society that would emerge", Miller explains, "would be highly decentralized. Its two basic components would be productive associations, each run collectively by its own members, and local communes, responsible for meeting the needs of everyone in a certain geographical area (a town or rural district, say). Units of both kinds might

federate for purposes which could not be accomplished fully at the local level” (Miller 1983, 324). This idea promoted in Kropotkin’s work, however, does not explain his claim that societies will revert to small units when the anarcho-communist revolution occurs, as he claims that, within such circumstances, economic self-sufficiency will occur in all cities or territories regardless of their size (Kropotkin 1926, 187).

The ambiguity in Kropotkin’s account is further supported through Miller’s explanation regarding the nature of mutual aid which Kropotkin posits. The practices of mutual aid which Kropotkin holds agents as engaging in “only show...that some degree of behavioural altruism has instinctual origins. [They do] not show that altruism tends to increase as we move along the evolutionary scale, which was the stronger point that Kropotkin wanted to establish...[T]he story he tells about human social development is certainly not one of steadily increasing quantities of altruism; mutual aid practices become wider and more numerous, but also weaker” (Miller 1983, 337). I argue, therefore, that Kropotkin, in stating that societies would revert to small units, makes an underlying claim regarding the limits of his account of sociability. If Kropotkin holds that human pro-socialness can solely extend to a limited range of people, this would entail that once societies grow to a certain size, interaction between agents is potentially constituted by conflict.

Kropotkin makes two claims regarding sociability: 1) that humans possess pro-social traits and a pro-social sense of justice which facilitate successful interaction, and 2) that anarcho-communist societies will revert to small units. The ambiguity between these two claims is perplexing. Humans, on his account, must be either entirely pro-social beings by virtue of their *sociability proper* (which would allow successful interaction to occur within any circumstances, with anti-social traits being infrequently acted on and inconsequential to successful interaction in

society), or humans are only partially pro-social insofar as their sense of justice and pro-social traits solely extend to a limited number of agents. If the latter is the case, this position would seem to undermine Kropotkin's vision of the anarcho-communist society which he claims will inevitably arise. The latter case is plausible in regard to the pro-social traits which humans are held to possess,³¹ however, that the sense of justice would lose strength as societies grow in size, is impossible. The sense of justice promoted within Kropotkin's account, it can be assumed, successfully extends to an unlimited range of agents (i.e. operates successfully within societies of any size) due to the fact that it is based on agents' logic in identifying the rights of others as equal to their own. Disassociation between agents (as societies grow in size) would not work to undermine this logic, and therefore, if Kropotkin holds that agents' pro-socialness solely extends to a limited range of individuals, it must necessarily be caused by a change in the motivational forces of traits of sociability.

If Kropotkin does view sociability as bounded, this aspect of his account is strikingly similar to Hume's. Both thinkers would then hold that agents possess pro-social traits and are able to interact successfully with each other without external constraints on their action, however, only within societies of a certain size. Both thinkers, it would appear, hold that once societies grow in size, the pro-social traits agents possess are insufficient to facilitate successful interaction. Hume argues that this problem is remedied through the natural introduction of the artifices of justice and government. Kropotkin, however, does not address the potential implications of his assumed claim, and it is therefore unknown how it would be addressed within his account. Kropotkin holds that the state is unhelpful and harmful, and it is therefore unclear

³¹ It is unclear, within Kropotkin's account, whether pro-social traits are held to diminish in motivational strength as societies grow in size, whether anti-social traits are held to gain motivational strength, or both.

how he would propose successful interaction be facilitated (if not through external coercive constraints on action). This uncertainty poses a challenge to Kropotkin's argument for the unjustifiability of the existence of the state, due to the fact that if external constraints are needed to facilitate successful interaction in certain circumstances, the state may be justifiable.

I suggest that this challenge can be overcome through a close evaluation of the sense of justice agents are held to possess within his account, which, it will be argued, is relatively analogous to the trait of sympathy within Hume's account. The aforementioned similarity between accounts, I hold, provides a potential solution to the ambiguity in Kropotkin's account resulting from his failure to address the issue of how large-scale societies can successfully exist. A question which may arise at this point is: if Kropotkin holds that societies will revert to small units, and thus promotes the idea that sociability is bounded, why ought we to attempt to supply an explanation which would reconcile his account with the existence of large-scale societies? I argue that such an exploration is necessary in order to evaluate the limits of Kropotkin's account of sociability, and thus, explore the extent of its implications on the justifiability of political governance.

Hume's trait of sympathy, as has been previously explained, successfully regulates interaction within small societies through agents' identification and reproduction of others' emotions within themselves. Once societies grow in size, however, the trait of sympathy loses motivational strength. The artifice of the virtue of justice is thus introduced (which is then replaced by the state) through the trait of self-interest in order to facilitate successful interaction. The natural obligation to the virtue of justice (based on self-interest) is then transformed into a moral obligation as a result of the human trait of sympathy. The moral obligation to the virtue of justice is created through agents' recognition that adherence to the virtue promotes pleasure in

agents, and violations cause pain. The moral obligation results in stronger adherence to the virtue, as it demands adherence for more important reasons than individual utility.³² Thus, it is plausible, I argue, to assume that agents possess an understanding regarding what individuals are owed as human beings based on the demands of justice, which motivates adherence to the moral obligation to the virtue of justice. I argue that this understanding of the trait of sympathy can inform the ambiguity posited in Kropotkin's account, insofar as it can be held to be relatively analogous to the sense of justice. Thus, the sense of justice can be held to possess the same role as sympathy in the facilitation of successful interaction.

I hold the trait of sympathy and the sense of justice to be relatively analogous due to the fact that both traits facilitate successful interaction between agents in society. Hume states that once society grows to a certain size, however, sympathy is no longer sufficient to facilitate successful interaction. I have argued that Hume mischaracterizes the trait of sympathy, and thus, misconstrues the extent to which it would facilitate successful interaction between agents. I argue that the trait of sympathy must necessarily include a component of understanding, based on reason, as to what agents are owed as equal individuals, and thus, that the trait of sympathy ought to be understood as being able to facilitate successful interaction between an infinite number of agents, regardless of the disassociation between them.

³² The claim stating that the reasons which create the moral obligation are more important than those which create the natural obligation (well-being of others versus individual utility) is an extrapolation I have generated in response to Hume's characterization of the virtue of justice. I assume that Hume, in stating that the moral obligation results in more strict adherence to the virtue of justice, implicitly makes a claim supporting that the well-being of others is a consideration which possesses strong motivational drive in agents not solely because they will suffer if violations occur (by sharing in the pain caused in others through sympathy), but that agents develop an understanding regarding what other agents are owed according to justice as human beings equal to themselves. This idea was discussed in detail in the section of the chapter addressing complexity/ambiguity present in Hume's account of sociability.

I argue that it is imperative that the aspects of logic included within the sense of justice be highlighted in a similar manner as the aspects of reason (I infer) within the trait of sympathy. Kropotkin states that agents naturally tend towards viewing the rights of others as equal to their own, and thus, it is puzzling why he would hold that the sense of justice does not facilitate successful interaction in societies of any size. Even if agents' pro-social traits are held to diminish in motivational force (or agents' anti-social traits are held to gain motivational force, or both) as societies grow in size, the sense of justice ought to remedy this problematic state of affairs through the motivational influence it exerts in agents through logical reasoning. Even if, for example, the motivational forces of agents' pro-social traits diminish as societies grow in size, the logical reasoning within the sense of justice, in regard to what agents are owed based on their equal human dignity, ought to transcend the motivational forces that anti-social traits possess in such circumstances. Thus, agents could be held, according to this understanding of the sense of justice, to be able to engage in successful interaction in societies of any size. The above speculation regarding how Kropotkin can overcome the ambiguity in his theory regarding agents' pro-socialness in relation to different sizes of societies is, additionally, compatible with Kropotkin's anarchist beliefs, as the sense of justice is not introduced or enforced by external coercive forces, but rather, is a natural component of human sociability.

Thus, Kropotkin's claim regarding the predominantly pro-social nature of human beings can be upheld by implementing the re-characterized understanding of the sense of justice, as the pro-socialness of agents would not be limited to certain circumstances. Kropotkin's argument regarding the unjustifiability of political governance, therefore, can be held to be justifiable, as successful interaction can be interpreted as occurring freely in any circumstances (i.e. not solely in small, independent units).

In conclusion, it is clear that once Kropotkin's claim regarding the regression of anarcho-communist societies from large societies into small units is evaluated, the implications of its underlying assumption regarding the boundedness of sociability becomes analogous to aspects of Hume's account of sociability. However, both accounts, I hold, mischaracterize the nature of important pro-social traits of sociability, specifically, sympathy and the sense of justice. I argue that both these traits ought to be interpreted/recognized as comprising components based in reason, and thus, applicable to an infinite number of agents. Thus, both theories, upon extrapolation, can be held to promote accounts of sociability which hold that successful interaction can occur freely between agents within societies of any size (and that political governance is, thus, unjustifiable). Kropotkin's theory, therefore, continues to be posited as successfully fulfilling the first stage of justification, as his argument regarding the unjustifiability of political governance coheres with the account of sociability he promotes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the accounts of sociability promoted by Hume and Kropotkin illustrate the manner in which such accounts underlie theories of political governance, and how such theories can appropriately address, and be modelled in accordance with, the relevant accounts. The aforementioned theories are interesting to evaluate as they promote accounts of sociability with relatively similar assumptions, however, they draw differing conclusions regarding the justifiability of political governance. Both thinkers promote the generic account of sociability, emphasizing the pro-social traits which agents possess, with the additional secondary stipulation regarding the size of societies in relation to the motivational strengths of pro-social/anti-social traits. However, as has been illustrated, it is of fundamental importance to carefully evaluate

accounts of sociability, as complexity and ambiguity can be found even within those which are seriously and thoroughly composed, which may have serious implications for the justifiability of political governance. As has been illustrated in the evaluations of both Hume's and Kropotkin's accounts of sociability, while they may, at first, appear to align with the generic account, it provides solely a skeletal outline of the complexity and variance which exist in such accounts, which is imperative to be taken into account when evaluating justifications of political governance.

In the following chapter, I will evaluate the theories of political governance put forward by Thomas Hobbes and Max Stirner. Both thinkers rest their theories on accounts of sociability which (initially appear to) hold humans to possess predominantly anti-social traits. The project in the third chapter is analogous to the project in this chapter, insofar as it is aimed at illustrating the important role that accounts of sociability play in theories of political governance, and additionally, to illuminate how the justification of political governance within such theories can be undermined by complexity/ambiguity present in the relevant accounts.

Chapter 3:

Anti-Social Theories and the Justifiability of the State: Hobbes and Stirner

In the first chapter I argued that theories of political governance are based on assumptions regarding human sociability - specifically, the balance of pro-social and anti-social motivations, and hence the preconditions of successful cooperation. I argue that justifications of such theories, therefore, ought to depend, in the first stage, on such assumptions. In the second chapter, I evaluated theories of political governance promoted by two thinkers (Hume and Kropotkin) who emphasized agents' pro-social motivations. In the present chapter, I will evaluate theories of political governance promoted by two thinkers (Thomas Hobbes and Max Stirner) who emphasize agents' anti-social motivations. Analogous to the second chapter, my aim is both exegetical and critical: I will illustrate how such theories invoke assumptions of sociability, but also how the links that are drawn between sociability and the state contain ambiguities and tensions. As will be illuminated, for theories which promote the anti-socialness of agents, as with those which promote the pro-socialness, the link between sociability and justification of the state is both essential but also elusive.

Hobbes's Account of Sociability & Theory of Political Governance

In his work *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes puts forward his account of human sociability, which is generally interpreted as portraying agents as being predominantly anti-social. The anti-socialness of agents, posited within Hobbes's account, underpins his argument regarding the justifiability of

the existence of the state, specifically, an authoritarian state.³³ As will be argued, however, Hobbes's assumptions regarding sociability are more complex/ambiguous than the general conception of agents as predominantly anti-social, and thus, the justifiability of his justification of an authoritarian state will become uncertain. The following section of the chapter will present information from Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which is helpful in illuminating aspects of his account of human sociability and theory of political governance.

Hobbes promotes a consent/contract theory of political governance insofar as he holds the consent of agents to be necessary for political governance to be justifiable. Hobbes's theory posits that agents, situated within the state of nature,³⁴ would make covenants with each other to transfer a certain number of their rights to an appointed agent in order to create the Commonwealth (which I will label, for the purpose of the chapter, the state). The state will possess overarching power within the relevant society, using such power to preserve peace and defend the agents therein (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). The nature of how and why such a form of governance is, and ought to be, created, within Hobbes's theory, will be explained through an analysis of Hobbes's characterization of human beings.

Hobbes explains that a "generall inclination of all mankind [is] a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death" (Hobbes 1651, ch.11). Power is desired in order to ensure that an agent is able to continually secure necessary goods to ensure their self-preservation, which is a fundamental desire of human life (Griswold 1989, 24). Such a desire for

³³ Hobbes's justification of an authoritarian state from anti-social premises can be seen as the converse of Kropotkin's argument for the unjustifiability of the state based on agents' pro-socialness.

³⁴ It is important to note that Hobbes's "state of nature" (i.e. conditions in which there is no state rule) is not to be interpreted as a historical account of how humans lived before the introduction of the state (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). Although the state of nature is described as "the natural conditions of mankind", it is used by Hobbes as a theoretical device in order to evaluate the hypothetical consequences of human interaction within such conditions (Martinich 2005, 63).

power is driven by the equality of agents, which prevents assurance that one will be able to attain/defend their desired ends when the same ends are desired by others.

Hobbes characterizes human beings as (roughly) equal in mental and physical capacities (Hobbes 1651, ch.13), consequently possessing equal ability to attain their desired ends. As all agents possess such equal ability, competition over the attainment of non-divisible goods will ensue. Agents will endeavour to “destroy, or subdue” (Hobbes 1651, ch.13) each other in their striving to attain ends, as the only way that one can ensure success is through the possession of more power than others. Thus, equality facilitates diffidence among agents insofar as the attainment of ends is never secure (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). Agents, in the state of nature, attempt to gain power in order to ensure success in self-preservation, with the actions of all agents doing so consequently creating an environment of widespread competition (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). Agents, furthermore, are held to possess high esteem for themselves, which they expect others to acknowledge and respect (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). As there is no overarching power in the state of nature, however, to ensure that agents respect each other in the manner they feel they are deserving, an agent who perceives that they are being disrespected/undervalued will work to extract redress by force, and attempt to ensure that it will not occur again through such an example (Hobbes 1651, ch.13).

Thus, the state of nature, within Hobbes’s theory, is one of war, with “three principall causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory” (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). As Hobbes explains, “the first maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation” (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). The state of nature is a state of war not because there is, in fact, constant violence ensuing, but rather because it lacks the security that agents will receive necessary goods and honour. Thus, agents’ “Will to contend by Battell” (Hobbes 1651,

ch.13) for such goods is prevalently acknowledged. In the state of nature, Hobbes explains, there is “continually feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes 1651, ch.13).

In such conditions of war, Hobbes explains, “nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law; where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinall vertues” (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). The “RIGHT OF NATURE”, Hobbes explains, “...is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14). The state of nature, therefore, is a “condition of unrestricted liberty” (Martinich 2005, 79) wherein agents possess the right to “preserve themselves” (Tuck 1996, 188) through whichever means they judge to be most effective, including the appropriation of any object, even others’ bodies (Hobbes 1651, ch.14).

The first law of nature within Hobbes’s theory is derived from the lack of security which is facilitated by all agents’ possession of the right of nature. A “LAW OF NATURE”, Hobbes explains, “...is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14). The first law of nature, therefore, is “That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14). Hobbes explains that the laws of nature dictate peace and facilitate successful interaction among “men in multitudes” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), and therefore, apply properly to civil society. Several of the laws of nature will be identified below, as they

provide interesting insights regarding the requirements which Hobbes holds to be necessary for successful interaction to occur in society.

The second law of nature is “That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14). Hobbes explains that “as long as every man holdeth this Right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of Warre” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14). The third law of nature, is “That Men Performe Their Covenants Made; without which, covenants are in vain, and but Empty words; and the right of all men to all things remaining, wee are still in the condition of Warre” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). The fourth law of nature dictates “That a man which receiveth Benefit from another of meer Grace, Endeavour that he which giveth it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). If such is not the case, Hobbes explains, “there will be no beginning of benevolence, or trust; nor consequently of mutuall help; nor of reconciliation of one man to another; and therefore they are to remain still in the condition of War” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15) The fifth law of nature is “compleasance” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15) (in other words, “cooperativeness” (Martinich 2005, 99)), which dictates “That every man strive to accommodate himselfe to the rest” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). It is noteworthy to illuminate that Hobbes classifies “[t]he observers of this Law...[as] SOCIABLE...[and] the contrary, Stubborn, Insociable, Froward, Intractable” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). Although Hobbes presents many further laws of nature, which dictate precepts such as practicing forgiveness (sixth law) (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), not showing hate towards others (eighth law) (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), acknowledging the equality of others (ninth law) (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), and sharing indivisible goods equally (twelfth law) (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), the above overview of the initial five laws

will suffice for the purpose of the chapter. Finally, it is important to note that Hobbes holds that all of the laws of nature are engaged in for the purpose of preserving one's own self-interest (i.e. one's life) (Hobbes 1651, ch.15).

Agents seek to escape the state of nature due to the fear they possess regarding their self-preservation within such conditions (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). The solution to this predicament is found in the laws of nature (Martinich 2005, 105), however, agents are unwilling to freely abide by them. "For the Lawes of Nature", Hobbes illuminates, "(as Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy, and (in summe) Doing To Others, As Wee Would Be Done To,) if themselves, without the terrour of some Power to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like" (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). Furthermore, covenants, Hobbes explains, "without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all" (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). In order for agents to escape the state of nature, therefore, it is necessary that an overarching power be created which can hold agents "in awe, and tye them by feare of punishment to the performance of their Covenants, and observation of [the] Lawes of Nature" (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). Hobbes eloquently explains the solution to the predicament of the state of nature:

[t]he only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend [agents] from the invasion of Forraigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their owne industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements to his Judgment. This is more than Consent, or Concord; it is a reall Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person, made by Covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man 'I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to

this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner'. This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH. (Hobbes 1651, ch.17)

As the state is created through covenants between agents, the moral obligation to obey the state is owed to one's fellow citizens (while the content of one's obligation is owed to the state). Hobbes explains that states can come into existence two ways: through institution (i.e. when agents covenant with each other to create the state), or through acquisition (i.e. when a state demands obligation through force)³⁵ (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). It is interesting to note that both forms of states are created through the motivating passion of fear. "The only difference between the two kinds of sovereignty", A.P. Martinich explains, "concerns the historical origin or contingent facts about the circumstances that caused people to create the sovereign: the covenant that creates a sovereign by institution is caused by the mutual fear each covenanter has towards his fellow covenanters, while the covenant that creates a sovereignty by acquisition is caused by the fear the covenanter has of the person he makes sovereign" (Martinich 2005, 126). In the present discussion of Hobbes I will equate the passion of fear with the trait of self-interest (and use these terms interchangeably).

It is important to highlight several features of the state which Hobbes holds as necessary for success in its task of facilitating the safety of citizens. The first, which is held to be the most important, is absoluteness (Martinich 2005, 128). The state must control, Hobbes explains, all political power, and possess the authority to control all facets of citizens' lives (Martinich 2005, 129). Such absolute control is necessary in order to ensure that agents abide by their covenants to

³⁵ In my discussion of Hobbes's account of sociability and theory of political governance, I will solely be addressing states which are created through institution, as this form of governance illustrates important aspects of Hobbes's account of sociability (specifically, agents' cooperativeness).

relinquish their right to govern themselves, as “the bonds of words are too weak to bridle mens ambition, avarice, anger, and other Passions, without the feare of some coercive Power” (Hobbes 1651, ch.14) The state must also possess authority over which opinions and doctrines are conducive to peace, and are thus permissible in the state (Hobbes 1651, ch.18), as well as which goods and actions agents are permitted to enjoy (Hobbes 1651, ch.18). Such constraints are held to be necessary due to the selfishness and biases that agents possess. Furthermore, the state must possess permanence, insofar as its power cannot be taken away or forfeited (Martinich 2005, 129). For if the state were to ever dissolve, Hobbes explains, agents would inevitably, “by the difference of their interests...fall again into a Warre amongst themselves” (Hobbes 1651, ch.17). Additionally, due to the aforementioned tendencies humans are held to possess, the state must be the judge in all disputes between citizens (Martinich 2005, 129).

A final feature of the state which is noteworthy to illuminate, is that it ought to control the riches and honours allocated to agents (Hobbes 1651, ch.18). As Hobbes explains, “considering what values men are naturally apt to set upon themselves; what respect they look for from others; and how little they value other men...It is necessary that there be Lawes of Honour, and a publique rate of the worth of such men as have deserved, or are able to deserve well of the Common-wealth; and that there be force in the hands of some or other, to put those Lawes in execution” (Hobbes 1651, ch.18). Hobbes makes clear that agents are highly influenced by their perceived opinions of themselves (and the honour they believe they are consequently due) in relation to others’ opinions, by stating that glory-seeking is one of the principal causes of quarrel in the state of nature (Hobbes 1651, ch.13). The eighth law of nature forbids “all signs of hatred, or contempt” (Hobbes 1651, ch.15), for such acts would inevitable lead to conflict due to the fact that “most men [would] choose rather to hazard their life, than not to be revenged”

(Hobbes 1651, ch.15).

The above necessary characteristics of the state pertain to Hobbes's account of human sociability as being, predominately, anti-social. Agents are described as being selfishly motivated, insofar as they solely covenant with each other to create the state through concern for their own safety. It is Hobbes's emphasis on such self-interest which leads to the depiction of his account as predominantly anti-social, with the trait of self-interest motivating agents' actions within the state of nature as well as under the rule of the state. The only pro-social trait which can be attributed to agents, it initially appears, is the capacity for cooperation, as Hobbes holds that agents are able to successfully covenant with others to create the state. However, that such a pro-social trait seems to be posited in Hobbes's account does not lead to the conclusion that it possesses strong motivational force in interaction. Hobbes seems to imply, in fact, that the aforementioned trait does not possess strong motivational force, as agents are only induced to cooperate through self-interest, and it appears to occur successfully only once it is facilitated by the state. The capacity for cooperation, therefore, appears to be a trait which simply exists in humans, as do the relevant anti-social traits, which, however, is not held to possess strong motivational force in interaction (i.e. agents do not possess an inclination to cooperate for its own sake).³⁶

Hobbes's theory clearly supports the sociability hypothesis. He clearly rests his theory on

³⁶ It is relevant to note the distinction between Hobbes's characterization of the trait of cooperation and Hume's and Kropotkin's. Hobbes characterizes the trait of cooperation as a capacity which does not possess any motivational influence. Agents do not possess an inclination to cooperate, and it only occurs as a result of the execution of the trait of self-interest (a trait which does possess strong motivational influence). By contrast, Hume and Kropotkin hold the trait of cooperation to be a capacity which possesses the additional element of strong motivational force. Agents, in Hume's and Kropotkin's accounts, possess a clear disposition towards cooperation, insofar as they freely seek it out. Thus, although Hobbes, Hume, and Kropotkin all hold that agents possess the pro-social trait of cooperation, the manner in which the trait is characterized, and its consequential influence on interaction, differs greatly.

an account of human sociability, holding agents to be primarily motivated by the trait of self-interest. As agents are conceived as additionally possessing the ability to engage in successful cooperation, however, Hobbes's account implicitly promotes agents as possessing both pro-social and anti-social traits (regardless of how (seemingly) imbalanced the motivational forces of such traits are in interaction). As such, Hobbes promotes the generic account of sociability. He also gives appropriate recognition to the role that sociability plays in his theory, as he explicitly justifies the existence of the state through appeal to the nature of human sociability. Hobbes, furthermore, defends his sociability assumptions by explaining, in detail, the trait of self-interest as it exists in the state of nature as well as within the state. Finally, Hobbes consistently applies his sociability assumptions, as the form of political governance he promotes is appropriately modelled in relation to the relevant account (with aspects of the state being designed to mitigate conflict caused by traits of sociability (i.e. the state must be absolute, eternal, etc.)). In all of these respects, Hobbes can be seen as a paradigmatic example of how theories of political governance rest on assumptions about sociability.

However, the next section will explore certain complexities and ambiguities within Hobbes's account of sociability. It will be shown that Hobbes's view of sociability in fact appeals to certain pro-social traits, which may alter the way that human interaction can be posited to occur. And this in turn puts in question the justifiability of the strict authoritarian state which Hobbes promotes.

Complexity/Ambiguity in Hobbes's Account of Sociability

The principal complexity within Hobbes's account of sociability pertains to the number of pro-social and anti-social traits agents are held to possess, as well as their motivational force. While

Hobbes explicitly promotes a picture of human beings as being predominately driven by self-interest, this trait can be characterized as either pro-social or anti-social depending on the consequences which result from it. Hobbes, furthermore, acknowledges the existence of multiple pro-social traits which agents are held to possess. The pro-social nature of self-interest, as well as the additional pro-social traits identified in Hobbes's account, play an important if unacknowledged role in Hobbes' theory, which calls into question his justification of a strict authoritarian state.

Hobbes's Account of Sociability as Anti-Social

Hobbes is typically interpreted as promoting a conception of human nature which emphasizes agents' anti-socialness. He is interpreted as "hold[ing] a view of human beings as creatures who will, if unchecked, inevitably behave violently toward one another...Hobbes uses this conception of human beings to argue that we are creatures who can live in peace only if we subject ourselves to an absolute sovereign" (Hampton 1986, 5). Hobbes holds that the state is necessary for agents to live in safety, "[f]or if we could suppose", he explains, "a great Multitude of men to consent in the observation of Justice, and other Lawes of Nature, without a common Power to keep them all in awe, we might as well suppose all Man-kind to do the same; and then there neither would be nor need to be any Civill Government, or Common-wealth at all; because there would be Peace without subjection" (Hobbes 1651, ch.17).

The anti-social interpretation of Hobbes's account of sociability is based on several factors, one of which is the radical individualism he is held to promote. Such individualism "regards individual human beings as conceptually prior not only to political society but also to *all* social interactions...[, with] human beings [being interpreted as] individuals first and social

creatures second” (Hampton 1986, 6-7). Such individualism leads him to espouse an idea of the family which is strikingly similar to Stirner’s, as we will see in the next section of the chapter, holding that “family bonds are not natural to individuals but only artificially forged and coerced contracts” (Hampton 1986, 10).

Hobbes’s radical individualism is connected with his materialist conception of human beings (Hampton 1986, 11), which provides further support for anti-social interpretations of his account of sociability. The materialist conception holds agents as “organisms with a certain physiological structure, [possessing] certain desires or aversions...intrinsically in virtue of how their bodies function” (Hampton 1986, 13). Hobbes promotes humans’ intrinsic desire for self-preservation as the most important, as “we are naturally averse to anything that hinders our internal vital motions, above all, death, insofar as it is the complete cessation of vital motion” (Hampton 1986, 14-5). Jean Hampton points out, however, that it is “important to be clear on the fact that although all people pursue self-preservation, they do not all desire the same object. Each person wants his own self-preservation above all else, not the self-preservation of everyone. And because each person has a different object of desire, conflicts between people as they pursue these different goals are, in Hobbes’s eyes, inevitable” (Hampton 1986, 15).

Conflict, within Hobbes’s account, arises by virtue of agents’ rational self-interested pursuit of their well-being, which Hampton labels as the rationality account of conflict. As all agents possess the same motivating drive, equal ability, and the right of nature, they will engage in war in order to acquire the necessary goods for their preservation, as well as in preemptive defence against others (Hampton 1986, 59). Hampton explains the rationality account of conflict in the state of nature using the game-theoretic tool of the prisoner’s dilemma matrix (Hampton 1986, 61). Hampton provides an example of agents in the state of nature who possess a certain

number of goods but are desirous of the goods of others. The relevant agents have the options of attempting to steal the other agents' goods or to refrain from doing so. The aforementioned choices result in several possible outcomes: either both attempt to steal the goods from each other, both refrain from doing so, or one agent attempts to steal goods while the other does not. If both agents choose to attempt to steal the goods, both parties suffer as their self-preservation is put in jeopardy. If an agent does not engage in such an attempt, however, they will not reap any reward of stolen goods, and are in jeopardy of having their own goods stolen. The preference for both agents, therefore, is that they attempt to steal the goods while the other refrains from doing so. As neither agent knows which decision the other will make, it is rational for both agents to always choose to attempt to steal the goods. This choice, Hampton explains, represents agents' rational pursuit of self-preservation, and is the reason that the state of nature would be a war of all against all.³⁷ The rationality account of conflict is further supplemented by the pursuit of glory, which is held to additionally contribute to conflict (Hampton 1986, 61-3).

In addition to the rational pursuit of self-preservation, Hobbes cites the desire for glory (and vainglory) as a trait which leads to conflict. It is important to note that the desire for glory is held to be of secondary importance to that of self-preservation. The trait of glory-seeking is posited as a "desire for personal advancement that is somehow biologically intrinsic and that is so strong in us that when we cannot see it satisfied by the reality of our own powers and abilities in the world, we lie to ourselves and inflate those powers and abilities" (Hampton 1986, 14). Hobbes posits that two forms of glory-seeking exist: one which is "healthy", pertaining to the reality of one's ability to obtain their desired ends, and one which is "unhealthy", "vainglory-

³⁷ Hampton provides several reasons why the rationality account of conflict may be erroneous. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, my focus is not the truth of this account, but whether it accurately captures Hobbes' overall view of sociability.

seeking”, which pertains to one’s idea of their powers in relation to others’ conceptions (Hampton 1986, 14).

The desire for glory can be interpreted as rational in regard to its relevance in ensuring self-preservation. The desire for vainglory, however, pertains to “appreciation and praise [which] is clearly a different motivating power than the passion for self-preservation. A person who seeks [vain]glory is not seeking an object that directly satisfies his present or future survival needs. Indeed, this search may conflict with his desire to preserve himself” (Hampton 1986, 61). Thus, the desire for vainglory is understood to be an irrational passion, which leads to conflict between individuals and produces no benefits. Hobbes cites the desire for vainglory as a trait which differentiates human beings from naturally pro-social animals, which consequently leads to the requirement of political governance to be introduced in human societies for successful interaction is to occur. As he explains, “men are continually in competition for Honour and Dignity,...and consequently...there ariseth on that ground, Envy and Hatred, and finally Warre” (Hobbes 1651, ch.17).

Complexity in Hobbes’s Account: Generic Account of Sociability

While Hobbes is generally understood as presenting a picture of human beings as predominantly anti-social by virtue of their pursuit of self-preservation and glory/vainglory, and thus unable to successfully order society without intervention from the state, this may in fact be an inaccurate portrayal of human sociability as it is posited in his theory. Such a portrayal of Hobbes’s account is erroneous on two grounds: first, the trait of self-interest can be construed as either a pro-social or anti-social trait; second, Hobbes posits agents to possess more pro-social traits than is generally recognized.

Firstly, it is important to note that fear (or as I label it, self-interest), is a trait which can lead to successful cooperation (Gert 1996, 162), and thus, in specific circumstances, can be labelled as pro-social. Although, in Hobbes's account, the aforementioned trait is motivated by individuals' concern for themselves, one of the consequences of the trait is successful cooperation in covenanting to create the state. The trait of self-interest within Hobbes's account is misconstrued both by Hobbes and the commentators who interpret his account as one which emphasizes agents' anti-socialness. Hobbes misconstrues self-interest insofar as he views the trait as one which predominantly leads to conflict within the state of nature, while failing to recognize that it is both a pro-social and anti-social trait. While self-interest, certainly, works to facilitate conflict among agents in the state of nature, it also works to facilitate their cooperation in creating the state to exit such circumstances. That agents do, in fact, act on self-interest in covenanting to create the state illustrates the motivational strength of the pro-social side of the trait. That agents seem to possess an underlying impulse to act on pro-social self-interest in the relevant circumstances presents evidence that the pro-social nature of self-interest is more motivationally forceful than its anti-social nature. If such were not the case (i.e. if the anti-social nature of self-interest was more motivationally forceful than its pro-social nature), agents would not be able to exit the state of nature (or, if the pro-social and anti-social natures of the trait were equal, agents' exit would be held to be possible, but not inevitable as Hobbes promotes is the case).

That self-interest is more pro-social than anti-social leads to important consequences regarding the cooperation which occurs under state rule. As Hobbes holds self-interest as primarily facilitating conflict rather than cooperation, the successful interaction which occurs under the rule of the state is posited as being a consequence of the state's authority. This is

arguably inaccurate, however, as it is agents who initially cooperate together, due to the trait of self-interest, in order to create the state. Successful interaction, therefore, begins by agents freely acting on pro-social self-interest. The further successful interaction which occurs within the state, therefore, ought to be primarily attributed to the agents who instituted the state. While the state does, certainly, augment self-interest through its authority, the power of societal control (in regard to the facilitation of successful interaction) ought to be properly viewed as predominantly lying with the agents who instituted the state, rather than the state itself.

Furthermore, regarding the misconstrual of the trait of self-interest within Hobbes's account, commentators have mistakenly equated self-interest with traits such as cruelty or malice. Although Hobbes does state that self-interest leads to conflict in the state of nature, he does not hold that such a trait implies that agents are cruel or have a passion/desire for conflict. As has been shown, Hobbes even seems to implicitly recognize that self-interest leads to cooperation in the institution of the state, however, fails to acknowledge the pro-socialness of the trait.

Secondly, although Hobbes appears to promote an account of sociability which holds agents as being predominantly motivated by anti-social self-interest, there are, within his work, many instances wherein he alludes to various pro-social traits (other than that of pro-social self-interest) which humans are held to possess. Some of the passions which I would argue are based on pro-social traits include: “[a]nger for great hurt done to another” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “BENEVOLENCE, GOOD WILL, CHARITY...[and] [i]f to man generally, GOOD NATURE” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “kindnesse [regarding love for all agents in order to aid society]” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “love [in relation to a singular individual, including the desire to be reciprocally loved]” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), and “pitty [in regard to the misfortunes of others,]...called also

COMPASSION...[or] FELLOW-FEELING” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6). Such passions derive from pro-social traits, generating feelings such as love, kindness, compassion, etc., among agents, and which work to facilitate successful interaction. Thus, Hobbes promotes a more complex account of sociability than is generally interpreted, promoting multiple pro-social traits which agents are held to possess.

Hobbes makes explicit that he posits fear as the primary trait of sociability present in interaction between agents, which is understood to lead to successful cooperation. What are some of the traits which would impede successful interaction, one may ask, which would uphold the characterization of Hobbes’s account as anti-social? Certain traits Hobbes describes which could work to do so include: a desire for glory (Hobbes 1651, ch.13), “covetousness” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “revengefulness” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “[c]ontempt, or little sense of the calamity of others,...which men call cruelty” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “envy” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), “ambition” (Hobbes 1651, ch.6), and “limited altruism” (Gert 1996, 168).

Hobbes may be interpreted as promoting a conception of human sociability which posits agents as possessing predominantly anti-social traits due to the manner in which he explains the origins of certain traits. In his work, traits which are generally interpreted as being properly directed towards others are seemingly turned into passions of self-love (Hampton 1986, 20). The content of such traits, however, does, in fact, relate to others. The self-interested appearance of such traits is produced by the origination of the passion in one’s own imagination, “specifically our imaginative idea of what it would be like if we were in an unfortunate person’s shoes. And this imaginative identification, which explains the origination of pity [for example], should not be taken for a characterization of the passion itself” (Hampton 1986, 21). The origin of such traits in one’s imagination parallels the function of the trait of sympathy in Hume’s account,

which, as was observed in chapter two, gives rise to pro-social traits. That other-regarding traits are misconstrued in Hobbes's account, and the fact that they are not discussed at length, results in commentators "consider[ing] Hobbes's views more 'pessimistic' than the views of those philosophers who, like Hume, are willing to grant far more power and scope to other-interested desires" (Hampton 1986, 22). However, although Hobbes's account is viewed as "more pessimistic" than others', it is not, in fact, "structurally different" (Hampton 1986, 22). In short, although it may not appear so, Hobbes can be interpreted as promoting an account of human sociability which holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits, in other words, the generic account.

Ambiguity in Hobbes's Account: Motivational Force of Pro-Social/Anti-Social Traits

Examining the traits of sociability which are posited in Hobbes's work suggests a conception of sociability which holds agents to possess a relatively equal number of pro-social and anti-social traits, with the strongest motivational force being attributed to self-interest. Hobbes extensively emphasizes the motivational strength of self-interest in regard to the necessity of the state and the method whereby it is instituted. However, apart from that of self-interest, the relative motivational strengths of pro-social and anti-social traits are not addressed in detail.

Hobbes is interpreted as attributing certain other-regarding passions to agents, however, his radical individualism is not undermined as such passions are held to be interactive (i.e. not intrinsic to human beings, but rather, created once agents enter into society). The motivational force of such passions is not held to be significant, "for how could they be powerful enough to compete with the intrinsic self-regarding desires that drive human beings *as a species*?" (Hampton 1986, 22) Thus, if self-interest is held to be a pro-social trait, and the motivational

strengths of the remaining traits of sociability are not addressed, the fact that Hobbes specifies self-interest as the primary motivating drive in human interaction leads me to pronounce that Hobbes's account of sociability is, in fact, one which emphasizes the pro-socialness of human beings.

It is important to note that Hobbes suggests that the desire for glory possesses the second-most motivating force in interaction. Thus, it is necessary that such a trait be addressed in the examination of the relative motivational forces of traits of sociability. The trait of glory-seeking (and vainglory-seeking), it is clear, is characterized as anti-social insofar as it facilitates conflict between individuals. However, it is interpreted to be interactive, "because glorying seems to presuppose a comparison of oneself with other human beings, which would make it a passion that could only develop in a social context" (Hampton 1986, 14). Thus, as glory-seeking is held to be the second-most powerful motivating force in interaction, but is held to be interactive, and thus not, in any respect, as powerful as the intrinsic trait of self-interest, Hobbes's account of sociability, I hold, remains one which advances the pro-socialness of human beings.

Hobbes stipulates that "no man giveth, but with intention of Good to himself; because Gift is Voluntary; and of all Voluntary Acts, the Object is to every man his own Good" (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). Such a statement potentially leads readers to infer that every agent solely acts to promote their own interests (Martinich 2005, 59). Such an inference is erroneous, however, as it "does not entail that each person desires only his own good, but only that the thing each person desires must include something that is good for himself" (Martinich 2005, 59). Hobbes explicitly highlights the self-interested nature of agents, however, this does not preclude the possibility that agents can act altruistically, even if they additionally derive benefits from such actions. As Martinich explains, Hobbes does not need to hold that agents are entirely anti-social in order to

postulate competition as emerging from the state of nature (Martinich 2005, 64). The state of war posited in the state of nature can come about “as long as human beings desire to live, the resources necessary for living are scarce and the population is dense enough to put people in contact with each other” (Martinich 2005, 64). Even in conditions of unlimited resources, the fact that certain agents may be “aggressive enough or stupid enough to want every [indivisible] object that someone else want[s]” (Martinich 2005, 65) would lead to conflict between agents through their attempts to ensure self-preservation. The key aspect to identify in the aforementioned passage, however, is that there may only be a certain number of agents who act non-cooperatively, sparking conflict between agents. Hobbes does not imply that all agents act in such a way, but rather, suggests that it solely takes a limited number of agents acting anti-socially to inspire fear in society.

Uncertainty in Hobbes’s Theory: Justifiability of Political Governance

Hobbes’s account of sociability is generally interpreted as positing agents to be anti-social in interaction, with violence playing a significant role “both in the individual’s personal life and in his communal life” (Churchill 1989, 19). Such a construal of Hobbes’s account, however, is misguided, as Hobbes does not posit humans as inherently conflictual, but rather, self-interested. As has been identified, self-interest does not necessitate that individuals constantly seek to harm one another or cause war for no reason (apart from certain agents who seek violence for its own sake (Martinich 2005, 69)). On the contrary, it works to facilitate successful cooperation between agents in society. On such an interpretation, it can be promoted that Hobbes portrays humans as (predominantly) rational agents concerned with their self-preservation, who primarily engage in violence in self-defence. As David Gauthier explains, “[w]e cannot suppose that men [sic] in

Hobbes's state of nature are irrational. They do not engage in the war of all against all merely in order to satisfy immediate passion, or even to secure short-term interests. In competing with their fellows they are seeking their over-all well-being" (Gauthier 1979, 17-8). Such a picture stands in stark opposition to the interpretation of agents as evil, bloodthirsty creatures, who are constantly, irrationally, at war with one another, as certain readers infer from Hobbes's portrayal of the state of nature. "Hobbes's metaphor is grossly misunderstood", Gauthier explains, "if it is thought to show man's natural malevolence and evil" (Gauthier 1979, 17). Agents ought to be understood as being willing to live in peace with others, and capable of doing so, as long as the security of the state is in place to allow them to exercise this capacity (Gauthier 1979, 19). Hobbes's project in creating his theory of political governance was, in fact, to illustrate how human relationships can excel and flourish, (Martinich 2005, 59), not to provide a pessimistic and derogatory account of human sociability.

In short, Hobbes's account of sociability is more complex and subtle than is often realized. However, this very complexity puts in question the justifiability of the form of political governance which he promotes. Hobbes promotes an extremely rigid, authoritarian form of political governance which possesses absolute power over its citizens and can never be undermined or dissolved. Hobbes posits that the state would be invoked as a result of agents' fear for their well-being, and thus, in order for it to be successful in facilitating successful interaction, it must be designed so that citizens never have to worry about being once again thrust into the state of nature. However, if agents are in fact able to cooperatively organize themselves to create the state and exit the state of nature, why would they worry that the state would ever fail and they would be thrust into the state of nature? Either the majority of agents would, voluntarily, adhere to the dictates of the state, as it promotes their interests (and, thus, the

state would never fail), or, even if the state did fail, agents would recognize that they possess the capacity to reinstate political governance, and thus, the reintroduction of the state would be inevitable. Thus, even if agents are presumed to possess a reasonable aversion to being thrust into the state of nature, the fear that such circumstances may arise is not severe enough to justify the form of governance which Hobbes promotes, with its absolute and indefinite power.

That agents are held to create and adhere to the state due to reasons of self-interest suggests that the rigid and absolute state which Hobbes promotes is not necessary in relation to the account of human sociability he posits. A state which is less absolute in its power could be promoted as appropriate in regard to Hobbes's re-characterized account of sociability, as such an account emphasizes the voluntary actions/mentalities of citizens in using their pro-social traits to facilitate cooperation in the institution of the state. The power of societal control, within this account, is held not to primarily lie with the invoked state, but rather with the citizens who invoked it. Emphasizing the role that the pro-social trait of rational self-interest plays in facilitating successful interaction, as well as the secondary roles of other-regarding traits which inspire passions such as benevolence, kindness, compassion, etc., undermines the need for the state to possess absolute authority. Such pro-social traits play a significant role in freely facilitating successful interaction, through the creation and sustainment of the state.

It is interesting to ask whether, given this more complex account of sociability, Hobbes could and should have come to a similar view of the state as promoted by John Locke in his work *Two Treatises of Government*. Like Hobbes, Locke promotes a form of governance which possesses authority over its citizens, which it uses to facilitate successful interaction in society. However, unlike Hobbes, such authority is limited, as citizens possess the power to disband the state if it is not working to promote their well-being. Citizens are not held to covenant with each

other to permanently transfer their rights to govern themselves to the state, but rather, to give up their rights only as long as the state successfully fulfills the task for which it is implemented (facilitating their well-being).

It seems to me that Hobbes could have come to a similar conclusion. Locke argues that the state can solely possess a “moderate” amount of power in order for its existence to be justifiable, and, as I have argued above, Hobbes ought to have argued for the justifiability of a similar form of state. This conclusion is derived from the fact that both ultimately endorse the generic account of sociability. That Locke promotes the generic account will not be argued for in detail, however, it is clear, throughout his work, that he holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits. Locke holds agents to possess pro-social traits due to the fact that he believes that the state can be successfully created through agents covenanting with each other. Agents, therefore, must necessarily possess certain pro-social traits which facilitate such cooperation. Locke, additionally, provides evidence of certain anti-social traits that agents may be held to possess, which impede successful interaction, and thus, lead to the requirement of state intervention. Examples of such traits include self-love, which leads to agents’ biases towards themselves or specific others, as well as “ill nature, passion and revenge” (Locke 1763, 204) which lead to over-indulgence in the punishment of others.

The fact that both Hobbes and Locke promote the generic account of sociability, and that this account naturally leads to similar forms of limited governance, reinforces an important conclusion which was highlighted in the first chapter. The promulgation of such forms of governance illustrates the underlying trend in thinkers’ intuitions regarding human nature, and the consequent justifiability of the state in relation to it. That such a form of governance is promulgated so widely contributes to its plausibility, and supports its validity.

In conclusion, Hobbes explicitly bases his theory of governance on an account of sociability, and thus supports the sociability hypothesis. Hobbes, furthermore, acknowledges the role of sociability in his theory by arguing that it is due to the nature of human sociability that the existence of the state is necessary, and thus justifiable. Hobbes fails, however, to defend his assumptions of sociability, as he fails to acknowledge the dual nature of self-interest, including pro-social elements. Hobbes, furthermore, fails to meet the third test, as he does not consistently apply his assumptions when defending the existence of the state. Hobbes fails to recognize that it is not the state which primarily creates successful interaction in society, but rather the pro-social traits of the citizens themselves. This oversight leads him to promote an overly-constraining form of governance which is unnecessary in relation to the nature of human sociability.

Stirner's Account of Sociability & Theory of Individualist Anarchism

Max Stirner, originally named Johann Caspar Schmidt (Leopold 2019), was a German individualist anarchist whose work *The Ego and His Own* provides a description of his individualist anarchist theory and how it translates into society. The following section will present information from *The Ego and His Own*, which is helpful in illuminating aspects of Stirner's account of human sociability and theory of individualist anarchist society.

Stirner's anarchist individualism holds that the individual is above all else in the world. Society, the state, religion, etc., are all spooks in the minds of human beings, meaning that they do not exist in an objective way. Stirner advocates that individuals ought to rid themselves of all forces which impede their autonomy, such as the spooks mentioned above, as well as internal constraining forces such as one's own passions, desires, ideologies, etc. An individual is free,

Stirner believes, when they act on the basis of their own will, which Stirner labels as “ownness [Eigenheit]” (Leopold 2019).

The Ego and His Own is divided into two parts. Part one illustrates how in ancient and modern eras humans have failed to free themselves from oppression, even though modernity claims to have done so by renouncing religious thought (Leopold 2019). Part two illuminates the possibility of an egoistic future,³⁸ and explains how such a society would function (Leopold 2019). Stirner is not a psychological egoist, and therefore does not believe that humans always act so as to promote their own welfare (Shaver 2014). This is evident, as he argues that the mistakes of the ancient and modern eras consist in humans not acting according to egoistic reasons/tendencies, thus failing to free themselves from oppression (Leopold 2019). Although humans have not acted egoistically in the past or present, Stirner argues, the possibility exists for them to do so in the future, and, he states, they ought to.

An egoistic future, Stirner holds, is both desirable and feasible (Leopold 2019). The transition towards the egoistic future is visible through the successive stages of history. Ancient humans were solely concerned with the material world, and were thus oppressed by their desire and need for material goods. Such material concerns were not solely directed towards objects, but also relations with other individuals (Stirner 1907, 18). As history progressed into the modern era, humans ceased attributing importance to the external world, and instead turned

³⁸ In the discussion of Stirner’s theory of governance and account of sociability, the term “egoism” will refer to the pursuit of self-interest. Thus, the “egoistic future”, according to Stirner, is one in which agents act solely to further their self-interest. It is important to note that Stirner holds a conception of egoism which posits agents’ self-interest as anti-social in nature (as it consists in agent solely seeking to advance their own ends, while holding all others in opposition to themselves). However, I will argue that it cannot be described (as he wishes to depict) as solely anti-social in nature. It is important to distinguish “egoism” from the term “anti-social”, which I use throughout the dissertation to refer to traits/motivations which impede successful interaction.

inward to prioritize and cultivate their faculty of reason. With the cultivation of reason came the cultivation of spirituality. Spirituality, Stirner argues, serves to oppress individuals by placing the spirit above and external to them, as an objective towards which they must strive (Stirner 1907, 31). Ancient humans were oppressed by the “natural bonds” they prioritized over their individual selves (Stirner 1907, 29), Stirner argues, only to turn to another oppressive “master” in their prioritization of the spirit (Stirner 1907, 32). In order for individuals to free themselves, they must reject spirituality and adopt egoism. Stirner’s egoistic future consists of free individuals who prioritize themselves above all else. In a reversal of the traditional idea of the social contract, Stirner states that human beings’ “state of nature” is in society, and as humankind progresses and matures, agents strive towards isolation (Leopold 2019). Striving towards isolation, according to Stirner, perfects humankind, as the “inadequacies” of social life are overcome (Leopold 2019).

Although Stirner holds that humankind’s “state of nature” is in society, he argues that a change in agents’ thought processes (realizing that they ought to prioritize themselves over all else) can lead to their attainment of freedom. In arguing that human beings ought to strive towards freedom, Stirner is consequently arguing that agents require freedom in order to flourish. Stirner promotes an account of human flourishing which rests on individuals acting freely as autonomous agents through the recognition and prioritization of their ownness. Psychologically, therefore, it can be assumed that, within Stirner’s account of sociability, agents do not require interaction with others in order to flourish. Whether, however, humans are held to require interaction with others in order to flourish physiologically, is less clear. This ambiguity within Stirner’s account will be discussed in the following section of the chapter.

As an anarchist, Stirner rejects all forms of hierarchy and authority. Stirner's beliefs as an individualist anarchist are situated in opposition to those of social anarchists, such as Peter Kropotkin. Social anarchists hold that humans are inherently sociable beings, and therefore flourish in society. As humans are sociable beings, Kropotkin holds, society will freely organize itself more effectively and justly than under state rule. In opposition, individualist anarchists hold that humans are independent beings, and therefore flourish when they act autonomously, free from constraints on their actions/beliefs. As a result of Stirner's emphasis on agents' individualism, he holds that the state and individuals will always be in conflict with one another. Freedom can only be attained through ownness, and for this reason the state is unnecessary and harmful (Stirner 1907, 218-219). As the state is a spook in the mind, and the only authority that an individual ought to recognize is their ownness, Stirner rejects that individuals possess any obligation to state authority (Leopold 2019). One's obligation to their ownness, however, is not continuous, as Stirner holds that one's past decisions or promises made to oneself ought not bind one in the future. Individuals ought to be guided by fluid decision-making, which is not constrained by any force from other agents or themselves (in certain respects) (Stirner 1907, 424).

The individual, Stirner argues, is solely constrained by their own lack of power. The whole of the external world, including other agents, is property which can be appropriated, as the notion of any "right" to objects is a spook in the mind. The only reason why individuals fail to appropriate objects they desire is if they lack the power to do so. In order to overcome such limitations, Stirner argues, individuals can form agreements among themselves called "unions of egoists", in which one's individual power can be extended through the aid of others (Stirner 1907, 415). Such unions consist of egoists who agree to work together as long as it is to their

own benefit. As soon as any agent acts altruistically, Stirner argues, the union is destroyed. The union is composed of agents who do not relinquish their ownness to the union, nor do they hold the union as sacred. Agents do not possess any obligations or duties to the union, and may abandon it at any moment that it stops serving their interests (Stirner 1907, 415). Unions of egoists are reflective of the fact that the only relationship individuals have towards each other is that of use (Stirner 1907, 394-5). Stirner states that the goal of human history ought to be the creation of unions of egoists, rather than communities (Stirner 1907, 414). Relationships such as those of love or friendship, therefore, would not occur in the egoistic future as they are currently understood. Stirner holds that agents ought to love each other for their own enjoyment (Stirner 1907, 385-6), as individuals' intercourse with the world ought to solely consist in using it for their benefit (Stirner 1907, 425).

The appropriation of objects, Stirner holds, is arranged through individuals engaging in a war of all against all (Stirner 1907, 343-4). Stirner argues that resource distribution ought to be determined through conflict among agents, through the use of their power, in an attempt to secure their own well-being (Stirner 1907, 344-5). Stirner does not find it problematic that certain agents possess a lesser ability to appropriate goods than others, as he states that everyone possesses a certain level of competence and this is sufficient in the war of all against all (Stirner 1907, 532-3). Individuals, Stirner holds, possess no duties of aid towards others, as everyone ought to be solely concerned with advancing their own welfare (Stirner 1907, 482).

Stirner provides a clear picture of the type of interactions which would occur in the egoistic future. Stirner argues that, as egoists, individuals would perceive each other as objects to be used (Stirner 1907, 394-395). Individuals owe each other nothing (Stirner 1907, 394-5), as the concept of humankind is a spook, the only truth being found in the individual (Stirner 1907, 48). Society,

Stirner states, is a spook, and is solely an arrangement of people who have been arbitrarily grouped together according to proximity (Stirner 1907, 285-6). Even the family, Stirner argues, is a spook, as there are no natural bonds between family members. The principle that the family is an unbreakable bond to which individuals are tied solely exists due to the beliefs of agents who uphold this principle (Stirner 1907, 288-9). Egoists, therefore, possess no social duties towards others (Stirner 1907, 424). Individuals ought to act in any way that most effectively advances their interests, without worrying about how it affects others. The egoist, Stirner illustrates, “does not fancy that he exists for the further development of mankind and that he must contribute his mite to it, but he lives himself out, careless of how well or ill humanity may fare thereby” (Stirner 1907, 489). The egoist is solely concerned with their own well-being, and acts for no one’s sake but their own (Stirner 1907, 425).

Through providing his account of sociability, Stirner attempts to present a picture of agents as isolated individuals in competition with each other. That Stirner holds agents as possessing anti-social traits which ought to be invoked in the egoistic future, is clear. Agents possess, predominantly, the trait of self-interest, which would lead them to engage in competition with others in order to advance their interests. That unions of egoists can, in fact, exist and succeed, however, alludes to the fact that Stirner implicitly holds agents to possess traits which facilitate successful interaction, however minimal he claims their influence ought to be on agents’ behaviour. Such pro-social traits could be the capacity for cooperation (however self-directed it may be) or the trait of toleration. Stirner does not provide an explanation regarding what such traits might be (and therefore my discussion on this topic will be speculative), and further, seems to wish to promote a vision of ideal human sociability as predominantly anti-social. The fact that agents have not acted egoistically in the past, however, and that they possess traits which

facilitate successful interaction in the egoistic future, contradicts the anti-socialness that Stirner wishes to emphasize. I will, therefore, hold that Stirner's theory supports the sociability hypothesis, promoting the generic account of sociability. I argue that Stirner's theory does not, however, successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, due to the fact that his argument regarding the unjustifiability of political governance is incompatible with the account of sociability he posits. The incompatibility of Stirner's argument regarding the unjustifiability of the state with the account of sociability he promotes will be explored in the following section of the chapter.

Complexity/Ambiguity in Stirner's Account of Sociability

The primary complexity within Stirner's account of sociability is that he implicitly holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits. This complexity, combined with ambiguities regarding the relative motivational strengths of such traits, and the necessity of successful interaction for human flourishing, leads to uncertainty in Stirner's theory regarding the justifiability of the state.

Complexity in Stirner's Account: Generic Account of Sociability

Stirner, in his work, seemingly addresses, in a thorough manner, the account of sociability upon which his theory of individualist anarchism is based. On a closer evaluation, however, it becomes clear that he predominantly addresses a hypothetical account which is based on what he believes *ought* to be the nature of human sociability in the egoistic future (that which consists solely of anti-social self-interest), excluding from examination certain pro-social traits which agents possess. The account of sociability that Stirner posits, therefore, comprises both pro-social

and anti-social traits, and is thus held to be the generic account.

Stirner promotes a very specific normative account of sociability as it ought to be constituted in the egoistic future, as one in which agents are solely characterized by the egoistic trait of anti-social self-interest. Such egoism, he argues, leads agents to solely strive to further their own interests, using the external world, including other agents, in their attempt to do so. Stirner promotes a conception of egoism wherein agents would be solely concerned with themselves, and hold all others in opposition to themselves in relationships of either use or conflict. As was illustrated in the above discussion regarding Hobbes's account of sociability, however, the trait of self-interest can be characterized as either pro-social insofar as it can facilitate cooperation among agents, or anti-social insofar as it can work to impede successful interaction. The egoistic account of sociability which Stirner promotes is described with the aim of emphasizing the anti-socialness of agents in regard to their interests in advancing their projects and holding others in opposition to themselves. However, Stirner himself explains how self-interest can facilitate successful cooperation within unions of egoists. Although Stirner explains that such unions ought to be driven by strictly self-interested motivations, cooperation can, in fact, occur successfully, which provides evidence that the trait of self-interest can also be pro-social in nature.

In explaining his account of sociability, Stirner does not simply state that agents ought to be self-interested, but goes further to depict a mentality which holds them as being hostile and conflictual with others. Stirner, it seems, wishes to depict agents as possessing harsh and conflictual temperaments towards others, which would lead to a society in which agents are in constant war. Whether such a state of affairs would occur, however, is uncertain. Although Stirner advocates that the temperament described above is the proper nature of sociability which

agents ought to embody, whether it is, in fact, an accurate representation of human sociability as Stirner posits it, is uncertain.

Stirner, I argue, promotes a conception of human sociability which posits agents as possessing both pro-social and anti-social traits. Agents are posited to possess the trait of self-interest, as he prescribes that this trait ought to motivate all interactions in the egoistic future. As has been described, however, such a trait can be defined as pro-social or anti-social depending on the consequences which result from it. Within the egoistic future, Stirner implies that both successful cooperation (for instance, within unions of egoists) and conflict (for instance, agents potentially using others to advance their ends without their consent) will result from self-interest, and thus, it cannot be defined as solely anti-social. Furthermore, Stirner's exposition of human interaction in the past and present implies that agents may, in fact, possess pro-social traits such as solidarity, affection, etc. Agents in the past and present have failed to act egoistically, and thus, the predominant pattern of such interaction indicates that agents may possess traits which facilitate such a state of affairs. The fact that such non-egoistic interaction has prevailed for so long suggests that agents may possess numerous pro-social traits, or pro-social traits which possess strong motivational force, which has driven/drives such interaction.

Ambiguity in Stirner's Account: Motivational Force of Pro-Social/Anti-Social Traits

The aforementioned complexity within Stirner's account of sociability leads to ambiguity regarding the influence of pro-social and anti-social traits in interactions. Stirner explicitly emphasizes the self-interest of agents, which, as has been explained above, can be interpreted as both pro-social and anti-social in nature. Thus, the most predominant trait in his account can be interpreted as both facilitating and impeding successful cooperation. Furthermore, Stirner alludes

to pro-social traits which have facilitated the free successful interaction which has prevailed thus far in history. Thus, agents can be interpreted to possess certain pro-social traits in addition to that of (pro-social) self-interest. Of course, Stirner denies that our self-interest is inherently pro-social, but he does not state that agents possess a hatred of others, or inclinations towards cruelty, or other anti-social dispositions. Thus, Stirner's account of sociability in fact suggests that agents throughout history have possessed a greater number of pro-social traits.

The above speculation regarding the number of pro-social and anti-social traits in Stirner's account leads to the further ambiguity regarding the varying motivational strengths that such traits possess in agents' interactions. Although Stirner advances the notion that interaction between agents will be driven (in the egoistic future) solely by anti-social self-interest, it is not clear that this trait possesses the strongest motivational force. Since egoism has failed to be predominant form of interaction in history, its motivational force can be questioned.

Stirner does not explicitly address the pro-social traits which are inferred in his theory, and thus, the motivational force that such traits possess remains unclear (including the motivational force that pro-social and anti-social traits have in relation to each other, and whether such force alters in respect to different agents, different circumstances, etc.). However, it may be posited that agents possess pro-social traits with stronger motivational force than anti-social traits, as the egoistic future is one which has not come about thus far in history, but rather, is one which Stirner has to vehemently argue in support of.

Ambiguity in Stirner's Account: Successful Interaction Necessary for Human Flourishing

A further ambiguity within Stirner's account of sociability regards whether successful interaction is held to be necessary for human flourishing. Stirner seems to acknowledge that, although it

limits individuals physiologically, human beings are born as social creatures. As he explains, “[n]ot isolation or being alone, but society, is man’s original state. Our existence begins with the most intimate conjunction, as we are already living with our mother before we breathe; when we see the light of the world, we at once lie on a human being’s breast again, her love cradles us in the lap, leads us in the go-cart, and chains us to her person with a thousand ties” (Stirner 1907, 407). Stirner acknowledges that human infants require successful social interaction with other (adult) agents in order to survive. Furthermore, Stirner indicates that, even in adult life, agents may require the aid of others in order to accomplish certain tasks. Each individual’s strength is limited, he acknowledges, and therefore agents can only accomplish a certain amount on their own (Stirner 1907, 415). As he states, “if I can use [another], I doubtless come to an understanding and make myself at one with [them], in order, by the agreement, to strengthen *my power*, and by combined force to accomplish more than individual force could effect” (Stirner 1907, 415).

What remains unclear regarding Stirner’s view of the above mentioned cooperative unions is whether they are necessary for survival or to complete non-essential projects (i.e. projects not essential to agents’ survival). In regard to survival, as in the case of infants, humans are physiologically dependent upon social interaction, therefore rendering it necessary for freedom,³⁹ and consequently, flourishing (as was explained in the previous section, Stirner’s definition of flourishing consists in agents acting autonomously, which (I infer) necessarily requires both psychological and physiological freedom). In regard to non-essential projects, agents are not completely free if they require the aid of others in order to accomplish a desired task. By

³⁹ The nature of freedom is, certainly, a highly contentious topic. For the purpose of the present discussion, I will hold a relatively simple account, positing freedom to consist in the ability to engage in any actions/beliefs one desires or requires.

acknowledging that individuals possess limited power, and must therefore form unions with others in order to achieve desired aims, Stirner illuminates that humans are not completely physiologically free by virtue of their natural limitations.

In both cases identified above, agents are held to require successful interaction with others in order to facilitate their exercise of physiological freedom, and thus flourish. Although Stirner emphasizes the importance of psychological freedom (abiding by one's ownness) for human flourishing, agents in fact require both psychological and physiological freedom in order to do so. As Stirner implies that agents can achieve psychological freedom as isolated individuals, but not physiological freedom, it can be assumed that Stirner holds that successful interaction with others is required (to a certain degree) in order for humans to flourish.

Uncertainty in Stirner's Theory: Justifiability of Political Governance

The complexity and ambiguities within Stirner's account, addressed above, lead to a serious uncertainty within his theory pertaining to the justifiability of political governance. As identified above, Stirner promotes the generic account of sociability, which consequently posits agents as possessing traits which allow them to engage in successful, as well as conflictual, interaction. The respective motivational strengths that such traits possess in interactions, however, are not addressed. Thus, it is unclear, within his account, whether agents are held to engage in predominantly successful or conflictual interaction with each other. Such uncertainty is problematic, as it is posited that successful interaction is necessary for humans to flourish. The uncertainty regarding the motivational strengths of pro-social/anti-social traits in interaction leads to the uncertainty regarding whether successful interaction will come about freely, or whether the intervention of an external authority (i.e. the state) is required to facilitate such a

state of affairs.

Although it was postulated that agents may predominantly engage in pro-social interaction, this is solely an assumption inferred from Stirner's description of agents' interactions in the past and present. The important detail to highlight in such a hypothesis is the fundamental uncertainty regarding the nature of interaction as Stirner posits it. Stirner bases his argument regarding the unjustifiability of political governance on the importance of the individual adhering to their ownness. However, in promoting such an argument, Stirner mistakenly overlooks a fundamental requirement for agents to engage in such a project, which pertains to the account of sociability he attributes to them. In order for agents to exercise their freedom and thus adhere to their ownness, they require a certain degree of successful interaction. It is unclear, however, whether such successful interaction arises freely or whether it must be facilitated through external coercion. The state, therefore, may, in fact, be necessary for humans to engage in successful interaction and thus exercise their freedom, and thus, may be justifiable.

Stirner's theory, therefore, fails to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification, as it fails to meet all three of the relevant tests. Firstly, by basing his argument regarding the unjustifiability of governance on the importance of agents solely acting according to their ownness, Stirner fails to address a necessary aspect of such a project pertaining to agents' sociability: the requirement of successful interaction for the exercise of freedom, which may require the invocation of the state to facilitate. Thus, Stirner fails to acknowledge the role of sociability in his argument regarding the unjustifiability of governance. Furthermore, by emphasizing the normative, anti-social account of sociability pertaining to the egoistic future, rather than the generic account which is attributed to agents in the past and present, Stirner fails to explain or defend the account he holds. Finally, Stirner fails to consistently apply his

assumptions of sociability, as he overlooks the fact that he promotes the generic account, and thus, the state may be justifiable in its role of facilitating necessary successful interaction.

One Final Ambiguity in Stirner's Account: Plausibility of the Egoistic Future

At this point, I will present one final ambiguity in Stirner's account of sociability, pertaining to his depiction of the egoistic future. It is unclear, within his account, whether agents are held to enjoy social interaction on non-egoistic grounds. Stirner holds that the egoistic future is feasible to attain, however, at the same time, he holds that in the past two eras (ancient and modern) human beings have not acted egoistically. It is clear, according to Stirner's account of sociability, that agents possess the capacity to act egoistically and non-egoistically (i.e. possess both pro-social and anti-social traits). It can be assumed, therefore, that agents would have to consciously choose to act egoistically in the egoistic future. The challenge to Stirner is that it would be difficult for agents to change their behaviour in order for the egoistic future to be realized.

It is unclear whether, in Stirner's account of sociability, agents enjoy acting non-egoistically (i.e. acting on their pro-social traits). The fact that non-egoistic behaviour prevailed for all of human history indicates that humans may, in fact, enjoy such behaviour. Stirner claims that once agents are situated within the egoistic future, they will relate to each other in opposition to themselves (Stirner 1907, 233). However, based on the account of sociability which is inferred from his exposition of the ancient past and modernity, it is unclear whether agents are inclined to relate to each other on grounds of mutual aid and solidarity (for example) rather than as opponents. If it is the case that agents did/still do relate to each other on such terms, the plausibility of Stirner's account of the egoistic future is uncertain.

Although successful social interaction is required in human life, individuals do not, Stirner

holds, possess social duties to others, or possess inherent connections to other individuals or humankind overall. Although Stirner holds that, theoretically, agents ought to interact with each other solely to advance their own interests, whether humans do, in fact, enjoy interaction for its own sake, is not addressed. The uncertainty in Stirner's account between his theoretical, normative position, and the nature of human social inclinations as they have historically existed, leads to the accusation that his vision of the egoistic future is overly idealistic. Whether humans possess preferences for successful interaction with others, and whether these tendencies can be overcome in order to be replaced with egoistic preferences, is an aspect of Stirner's account of sociability which remains unclear. If Stirner claims that humans enjoy interaction with others on the basis of egoistic reasons, this view remains consistent with his vision of the egoistic future. If, however, agents enjoy interaction based on feelings of duty, altruism, solidarity, etc., and these feelings cannot be overcome, the plausibility of Stirner's vision of the egoistic future is undermined.

Comparison of Hobbes's and Stirner's Accounts of Sociability and Theories of Governance

In the previous chapter, I addressed the question of why Hume and Kropotkin seem to start from similar assumptions regarding sociability (holding agents as predominantly pro-social in interaction), yet reach different conclusions regarding the justifiability of political governance. It was shown that once Hume's and Kropotkin's accounts of sociability are carefully examined and reinterpreted in light of evidence regarding agents' pro-social traits, both theories seem to support an argument regarding the unjustifiability of the existence of the state. In this section of the chapter, I advance an argument stating that both Hobbes's and Stirner's theories, upon a close evaluation, posit accounts of sociability which possess a more even balance of pro-social

and anti-social traits than is generally interpreted, and consequently, can be held to support similar arguments regarding the justifiability of the state.

As has been explained above, Hobbes is generally interpreted as promoting a thoroughly anti-social account of sociability, as he emphasizes the trait of self-interest which is held to lead to the requirement of an authoritarian state. Similarly, Stirner emphasizes agents' self-interest in his description of the egoism that ought to be embraced in the egoistic future. Stirner's characterization of such egoism portrays self-interest as an anti-social trait, insofar as agents ought to solely work to advance their own interests, and hold all other agents in opposition to themselves.

Both Hobbes's and Stirner's accounts of sociability emphasize the trait of self-interest, and thus at first glance seem relatively similar. However, they advance very different arguments regarding the justifiability of the existence of the state. Hobbes argues that the state is necessary, and thus justifiable, in regard to its role of facilitating successful interaction. Stirner, on the other hand, argues that, as the most important task is for agents to act according to their ownness, and they do not possess any obligations (to the state or even to oneself), the state is unnecessary and unjustifiable.

Upon a close examination of both Hobbes's and Stirner's accounts, however, the nature of the trait of self-interest is shown to be ambiguous. Self-interest, it was argued, can be labelled as either a pro-social or anti-social trait, depending on the consequences which follow from it in regard to interaction (successful or conflictual). Hobbes's account, therefore, was reinterpreted as the generic account, which, in fact, emphasizes the pro-socialness of agents, as self-interest is understood as facilitating successful cooperation among agents in their covenanting to create the state. Furthermore, while Stirner attempts to advance an account of egoism which posits anti-

social self-interest, it was shown that, within his theory, he provides evidence that self-interest is, in fact, both a pro-social and anti-social trait. Additionally, while Stirner does not engage in an explicit examination of the traits of sociability agents are held to possess, his description of the prevalence of pro-social human interaction throughout history alludes to the fact that agents may possess pro-social traits which facilitated such a state of affairs. Stirner's account, therefore, is interpreted as the generic account, which, analogously to Hobbes's, promotes the pro-socialness of human beings.

The fact that Hobbes's and Stirner's reinterpreted accounts of sociability are held to be relatively analogous leads to the question of whether they can be interpreted as supporting similar arguments regarding the justifiability of the existence of the state. I argue that such is indeed the case, albeit from opposite directions. Hobbes, generally interpreted as advancing an account of sociability which promotes agents' anti-socialness, advances an argument in support of a strict, authoritarian state on such grounds. However, if Hobbes is interpreted as advancing an account which holds agents to possess significant pro-social tendencies, such a strict state is unnecessary, and thus, unjustifiable. Thus, on the revised interpretation of his account, Hobbes can be held as arguing that the existence of the state is justifiable, however, it should be a less coercive/constraining state than that which he initially advances.

Stirner, conversely, promotes an argument regarding the unjustifiability of the state on the grounds of the inviolability of agents' ownness. However, he can be re-interpreted as supporting the generic account, and thus, agents are posited as being capable of engaging in both successful and conflictual behaviour. As Stirner posits that freedom is necessary for one to act on their ownness, and agents are not explicitly stated as being able to engage in successful interaction (required for such freedom) freely, the existence of the state may be justifiable in the task of

facilitating such interaction. As Stirner is an anarchist, and thus strictly opposed to authority, it is plausible that he would advance that the state is only justifiable if it is designed so as to fulfill this task, but not exact any more coercion on citizens than that which is strictly necessary to do so. Thus, one could posit Stirner as supporting the justifiability of a form of political governance which possesses a certain amount of authority, however, is not overly strict or coercive.

Upon an examination of the revised arguments regarding the justifiability of the existence of the state attributed to Hobbes and Stirner, therefore, it appears that they promote arguments supporting the justifiability of similar forms of governance (ones which possess the authority to facilitate a base level of successful interaction, but are not overly authoritative).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of Hobbes's and Stirner's accounts of sociability and theories of political governance illuminate the importance not only of the role that accounts of sociability play in justifications of theories of governance, but of carefully examining such accounts, as they can possess underlying complexity and ambiguity which affects the justifiability of the forms of governance promoted in relation to them, which even the relevant thinkers themselves may not identify.

In the following chapter, I will examine Steven Pinker's work *The Better Angels of our Nature* as a demonstration of the manner in which I argue the project of political philosophy ought to be engaged in, in specific regard to justifications of political governance. Pinker's work is not a work of political philosophy, however, he provides a historical and psychological analysis of human interaction, in specific regard to the state's effects on successful interaction. I argue that such a close examination of the nature of human sociability is important, as it provides

a demonstration of how the nature of human sociability can be assessed in a serious and accurate manner. The account of sociability which emerges from Pinker's work fundamentally influences the justification of political governance made in relation to it.

The project in the following chapter provides an illustration of how evaluations of human sociability, from empirical fields such as history and psychology, can inform the project of political philosophy. It is important that political philosophers, in creating theories of political governance, explicitly and seriously construct their accounts of human sociability. In order to do so, however, such accounts must, in at least a minimal capacity, be held accountable to evidence from empirical fields.

Chapter 4:

A Way Forward: Pinker's Account of Sociability and the State

In the first three chapters of the dissertation, theories of political governance were evaluated in regard to their support of the sociability hypothesis and their fulfillment of the first stage of justification. The first chapter showed that all major contemporary theories of political governance support the sociability hypothesis, however, fail to fulfill the first stage of justification by failing to meet one or more of the three relevant tests. Chapters two and three provided detailed examples of earlier theories of governance which were more explicit and systematic in linking governance and sociability. However, even here, the accounts of Hume, Kropotkin, Hobbes, and Stirner all contain complexities and ambiguities that threaten their positions regarding the justifiability of the existence of the state.

The purpose of the present chapter is to illustrate how the insights which have been amassed throughout such examinations can be utilized in a meaningful manner. This chapter will focus on Steven Pinker's work *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, in which he connects an account of sociability to questions regarding the existence of the state. Pinker supports that the existence of the state is justified insofar as it works to facilitate a decrease of violence. The state is necessary to reduce violence, he argues, due to the fact that agents possess anti-social traits which lead to conflict. In its facilitation of successful interaction, the state works to combat agents' anti-social traits, but also, engages certain pro-social traits which aid in such an endeavour (Pinker 2011, xxiii).⁴⁰ As we can see, Pinker thereby endorses the generic account of sociability, as he holds agents to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits.

⁴⁰ Further references to this work in this chapter will just cite the page number in parentheses.

The aspect of his theory which is significant, however, is that it is based on an account of sociability which is empirically derived. Pinker is a renowned experimental psychologist, and he develops his account of sociability using empirical data from the fields of psychology and history (among others). Pinker invokes a theory of mind which is a “synthesis of cognitive science, affective and cognitive neuroscience, social and evolutionary psychology, and other sciences of human nature” (xxiii). Pinker holds that “the mind is a complex system of cognitive and emotional faculties implemented in the brain which owe their basic design to the processes of evolution. Some of these faculties incline us toward various kinds of violence. Others – ‘the better angels of our nature,’ in Abraham Lincoln’s words – incline us toward cooperation and peace” (xxiii).

I will argue that Pinker’s theory supports the sociability hypothesis, and can fulfill the first stage of justification by meeting all three of the relevant tests (by virtue of my added contribution regarding his work, i.e. explicitly tying the sociability assumptions he posits with the justification of the existence of the state). Pinker’s theory of political governance is articulated through the project of “explain[ing] the decline of violence [by] identify[ing] the changes in our cultural and material milieu that have given our peaceable motives the upper hand” (xxiii). Moreover, Pinker’s account of sociability and theory of governance is based on empirical data concerning the nature of human sociability. His work, therefore, provides an example of the manner in which political philosophy should be engaged, by carefully and seriously creating his account of sociability, and allocating its role its proper importance (with my added contribution of explicitly basing the justification of the existence of the state on the relevant account of sociability). Pinker’s theory, furthermore, provides an example of the important real-world applicability the project of political philosophy can have if it is engaged in

in a responsible manner, and is consistent with empirical data. Pinker's approach provides a framework that enables us to analyze and critique theories of governance invoked by real-world states.

To be sure, Pinker's work has been subject to important critiques, and I will discuss these as we proceed. As we will see, questions can be raised about how Pinker defines and measures violence, and about the historical narrative he constructs regarding the decline of violence over time. However, I will argue that these limitations do not undermine the core of his argument, which focuses on the way state institutions can affect the balance of pro-social and anti-social dispositions in a way that produces better social interaction. Thus, while I focus on the methodological structure of Pinker's argument regarding the relationship between violence and the state, I do not support the entirety of the content of his theory.

In the examination of Pinker's theory of political governance and account of sociability, certain similarities will become evident between his theory and the theories of Hume, Kropotkin, Hobbes, and Stirner. Thus, our analysis in previous chapters will aid in the comprehension of Pinker's work. Interestingly, Pinker addresses head-on potential complexity in his account in a way that mitigates concerns about the justifiability of his theory of political governance.

The form of political governance which Pinker promotes in relation to human sociability is liberal democracy. Such a form of governance can be held to be relatively analogous to the form of governance addressed in the previous chapter: one which possesses authority, however, with limits. It is significant to note that such a form of governance is based on the generic account. As was identified in chapter one, the majority of theories which promote the generic account support the aforementioned form of governance, and the widespread nature of such

conclusions supports its validity. That Pinker's account is based on empirical evidence strongly supports the validity of the generic account.

This chapter is structured analogously to Pinker's work. I will begin with an exegesis of the six trends in the "retreat from violence" (xxiv): 1) the Pacification Process, 2) the Civilizing Process, 3) the Humanitarian Revolution, 4) the Long Peace, 5) the New Peace, and 6) the Rights Revolutions (xxiv-xxv). Throughout the exegesis I will identify those aspects of Pinker's theory of governance and account of sociability which parallel Hume's, Kropotkin's, or Hobbes's theories. In the following section, I will provide a more detailed explanation of Pinker's account of sociability. The relevant aspects of Pinker's account of sociability which will be evaluated are five "inner demons": predatory/instrumental violence, dominance, revenge, sadism, and ideology (xxv), and four "better angels": empathy, self-control, moral sense, and reason (xxv). Finally, I will provide an evaluation of the success of Pinker's theory in fulfilling the first stage of justification, which, I argue, it can by meeting all three of the relevant tests.

The Decline of Violence & Pinker's Theory of Political Governance

Pinker holds that the decline of violence is not solely a result of the institution of the state,⁴¹ but also a change in our traits of sociability. These factors facilitate the decline separately, as well as working in conjunction with one another or by influencing each other.

⁴¹ Pinker's claim that the state aids in facilitating the decline of violence is justifiably shocking and counter-intuitive to many commentators, given the enormous harm it, in fact, perpetrates. Settler-states such as Canada, for example, have been built upon the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Pinker has been accused by critics of misrepresenting the levels of harm the state perpetrates versus prevents, failing to sufficiently include the former in his theory regarding the relationship between violence and the state. I will return to this issue at various points in the chapter.

The Pacification Process

The first trend Pinker identifies in the decline of violence consists in “the transition from the anarchy of the hunting, gathering, and horticultural societies...to the first agricultural civilizations with cities and governments” (xxiv). “With that change”, he explains, “came a reduction in the chronic raiding and feuding that characterized life in a state of nature and a more or less fivefold decrease in rates of violent death” (xxiv). Pinker labels this process the Pacification Process.

Pinker provides ample data which suggests that nonstate societies (i.e. “foraging bands and tribes who live in a state of anarchy”) are considerably more violent than societies under state rule (i.e. “settled states with some form of governance”) (36). He begins by addressing data from archeological remains of “hunter-gatherers and hunter-horticulturalists from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas” (48). These agents all lived before states came into existence, or before the societies that such individuals were members of closely interacted with them. The rate of violent death of such individuals ranges from “0-60 percent, with an average of 15 percent” (48). Pinker then addresses data from contemporary/recent hunter-gatherer societies “from the Americas, the Philippines, and Australia” (50). The rate of violent death in such societies is exceedingly similar to the previous data set, ranging from 4-30 percent, with an average of 14 percent (50). Next, Pinker addresses data from pre-state societies which “engage in some mixture of hunting, gathering, and horticulture”, including societies from New Guinea and the Amazon rain forest, as well as the Montenegrins (50). The rate of violent death in this date set is 24.5 percent. Pinker compares the above data with that from states:

[t]he earliest [figures] are from the cities and empires of pre-Columbian Mexico, in which 5 percent of the dead were killed by other people. That was undoubtedly a dangerous place, but it was a third to a fifth as violent as an average pre-state society.

When it comes to modern states, we are faced with hundreds of political units, dozens of centuries, and many subcategories of violence to choose from (wars, homicides, genocides, and so on), so there is no single “correct” estimate. But we can make the comparison as fair as possible by choosing the *most* violent countries and centuries, together with some estimates of violence in the world today...[T]he two most violent centuries in the past half millennium of European history were the 17th, with its bloody Wars of Religion, and the 20th, with its two world wars. The historian Quincy Wright has estimated the rate of death in the wars of the 17th century at 2 percent, and the rate of death in war for the first half of the 20th at 3 percent. If one were to include the last four decades of the 20th century, the percentage would be even lower. One estimate, which includes American war deaths as well, comes in at less than 1 percent. (50)

Pinker goes on to evaluate data on a different metric, the “number of deaths per 100,000 people per year” (51-5), however, the above data is sufficient to illustrate the comparative violence between nonstate societies and those under states, as non-state societies are proven to be, according to this evidence as well, exceedingly more violent than societies under state rule.

Pinker explains that the above conclusion regarding the rate of violence between nonstate societies and states is generally surprising, as certain scholars have viewed individuals in nonstate societies as “harmless foragers”, and hence had “trouble imagining the means and motives that could drive them to war” (46). Pinker argues that this is an erroneous picture, however, as “organisms that have evolved by natural selection always have something to fight about (which doesn’t, of course, mean that they will always fight)” (46). The goods which agents in nonstate societies compete for, Pinker explains, are those which Hobbes cites as the principal causes of quarrel: “gain, safety, and credible deterrence” (46). Hobbes, furthermore, accurately predicted the effects of the trait of glory-seeking on conflict. Pinker explains that “in most surveys the most commonly cited motive for warfare is vengeance, which serves as a crude deterrent to potential enemies by raising the anticipated long-term costs of an attack” (46-7).

It is important to note that Pinker does not hold agents to be entirely anti-social in nature, as he promotes the generic account of sociability. “Though war is common among foraging

groups”, he explains, “it is certainly not universal. Nor should we expect it to be if the violent inclinations in human nature are a strategic response to the circumstances rather than a hydraulic response to an inner urge” (52). Pinker explains that agents’ anti-social traits evolved as a means of securing their safety, but that agents also possess pro-social traits which can be augmented under the rule of the state. Thus, the introduction of the state is an essential feature in the decline of violence. Pinker explains that the decline of violence in societies is predominantly due to the nature of their social organization, with the primary aspect of this decline being “the appearance of the first form of social organization that shows signs of design for reducing violence within its borders. That would be the centralized state, the Leviathan” (42). He further states that “[t]he reduction of homicide by government control is so obvious to anthropologists that they seldom document it with numbers...The Pacification Process is so pervasive that anthropologists often treat it as a methodological nuisance. It goes without saying that peoples that have been brought under the jurisdiction of a government will not fight as much” (55-6).

Pinker explains that states originated approximately “five thousand years after the origin of agriculture”, when the “more powerful chiefdoms used their armed retinues to bring other chiefdoms and tribes under their control” (41). This centralization of power created the opportunity for agents to specialize in different trades, as well as facilitated the development of the infrastructure of society in regard to codification and enforcement of laws. Furthermore, “[p]etty states with designs on their neighbors’ assets sometimes forced them to become states in defense, and bigger states often swallowed smaller states” (42). An aspect of note in this explanation is the way in which certain societies were forced to institute forms of governance in response to the creation of states around them. This phenomenon parallels the explanation in Hume’s theory regarding the institution of government. Governance is instituted not in response

to conflict within society, Hume explains, but rather, as a means of protection from attack by other societies.

While Pinker holds that the state is an essential feature in the reduction of violence, the imposition of a state presents the risk of excessive coercion or abuse of citizens.⁴² This is “the more sinister sense of the word *pacification*: not just the bringing about of peace but the imposition of absolute control by a coercive government. Solving this second problem would have to wait another few millennia, and in much of the world it remains unsolved to this day” (58). The risk of an unjustifiably coercive state was examined in the third chapter in relation to the form of authority Hobbes promotes. It was discovered that the generic account which Hobbes promotes supports the institution of a state which is not highly authoritative. It can be inferred that Pinker’s theory is analogous, insofar as it posits the requirement of the state, however, it promotes one which is not highly authoritarian.

Pinker notes that, throughout history, thinkers have debated whether humans are predominately conflictual or cooperative. As he explains, “[t]hrough the philosophies of Hobbes and Rousseau were far more sophisticated than ‘nasty brutish and short’ versus ‘the noble savage’, their competing stereotypes of life in a state of nature fueled a controversy that remains with us today...[and] the issue has accumulated a heavy burden of emotional, moral, and political baggage” (36). As we have seen in the discussion of Darwinian egoism in chapter two, people can use such ideologies (even if they are erroneously interpreted) to support harmful forms of governance. It is imperative that conceptions of sociability be carefully scrutinized and responsibly applied, if valid justifications regarding the existence of the state are to be constructed upon them. Pinker identifies that, “[w]hen it came to violence in pre-state peoples,

⁴² I would like to highlight the importance of this caveat.

Hobbes and Rousseau were talking through their hats: neither knew a thing about life before civilization. Today we can do better” (36). While “Hobbes considered competition to be an unavoidable consequence of agents’ pursuing their interests”, it is now understood as a reasonable trait resulting from evolution (33): agents are not posited to be entirely violent beings.

The Civilizing Process

The second trend which Pinker identified in the decline of violence is “the consolidation of a patchwork of feudal territories into large kingdoms with centralized authority and an infrastructure of commerce” (xxiv). The sociologist Norbert Elias created the idea of the Civilizing Process, and accordingly, Pinker labels this trend “with a nod” to him (xxiv).⁴³

Pinker explains that “[b]etween the late Middle Ages and the 20th century, European countries saw a tenfold-to-fiftyfold decline in their rates of homicide” (xxiv). Life in medieval Europe, Pinker explains, was violent in many ways (65-7). Elias further noticed, he explains, that “the temperament of medieval people...by our lights seem[ed] impetuous, uninhibited, [and] almost childlike” (68). Therefore, manuals regarding civility were created, which, at the time, were “serious guides to moral conduct” (69). “[A]s Elias points out”, Pinker explains, “the habits of refinement, self-control, and consideration that are second nature to us had to be acquired – that’s why we call them *second nature*- and they developed in Europe over the course of its modern history” (70). The rules of etiquette which were promoted, Pinker explains, “are deducible from a few principles: Control your appetites; Delay gratification; Consider the

⁴³ A significant critique levelled against Pinker’s work is his use of the idea of the Civilizing Process. The theory of the Civilizing Process, it is important to note, is problematically one-sided in its assumptions regarding the agents who supposedly undergo this process, as well as the ideologies which are held to reduce violence.

sensibilities of others; Don't act like a peasant; Distance yourself from your animal nature. And the penalty for these infractions was assumed to be internal: a sense of shame" (71).

Pinker explains that Elias's theory "[thus] attributes the decline in European violence to a larger psychological change... over a span of several centuries, beginning in the 11th or 12th and maturing in the 17th and 18th" (72). This transition consisted in the development of pro-social traits involving the inhibition of anti-social desires and an awareness of the consequences of actions on successful interaction, all with an eye to others' beliefs and emotions. These changes in behaviour shifted societal values towards the control of one's emotions and actions, rather than honour and revenge (72). The relevant changes in behaviour occurred as a result of "explicit instructions that cultural arbiters gave to aristocrats and noblemen, allowing them to differentiate themselves from the villains and boors. But they were then absorbed into the socialization of younger and younger children until they became second nature. The standards also trickled down from the upper classes to the bourgeoisie that strove to emulate them, and from them to the lower classes, eventually becoming a part of the culture as a whole" (72). It is important to note, however, that Elias didn't claim "that early modern Europeans 'invented' or 'constructed' self-control", but rather, "that they toned up a mental faculty that had always been a part of human nature but which the medievals had underused" (73).

It is interesting to note the similarities between the rules of etiquette which were promoted during the Middle Ages and the laws of nature presented in Hobbes's theory. The laws of nature, Hobbes promotes, are those which are conducive to successful interaction in society, which can be analogized (to a degree) with the aforementioned rules of conduct. Such rules were not as much about hygiene and manners than avoiding offending others. That minimizing offence to others would be conducive to peace is an idea which is strongly promoted in Hobbes's

theory, as agents are interpreted as holding themselves in high esteem which, if not respected, causes violence. Furthermore, several of the rules are relatively similar to the ideas promoted in the laws of nature, such as that agents are to consider the emotions of others, which can be seen to be represented in Hobbes's ninth law which dictates acknowledgment of the equality of others (Hobbes 1651, ch.15). Additionally, the penalty for the infraction of the rules of conduct, an internal sense of shame, is similar to the motivation behind the moral obligation to the virtue of justice and then the state, within Hume's account, which are formed as a result of the sense of sympathy. Both traits are self-enforced by individuals, as the reasons underlying the relevant actions are internalized by agents.

Pinker explains that the Civilizing Process was started by two exogenous factors: the state and an economic revolution. As Pinker explains, "the consolidation of a genuine Leviathan [came] after centuries of anarchy in Europe's feudal patchwork of baronies and fiefs. Centralized monarchies gained in strength, brought the warring knights under their control, and extended their tentacles into the outer reaches of their kingdoms" (74). Conflicts within societies were a nuisance to the new leaders, but more importantly, "a lost opportunity", as agents who were killed from such conflict could not fuel their economies or fill their armies (74).⁴⁴ Pinker explains that the institution of the state changed the method whereby agents could achieve success, insofar as personal advancement was now furthered by one's ability to present themselves as responsible and empathetic, rather than physically powerful. A king's court, Pinker explains, "had no use for hotheads and loose cannons, but sought responsible custodians to run its provinces. The nobles [thus] had to change their marketing. They had to cultivate their

⁴⁴ The ideology identified in this statement, regarding the state's desire for non-violence amongst its citizens, highlights the way that states have, and predominantly still do, underlie their project of advancing the well-being of citizens with instrumental considerations (e.g. strengthening economic or military power), rather than humanitarian concern for the agents themselves.

manners, so as not to offend the king's minions, and their empathy, to understand what they wanted" (75).

It is interesting to highlight that "[m]any criminologists", Pinker states, "believe that the source of the state's pacifying effect isn't just its brute coercive power but the trust it commands among the populace...A Leviathan can civilize a society only when the citizens feel that its laws, law enforcement, and other social arrangements are legitimate, so that they don't fall back on their worst impulses as soon as Leviathan's back is turned" (79). The reason for this requirement of legitimacy can be viewed as analogous to the requirement of permanence which Hobbes stipulates in his theory of governance. Hobbes holds that the state can only be effective in facilitating successful interaction when citizens are secure in the knowledge that it will never be undermined, as Hobbes claims that if such were to happen, agents would immediately fall back into the state of nature (i.e. fall back on their worst impulses). The requirement for the state to be absolute and eternal, however, was discovered to be unnecessary in regard to the nature of agents' sociability in Hobbes' account. It was shown that agents are not as anti-social as is interpreted by Hobbes, and thus, although a certain amount of state authority is required to successfully order society, an eternal, untouchable state is unjustifiably coercive. Thus, the form of governance which Pinker promotes, which possesses enough authority to enforce its laws and ensure that citizens acknowledge its legitimacy, would be sufficient to overcome the similar problem regarding the stability of society present in Hobbes' theory.

The second exogenous change, the economic revolution, occurred during the later Middle Ages (75). Economic productivity increased during this time period due to technological advances in production, new forms of transport, etc., leading to an expansion of the diversity of craftsmen. And thus, "[l]ife presented people with more positive-sum games and reduced the

attractiveness of zero-sum plunder. To take advantage of the opportunities, people had to plan for the future, control their impulses, take other people's perspectives, and exercise the other social and cognitive skills needed to prosper in social networks" (77). Positive-sum games "change the incentives for violence", as agents can benefit more from a living, willing trading partner than they can from conflict. For this reason, "a free market puts a premium on empathy", as agents who are better able to anticipate what their trading partner wants/needs are better able to successfully provide it, and prevent the agent from seeking business elsewhere (76-7).⁴⁵

The Humanitarian Revolution

The third trend that Pinker identifies in the decline of violence involves "the first organized movements to abolish socially sanctioned forms of violence like despotism, slavery, dueling, judicial torture, superstitious killing, sadistic punishment, and cruelty to animals, together with the first stirrings of systemic pacifism" (xxiv). Pinker explains that "beginning in the Age of Reason in the 17th century and cresting with the Enlightenment at the end of the 18th" (133), many violent institutions came to an end. As he explains, "[i]n the modern West and much of the rest of the world, capital and corporal punishments have been effectively eliminated, governments' power to use violence against their subjects has been severely curtailed, slavery has been abolished, and people have lost their thirst for cruelty" (133).⁴⁶ This transformation was

⁴⁵ It is important to identify that institutions such as the free market are based on calculations of mutual benefit, which determine their operation. This mentality leads to significant harm, as it justifies the exclusion of certain people's interests from consideration if they are unable to contribute to cooperative schemes producing mutual benefit (this problematic aspect of cooperation based on mutual benefit was discussed in chapter one in relation to Rawls' theory of society as a cooperative venture for mutual advantage).

⁴⁶ It is certainly a contentious claim that states' power to use violence against their subjects has been, either in theory or reality, reduced to a justifiable level. Furthermore, that institutional

facilitated by two forces: a change in agents' attitudes towards violence, and a change in the design of the state (133).

I will begin by addressing the first of such forces, the change in agents' relationship with violence. During the Humanitarian Revolution, Pinker explains, agents underwent an emotional transformation (143), one aspect of which being an augmentation of the trait of sympathy. Agents, Pinker explains, "began to *sympathize* with more of their fellow humans, and were no longer indifferent to their suffering" (133). The scope of the trait of sympathy, however, is not naturally far-reaching, and thus, in order for sympathy to evolve as it did, certain exogenous factors were necessary to spark such a change. "The human capacity for compassion", Pinker explains, "is not a reflex that is triggered automatically by the presence of another living thing... [T]hough people in all cultures can react sympathetically to kin, friends, and babies, they tend to hold back when it comes to larger circles of neighbors, strangers, foreigners, and other sentient beings" (175). Pinker suggests that the "growth of writing and literacy" (174) was a factor which "accelerated humanitarian sentiments in the 17th and 18th centuries" (170), as it may have facilitated agents' engagement with the experiences of others, removed from one's own biased viewpoint, as well as facilitated the creation of progressive ideas regarding moral and social values (177). Furthermore, "the rise of cosmopolitanism in the 17th and 18th centuries deserves part of the credit for the Humanitarian Revolution" (180), as the creation and promulgation of such sentiments is more effectively facilitated through the channels of literacy and urbanization.

A further change in agents' sensibilities towards violence occurred via a change in their understanding of humankind, as a result of the trait of reason. During the Humanitarian Revolution agents developed "an increased valuation of human life and happiness...we

violence and cruelty, both in the modern West and the rest of the world, has not been eliminated entirely, and is still perpetrated against certain groups of people, ought not be misrepresented.

sympathize with other humans, even if we don't know them, by virtue of the fact that they *are* human, and we parlay that sympathy into bright lines that outlaw the imposition of suffering on an identifiable human being" (139). Human life and well-being was understood as possessing increased value through "an intellectual and moral change: a shift from valuing *souls* to valuing *lives*" (143). "This line of reasoning", Pinker states, "may be called humanism because the value that it recognizes is the flourishing of humans, the only value that cannot be denied. I experience pleasures and pains, and pursue goals in service of them, so I cannot reasonably deny the right of other sentient agents to do the same" (183). Such an ideology extends beyond the scope of agents in our immediate environment, insofar as all humans are deserving of equal moral status, and thus, it is consequently unacceptable to inflict suffering on them (139). It is interesting to note that this ideology resembles the re-characterization of Hume's trait of sympathy which I proposed in chapter two. The element of reason, which I suggested should be identified within his trait of sympathy, would allow for the scope of sympathy to extend to all agents, regardless of proximity, in recognition of the fundamental equality of human beings.

The change in agents' relationship to violence, through the augmentation of traits such as sympathy and reason, formed "[a] new ideology...one that placed life and happiness at the center of values, and that used reason and evidence to motivate the design of institutions" (133).⁴⁷ The change of the design of institutions is the second force identified in the Humanitarian Revolution. Not only were specific forms of institutionalized violence abolished, but the reasons posited for systems of governance to exist were altered.

Pinker notes that many forms of institutionalized violence were abolished during the Humanitarian Revolution, one of which being capital punishment. It may be posited, Pinker

⁴⁷ Whether such an ideology did, in fact, effectively change the design of institutions such as the state, is contestable.

explains, that during the time period wherein the debate regarding the abolition of such an institution occurred, agents may have been worried that abolition would result in increased incentive for agents to engage in crime for “profit or revenge” (153). However, it is evident from an evaluation of relevant data, that this is not the case. “[T]oday we know”, Pinker explains, “that abolition, far from reversing the centuries-long decline of homicide, proceeded in tandem with it, and that the countries of modern Western Europe, none of which execute people, have the lowest homicide rates in the world. It is one of the many cases in which institutionalized violence was once seen as indispensable to the functioning of a society, yet once it was abolished, the society managed to get along perfectly well without it” (153).

The above example regarding the abolition of capital punishment illustrates the importance of possessing accurate accounts of human sociability upon which forms of governance are created, including the institutions which compose them. The nature of human sociability that we can now observe through empirical evidence, Pinker explains, is such that cruel and excessive punishment such as those which were used before the Humanitarian Revolution are not necessary to the flourishing of successful interaction in society. This is a relevant example in regard to my critique of Hobbes’s theory of political governance, as I argue that the strict, authoritarian state he promotes is unnecessarily coercive in regard to the account of sociability he inherently posits. My critique of Hobbes’s theory was based on the incongruity between the account of sociability he posits and the form of governance he promotes. However, the above example regarding the abolition of capital punishment highlights the importance not only of carefully evaluating accounts of sociability in order to assess whether the relevant forms of governance are compatible with them, but also, that the accounts posited are accurate in regard to empirical data regarding the reality of human sociability. The account of sociability

posited by those who supported capital punishment is, clearly, inaccurate, and as such, the institution of capital punishment which is based on it is not only harmful, but unjustifiable.

During the Humanitarian Revolution, an ideological shift occurred in the conceptualization of the role of the state: “[i]nstead of taking government for granted as an organic part of the society, or as the local franchise of God’s rule over his kingdom, people began to think of a government as gadget – a piece of technology invented by humans for the purpose of enhancing their collective welfare” (160). The state was understood, upon this shift in ideology, as a means of enhancing the well-being of its subjects, which, in specific relation to the subject of the dissertation, involves facilitating successful interaction in society. Certain thinkers engaged in the project of reconceptualizing the state through thought experiments regarding agents’ deliberations, in the state of nature, regarding the form of state which would most effectively promotes their interests (one result of such thought experiments has been evaluated in Hobbes’s work) (160). The forms of governance supported through such thought experiments, Pinker explains, “[bore] no resemblance to the theocracies and hereditary monarchies of the day...Instead, the government would serve at the pleasure of the people it governed. Its power to ‘keep them all in awe’, as Hobbes put it, was not a license to brutalize its citizens in pursuit of its own interests but only a mandate to implement” (160) the covenants agents formed between them to create/obey the state.

Pinker argues that Hobbes’s theory of governance, formed from such a thought experiment, is erroneous. Hobbes, he states, “imagined that somehow people would vest authority in a sovereign or a committee once and for all at the dawn of time, and thereafter it would embody their interests so perfectly that they would never have reason to question it...Real-life Leviathans are human beings, with all the greed and foolishness we should expect

of a specimen of *Homo sapiens*” (160). Locke attempted to overcome such an error, Pinker states, by “call[ing] for a separation between the legislative and executive branches of government, and for the citizenry to reserve the power to throw out a government that was no longer carrying out its mandate” (160). Locke argued this would be necessary as he held that leaders would be tempted, through bias/selfishness to disobey their own laws, and form them to suit their individual interests (160). The idea of the fallibility of agents in attempting to facilitate successful interaction without external constraints on their action, has been represented by the generic account of sociability emphasized throughout the dissertation. The idea that agents possess traits which both facilitate and impede successful interaction is promoted in all major theories of political governance (apart from Wolff’s), and its validity is supported by its widespread promulgation, as well as empirical evidence (as will be illuminated in the following section pertaining to Pinker’s account of sociability).

Pinker goes on:

[the aforementioned] line of thinking [regarding the nature of human sociability] was taken to the next level by the heirs of Hobbes and Locke who hashed out a design for American constitutional government after years of study and debate. They were obsessed with the problem of how a ruling body composed of fallible humans could wield enough force to prevent citizens from preying on each other without arrogating so much that it would become the most destructive predator of all. As Madison wrote, ‘If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.’ And so Locke’s ideal of the separation of powers was written into the design of the new government, because ‘ambition must be made to counteract ambition’. The result was the division of government into executive, judicial, and legislative branches, the federalist system in which authority was divided between the states and the national government, and periodic elections to force the government to give some attention to the wishes of the populace and to transfer power in an orderly and peaceable way. Perhaps most important, the government was given a circumscribed mission statement—to secure the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of its citizens, with their consent—and, in the form of the Bill of Rights, a set of lines it could not cross in its use of violence against them. (160-1)

The idea promoted above regarding ambition being used to combat ambition is strikingly similar, I suggest, to Hume's idea of the trait of self-interest being used to combat its anti-social effects. Furthermore, it is interesting to point out that the stipulation requiring the consent of citizens is one which Hobbes promotes in his theory of governance.

The above form of governance, democracy, is the form of governance Pinker promotes as the most effective in the facilitation of successful interaction, and thus, that which is justified within his theory. "The idea of democracy", he states, "...as we shall see,...turn[s] out to be one of the greatest violence-reducing technologies since the appearance of government itself" (161).⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that theories of governance which promote democratic rule, based on the generic account of sociability, have been addressed in chapter one (in the evaluation of Stilz's theory), however, such theories failed to successfully fulfill the first stage of justification by failing to meet all the relevant tests. Pinker's theory will provide an illustration of how such gaps can be filled. While not all thinkers which have been evaluated thus far in the dissertation have explicitly promoted democratic governance, the idea of the state as a necessary institution with a limited amount of authority (used to facilitate successful interaction) is an idea regarding a justifiable form of governance which has been promoted by almost all thinkers which have been evaluated who hold the generic account of sociability.

Within Pinker's theory of governance, he not only recognizes democracy as fundamentally important to the decline of violence, but also gentle commerce. Pinker explains: "another innovation of the American system was its explicit recognition of the pacifying effects of positive-sum cooperation. The ideal of gentle commerce was implemented in the Commerce,

⁴⁸ Here, again, is it significant to point out that Pinker is only addressing certain forms of harm (as will be discussed, specific forms of violence), in relation to certain groups of people, and thus, undermines the serious harm that the state itself inflicts.

Contract, and Takings clauses of the Constitution, which prevented the government from getting too much in the way of reciprocal exchanges among its citizens” (161). Pinker identifies that psychological commonality between human beings allows for “a meeting of the minds. I can appeal to your reason and try to persuade you, applying standards of logic and evidence that both of us are committed to by the very fact that we are both reasoning beings” (182). This ability to reason (trait of reason) allows agents to overcome the prisoner’s dilemma (discussed in chapter three) by facilitating explicit discussion based on logic in regard to mutual benefit (which would be achieved as a result of cooperation) (182).⁴⁹

Thus, based on the trait of reason and the acknowledgement of human equality, Pinker explains, conclusions regarding the proper ordering of society can be deduced. The implementation of the state is beneficial due to the fact that

in a state of anarchy people’s self-interest, self-deception, and fear of these shortcomings in others would lead to constant strife. People are better off abjuring violence, if everyone else agrees to do so, and vesting authority in a disinterested third party. But since that third party will consist of human beings, not angels, their power must be checked by the power of other people, to force them to govern with the consent of the governed. They may not use violence against their citizens beyond the minimum necessary to prevent greater violence. And they should foster arrangements that allow people to flourish from cooperation and voluntary exchange. (183)

The form of political governance which Pinker promotes in his theory, therefore, is liberal democracy, with the inclusion of a capitalist free market.⁵⁰ The previous quote summarizes the

⁴⁹ Pinker’s statement, regarding the role of reason in the facilitation of peace through the mutual benefit provided by non-violence and the free market, threatens to exclude from deliberations agents who are unable to engage in such “meetings of the mind”, and as such, from the scope of justice (in this context, facilitated by cooperation and benefit).

⁵⁰ The majority of liberal democracies, it can be argued, do not, in fact, use the minimum amount of force necessary to facilitate successful interaction, and systematically engage in excessive violence. Furthermore, as was identified above, the schemes within such states which foster

form governance he supports, as well as illuminates aspects of the account of sociability which underlies it. It is interesting to note the similarities between Pinker's theory regarding the state of sociability in nonstate conditions as one in which agents would engage in constant conflict based on their anti-social traits, and their fear of such traits in others, as this is analogous to Hobbes's conception of the state of nature. While Hobbes promotes a highly authoritarian form of governance based on his characterization of the state of nature, Pinker posits that a moderately coercive form of governance (democracy) is justifiable in regard to human sociability. As was identified in the evaluation of Hobbes's theory, however, I argue that Hobbes ought to have promoted a form of governance more similar to that promoted by Pinker.

During the Humanitarian Revolution, change additionally occurred in regard to major war. The beginning of the decline of major war occurred around 1700, with a shift in leaders' (apparent) attitudes regarding it. Such leaders proclaimed their love of peace, and stated that they had been unwillingly coerced into wars (167). The reason for this shift may have been leaders' recognition of the change in attitudes towards war in their citizens as a result of the Humanitarian Revolution, but furthermore, their attitudes may have similarly changed. Evidence of progress, Pinker explains, "was seen in the dwindling appeal of imperial power" (167). Military losses were abandoned, rather than sparking retaliation, and countries were abandoning their projects of conquest in favour of commerce. As a result, "wars between great powers became shorter, less frequent, and limited to fewer countries (167).

The Long Peace

voluntary cooperation and exchange, risk the neglect and harm of certain agents or groups of agents within society.

The Long Peace, Pinker explains, constitutes the period in which “the great powers, and developed states in general, ... stopped waging war on one another” (xxiv).⁵¹ It is counterintuitive, Pinker grants, to look at the 20th century and believe that the trend in violence in the world, throughout history, is downwards, given its “cascade of world wars, civil wars, and genocides that Matthew White has called the Hemoclysm, the blood-flood” (190). It is important to remember, however, Pinker states, that “[t]he second half of the 20th century saw a historically unprecedented avoidance of war between the great powers which the historian John Gaddis has called the Long Peace, followed by the equally astonishing fizzling out of the Cold War” (190). The 20th century, Pinker explains, when evaluated in the context of relevant “adjusts[ments] for population size, ...availability bias, and...historical myopia”, cannot be labelled as the most violent in history (200).

Pinker identifies that wars both begin and end at random, following “no meaningful cycle[s] at all” (207). As he explains, “[a] horrible conflict doesn’t make the world weary of war and give it a respite of peaceable exhaustion. Nor does a pair of belligerents cough on the planet and infect it with a contagious war disease. And a world at peace doesn’t build up a mounting desire for war, like an unignorable itch, that eventually must be discharged in a sudden violent spasm” (206). This claim by Pinker reveals that he does not believe that agents are entirely anti-social, or possess an inner urge for violence. Conflict, within Pinker’s account of sociability, is engaged in within specific circumstances, but is not driven by a blood-thirst which must be satiated.

One notable generalization which Pinker highlights in regard to the engagement of wars, is that “[a] long-standing government inhibits fighting: peoples on one side of a national border

⁵¹ As will be discussed, Pinker’s characterization of war, and the data he presents regarding its decline, is highly biased and controversial.

are less likely to have a civil war than peoples on opposite sides are to have an interstate war” (202). This claim is relevant to the justification of the existence of the state within his theory, as the state is held to reduce violence within the society over which it presides.

Pinker provides a list of important zeros which characterize the Long Peace:⁵²

Zero is the number of times that nuclear weapons have been used in conflict...the number of times that the two Cold War superpowers fought each other on the battlefield...the number of times that any of the great powers have fought each other since 1953 (or perhaps even 1945, since many political scientists don't admit China to the club of great powers until after the Korean War)...the number of interstate wars that have been fought between countries in Western Europe since the end of World War II...the number of interstate wars that have been fought in Europe as a whole since 1956, when the Soviet Union briefly invaded Hungary...the number of interstate wars that have been fought since 1945 between major developed countries (the forty-four with the highest per capita income) anywhere in the world (again, with the exception of the 1956 Hungarian invasion)...the number of developed countries that have expanded their territory since the late 1940s by conquering another country...[And,] the number of internationally recognized states since World War II that have gone out of existence through conquest. (249-251)

These zeros, he argues, are a result of changes in agents' psychological traits in “the mainstream of the developed world (and increasingly, the rest of the world)” (251), pertaining to how war is conceptualized. Throughout history, war was predominantly viewed as a legitimate institution, and thus, “influential people who craved power, prestige, or vengeance could count on their political network to ratify those cravings and to turn off their sympathies for the victims of an effort to satisfy them” (251-2). This ideology towards war is no longer prevalently endorsed, and “since the late 1940s [has] been disaggregated in Europe and other developed countries” (252). Thus, although “the psychological components of war have not gone away—dominance,

⁵² As will be discussed, Pinker's characterization of the “peace” which constitutes the Long Peace is highly contentious.

vengeance, callousness, tribalism, groupthink, self-deception” (252) the frequency of war has decreased.

Within the above quote, several notable aspects of Pinker’s account of sociability are illuminated. Agents, he holds, possess anti-social traits such as the desire for power, prestige, and vengeance, as well as those of dominance, callousness, tribalism, groupthink, and self-deception. It is interesting to note that several analogous traits have been posited by thinkers evaluated in the second and third chapters, such as the will to power (Kropotkin), the desire for power and glory (Hobbes), the willingness to avenge harms (Hobbes), the harsh promotion of self-interest (Stirner), and tendencies for societies to attack other societies (Hume).

The Long Peace was facilitated through changes in agents’ psychological traits insofar as “[e]ach component of the war-friendly mindset—nationalism, territorial ambition, an international culture of honor, popular acceptance of war, and indifference to its human costs—went out of fashion in developed countries in the second half of the 20th century” (257). A further psychological change in citizens was their conceptualization of the purpose of the state. Citizens in Europe, for example, “no longer [held the state to be] the proprietor of a military force that enhances the grandeur and security of the nation, but a provisioner of social security and material well-being” (268). Furthermore, “[t]ogether with nationalism and conquest, another ideal...faded in the post-war decades ‘honor’” (261). The decline of violence which occurred as a result of the diminishing value of honour, can be related to Hobbes’s view regarding the trait of glory-seeking. Hobbes cites glory-seeking as a significant contributing factor to conflict within the state of nature, as agents are held to seek glory for reasons of utility, or to bolster their own self-image (vain-glory), however, in both cases, it results in conflict among agents. That a decrease of the value of honour would lead to a reduction of violence is unsurprising in light of

Hobbes's characterization of the trait, as agents' psychological shift to value human lives, rather than one's own glory or the glory of one's nation, would reduce the conflict produced as a result of such influences.

The change in the relevant attitudes towards war may be, Pinker proposes, a result of similar factors as those which drove the Humanitarian Revolution (for instance, "literacy, travel, [and] science" (292)). Pinker remarks that

[t]he communications guru Marshall McLuhan called the postwar world a "global village". In a village, the fortunes of other people are immediately felt. If the village is the natural size of our circle of sympathy, then perhaps when the village goes global, the villagers will experience greater concern for their fellow humans than when it embraced just the clan or tribe. A world in which a person can open the morning paper and meet the eyes of a naked, terrified little girl running toward him from a napalm attack nine thousand miles away is not a world in which writer can opine that war is 'the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of man' or that it 'enlarges the mind of a people and raises their character'. (292)

It is significant to note the parallels between Pinker's explanation of the effects of the expansion of human connection and the resulting augmentation of the trait of sympathy, and Hume's trait of sympathy. Hume's characterization of the trait of sympathy (not the one I propose which includes the element of reason) posits that it is dependent on close connection with other agents. Thus, within the circumstances of growing human connection such as that which Pinker identifies, Hume would surely agree that the expansion of such intimacy would expand the scope of sympathy.

The Long Peace, Pinker argues, is necessarily a democratic peace, due to the propensity of such a form of governance to facilitate peace and avoid military disputes (283). Pinker draws from Immanuel Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace", in order to explain why democracy would work to facilitate peace (even if the rulers of such states are not peaceable or altruistic). Democracy,

Kant proposed, “is designed to resolve conflicts among citizens by consensual rule of law”, and thus, such a form of organization can be interpreted to be applied in interactions with other societies as well. As democracies are designed in such a way, democratic states can trust that their dealings with each other will be just. Trust can be formed between such states, which “should nip in the bud the Hobbesian cycle in which the fear of a preemptive attack on each side tempts both into launching a preemptive attack” (278). Additionally, “since democratic leaders are accountable to their people, they should be less likely to initiate stupid wars that enhance their glory at the expense of their citizenries’ blood and treasure” (278).⁵³

The justification of the existence of the democratic state posited in Pinker’s theory is based on the account of human sociability he promotes. Pinker explains, however, that there are limits to the effectiveness of such a state (and thus, to its justifiability). “Democracy”, Pinker states, “is not completely exogenous to a society; it is not a list of procedures for the workings of a government from which every other good follows. It is woven into a fabric of civilized attitudes that includes, most prominently, a renunciation of political violence...Without this fabric, democracy brings no guarantee of internal peace” (284). Thrusting democratic rule on every state, therefore, will not work to facilitate successful interaction, as both a democratic form of governance and certain traits (attitudes) in citizens are necessary for successful interaction to be secured. Thus, Pinker’s theory of political governance can be seen as bounded insofar as it is only applicable in relation to a certain type of agent. Thus, the inherent and important connection between the nature of sociability, and the justification of political governance, is expressed in Pinker’s theory.

⁵³ Although the design of democratic states may be aimed towards minimize certain forms of violence (in this specific context, war), such designs often fail, in reality, to fulfill their purpose.

Pinker, additionally, addresses the role that the institution of capitalism may play in the facilitation of peace, which is somewhat analogous to Kant's argument regarding the effects of democratic rule in doing so. Pinker highlights the nature of contracts within the capitalist system as being voluntarily created between citizens rather than imposed by the state (287). Pinker explains that "[t]he ethic of voluntary negotiation within a country...is naturally externalized to its relationships with other countries. The transparency and intelligibility of a country with a free market economy can reassure its neighbors that it is not going on a war footing, which can defuse a Hobbesian trap and cramp a leader's freedom to engage in risky bluffing and brinkmanship" (287).⁵⁴

The New Peace

The New Peace constitutes the decline of "organized conflicts of all kinds—civil wars, genocides, repression by autocratic governments, and terrorist attacks... since the end of the Cold War in 1989" (xxiv). Pinker explains that although the Long Peace secured unprecedented levels of peace in the world, three types of violence continue to occur. The first, Pinker states, "embraces all the other categories of violence, most notably the civil wars and wars between militias, guerrillas, and paramilitaries that plague the developing world. The[y] are the 'new wars' or 'low-intensity conflicts' that are said to be fueled by 'ancient hatreds'" (296). The second of such forms of violence is the "mass killing of ethnic and political groups" (296), and the third is terrorism (297). The fact that these forms of violence persist, Pinker explains,

⁵⁴ Again, although the design of capitalism may minimize the chances of certain types of violence occurring (in this specific instance, war between states with free markets), it often, in reality, fails to do so.

produces “the impression that the world is ‘a more dangerous place than ever’” (296), however, this is not the case, as all three forms of violence are in decline.

The message of this subsection is that changes in agents’ traits of sociability regarding violence and governance, and the implementation of the state and democracy, have facilitated the decline of violence. Pinker eloquently explains that “[t]he point is not that we have entered into an Age of Aquarius in which every last earthing has been pacified forever. It is that substantial reductions in violence *have* taken place, and it is important to understand them. Declines in violence are caused by political, economic, and ideological conditions that take hold in particular cultures at particular times. If the conditions reverse, violence could go right back up” (361).

The Rights Revolutions

The final trend in the decline of violence, which Pinker identifies, constitutes a change in agents’ attitudes (traits) towards violence, comprising a “growing revulsion against aggression on smaller scales, including violence against ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals, and animals” (xxiv) in the postwar era. The changes in agents’ attitudes towards violence on such a scale has resulted in “efforts to stigmatize, and in many cases criminalize, temptations to violence...in a cascade of campaigns for ‘rights’— civil rights, women’s rights, children’s rights, gay rights, and animal rights” (380). The decline of such forms of violence has been facilitated by the same factors identified in the previous subsections of the chapter, i.e. changes in agents’ attitudes towards violence, as well as the state, and changes in the means/aims of governance.

Pinker provides an example of the decline of deadly ethnic riots. Agents, he explains, possess “a rising abhorrence of violence, and of even the slightest trace of a mindset that might lead to it” (388). This facilitates the decline of such forms of violence insofar as “the main risk

factor of genocides and deadly ethnic riots is an essentialist psychology that categorizes the members of a group as insensate obstacles, as disgusting vermin, or as avaricious, malignant, or heretical villains” (388-9). In addition to the relevant psychological changes in agents’ attitudes, changes in governance worked to reduce deadly ethnic riots in the West. Pinker explains that “[p]rompt law enforcement can quell riots and nip cycles of group-against-group revenge in the bud” (388), and “that “official discrimination by governments [has] been in decline” (389).⁵⁵

As has been discussed above, changes in the nature/implementation of the trait of sympathy have led to an expansion of the scope of whom we sympathize with, which led to the increasing inclusion of children and gay individuals within circles of sympathy. As Pinker explains, “Americans increasingly felt that gay people were a part of their real and virtual communities, and that made it harder to keep them outside their circle of sympathy” (451). Pinker states that were he “to put my money on the single most important exogenous cause of the Rights Revolutions, it would be the technologies that made ideas and people increasingly mobile” (477). In relation to Hume’s characterization of the trait of sympathy, such increasing connection between agents would work to overcome the limitations of the trait in regard to the requirement of agents’ proximity.

Another example of a change in agents’ traits of sociability is the augmentation of the trait of reason, which can be labelled as pro-social when it is utilized to facilitate solidarity. The augmentation of such a trait, Pinker explains, is invoked in many of the projects which strive to protect individuals. “The universalizing of the generic citizen’s vantage point”, he explains, “driven by reason and analogy, was an engine of moral progress during the Humanitarian Revolution of the 18th century, and it resumed that impetus during the Rights Revolutions of the

⁵⁵ This is, clearly, a highly contestable claim.

20th” (404). Furthermore, changes in agents’ ideals regarding humankind facilitated “a humanist mindset that elevate[d] the rights of individual people” (414) above other considerations such as community traditions.

It is interesting to note that the effects of the recognition of the equality of humankind on peace has been echoed in Hume’s, Kropotkin’s, and Hobbes’s work. The trait of sympathy Hume promotes, I argue, draws on such considerations in creating the moral obligation to the virtue of justice, insofar as it becomes morally unjustifiable to harm others through reasoned deliberation regarding the right of all agents to equal treatment. Kropotkin, furthermore, rests his theory on the premise of the equal right of agents to well-being. As he explicitly states, “[w]hat we proclaim is The Right To Well-Being: Well-Being For ALL!” (Kropotkin 1926, 11). Finally, Hobbes posits that one of the laws of nature is to acknowledge the equality of others (ninth law), as human equality is both a true state of affairs, as well as necessary for the facilitation of peace (due to agents’ high self-regard).

Finally, Pinker presents an example of a decline of violence which has been facilitated by a change in agents’ propensity to utilize and act on reason, in regard to moral principles. “The revolution in animal rights”, he explains,

is a uniquely emblematic instance of the decline of violence...because the change has been driven purely by the ethical principle that one ought not to inflict suffering on a sentient being. Unlike the other Rights Revolutions, the movement for animal rights was not advanced by the affected parties themselves...Nor has it been a by-product of commerce, reciprocity, or any other positive-sum negotiation...And...it does not hold out the promise of an improvement in the makeup of its beneficiaries later in life. The recognition of animal interests was taken forward by human advocates on their behalf, who were moved by empathy, reason, and the inspiration of the other Rights Revolutions. (456)

Pinker states, in conclusion, that “[i]nsofar as violence is immoral, the Rights Revolutions show that a moral way of life often requires a decisive rejection of instinct, culture, religion, and standard practice. In their place is an ethics that is inspired by empathy and reason and stated in the language of rights” (475). This quote appears to suggest that Pinker promotes an account of human sociability which posits agents as being, at base, predisposed towards violence, which must be consciously rejected and overcome in order for peace to prevail in society. This is not, however, an accurate interpretation of Pinker’s account of sociability. Pinker explicitly states that the hydraulic theory of violence is untrue (xxv), and that “[h]umans are not innately good (just as they are not innately evil), but they come equipped with motives that can orient them away from violence and toward cooperation and altruism” (xxv).

Pinker’s Account of Sociability

In the following section of the chapter, I will provide an overview of Pinker’s account of sociability. Pinker holds the generic account of sociability, insofar as he posits agents as possessing both pro-social and anti-social traits. I will argue that Pinker’s account is one which emphasizes the anti-socialness of agents, as the state is held to be necessary to augment/facilitate the pro-social traits agents possess, in order to facilitate the decline of violence.

Throughout the above exegesis regarding the decline of violence in history, many of the traits of sociability which Pinker posits have been touched upon. I will not, therefore, provide a detailed explanation of each trait he posits, but rather, provide information which will allow the reader to identify the relevant traits in the above story, and evaluate how they have evolved throughout history.

Five Inner Demons

In this subsection, I provide an overview of the traits of sociability which Pinker labels “inner demons”. These traits, he holds, are those which predominantly impel us towards violence (which, in such circumstances, are conceived as anti-social in nature). Pinker maintains that the inner demons and better angels he identifies are caused by specific brain systems, which are ramped up or down by certain forces (such as, for instance, the state) (497).⁵⁶ As Pinker explains, the relevant brain systems involved in such traits “can cause both the best and the worst in human behavior” (497). Pinker states, however “that violence does not have a single psychological root but a number of them, working by different principles” (Pinker 2011, 508), and therefore, one must also look at the reasons why people engage in violence, not just the relevant circuitry.

Pinker explicitly states that while agents possess a number of inner demons, “[w]hatever causes violence, it is not a perennial urge like hunger, sex, or the need to sleep” (482). However, he does wish to clarify “that most of us...are wired for violence, even if in all likelihood we will never have an occasion to use it” (483). The majority of agents, he explains, fantasize about violence, however, they do not often execute the relevant acts in reality (485). Even when conflict does occur, such as when two individuals fight each other, “they often exercise restraint. But this reticence is not a sign that humans are gentle and compassionate. On the contrary, it’s just what one would expect from the analyses of violence by Hobbes and Darwin” (487). Initiating conflict with others puts the aggressor at risk of being harmed by the intended target, as well as provides the targeted individual with the motivation of preemptively harming them before they initiate the conflict. Furthermore, the aggressor risks retribution carried out by the

⁵⁶ For the purpose of the dissertation, I will not explore the specifics of these brain systems.

target's kin if they prevail in the conflict. Thus, “[i]t stands to reason that initiating serious aggression in a symmetrical standoff is something a Darwinian creature must consider very, very carefully” (487). Agents are most likely to engage in conflict when the circumstances favour their success, such as when their opponent is vulnerable.

A further aspect regarding the nature of human violence is that agents possess an ability to mentally deny their capacity for violence (488), and an ability to rationalize to themselves that they are justified in any violence they do execute (490). Such “[s]elf-serving biases”, Pinker states,

are part of the evolutionary price we pay for being social animals. People congregate in groups not because they are robots who are magnetically attracted to one another but because they have social and moral emotions. They feel warmth and sympathy, gratitude and trust, loneliness and guilt, jealousy and anger. The emotions are internal regulators that ensure that people reap the benefits of social life—reciprocal exchanges and cooperative action—without suffering the costs, namely exploitation by cheaters and social parasites. We sympathize with, trust, and feel grateful to those who are likely to cooperate with us, rewarding them with our own cooperation. And we get angry at or ostracize those who are likely to cheat, withdrawing cooperation or meting out punishment. A person's own level of virtue is a tradeoff between the esteem that comes from cultivating a reputation as a cooperator and the ill-gotten gains of stealthy cheating. A social group is a marketplace of cooperators of differing degrees of generosity and trustworthiness, and people advertise themselves as being as generous and trustworthy as they can get away with, which may be a bit more generous and trustworthy than they are. (490-1)

Self-serving biases, therefore, work to influence agents' judgments regarding the advantages they deserve, in relation to the harms they exact against others, within the context of society (491). The balance between trust/cooperation and free-riding is a dichotomy we have observed in many of the theories evaluated in chapters two and three. It is interesting to note that Hume believes that free-riding impedes successful interaction in society (requiring state intervention to

prevent such circumstances), while Kropotkin does not. Self-serving biases, Pinker argues, can be overcome, however, they possess strong motivational force in interaction (492).

The first inner demon which Pinker identifies is the trait of predation, which is categorized under “practical, instrumental, exploitative, or predatory” violence. Such violence, Pinker explains, is simply construed as “the use of force as a means to an end” (508), and “coincides with Hobbes’s first cause of quarrel: to invade for gain” (509). Such violence involves agents harming others in pursuit of their own well-being, as evolutionarily developed survival machines (509). Predatory violence, Pinker continues, can involve “[d]efensive and preemptive violence” (510) against potential aggressors.

“The psychology of predatory violence”, Pinker explains, “consists in the human capacity for means-end reasoning and the fact that our faculties of moral restraint do not kick in automatically in our dealings with every living thing” (511). Thus, predatory violence can be interpreted as occurring as a result of the trait of reason, as well as the boundedness of the trait of sympathy. Pinker explains that when an agent who is the object of predation uses their own form of instrumental violence in retaliation, this “gives rise to a security dilemma or Hobbesian trap” (510). Although predatory violence is engaged in through practical reasoning, in such circumstances a psychological shift may occur regarding the traits upon which the predator is acting, “from dispassionate means-end analysis to disgust, hatred, and anger” (511). This explanation regarding the psychology of predatory violence suggests that agents possess capacities (traits) for disgust, hate, and anger, which, in the relevant circumstances, can be activated, and facilitate the execution of violence.

Agents, furthermore, are held to possess the capacity (trait) for confidence which, if excessively invoked in relation to predatory violence, can lead to severe harm. Pinker explains

that agents not only possess the capacity for confidence, but furthermore, have a propensity to delude themselves about their abilities, leading to unreasonable overconfidence (512). If agents “were completely rational”, Pinker explains, “they would launch an act of predatory aggression only if they were likely to succeed and only if the spoils of the success exceeded the losses they would incur in the fighting. By the same token, the weaker party should concede as soon as the outcome was a foregone conclusion...Violence would come about only if the two parties were so closely matched that a fight was the only way to determine who was stronger” (512). However, due to the human propensity for overconfidence, agents are prone to engage in conflict even when it is unreasonable for them to do so, as they misconstrue their chances of success. As Pinker states, “[t]he result [of such behaviour] can be wars of attrition...which...are among the most destructive events in history” (512).

The second inner demon Pinker identifies is the trait of (seeking) dominance, which underlies violence that is engaged in due to “the drive for supremacy over one’s rivals” (508). Such a trait can lead to violence between individuals, but also between groups. Hobbes identifies the harmful effects of the drive for dominance in his work, through agents’ trait of glory-seeking in the state of nature. Pinker explains the logic behind the trait of (seeking) dominance: “[i]n any zone of anarchy, an agent can protect its interests only by cultivating a reputation for a willingness and an ability to defend itself against against depredations. Though this mettle can be demonstrated in retaliation after the fact, it’s better to flaunt it proactively, before any damage is done” (515).

One factor which leads to violence through seeking dominance is agents’ capacity for confidence, and their tendency for unreasonable over-confidence. Similar to the idea Hobbes promotes regarding agents’ valuation of themselves compared to others, Pinker states that

(certain) agents possess the trait of excessive self-esteem. Such a trait can augment violence resulting from the trait of (seeking) domination, as an affront to one's own posited abilities can enrage an agent who holds themselves in high esteem (520).

Furthermore, a trait which Pinker identifies in agents is the tendency to conflate one part of their identity with that of the group with which they are affiliated. This trait, Pinker explains, seems to have resulted from evolutionary adaptation, insofar as the welfare of one's group affects one's own welfare. Such a trait, however, can lead to violence, insofar as it involves a desire for one's group to dominate others (522). This trait is labelled as "tribalism", as it involves agents' desire for their group to be categorized at the top in a hierarchy of dominance.

Pinker explains that "[v]iolence-prone personality traits [(such as dominance-seeking)] are [extremely] consequential when they infect political rulers", as the decisions of such agents "can affect hundreds of millions of people" (520). However, the institution of democracy, he argues, can help to prevent such circumstances from coming about, as the leadership-selection process which underlies it "penalizes an utter lack of empathy, and [its] checks and balances limit the damage that a grandiose leader can do" (521).⁵⁷ Pinker explains that the trait of dominance-seeking is an evolutionary adaptation to nonstate conditions, and thus once a state is introduced, it no longer has any advantages (as agents do not need to cultivate a reputation for violence as they are not potential subjects of attack). Furthermore, such a trait becomes harmful, as agents will suffer repercussions if they engage in it within the circumstances of state rule. Thus, the institution of the state works to diminish violence between individuals and groups. Pinker stipulates, however, that this "doesn't mean that the emotions behind dominance will go

⁵⁷ As identified above, although the design of states may be aimed at such ends, they often fail to prevent such harm from coming about.

away—they are very much a part of our biology, especially in a certain gender—but they can be marginalized” (528).

Pinker argues that certain traits, such as that of dominance-seeking, generally possesses stronger motivational force in males than females (525). Pinker states that “[t]he gender gaps in overconfidence, personal violence, and group-against-group hostility raise a frequently asked question: Would the world be more peaceful if women were in charge? The question is just as interesting if the tense and mood are changed. Has the world become more peaceful because women are more in charge? And will the world become more peaceful when women are even more in charge? The answer to all three, I think, is a qualified yes” (526). The aforementioned idea promoted by Pinker highlights a potential further element which can be attributed to his theory of political governance, which is support for a female leader (within the institution of liberal democracy).

The third inner demon addressed by Pinker is revenge. The trait of seeking revenge is prominently addressed in Hobbes’s work, as he cites the drive for revenge to be widespread in the state of nature due to agents’ glory-seeing (in order to protect their reputation) and vainglory-seeking (to avenge affronts to their self-esteem). Pinker posits that the trait of revenge-seeking “is, quite literally, an urge” (530), and can thus be interpreted to possess strong motivational force in agents’ behaviour. Pinker further explains that “[r]evenge requires the disabling of empathy” (531).

Pinker explains that revenge is driven by the desire to prove that one will react unfavourably if harmed, for the purpose of deterrence. If agents avenge harms done to them, this illustrates to others that harming them will result in a greater loss than the gain they may reap by doing so (532). The tendency for revenge is an essential feature of the scheme of social

interaction which pervades life in society, represented by the prisoner's dilemma (discussed in chapter three). In iterated versions of the prisoner's dilemma, the most effective strategy that one can use is "a simple strategy of Tit for Tat: cooperate on the first move, then continue to cooperate if your partner cooperates, but defect if he defects. Since cooperation is rewarded and defection punished, defectors will switch to cooperation, and in the long run everyone wins" (534). This strategy draws on Robert Trivers' idea of evolutionarily developed reciprocal altruism. Trivers states that traits of sociability are evident in the scheme of Tit for Tat cooperation, including that of vengeance: "[s]ympathy is cooperating on the first move. Gratitude is cooperating with a cooperator. And anger is defecting against a defector—in other words, punishing in revenge...Vengeance is no disease: it is necessary for cooperation, preventing a nice guy from being exploited" (534). Thus, the trait of revenge is reasonable insofar as it prevents agents from free-riding on others' cooperation.

The motivational force of the trait of revenge, Pinker explains, can be diminished by certain factors. The first is with regard to agents within one's circle of sympathy (for instance, one's family, friends, etc.). Another such diminishing factor is if the relationships at stake are too valuable to undermine (541). A final circumstance which works to diminish the force of the trait of revenge is if "the perpetrator has become harmless" (542). The perpetrator may try to persuade the relevant agent that they no longer wish to harm them, and that the harm they exacted was a result of unfortunate circumstances which won't be repeated.

The state helps to reduce the occurrence of acts of revenge, Pinker explains, as it evaluates, in an unbiased way, harms that have occurred between agents.⁵⁸ The state consequently possesses a "monopoly on force [which] prevents the loser from doing anything

⁵⁸ The claim that the state acts as an unbiased judge is, certainly, seriously inaccurate.

about it, and gives him less reason to *want* to do something about it, because he is not conceding weakness to his adversary and has less incentive to carry on the fight to restore his honor” (538). Pinker further explains that the criminal justice system bases its punishments not solely on “specific deterrence, general deterrence, and incapacitation...[but] also embraces just deserts, which is basically citizens’ impulse [(and desire)] for revenge” (538).

Although the existence of the state works to reduce violence, it can only reduce it to a certain level. While the Pacification Process worked to reduce deadly violence based on revenge, in order to further promote peace, it is additionally necessary that agents internalize the norms which are promoted by the state. This phenomenon does occur, Pinker explains, and can be explained through the theory of the Civilizing Process. “[G]overnment-administered justice”, he explains, “can have knock-on effects that lead its citizens to internalize norms of self-restraint and quash their impulses for retribution rather than act on them” (540).

The fourth inner demon which Pinker identifies is sadism. The trait of sadism, Pinker explains, is monstrous, as well as baffling, insofar as there is no evolutionary explanation as to why it occurs. Sadism is described as “ [t]he deliberate infliction of pain for no purpose but to enjoy a person’s suffering”, wherein the agent engaging in the trait “receives no apparent personal or evolutionary benefit” (547) from the harm they inflict. Sadism has been engaged in throughout history in forms such as torture and serial killing, as well as in the actions of agents such as “inquisitors, rampagers, public execution spectators, bloodsport fans, and Colosseum audiences” (549). There are several motives within humans, Pinker explains, which may explain why certain agents engage in this trait: “a morbid fascination with the vulnerability of living things” (549), “dominance” (550), “revenge” (550), and sexual gratification (551). Sadism

requires, Pinker explains, two features: 1) “motives to enjoy the suffering of others, and [2]) a removal of the restraints that ordinarily inhibit people from acting on them” (549).

Mental traits exist, Pinker states, which impede violence from sadism from occurring, which only fail from doing so when they are disabled (552). The most prominent of such traits is that of empathy. As Pinker explains, “[i]f people feel each other’s pain, then hurting someone else will be felt as hurting oneself” (552). This idea of empathy and its effects has been evaluated prominently in Hume’s work (Hume labels this trait the trait of sympathy). The trait of empathy, however, is limited, insofar as it only occurs when it “include[s] an alignment of one’s own happiness with that of another being” (552). Another prominent impediment to the engagement of sadism is the trait of revulsion, as humans naturally feel a visceral reaction to such acts of violence (553). A final impediment to the engagement of sadism can be created within the institutions of society, insofar as the paths which lead to such actions can be blocked, thus preventing people from acquiring a taste for it (556).

The final inner demon which Pinker cites as a cause of violence is ideology, which, I interpret, is a consequence of the trait of reason. Violence which is caused by ideology is a form of instrumental violence, Pinker explains, insofar as it is perpetrated with the aim of advancing “a conception of the greater good” (556). Violence which is perpetrated with the aim of an ideological end is highly dangerous, insofar as the nature of the good it pursues justifies unlimited violence for its achievement, and “opponents of the ideology [are characterized as] infinitely evil and hence deserving of infinite punishment” (556).

The psychological component of the human mind which allows agents to engage in such violence is an “ability to think through long chains of means-end reasoning...[facilitating their] carry[ing] out [of] unpleasant means as a way to bring about desirable ends” (556) (with such

means potentially including harming other human beings). Pinker explains that this aspect of the trait of reason is supported by the traits of seeking “dominance and revenge, our habit of essentializing other groups, particularly as demons or vermin, our elastic circle of sympathy, and the self-serving biases that exaggerate our wisdom and virtue” (557). A further trait which can propagate ideological violence is the group-think explained above (in the discussion on the trait of dominance-seeking). Within groups, “pathologies of thought” (557) can be fostered, in which ideas are reinforced and strengthened. Within such circumstances, agents adopt ideas which they individually may not accept (565), which facilitate their execution of actions which they may not have otherwise engaged in (559).

Pinker explains that opportunities for ideological violence can be prevented through “open societies with freedom of speech and movement and well-developed channels of communication” (564), as such societies are less likely to foster/promote harmful ideologies. Pinker explains that although “nothing can guarantee that virulent ideologies will not infect a country, one vaccine is an open society in which people and ideas move freely and no one is punished for airing dissenting views, including those that seem heretical to polite consensus” (569). As Pinker explains, “[t]he relative immunity of modern cosmopolitan democracies to genocide and ideological civil war is a bit of support for this proposition” (569).⁵⁹

Four Better Angels

⁵⁹ This is, certainly, a shocking and unacceptable statement from Pinker, given the horrific violence that “modern cosmopolitan democracies” do, in fact, perpetrate. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, and as will be discussed further, I do not agree with the entirety of the content of Pinker’s story regarding the state’s effects on the decline of violence, and I furthermore wish to distance myself from offensive statements such as this.

Pinker explains that while human beings possess traits which incline them towards violence, they also possess those which incline them towards peace. Such traits have been augmented throughout history, which contributed to the decline of violence (573). Pinker does not celebrate such traits too highly, however, as he explains that “[t]he parts of the brain that restrain our darker impulses were also standard equipment in our ancestors who kept slaves, burned witches, and beat children, so they clearly don’t make people good by default. And it would hardly be a satisfying explanation of the decline of violence to say that there are bad parts of human nature that make us do bad things and good parts that make us do good things” (573). Pinker, therefore, upholds my conception of the nature of traits of sociability as either pro-social or anti-social depending on the outcome of the relevant trait, as most traits can be classified as either within different circumstances. Pinker explains that although agents’ better angels deter them from violence, an explanation must be provided as to “why they so often fail...not just how they have been increasingly engaged, but why history had to wait so long to engage them fully” (573). The explanations below will provide evidence for the conclusion I posit within Pinker’s account, which is that although he promotes the generic account of sociability, he emphasizes the anti-social nature of human interaction. While agents’ engagement with their better angels has certainly increased, aiding the decline of violence (573), this alone (i.e. without state intervention) was not sufficient to facilitate the drop which has occurred over the course of history.

The first better angel Pinker discusses is the trait of empathy. Pinker posits this trait as a cause of certain aspects of the decline of violence, as is evident in the exegesis provided in the previous section of the chapter. Furthermore, it works to uphold the reduction of violence in contemporary circumstances in regard to agents’ aversion to cruel punishments, and their

increased concern pertaining to “the human costs of war” (572). However, Pinker stipulates that the effects of the trait of empathy must not be exaggerated. He explains that, while “[t]he decline of violence may owe something to an expansion of empathy,...it also owes much to harder-boiled faculties like prudence, reason, fairness, self-control, norms and taboos, and conceptions of human rights” (572-3).

The trait of empathy is often confused with many different mental states, such as projection, perspective-taking, and mind-reading (574). “The sense of empathy we value most”, Pinker explains, “...is a distinct reaction that may be called sympathetic concern, or sympathy for short. Sympathy consists in aligning another entity’s well-being with one’s own, based on a cognizance of their pleasures and pains” (576). This sense of empathy, posited as “an altruistic concern for others” (574), is similar to the re-characterization of Hume’s trait of sympathy, involving logical reasoning regarding the equality of agents and their shared experience.

The trait of empathy, however, does not solely work to facilitate successful interaction. As Pinker explains, “[e]mpathy, in the morally relevant sense of sympathetic concern, is not an automatic reflex of our mirror neurons. It can be turned on or off and even inverted into counterempathy, namely feeling good when someone else feels bad and vice versa” (577). When revenge is executed, for example, such a reversal of the trait of empathy occurs (577). Thus, Pinker explains that empathy cannot be reliably counted on to facilitate the decline of violence, as it can change form depending on the relationships in which it is invoked. “Depending on how beholders conceive of a relationship”, Pinker explains, “their response to another person’s pain may be empathic, neutral, or even counterempathic” (578).

As noted earlier, agents sympathize with specific others. The “innermost kernel [of empathy] is the nurturance we feel toward our own children—the phenomenon of perception we

call cuteness” (Pinker 2011, 580). In addition to cuteness, physical beauty elicits more sympathy from agents. Pinker explains that although

we do manage to sympathize with our adult friends and relatives, including the ugly ones...our sympathy is spread not indiscriminately but within a delimited circle within which we apply a suite of moral emotions. Sympathy has to work in concert with these other emotions because social life cannot be a radiation of warm and fuzzy feelings in all directions. Friction is unavoidable in social life...Together with sympathy we feel guilt and forgiveness, and these emotions tend to apply within the same circle. (580-1)

Pinker explains that sympathy and guilt apply most effectively within communal relationships rather than exchange or equality-matching relationships (581). Furthermore, sympathy is most likely to be engaged in between agents who share similarities (e.g. hold the same values) (582).

Although the trait of empathy can be extended to new classes of agents, Pinker states that “we should not aim for an ‘age of empathy’ or an ‘empathic civilization’ as the solution to our problems...[as] [e]mpathy has a dark side” (590). As Pinker identifies, sympathy is typically applied to specific agents, and thus can “run afoul of [the] more fundamental principle [of] fairness” (590). The subversion of justice due to the trait of empathy, Pinker explains, can result in serious harm when it is executed by political leaders/institutions, as it can lead to the marginalization and harm of certain groups of people. As Pinker states, “[t]he institutions of modernity depend on carrying out abstract fiduciary duties that cut across bonds of empathy” (591).⁶⁰

The second better angel which Pinker identifies is the trait of self-control. Violence can be produced, he explains, from a lack of self-control (592), such as (for example) impulsive violence. Pinker explains that although most people “are not so lacking in self-control that they

⁶⁰ The biased care/concern that states give to certain groups of people within society, and the horrific harm/neglect that it engages in towards others, clearly illuminates that the bonds of empathy still influence, to a significant degree, the workings of modern states.

ever lash out in violence” (598), agents “with low self-control [are] more likely to perpetrate acts of violence” (599). Although self-control is an inherited, stable trait in individuals, Pinker states that it can still increase over time (606). Pinker explains that neurobiologically, the trait of self-control is one which takes physical effort to engage in (602), and as such can be strengthened through practice, and/or supplemented through external forces (such as, for example, proper nutrition, sobriety, etc.) (608).

Another force which can facilitate the strengthening of the trait of self-control is the ideology surrounding it in society. “In some eras”, Pinker explains, “self-control defines the paragon of a decent person...In others it is jeered at” (609). The increase of self-control, and the resulting decrease of violence, can be explained through the ideology presented in the theory of the Civilizing Process. “[T]he consolidation of states”, Pinker explains, “and the growth of commerce did more than just tilt the incentive structure away from plunder. It also inculcated an ethic of self-control that made continence and propriety second nature” (592).⁶¹

Pinker further explores whether the advances in self-control which are possible in individuals can be promulgated throughout a society, and thus change its overall character. Such a process is possible, Pinker posits, and would consist in “a change in law enforcement and opportunities for economic cooperation that objectively tilt the payoffs so that a deferral of gratification, in particular, an avoidance of impulsive violence, pays off in the long run” (609). This change in societal structure would facilitate an increase in agents’ exercise of self-control, which would in turn strengthen the trait, causing an inhibition of “violent impulses, above and beyond what is strictly necessary to avoid being caught and punished” (609). Pinker holds,

⁶¹ As highlighted above, the self-control and propriety that is claimed to have been instilled through the Civilizing Process is unjustifiably directed towards certain groups of people in society.

therefore, that the trait of self-control works to reduce violence, however, for it to be effectively strengthened and engaged in throughout societies, the state must be necessarily invoked.

The third better angel which Pinker identifies is the sense of morality (and additionally, sense of taboo). The human moral sense, Pinker argues, has facilitated advances of peace within certain circumstances, such as in “the humanitarian reforms of the Enlightenment and the Rights Revolutions of recent decades”, however, its overall influence on human welfare has been negative (622). The moral sense, Pinker explains, can be invoked to promote peaceable values (such as the equality of human beings), however, it can also be invoked in moral precepts which call for harsh punishment for violations. The moral sense, Pinker states, “would seem to have the strongest claim to be the source of our goodness...[however] in practice...[it] can be more diabolical than our worst inner demon” (622). The moral sense, Pinker emphasizes, is vulnerable “to competing convictions, most of which are morally wrong” (642), which makes it very dangerous in relation to violence.

Moral norms throughout the world, although produced by diverse cultures, “cluster around a small number of themes” (624), which provide an overall “grammar for social norms” (628). Such norms are created in relation to the nature of the specific relationships between agents in society. Each role that agents occupy involves implicit social norms, and if they violate these norms they “have tacitly agreed to”, they become “a target of moralistic anger” (629). There are certain forces which can placate a moralized anger, such as an awareness that the agent violated the norm by accident (630), or recognition that the agent is from a culture which possesses different norms (632).

Political institutions, Pinker explains, are designed to promote and reframe moral values/taboo (631). Pinker explains that the trend in the structure of political institutions is away

from those which promote authority, and towards those which support freedom and commerce.⁶² Such a transition facilitates peace insofar as structures which support power hierarchies “can legitimize tribalism and jingoism, and...can legitimize government repression” (636). One of the most prominent reasons that peace is facilitated, however, is that emphasizing citizens’ freedom results in a smaller number of acts which call for state force to impede/punish. Furthermore, emphasis on the free market promotes the rational goal of facilitating the greatest good for all in society (636-7).

The final better angel which Pinker addresses is the trait of reason. One of the ways reason facilitates the decline of violence is by debunking absurd ideas which lead to horrific consequences, such as that the murder of certain races is necessary, or that Gods require sacrifices, etc. (645). Furthermore, reason works to facilitate self-control, insofar as “[i]t is reason—a deduction of the long-term consequences of an action—that gives the self reasons to control the self” (645). Reason, additionally, can work to suppress certain instincts towards violence that may be present within agents, and instead support aims which are justifiable. Reason can furthermore be used to calibrate the amount of violence which is used in individuals’ actions, as well as those of institutions such as the state. As Pinker explains “[a] measured degree of violence, even if only held in reserve, will always be necessary in the form of police forces and armies to deter predation or to incapacitate those who cannot be deterred. Yet there is a vast difference between the minimal violence necessary to prevent greater violence and the bolts of

⁶² The transition in states towards an emphasis on freedom and commerce must not be understood as a remedy to every harm which occurs in society, as institutions designed in such a manner can still be biased towards certain agents, perpetuate terrible harm on others, and be coercively imposed.

fury that an uncalibrated mind is likely to deliver in acts of rough justice” (646).⁶³ A further way that violence can be reduced through the use of reason, is “when it abstracts violence itself as a mental category and construes it as a problem to be solved rather than a contest to be won” (646).

The habit of using reason which would facilitate restraint in the execution of violence, Pinker explains, “does not come naturally and must be cultivated” (646). Pinker explicitly argues, however, against the idea that reason is always controlled by the passions. It has been proven in laboratory experiments, he explains, that “[e]ven if a decision is guided by intuition, the intuition itself may be a legacy of moral reasoning that ha[s] taken place beforehand” (644). Pinker addresses Hume’s famous quote stating that “reason is, and ought to be, only the slave of the passions”, explaining that Hume was simply “making the logical point that reason, by itself, is just a means of getting from one true proposition to the next and does not care about the value of those propositions” (644). This supports my proposition in chapter two regarding the inclusion of an element of reason within Hume’s trait of sympathy. I argued that reason would promote the true proposition of the equality of human beings, hence leading to an expansion of the scope of sympathy to all humankind. As will be illuminated below, Pinker promotes a similar idea regarding the effects of reason on the decline of violence.

Pinker suggests that reason can reduce violence by invoking in agents a desire for nonviolence. Such an ideology results from agents’ desire to advance their own well-being, and their inherent situatedness in a community in which agents necessarily interact and affect one another. In order to promote their well-being, they desire that society be peaceable. This desire is represented in the prisoner’s dilemma, insofar as “assumptions of self-interest and sociality

⁶³ As identified above, state institutions such as the police routinely exceed the minimum amount of force necessary for such tasks.

combine with reason to lay out a morality in which nonviolence is a goal” (647). In the real-world, agents are able to confer with each other in order to reach such a conclusion, and “bind their promises with emotional, social, or legal guarantors” (647). Furthermore, each side’s trait of reason dictates that they are equals as human beings and possess the same desire not to be harmed, and thus, one cannot justify preying on the other for reasons of desert, superiority, etc.

Reason, thus, can be deployed “in pursuit of universal human interests, including an avoidance of violence” (648). Pinker hypothesizes “that as collective rationality is honed over the ages, it will progressively whittle away at the shortsighted and hot-blooded impulses toward violence, and force us to treat a greater number of rational agents as we would have them treat us” (648). Pinker professes that “if the members of species have the power to reason with one another, and enough opportunities to exercise that power, sooner or later they will stumble upon the mutual benefits of nonviolence and other forms of reciprocal consideration, and apply them more and more broadly” (648).

Pinker argues that modern societies are getting smarter, and this facilitates reductions of violence (642). Pinker explains that there are “several grounds for supposing that enhanced powers of reason—specifically, the ability to set aside immediate experience, detach oneself from a parochial vantage point, and frame one’s ideas in abstract, universal terms—would lead to better moral commitments, including an avoidance of violence” (656). Pinker explains that throughout the 20th century agents’ abilities to reason were advanced, which may “help explain the documented declines of violence in the second half of the 20th century: the Long Peace, New Peace, and Rights Revolutions” (656).

Pinker explains why he chose the trait of reason as the last better angel to present:

[o]nce a society has a degree of civilization in place, it is reason that offers the greatest hope for further reducing violence. The other angels have been with us for as long as we have been human, but during most of our long existence they have been unable to prevent war, slavery, despotism, institutionalized sadism, and the oppression of women. As important as they are, empathy, self-control, and the moral sense have too few degrees of freedom, and too restricted a range of application, to explain the advances of recent decades and centuries. (668)

Reason, on the other hand, can overcome the shortcomings of the other better angels insofar as it is designed to continually produce new ideas. Thus, “[o]nce it is programmed with a basic self-interest and an ability to communicate with others, its own logic will impel it, in the fullness of time, to respect the interests of ever-increasing numbers of others” (669). Although Pinker argues that the trait of reason provides the most support to the decline of violence, it is significant to note that he contextualizes the effectiveness of this trait within the circumstances of state governance. That the trait which provides the strongest pro-social motivational force is only effective under the rule of the state, highlights the importance of state governance in relation to Pinker’s account of sociability, and provides strong support for the justifiability of the existence of the state within his theory.

Sociability Hypothesis & First Stage of Justification

Pinker, it is clear, supports the sociability hypothesis, as he posits the generic account of sociability. As he states, “[h]uman nature accommodates motives that impel us to violence, like predation, dominance, and vengeance, but also motives that—under the right circumstances—impel us toward peace, like compassion, fairness, self-control, and reason” (483). Thus, as Pinker states, the explanation he provides regarding the decline of violence “dispatche[s] a dichotomy that has stood in the way of understanding the roots of violence for millennia: whether humankind is basically bad or basically good, an ape or an angel, a hawk or a dove, the

nasty brute of textbook Hobbes or the noble savage of textbook Rousseau. Left to their own devices, humans will not fall into a state of peaceful cooperation, but nor do they have a thirst for blood that must regularly be slaked” (482). This ideal regarding human sociability promoted by Pinker is echoed by all other thinkers which have been evaluated in the dissertation (even Hobbes and Stirner), insofar as humans are held to be neither entirely pro-social or anti-social, but rather, falling somewhere in the middle of the scale. Agents possess the capacity for successful interaction, however, it must be necessarily supplemented (in the majority of cases) by the intervention of the state.

I wish to highlight, at this point, an interesting deviation of Pinker’s account of sociability from the general characterization of the generic account I provide in the first chapter. In the first chapter, I stated that the generic account can include an additional secondary stipulation regarding the size of societies in relation to the motivational force of pro-social/anti-social traits. This stipulation, promoted by thinkers such as Hume and Kropotkin, posits that societies interact (fairly) peaceably when they are small in size, and become increasingly violent as they grow. The nonstate societies which Pinker addresses in his work are certainly smaller than most societies under state rule which exist today, however, Pinker identifies, they are much more violent. Although it appears that the ideology underlying the secondary stipulation of the generic account is reversed in Pinker’s account, this is not the case. Societies do not become more peaceful as they grow in size, but rather, it is the presence of the state which determines whether societies are more or less peaceable.

Pinker identifies five inner demons which generate anti-social interaction among agents, and four better angels. It is notable that he provides more examples of inner demons than better angels, as I infer that his account is one which emphasizes the anti-social nature of human

beings. Not only does Pinker highlight more inner demons than better angels, but he further explains that most of the better angels he identifies can work to facilitate anti-social interaction (in addition to pro-social interaction). Agents' better angels are not sufficient, on their own, to facilitate successful interaction. The state is required in order to augment agents' better angels and supplement the pro-social effects they produce, and minimize conflict stemming from our inner demons, as well as the anti-social effects of our better angels.

The fact that Pinker does not hold that all the better angels he identifies are entirely pro-social represents the complexity within accounts of sociability which was highlighted throughout the dissertation, with such complexity (and ambiguity) influencing the justifiability of forms of governance which are promoted in relation to such accounts. As was shown, Pinker provides an explanation of the decline of violence throughout history, however, this decline is not simply a result of the pro-social propensities of human beings. Although Pinker holds agents to possess certain better angels, these do not necessarily lead to successful interaction, as they are held to be anti-social in certain circumstances. Thus, the complexity of the traits which Pinker posits leads to his promotion of an account of sociability which comprises subtle nuances, which lead the motivational force of agents' anti-social tendencies to overbalance the pro-social, thus justifying the existence of the state in its role of facilitating successful interaction in relation to them.

The state, therefore, within Pinker's theory, is invoked as a result of its necessity in facilitating (a certain level of) successful interaction among agents in society, due to the predominantly anti-social nature of their sociability. The state's existence, therefore, is justified through its role in facilitating (a certain level of) peace. The state's success in doing so is supported through Pinker's historical and psychological exposition of the decline of violence in history. The state not only reduces conflict when it is initially introduced, but works to augment

and alter agents' traits of sociability. Agents' pro-social traits are augmented and given the opportunity to flourish, and conflictual interaction stemming from agents' anti-social traits is deterred through punishment. The specific form of state which is justifiable in regard to Pinker's account of sociability, as it is the most effective in facilitating successful interaction, is a liberal democracy with a capitalist free market.

Although Pinker promotes a hopeful outlook regarding the decline of violence in the world, his tone "is one not so much of optimism as of gratitude. Optimism requires a touch of arrogance, because it extrapolates the past to an uncertain future...Declines of violence are a product of social, cultural, and material conditions. If the conditions persist, violence will remain low or decline even further; if they don't, it won't" (671). The state, Pinker claims, "[which] uses a monopoly on force to protect its citizens from one another may be the most consistent violence-reducer that we have encountered" (680). And although Pinker explicitly states that the purpose of his work is not to "offer advice to politicians, police chiefs, or peacemakers, which given [his] qualifications would be a form of malpractice" (671), I feel that it is appropriate for me, as an individual engaging in the project of political philosophy, to extrapolate from his work a justification of the existence of the state. Pinker argues that it is primarily a result of the institution of the state that violence declines in society, as it works to facilitate successful interaction by impeding agents' anti-social traits, as well as augmenting their pro-social traits and creating an environment in which they can be increasingly exercised. Pinker further argues, as illustrated in the above quote, that if the state were to be removed, it is possible that society would descend back into the high levels of violence which occur in nonstate societies.

Thus, it is clear, I argue, that Pinker can successfully fulfill the first stage of justification by meeting all three of the relevant tests. Pinker, firstly, acknowledges his reliance on sociability

assumptions, as he argues that the state must be necessarily invoked due to the nature of human sociability which he posits (holding agents' pro-social traits as not possessing enough motivational force to facilitate successful interaction without the aid of the state). Furthermore, Pinker adequately defends his assumptions of sociability by providing a detailed explanation of the nature of pro-social and anti-social traits throughout history, in specific regard to their nature in circumstances both within and outside of state rule. This explanation is based on empirical data from the fields of history and psychology, and thus, it can be interpreted as valid in regard to the nature of real human beings. Finally, Pinker consistently applies the assumptions of sociability he posits by providing an explanation of a form of state which would most effectively and justly facilitate successful interaction based on the nature of human sociability: a liberal democracy which incorporates a capitalist free market. This form of governance is effective in facilitating successful interaction as it possesses the necessary authority to impede agents acting on their anti-social traits, and facilitates increased engagement with their pro-social traits, however, it does not engage in excessive coercion where it is not required (and thus, would be unjustifiable). Pinker's theory involves the justification of the existence of the state in regard to its role in facilitating a decline of violence, as well as a further justification regarding which form of state would be optimal to do so.

Pinker's Account of Sociability & Theory of Governance in Relation to the Dissertation

I argue that my evaluation of Pinker's work provides a means of more accurately and thoroughly understanding the nature of sociability which can be posited in theories of governance, and its relationship with conflict (in Pinker's work, specifically, violence). Pinker promotes an account of sociability which posits a shift in the anti-socialness/pro-socialness of human beings over the

course of history. Early human history was characterized by agents living in nonstate societies. Violence was prevalent within such societies, and thus, it can be interpreted that agents are held to possess anti-social traits which are more numerous, or possess stronger motivational force, than pro-social traits. This is interpreted to be the case as agents, when left to freely organize society, predominantly act on their anti-social traits, and are thus unable to facilitate successful interaction. Once the state is invoked, agents are no longer free to act on their anti-social traits without repercussions. Such circumstances provide agents the opportunity to increasingly act on their pro-social traits.⁶⁴ Additionally, with the introduction of the state came the corresponding development of the capitalist market, which incentivized agents to develop pro-social traits which would allow them to benefit from successful interaction. The state, furthermore, works to augment pro-social traits by creating the circumstances within which agents are increasingly able to exercise pro-sociability, which, in turn, alters their disposition towards such interaction. Agents develop habits of interacting successfully with each other, which leads to the development of traits which contribute to positive interaction among agents. This development constitutes the final stage of the evolution of sociability, within Pinker's account, which is agents' development of traits which contribute to successful interaction beyond that which is merely peaceful. These specific traits are those which involve care/concern/love for other agents. Such a transition in the nature of agents' sociability was evident in the development of such traits in the Humanitarian Revolution and Rights Revolutions.

⁶⁴ Agents increasingly engage with their pro-social traits due to considerations of legal enforcement, as well as societal safety. Firstly, agents are induced to act on their pro-social traits by virtue of the fact that the state enforces peaceful interaction, and thus, agents must act on such traits rather than their anti-social traits upon threat of punishment. Furthermore, such circumstances present agents the opportunity to engage with pro-social traits, as they no longer face the risk of being harmed by others acting on their anti-social traits, and thus, do not need to protect themselves from being taken advantage of by similarly engaging in anti-social traits.

My interpretation of Pinker's account of sociability depends on my definitions of successful interaction and pro/anti-social traits which I have developed in the dissertation. I hold that successful interaction is that which is characterized by peaceful interaction, and pro-social/anti-social traits are those which, respectively, facilitate or impede such interaction. Essential to my definition of pro-social traits is the fact that such traits do not necessarily involve feelings such as care/concern/love for others, or a desire for/joy in interaction. Pro-social traits facilitate successful interaction insofar as they merely ensure that it is peaceful. The difference between pro-social traits as I define them, and traits which involve a care/concern/love of others (let us, for the sake of clarity, label such traits as "ultra-social traits"), is one of the principal causes of confusion regarding Pinker's work, which underlies certain critiques regarding his account of sociability in relation to his theory of governance.

In regard to the distinction between pro-social and ultra-social traits described above, I will outline the stages of sociability which emerge in Pinker's story of the evolution of human sociability. The first stage, in nonstate societies, is characterized by an emphasis on agents' anti-social traits, which correlates with high levels of violence. The second stage, once the state and free market are introduced, is characterized by an emphasis on agents' pro-social traits, which corresponds with the facilitation of successful interaction (understood as merely peaceful interaction). The final stage, which occurs during the Humanitarian and Rights Revolutions, is characterized by agents' development of ultra-social traits, which pertain to positive advances in the manner whereby agents relate to each other. The crucial difference between the second and third stages is the transition from successful interaction to interaction based on traits which

extend beyond mere peacefulness.⁶⁵

It is in relation to the difference between the second and third stages, that I believe many critiques of Pinker's work pertain. Certain critiques of Pinker seem to posit that the entirety of his story regarding the decline of violence pertains not just to successful interaction, but interaction which would be characterized by ultra-social traits. Thus, they find it difficult to believe that institutions such as the state or the free market would facilitate the transition of human beings from predominantly anti-social to ultra-social. Such confusion is intuitive, and it is precisely because the aforementioned institutions would not change agents into ultra-social beings that Pinker does not claim that they do so. The state and commerce merely facilitate successful interaction, which is, at this stage of the development of agents' sociability (the second stage), based on their self-interest (insofar as they do not want to be punished by the state for acting on their anti-social traits, and they wish to benefit from successful interaction). That successful interaction is based on self-interest is plausible in relation to the conception of the initial nature of human sociability as anti-social (and thus, the only reason that agents would transition to acting pro-socially would not be due to considerations of love/affection/care for others, but rather, concern for themselves).

That self-interest can be held to facilitate successful interaction has been demonstrated throughout the dissertation, which provides helpful insight in interpreting Pinker's account of

⁶⁵ It is important to note that the term "ultra-social" applies to traits, based on sentiments of care/concern/love for others, which facilitate positive interactions between agents which extend beyond mere peace. The sentiments which underlie such traits can, in certain circumstances, undermine successful interaction (for instance, if they are solely applied to specific individuals/groups, at the expense of care/concern/love for others). However, in keeping with the method whereby pro-social/anti-social traits have been defined in the dissertation, based on the consequences they produce, ultra-social traits will be held to be those which facilitate positive interaction (and, in the circumstances wherein the sentiments which underlie them impede successful interaction, they will be labelled as anti-social traits).

sociability and theory of governance. Traits engaged in out of self-interest can be labelled as pro-social insofar as they facilitate peaceful interaction (allowing for successful cooperation to occur), without being posited to inspire sentiments such as those pertaining to ultra-social traits. It is in regard to this characterization of pro-social traits that the trait of empathy is misunderstood by many critics of Pinker's theory. Pinker claims that the introduction of the free market encourages agents' development of empathy. Certain thinkers interpret this claim as suggesting that the free market makes agents love/care for each other, which, given its design in terms of motivation from personal gain, is not plausible. Pinker is able to successfully incorporate the idea of empathy within such an institution because empathy, in this context, is not understood as an ultra-social trait involving love/concern/care for others, but rather, as a trait which is used to better interpret others' desires in order to engage in mutually beneficial transactions in the context of successful interaction.

Pinker, in his explanation of the state's effect on the decline of violence, does not need to posit that it, or the free market, inspires sentiments of love/concern/care for others in order to posit that it facilitates the decline of violence. Pinker's theory, understood in the context of the definition of pro-social/anti-social traits which has been developed throughout this dissertation, can be interpreted as a plausible story regarding how humans were originally prone to conflict, and then, through institutions which invoked their self-interest, developed traits which allowed them to thrive in a society characterized by successful interaction. Only once the state is introduced in order to impede agents' anti-socialness, Pinker holds, are agents provided the opportunity to engage in successful interaction, and then continue on to develop ultra-social traits.

The explorations of accounts of sociability and theories of governance throughout the

dissertation help us to accurately interpret Pinker's work, as well as provide an important way of understanding the relationship between human sociability and conflict (specifically, in Pinker's case, violence). It is unnecessary for thinkers to espouse views which posits agents as entirely prone to violence, nor is it necessary for agents to be posited to possess an ever-reaching love/concern for humankind, in order to suggest that agents engage in conflict/successful interaction. On the interpretation of sociability I promote in the dissertation, agents can be held to possess both pro-social and anti-social traits, which results in the capacity to engage in successful interaction and conflict within different circumstances. On this characterization, violence is not necessarily a tendency within agents, but rather, an outcome of certain circumstances, based on specific traits which are engaged in. This characterization of sociability can posit the idea that agents engage in violence, while still being compatible with the idea that they are not inherently violent, and further, in fact, possess pro-social capacities. Conversely, the fact that agents possess pro-social capacities does not necessitate, within this interpretation, that they will never engage in violence. The idea that human beings possess the ability for violence, but are not necessarily "red in tooth and claw" (Tennyson 1900, 60), is an intuitively plausible characterization of humankind that almost all agents, presumably, would see as valid in regard to their own experiences of other people.

Thus, the dissertation has highlighted the important role of accounts of sociability in political philosophy. The dissertation has evaluated the requisite desiderata of accounts of sociability for them to be held to be potentially valid, and the necessary tests that the corresponding theories of governance must meet in order for the forms of governance promoted within them to be justifiable. Evaluating Pinker's work provides a clear illustration of how all the relevant criteria outlined above can be met, however, additionally provides an example of how

accounts of sociability can be posited, and misconstrued, highlighting the inherently important role they play, and danger they pose, to the justifiability of theories.

Further Critiques of Pinker's Work

It is important to note that Pinker's work is highly controversial. Although I address his work in this chapter, this does not mean that I implicitly support all the claims he makes in his story regarding the decline of violence. Some areas of this story, in fact, are potentially highly problematic. One of such areas is the posited decline of violence throughout the Humanitarian Revolution. Pinker argues that many forms of institutionalized violence declined, however, it is evident that much violence was still being perpetrated against certain marginalized groups, such as Africans or Indigenous peoples. Pinker's narrative of the decline of violence during this time, it appears, is narrowly constrained in regard to its viewpoint. Furthermore, this one-sidedness of Pinker's narrative is evident in his explanation of the Civilizing Process, which John Lea claims ignores a wide range of critical theory which propounds "a more discontinuous historical progress" (Lea 2013, 1226).

Pinker, furthermore, is accused of ignoring significant areas of harm which are byproducts of the form of direct physical violence which he focuses on in his work. Critics state that Pinker fails to identify war-related deaths such as "non-battle inflicted civilian deaths from starvation, dispossession and disease" (Ray 2013, 1225), as well as forms of slow/"structural" violence including "poverty, toxic pollution [and] preventable disease" (Lea 2013, 1226). To ignore forms of harm which are the indirect consequences of war is unacceptable, critics hold, as current warfare, with its heightened destructive power, has exponentially increased the amount of suffering which is produced (Ray 2013, 1225). Pinker focuses on deliberately inflicted violence,

but the effects of slow violence are also produced through human action (including human negligence), and he thus fails to highlight the prevailing problematic “social relations of power and technology” (Lea 2013, 1226). Similarly, John Gray argues that Pinker does not address the extensive number of agents whose lives were “irreparably broken and shortened” (Gray 2015) by residual violence from warfare, and that this reflects a conscious choice regarding which forms of violence are deemed worthy to be included in evaluation.

Pinker responds to such criticism by arguing that the narrow focus on deliberately inflicted violence is justified, as it is violence itself which is the topic of his evaluation. Pinker argues that the term “violence” should not be extended “metaphorically to other deplorable conditions that some theorists tendentiously call ‘structural’ or ‘slow’ violence, such as disease, poverty, inequality, or pollution”, due to the fact that “[n]ot everything that is unpleasant in life is the result of deliberate malevolence or exploitation” (Pinker 2015, NP5). Pinker argues that “[t]o equate them all as different forms of ‘violence’ is to get carried away with words and to confuse moralizing and politicized theorizing with understanding” (Pinker 2015, NP5). Pinker insists that the evaluation of physical violence is significant in its own respect, and thus, if declines in such violence occur, even if declines of all forms of harm do not, this is important to highlight and explain.

Critics, furthermore, accuse Pinker of misconstruing the decline of violence in regard to his conception of modern warfare. Pinker is accused of diminishing the existence of, and the harm caused by, modern warfare, in order to support his theory regarding the decline of violence and his promotion of the Long Peace. Throughout the “Long Peace”, critics argue, conflict has not ceased, but rather, its form has been altered, insofar as it has become less explicit (Gray 2011). The fact that wars are still fought in different forms suggests that “advanced societies

have become terrains of violent conflict. Rather than war declining, the difference between peace and war has been fatally blurred” (Gray 2015). Furthermore, recent conflicts are more unstable and harmful than in the past. As John Gray explains, the nature of modern warfare has changed so that, instead of it being “a contest between well-organised states that can at some point negotiate peace, it is now more often a many-sided conflict in fractured or collapsed states that no one has the power to end” (Gray 2015). In addition, the amount of civilian harm which results from such warfare, as a result of modern tactics and technology, is much higher than in the past (Gray 2015). To minimize such harm in the evaluation of the state of warfare in the world is unpalatable, as it seems unacceptable to characterize “targeted assassination by drones with their collateral damage to Pakistani wedding parties as inherently more civilised than roadside improvised explosive devices” (Rose 2013, 1228).

Other critiques of Pinker’s work relate to his claim that the state and the capitalist free market work to facilitate the decline of violence. Such institutions, they propose, can lead to harmful consequences in regard to structures of hierarchy, domination, and exploitation, and additionally, are morally problematic if they are coercively imposed. Pinker, furthermore, is accused of attempting to depict liberal democracy as a purely peaceful form of governance, when such states have engaged in imperialist conquests and/or those aimed to secure resources (Lea 2013, 1226).

Pinker responds to such criticisms by stating that it is a defensible factual claim, not an “ideological dogma”, that modern liberal democracies “have relatively low rates of several categories of violence such as war, homicide, and aggression against women, children, and gay people” (Pinker 2015, NP4). Furthermore, his work does not, he argues, present such states as perfect and virtuous facilitators of peace, as “the acts of violence perpetrated by western states

and empires are on full display” (Pinker 2015, NP6). Although certain agents with “prosecutorial mindset[s] of certain leftist ideologies” (Pinker 2015, NP6) may not wish to acknowledge it, “human rights, free speech, democracy, feminism, gay rights, and other good ideas largely originated in, and have been disproportionately embraced by, modern western societies” (Pinker 2015, NP6). However, Pinker makes clear that he does not attribute all aspects of the decline of violence to Western invention, as he reminds critics that his work posits “increasing cosmopolitanism and technologies of information exchange” (Pinker 2015, NP6) to produce violence-reducing advances, with violence-reducing ideas coming from many sources. Pinker claims that although certain critics may object to his promotion of the state and free market in regard to the nature of such institutions, they do play a role in certain specific forms of the decline of violence. Thus, they ought not be rejected in principle, as this mentality “corrodes an appreciation of the institutions of modernity...which have made our lives so much richer and safer” (Pinker 2011, “If I Ruled”).

Finally, certain critics have a serious problem with Pinker’s inclusion of empirical evidence from the field of evolutionary psychology in his story of the decline of violence. Certain critics oppose his use of data from the field to support his story (Gray 2011), some protest that he doesn’t adequately address varying data from within the field (Bhatt 2013, 1231), and others claim that the field is an unreliable source from which to gather data (Bhatt 2013, 1230). As a scholar in the field of political philosophy, I cannot assess the reliability of the field of evolutionary psychology, or Pinker’s adequacy in addressing relevant sources within the field. However, I do strongly reject the idea that Pinker ought not have included evidence from this field in his work. Throughout the dissertation, I have highlighted the importance of the role that accounts of sociability play within theories of political philosophy, and I have argued that it is of

fundamental importance that such accounts be seriously constructed. I believe that a necessary aspect of such a project is addressing data from empirical fields, one of which is evolutionary psychology. In the conclusion of the dissertation, I will address this claim in greater detail, and provide an example of how political philosophy and evolutionary psychology has been integrated in Allen Buchanan and Russell Powell's work *The Evolution of Moral Progress*. Such a discussion will, I propose, promote an exciting and hopeful outlook regarding the future of political philosophy.

In conclusion, while critics have raised important objections to some of Pinker's claims in his narrative regarding the decline of violence, and to some of his methodology, I do not believe that any of these critiques affect the central claim of this chapter, which was to provide an outline of the manner in which I believe the task of political philosophizing ought to be engaged: incorporating and highlighting an account of sociability, created in relation to empirical data, which underlies justification regarding the existence of the state. My purpose in this chapter was to demonstrate how Pinker's book can be interpreted as a serious attempt to respond to the unresolved challenges of sociability that I have identified and discussed throughout the dissertation. Reading Pinker's book in light of the earlier chapters of this thesis aids in illuminating the role that the state plays in facilitating successful interaction in Pinker's theory, as well as facilitates an overall understanding regarding the relationship between sociability and conflict. Robert Epstein states that the biggest issue with Pinker's work "is its overreliance on history, which, like the light on a caboose, shows us only where we are not going" (Epstein 2011). I will argue, in the following chapter, however, that even if the content of Pinker's theory does not provide a reliable prediction regarding the future of violence in society, the structure of his work, incorporating what have been illuminated as fundamentally important criteria for the

project of political philosophy to be engaged in responsibly, can provide a basis of optimism regarding the future of the field.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pinker's theory of political governance provides an excellent example of how the project of political philosophy can incorporate empirical data regarding the nature of human sociability. This is fundamentally important, I argue, as accounts of sociability which underlie theories of political governance must be held accountable to empirical fields. If they are not, the conclusions which thinkers promote regarding the justifiability of political governance may be misplaced. Pinker provides an account of human sociability which is based on empirical data, which underlies the justification of the existence of the state. Pinker's theory can fulfill the first stage of justification by meeting all three tests, and his account of sociability is potentially legitimate in regard to empirical evidence, and thus, he can be held to provide a theory of political governance in which the existence of the state can be successfully justified.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have, throughout the dissertation, illuminated the inherent and fundamentally important role that accounts of sociability play in the justification of theories of political governance. This outcome is important, as it contributes to an understanding regarding the necessary criteria for the evaluation of justifications of real states. The stakes at risk, in theories of political governance, are extremely high, as such theories significantly affect the lives of the agents to whom they apply. A fundamentally important contributing factor to the quality of agents' lives is the interaction they engage in with others in society. It is, therefore, a requirement of the state, if it is to be justifiable in regard to its (necessary) task of facilitating successful interaction, to acknowledge and be shaped (in part) in specific relation to this role.

As has been identified in the dissertation, human beings are inherently social creatures. As such, it is of fundamental importance that the state, which is one of the main forces which regulates interaction in agents' lives, is structured in specific regard to the nature of human sociability. An example of how this can be done has been provided in the examination of Pinker's work, as he provides an example of how an account of sociability, created in a serious and responsible manner, can inform the form of governance which is justifiable in regard to it. The structures of real states, and the ideologies which underlie them regarding human sociability, ought to be examined, I argue, in light of the requirements of justifiability presented in this dissertation.

One area of significant critique levelled against Pinker, however, is his reliance on data from the field of evolutionary psychology (among other empirical fields) in order to support his theory of the decline of violence. Certain critics argue that it is inappropriate to include such data

because the results produced from the field are unreliable, while others argue that Pinker's engagement with the field is incomplete and/or incompetent. Such critiques challenge the validity of Pinker's claims pertaining to the decline of violence, and consequently, his theory regarding the state's influence on this decline. As is evident from the critiques levelled against Pinker, it is a risky, bold move to invoke empirical considerations, particularly from outside one's own area of expertise. I wish to argue, however, that this risk is worth the potential critiques a thinker may face.

When I initially began the dissertation project, I was concerned with identifying and understanding the connection between human sociability and the justifiability of political authority. I was interested in how states are, or are not, justifiable in regard to the important task of facilitating successful interaction in society. Surely, I assumed, this must involve empirical analysis of the nature of human sociability in the real world, otherwise, on what grounds could thinkers construct theories pertaining to the forms of governance which would successfully engage with/organize human beings? As I explained in the introduction to the dissertation, I was surprised to discover that few contemporary political philosophers address the nature of human sociability, and even fewer attempt to ground their conceptions of sociability on empirical evidence. Certain early thinkers such as Hume and Kropotkin attempted to do so, however, they predominately relied on their personal observations of humankind. Such limited and biased evidence, combined with the rudimentary scientific understandings of their day, inevitably led to relatively unsupported notions regarding human sociability.

Modern day, however, presents an entirely different set of circumstances within which this project can be executed. Scientific understanding has exponentially increased since Hume's or Kropotkin's times, through increases in technology, method and modes of communication. It

is incontestable that today we have more advanced means of engaging in empirical research regarding the nature of human sociability, which produces conclusions that are more reliable. This leads to an important claim that I wish to promote regarding the project of political philosophy. I have already argued that in order for accounts of sociability to be valid in relation to real agents, they must be answerable to empirical data. Thus, I hold that the conclusions produced by the advanced scientific methods which exist today be incorporated in political philosophers' theorizing.

Including empirical data in the project of political philosophy may certainly spark objection (as was seen in the critiques of Pinker's work), however, I argue that such objection is inappropriate. It is inappropriate, I argue, as agents only have available to them the scientific methods which exist in their day. Since it is a requirement, I hold, that empirical evidence be invoked in the creation of accounts of sociability, in order to ensure that they are (at least potentially) reliable, unless the scientific methods of the day possess majorly problematic flaws, the conclusions they produce ought to be contentiously considered (under the understanding that the relevant facts are not indisputable).

I argue that one empirical field which is important to include in the project of political philosophy, is evolutionary psychology.⁶⁶ The field of evolutionary psychology addresses the evolution of the human psyche, and of particular importance for the dissertation topic, the evolution of the manner in which agents interact. Such a field can play an important role in informing the manner in which states ought to be constructed in regard to agents, as well providing an understanding of the basis of agents' traits of sociability, and how they have changed over time. Furthermore, this field can provide hypotheses regarding the future of human

⁶⁶ In stating this claim, I do not imply that evolutionary psychology is the only important empirical field in relation to the project of political philosophy.

sociability, which can inform the manner in which states ought to be appropriately responsive to such changes, in order to ensure that successful interaction is continuously ensured.

Another example of the method of philosophizing I promote is presented in Allen Buchanan and Russell Powell's recent work *The Evolution of Moral Progress*. In this work, Buchanan and Powell present a theory of moral progress which is constructed with reference to the fields of moral and political philosophy, as well as empirical fields such as "evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, anthropology, sociology, and history" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, VII). Buchanan and Powell argue that it is fundamentally important to invoke empirical data in the project of philosophy (a method which they label as "naturalism"), as they hold that certain philosophical problems cannot be accurately or effectively addressed without "recourse to scientific knowledge, including the best available theory and data" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, VII). This claim pertains, I argue, especially to subjects such as moral and political philosophy, as the issues within such fields are essentially bound to the human subjects to which they pertain. It is essential, Buchanan and Powell argue, that theories within such fields be, at minimum, "compatible with the relevant psychological and social facts about human beings" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 27). Buchanan and Powell explicitly state that to include information from empirical fields in the tackling of philosophical problems is not to claim that "science can replace philosophy in these matters. Instead, the idea is that while traditional analytic philosophical skills of analysis and reasoning are necessary for addressing challenging philosophical problems, sometimes they are not sufficient" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, VII). Thus, they claim that naturalism is, potentially, one correct way in which the project of philosophy can be engaged.

It is interesting to compare Pinker's, and Buchanan and Powell's, work, as they possess

certain significant similarities, and support corresponding conclusions regarding the nature of human society. While Pinker, and Buchanan and Powell, focus on different topics, respectively, violence and moral progress, both of these topics pertain to the nature of human interaction. These thinkers turn to empirical data in order to inform their views on the relevant topics, and, interestingly, all promote the generic account of sociability. A question addressed by Buchanan and Powell in their work, is how certain “inclusivist moral norms” (i.e. moral norms pertaining to inclusiveness in one’s understanding of the agents to whom the scope of justice applies) can exist in modern society, when they are seemingly incompatible with assumptions regarding agents’ “exclusivist, tribalistic” (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 187) nature produced through evolution from the drive for survival (as individuals’ survival is dependent on the success of the groups in which they are situated). Buchanan and Powell argue that this is possible because human beings possess traits which both facilitate and impede inclusivist moral thinking, which can be augmented or diminished by external influences from their environment. Buchanan and Powell explain that there is “a wide range of evidence suggesting that evolution has produced ‘adaptively plastic’ moral psychological mechanisms that are configured to prevent inclusivist moral norms and dispositions from developing in certain environments, while allowing them to flourish in others” (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 187). In the context of the dissertation, this psychological account can be understood as promoting the idea that agents possess traits which enable moral progress as well as those which impede it, and thus, since moral progress can be (at least in certain respects) associated with advances in successful interaction, can be labelled as pro-social and anti-social traits.

Buchanan and Powell argue that whether agents predominantly act on their pro-social or anti-social traits, is determined by how closely their environment resembles the environment of

evolutionary adaptation, wherein agents' anti-social traits encourage exclusion of others in order to protect the chances of one's group's survival. When such circumstances are not present, however, agents' pro-social traits allow them to engage in inclusivist reasoning regarding the moral status of others, regardless of group-membership. The out-group threat cues which facilitate the augmentation of agents' anti-social traits, and the diminishment their pro-social traits, facilitate such a psychological shift regardless of whether the relevant threats are, in fact, present. If agents merely believe such threats to be present, anti-social traits will be augmented, and further, advances in inclusivist moral progress can be reversed.

Buchanan and Powell claim that the environmental cues which affect individuals' pro/anti-socialness can be consciously controlled (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 187), with one institution of such control being the state. The state, they argue, is a human invention, and thus subject to modification by its creators. It is possible, therefore, to structure forms of governance so that they create environments wherein the perception of out-group threats is diminished, thus facilitating agents' engagement with their pro-social traits. The form of governance Buchanan and Powell claim most effectively executes this task, analogously to Pinker's theory, is a liberal state. Buchanan and Powell explain, in a similar manner as Pinker, the beneficial aspects of liberal governance: "there is good reason to believe that...favorable conditions [to moral progress] are best exemplified—so far—in broadly liberal societies in which power is dispersed; in which there is freedom of information and association; in which rights against racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination and other forms of morally arbitrary subordination are substantially realized; and in which moral experiments can occur" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 392).

Buchanan and Powell not only address the role of the state in creating the conditions in which agents' pro-social traits can flourish, but also the importance of the state being

appropriately modelled in accordance with agents' psychological traits. In certain forms, states can advance out-group threat cues by promoting ideas regarding the danger that other groups, or states, pose to the individuals over which they rule, thus inducing the augmentation of agents' anti-social traits. That the state must be specifically modelled in accordance with the relevant psychological traits in order to be effective in facilitating successful interaction (between individuals and groups), reflects and supports the subject of this dissertation: the important role that sociability plays in the justifiability of forms of governance.

Thus, Buchanan and Powell promote a theory which is compatible with, and corroborates, Pinker's. Both theories rest on the generic account of sociability, which is supported by empirical evidence, and promote the effectiveness of liberal governance in facilitating successful interaction. Pinker explains that the state has worked to facilitate the decline of violence, however, such progress can be undone if the relevant influences to the decline are eliminated. Buchanan and Powell similarly argue that moral progress can be reversed, if agents' environments are altered so as to promote out-group threat cues. Buchanan and Powell argue, however, that agents can be hopeful that in the future the moral advances that have been achieved will remain in place, if empirical data pertaining to human psychology (for example) informs the design of exogenous forces on society, such as the state. Buchanan and Powell advance "hope that, with a full-fledged biocultural theory of moral progress one day in hand, human beings will be able to ensure that the arc of the moral universe continues to bend steadily, if not inexorably, toward progress" (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 395).

It is understandable that thinkers in specific fields are skeptical of the validity of the work produced by other fields, and reluctant to incorporate such work into their own. To be skeptical of different fields, however, I argue, does not require that they be immediately dismissed upon

such assumptions. It is reasonable to believe that differing fields provide insights and ideas, which, when combined, can strengthen and improve the overall conclusions produced. I argue that the field of political philosophy must include work from empirical fields in its deliberations, in order for its conclusions to be, at least potentially, accurate, and thus successful in its aims (in the context of this dissertation, the production of theories of governance which facilitate successful interaction).

Philosophy has, for a considerable time, predominantly been executed through abstract theorizing, with conclusions being drawn from logic and reasoning. It is, therefore, natural for philosophers to be unimpressed and unsympathetic to empirical fields, which claim to produce truths based on physical phenomena.⁶⁷ Buchanan and Powell address this aversion in an eloquent passage, which implores philosophers to open their minds to new methods of engaging in their field (it is important to note that the topic of moral progress which is addressed in this passage can be replaced with the topic of political theory, with the message remaining the same):

[w]e are aware that there may be a tendency for moral and political philosophers, most of whom are not well acquainted with evolutionary theory, to feel discomfort when confronted with the need to add evolutionary concepts and methods to their analytic toolbox....We understand that for those of us who learned to do philosophy without any serious engagement with the social and life sciences, it may be natural to think that all important philosophical topics—especially normative ones—can be successfully engaged by pure analysis conducted from the armchair. But for some philosophical topics, including moral progress, that is false comfort...[as] answering some of the most important questions about moral progress requires expanding the traditional philosophical toolkit. It is vital to emphasize, however, that expanding the toolkit means supplementing and enriching traditional analytic philosophical analysis, not in any way minimizing it, much less eliminating it. So, our plea to mainstream analytic philosophers is this: please give us the benefit of the doubt when we say that for this topic at least the traditional philosophical toolkit needs augmentation, and don't let the understandable discomfort that arises when one is asked to consider unfamiliar approaches impede your progress in thinking about moral progress. To think about moral progress without taking evolution seriously would be to assume that the moral progress that human beings are capable of is

⁶⁷ I acknowledge the fact that such empirical “truths” are subject to error.

unrelated to the kinds of beings they are. The study of evolution does not tell us everything there is to know about human beings, but it does tell us quite a lot. (Buchanan and Powell 2018, 32-3)

The attempts by Pinker, and Buchanan and Powell, to include empirical data in their work, provides a hopeful outlook regarding how political philosophy can be executed in the future. No longer ought political philosophy be conceived as a field which one can successfully engage in from their armchair, as this method is irresponsible and unreliable. With the inclusion of empirical fields such as evolutionary psychology, political philosophers can more accurately construct their theories of governance in relation to the subjects to which their projects pertain. As scientific advances continue, this method of political philosophizing will, inevitably, produce increasingly accurate theories of governance, which will improve their effectiveness in facilitating successful interaction. It is incontestable, I argue, that a world with ever-increasing successful interaction among agents is a positive goal towards which to strive. I argue that the proposed modification of the method of political philosophizing posited in the dissertation, with its attention to the role that accounts of sociability play in this project, and the necessary criteria required to make this project successful, will aid in the achievement of this fundamentally beneficial and important goal.

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