

Manuscript version: Author's Accepted Manuscript

The version presented in WRAP is the author's accepted manuscript and may differ from the published version or Version of Record.

Persistent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/161347>

How to cite:

Please refer to published version for the most recent bibliographic citation information.

Copyright and reuse:

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions.

Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Publisher's statement:

Please refer to the repository item page, publisher's statement section, for further information.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk.

Hobbes's Peace Dividend

Tom Sorell

Abstract: Hobbes thinks that people who submit to government can not only hope for, but actually experience, something they recognise as a good life. The good life involves the exercise of harmless liberty –activity that the sovereign should not prohibit. The exchange of harmless liberty in the commonwealth for ruthless self-protection in the state of nature is what might be called Hobbes's *peace dividend*. It is the liberty of ordinary citizens to buy, sell, choose and practice a trade as a source of income, and the liberty to keep some of the proceeds if the state does not need resources for public protection.

Key Words: Hobbes, war, peace, economic liberty, good law

Introduction

There is a well-known link in Hobbes's political philosophy between the establishment of the commonwealth and the fear of death. When people leave the state of nature and choose submission to a sovereign, they turn their backs on a state of war in which anyone can adopt any means they think necessary – even killing unthreatening competitors – to secure their own survival and prosperity. In these circumstances, no one can be sure that death is not imminent. And since human beings are all constituted to find death supremely fearful, they have a reason to leave the state of nature. By the same token, they have reason not to go back to the state of nature through civil war in an established state, and they have reason to support measures to prevent or discourage a war of conquest by a foreign power.

This much is familiar to most readers of Hobbes. But it's not the whole story. People have reason to avoid civil war not only because it is fatal for many, but also, according to

Hobbes, because it specifically undermines “industry” and the production of commodities that raise a way of life above the primitive.¹ In other words, hope for a standard of living better than mere survival stands alongside fear of death as a reason for entering a commonwealth. Hobbes thinks that people who submit to government can not only hope for, but actually experience, something they recognise as a good life. The good life involves the exercise of harmless liberty – activity that the sovereign should not prohibit. The exchange of harmless liberty in the Commonwealth for ruthless self-protection in the state of nature is what might be called Hobbes’s *peace dividend*.² Concepts needed to understand harmless liberty, moreover, are largely economic: harmless liberty is the liberty of ordinary citizens to buy, sell, choose and practice a trade as a source of income, and the liberty to keep some of the proceeds if the state does not need resources for public protection.

Although there has been a recent growth in attention to Hobbes’s economic concepts and political economy,³ the connection between economic liberty and the good life has not been examined adequately. For this reason, I shall discuss in detail the account of the good life that Hobbes develops in his three political treatises, but especially in *Leviathan*. I shall first highlight some passages in *Leviathan* that indicate the connection between what Hobbes calls the “commodious life” and the post-war opportunity for productive industry. Then I shall show how his two earlier political treatises foreshadow the connection by describing the sort of good life that is available to people who leave the state of nature. Next comes the connection between the concept of “good law” in *Leviathan* and economic liberty, along with my account of two preconditions of economic liberty, before a final summary.

1. *Leviathan*: civil war takes away the conditions for industry

A good place to begin is with a pair of passages from chapter 13 of *Leviathan*⁴ that acknowledge various ill effects of war on “industry” In the first of these passages Hobbes says that, in a local war of all against all,

...there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; nor Navigation, nor use of commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society (Tuck, ed. p. 89).

The term ‘industry’ in *Leviathan* is not simply a synonym for ‘work’ because Hobbes speaks at times of “industry *and* labour” (see e.g., ch. 11, Tuck, ed. p. 70). “Industry” in the relevant sense is a matter of channelling the will. It is in this sense that “Reason” is acquired by “industry,” not given to us innately or through experience (ch.5, Tuck, ed. p. 35). The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives two senses, now obsolete, of ‘industry’ that may have been current in the mid-17th century.⁵ The first is “intelligent or clever working; skill, ingenuity, or cleverness in the execution of anything;” the second is “an application of skill, ingenuity, or cleverness; a device, a contrivance; a crafty expedient.” Either, without making ‘industry’ a synonym of ‘work,’ might capture the human contribution to various commodious arts. And perhaps the skill of combining apt words and putting true propositions together might be how industry is involved in acquiring “reason” in the relevant sense.

Something like 'orderly, purposeful effort' is my best guess of a meaning of 'industry' wide enough to cover the use of the term in *Leviathan*. Industry is a matter of proceeding step by chosen step to accomplish an end or goal. This fits Hobbes's description of the human acquisition of science (and reason) through industry as well as – in the passage that I started with – how industry produces practical arts like agriculture, navigation, or commodious building. Productive effort guided by *method* would be a special and preferred case of 'industry' in the suggested sense.⁶ Science-based arts such as fortification and making of engines of war (cf. ch. 10, Tuck, ed. 63) might be due to industry in this preferred sense.

To return to the passage from chapter 13, Hobbes is saying that discouraging industry and its associated commodities is a major ill effect of war *distinct* from the ill effect of heightened danger of violent death. Or, more precisely, it is an ill effect distinct from the heightened risk of violent death in an all-out war among individuals. Nevertheless, the discouragement of industry does not accompany every kind of war. On the contrary, the reason why permanent *cold* war among nations can be tolerable, according to Hobbes, is that it does *not* stifle industry but supports it:

But through there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings, and Persons of Sovereigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdomes; and continual Spyes upon their neighbours, which is a posture of War. *But because they uphold thereby, the industry of their Subjects, there does not*

follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the Liberty of particular men (Tuck, ed. p. 90 – my emphasis).

Foreign *cold* war is compatible with continued production in pockets of industry insulated from disruption by the defences of particular commonwealths; but civil war –a local hot war of all against all—is incompatible with industry on any scale.

The distinction between industry-suppressing ill effects of hot war and death-associated ill effects of hot war is reflected in other distinctions that Hobbes draws: on the one hand, distinctions among the three passions that incline people to peace, and, on the other, the distinction between peace (absence of war) and public safety (peace plus commodious living). At the very end of chapter 13, Hobbes says that there are three passions that incline people to peace:

Feare of Death; Desire of Such things as are necessary for commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to attain them (Tuck, ed. p.90)

The first passage already quoted about “industry,” provides examples of the sorts of things necessary for commodious living: products of agriculture, architecture and trade-enabling methods of navigation. For people to realize their hope of attaining the makings of commodious living by industry is not just a matter of ending war by establishing the commonwealth. The sovereign must also create conditions for a good life beyond the cessation of fear of violent death. And these are the conditions that bring into play the harmless liberty of subjects. When these conditions are fulfilled, the sovereign has succeeded in achieving the goal of “public safety” (Tuck, ed. p.231), including the good life that he envisages for subjects.

The fact that war discourages products of arts and trades is a source of misery in the state of nature distinct from the threat of sudden death. People who are not killed outright in war linger in a condition of deprivation, distrust, and futile investment of effort. Submission to government creates conditions for reliable self-employment, production and exchange, which in turn provide taxable revenue for institutions –courts, schools, an army, a navy— that fend off civil and foreign wars. Conditions of harmless liberty, plainly, are not *exclusively* economic: as explained in what follows, Hobbes recognizes freedoms of starting and maintaining a family, of bringing up children as one sees fit, of moving from place to place, and of choosing where one lives. Nonetheless, the liberty of citizens is in large part economic liberty.

Economic requirements for a good life include avoiding civil *and* foreign war:⁷ in most countries, domestic industry requires the import of foreign raw materials and the export of manufactured goods abroad. In other words, industry in a single country often depends on international trade. But international trade depends on the existence of “arts,” such as ship-building and the art of navigation, as well as special legislation, which only peace and government in more than one country make possible. As explained further on, Hobbes also speaks of the benefits of regulating dangerous imports, monopolies and other undesirable by-products of trade. Regulated trade, he points out, can be mutually beneficial to countries that are otherwise in a permanent condition of cold war, and trade is a far less risky channel of access to foreign commodities than conquest, with its burden of imperial administration.

2. Earlier works: sovereign duties to permit liberty for industry

Hobbes's views about economic aspects of public safety are to be found not only in *Leviathan* (1651), the most mature statement of his political philosophy, but also in *The Elements of Law* (1640);⁸ and *De Cive* (1642).⁹ In each of these treatises, the relevant chapters are concerned with duties of sovereigns.

Hobbes derives these duties from an overall goal of sovereignty, which is to procure "public safety". Public safety is not the same as freedom from war; it is freedom from war along with provision of the commodious life that Hobbes says people hope for when they leave the state of nature. When people end the war of all against all, they simultaneously give up and transfer to a third party the right of nature, the right of pursuing survival and prosperity according to their own judgements of the means. They agree among themselves to leave it to the sovereign to protect them from the constant threat of imminent death. More than this, they hope to live in circumstances where they can channel their efforts into acquiring a share of a commodious life. Hobbes's doctrine of the duties of sovereigns outlines institutional arrangements that make possible this sort of post-war channelling of effort – arrangements of the sort that achieve the goal required by public safety. To the extent that sovereigns recognise public safety as their goal, they are obliged to introduce such arrangements, according to Hobbes. In that sense, sovereigns have *duties* to introduce them. The attention that Hobbes gives to these duties increases in successive treatises – from nine sections in the *Elements of Law* to seventeen in *De Cive*, followed by substantially more expansion in *Leviathan*.

To begin at the beginning: chapter 28, section 4 of *The Elements of Law* explains one aspect of the "temporal good" that sovereigns are duty-bound to provide as far as possible.

Temporal good –the good that one can achieve during life on earth rather than afterwards in heaven – consists of “multitude”, “commodity of living”, domestic peace, and defence against foreign attack. Multitude is the effect of the biblical God’s injunction to procreate, which the sovereign’s ordinances are to encourage. “Commodity of living” is the element of temporal good of primary concern for my account, and it has two components:

Liberty and wealth. By liberty I mean, that there be no prohibition without necessity of any thing to any man, which was lawful to him in the law of nature; that is to say, that there be no restraint of natural liberty, but what is necessary for the good of the commonwealth; and that well-meaning men not fall into the danger of laws, as into snares, before they are aware. It appertaineth also to this liberty, that a man may have commodious passage from place to place, and not be imprisoned or confined with the difficulty of ways, and want of means for transportation of things necessary. And for the wealth of people, it consisteth in three things: the well-ordering of trade, the procuring of labour, and forbidding the superfluous consuming of food and apparel....(Gaskin, ed. pp. 173-4).

Hobbes’s examples of liberty in this passage are freedom of movement from locality to locality and freedom to transport necessities. These examples seem to point to a much more modest liberty than people enjoy in the state of nature, where they can do as they like and take what they like as it seems to them to advance their interests. On the other hand, the extensive liberty of the state of nature is also miserable, fearful and fatal, and – to that extent at least – to be avoided.

It does not follow from this that the sovereign is justified in restricting freedom in the state as much as he or she likes. The state must not extinguish liberty, which is an essential element of the commodious life, but rather see that subjects exercise it within safe limits. Restrictions are justified only if they benefit the commonwealth. They are not justified if, for example, their purpose is merely to enrich the sovereign personally or to settle a private score. The dutiful sovereign's necessary restrictions, however, *are* justified because they *are* for the public good. For example, when the sovereign publicly decides that certain lands and their produce belong to person *A* and not to person *B*, the sovereign gives *A* an incentive to improve these lands and not merely defend them from others, as in the state of nature. A distribution of land among a whole population multiplies these incentives – with gains in welfare for many or most.

I now pass from *The Elements of Law* to the second of the earlier treatises, *De cive*. In chapter 13, section 6, Hobbes summarizes elements of the good life available to subjects of a commonwealth:

Regarding this life only, the good things citizens enjoy may be put into four categories: 1) defence from external enemies; preservation of internal peace; 3) acquisition of wealth so far as this is consistent with public security; 4) full enjoyment of innocent liberty. Sovereigns can do no more for citizens' happiness than to enable them to enjoy the possessions their industry has won them, safe from foreign and civil war (Tuck and Silverthorne, eds. p. 144)

This passage amends the list in *The Elements of Law*. There is no mention of the good of multitude or procreation, and the two elements of commodious living that I've just

discussed –liberty and wealth – are now listed separately. *De cive* discusses requirements of security at far greater length than *The Elements of Law* and also orders the elements of the good life differently: those concerned with freedom from war, civil or foreign, are treated *before* liberty and wealth, presumably to reflect the fact that requirements of security are necessarily prior to questions of the extent of liberty or the concentration of wealth.

Section 14 is an extended discussion of how wealth (prosperity) is to be acquired while maintaining public security.¹⁰ The discussion begins with

two things ... necessary for the citizens to prosper: *hard work* and *thrift*; a third contributing factor is the *natural produce* of earth and water; and there is also a fourth, *military activity*, which sometimes increases the citizens' wealth but more often erodes it (Tuck and Silverthorne, ed. p. 149).

Hobbes goes on to claim that of the four ingredients of prosperity, military action produces financial losses more often than wealth and so ought to be set aside. (Ibid. p, 150). This leaves products of earth and water, hard work and thrift as the only sources of wealth to be considered. With respect to these (Ibid. p. 150) the sovereign's duty is to declare laws that encourage people to turn raw materials from the earth and sea into saleable goods while also encouraging thrifty use of proceeds from those sales.

In the case of products of earth and water, Hobbes has in mind laws to encourage the arts of agriculture and fishing. Next he turns to hard work and directs sovereigns to outlaw idleness among the able-bodied. Labor is to be made compulsory for those who are able to

carry it out and is to be encouraged by laws promoting the art of navigation and the mechanical arts (Ibid.). The art of navigation creates a market for the labor of seafarers involved in shipping commodities, as well as the labor of traders-in and transporters-of those commodities after shipping. The mechanical arts – arts that move things – create a market for the labor of builders, transporters and others. Laws facilitating the practice of these arts are also laws permitting those practices as sources of income.

Indirectly, then, Hobbes's prescriptions of remedies for idleness are prescriptions of economic liberties. These liberties support one's chance to decide how much to spend and how much to save. Hobbes, as already noted, praises thrift or restraint in spending since its opposite is not only imprudent for individuals but also bad for a commonwealth that may need to find assets for defence against aggressors.¹¹

Helped by a metaphor, Hobbes outlines the need for liberty, including economic liberty, in the following passage from chapter 13:

Water stagnates and corrupts when it is closed in by banks on all sides; when it is open on all sides it spreads, and the more outlets it finds the freer it is. So with the citizens: they would be without initiative if they did nothing except at the law's command; they would be dissipated if there were no legal restrictions, and the more things unregulated by law, the more liberty they enjoy. Both extremes are faulty; for laws were invented not to extinguish human actions but to direct them...The extent of this liberty is to be measured by the good of the citizens and of the commonwealth (Tuck and Silverthorne, p. 151).

In other words, he treats liberty as a condition in which people *actively* pursue their interests, including economic interests (as in the state of nature), but by means consistent with the commonwealth's security interests (as judged by a dutiful sovereign).

From these various accounts proposed by Hobbes, a picture emerges of the good life provided for citizens by a sovereign who fulfils the duty of securing public safety. According to the first two political treatises, the good life consists of the liberty that citizens have to acquire wealth through work, especially as practitioners of the arts of fishing, agriculture, navigation and building. What citizens can keep is what they save minus what the commonwealth exacts for defence and other public goods through taxation or emergency appropriation – requisitioning houses, for example. To encourage saving by citizens, the state taxes their *consumption*.

Taxing consumption is not an *impoverishing* tax on *savings*. Before Hobbes gets to section 14 of *De cive* on wealth, he identifies poverty as a contributor to sedition and, indirectly, civil war.¹² He has in mind not poverty in general – mentioned in chapter 12, section 9 – but poverty caused by disproportionate taxation (section 10, Tuck and Silverthorne, ed p. 147). According to Hobbes, taxation is “unequal” or disproportionate and impoverishing whenever it applies to savings and not to purchases of goods. A tax on savings condones waste and extravagance on the part of those who spend everything they get or who have so much that they can't spend it all: taxation of this kind disincentivises¹³ the accumulation of assets which, in hard times, tide ordinary people over their difficulties and which the state can appropriate for defence. Equal taxation – in Hobbes's preferred sense of “equal” –

encourages saving, which in turn discourages poverty, which in turn reduces the need to fight or steal in order to survive.

3. “Bad law” as restricting harmless liberty

Leviathan develops the theory of sovereign duties still farther. Not only is its chapter 30 considerably longer than the corresponding parts of the *Elements of Law* (ch. 28) and *De cive* (ch. 13); it is also not the only chapter of Hobbes’s masterpiece that enlarges on treatments of liberty and wealth from the earlier treatises. Chapter 24 deals with the import, export and finishing of raw materials from home and abroad; also relevant are chapter 21 on the liberty of subjects and chapter 22, which considers international trading companies in relation to the sovereign power.

As for chapter 30, one of its most striking improvements on the two earlier treatises is to distinguish between good and bad laws, where bad laws are those that unnecessarily restrict the liberty of citizens (Tuck, ed. pp. 238-9). Hobbes explicitly rejects the idea that a law can be good when it benefits a sovereign but is not necessary for the people. Under such conditions, “good” laws are merely “trapps for Mony” (Tuck, ed. p. 239). Genuinely good laws are necessary, for the good of the people, and “perspicuous”, that is, clear in meaning to those who are subject to them (Tuck, ed. p. 238).

The distinction between good and bad laws bears on the question of what individuals are entitled to keep or, in other words, their property rights. Property rights, as noted previously, are limited by the sovereign’s tax regime and by the sovereign’s judgment of

what the state needs to commandeer in times of emergency. Chapter 30 goes farther by introducing a criterion for equal taxation, whereby how much one pays varies with the extent of one's debt to the sovereign for protection that the state provides. By this criterion, rich aristocratic employers are liable for much more tax than other citizens because the sovereign protects *all* of the many people who serve aristocrats, not just the lords themselves (Tuck, ed. p. 238). Likewise, practitioners of various arts owe the conditions of industry to the sovereign's protection:

For the Impositions, that are layd on the People by the Sovereigne Power, are nothing else but the Wages, due to them that hold the publique Sword, to defend private men in the exercise of their several Trades, and Callings. (Tuck, ed. p. 238).¹⁴

In other words, practitioners of the arts benefit from a division of labor that permits them to produce privately while others play public roles in the military. This justification is distinct from and strengthens the more familiar justification of taxation that Hobbes provides at the end of chapter 18 of *Leviathan*:

...the estate of Man can never be without some incommodity or other; and [...]the greatest, that in any forme of Government can possibly happen to the people in generall, is scarce sensible, in respect of the miseries, and horrible calamities, that accompany a Civil Warre; ...the greatest pressure of Sovereign Governours, proceedeth...in the restiveness of themselves, that unwillingly contributing to their own defence, make it necessary for their Governours to draw from them what they can in time of Peace (Tuck, ed. pp. 128-9).

Here Hobbes claims that taxation in general (not just taxation of practitioners of arts) is justified, because it finances defence against war; in chapter 30, on the other hand, he draws the justification of taxing from the provision of the good life, including the economic liberty which is part of public safety.

Although Hobbes seems to advise sovereigns to permit citizens to live modestly prosperous lives, he does not thereby limit the *rights* of sovereigns. Sovereigns are authorised to tax small-scale economic enterprise and to micromanage local politics even if it is inadvisable for them to do so – even if the micromanaging regime is unnecessary and counts therefore as “bad law”.

Even a sovereign who makes good law, however, cannot allow the same liberty to every economic agent within his realm. For example, economic liberties for individuals engaged in arts like fishing and agriculture do not necessarily extend to entrepreneurs organised under the same government into bodies politic for buying and selling commodities internationally. (Hobbes had personal experience with these trading companies, having represented his aristocratic employers on a company board.) These bodies politic are sites for concentrating wealth, and therefore power, that might challenge the sovereign’s power (ch. 29, p. 230). Moreover, trading companies might have monopoly rights to buy and sell a particular commodity. Not only can they buy low and sell high, they can also limit supplies of a commodity, thus inflating its market price. This can work against people in two places: where the commodity originates and where the commodity is sold (ch. 22, Tuck, pp. 160-1). The sovereign therefore has a reason to restrict the powers of trading companies in the

interest of public safety. Once again the good of the commonwealth sets limits on liberty: in this case, the corporate liberty of wealthy trading groups.

Hence it's the *small-scale* farmer, trader, fisherman or builder whom Hobbes makes the primary beneficiary of his economic liberalism. According to chapter 24 of *Leviathan*, preferential first distributions to individuals of land and tradable commodities are to be guided by equity (ch. 24, Tuck, ed. p. 171). Even after equitable distribution, however, buying, selling and contracting of various kinds may still be necessary to redistribute surpluses and make needed improvements, and subjects must be granted the economic liberties required for this marketplace activity (ch. 24, Tuck, ed. p. 174). On the other hand and as already noted, the freedom of people to keep what they have or sell it is limited by the sovereign's freedom, in an emergency, to appropriate whatever he wants to for the defence of the state.

Among other novelties in *Leviathan's* political economy, there is an order of priority for things that citizens consider their own:

Of things held in propriety, those that are dearest to a man are his own life & limbs; and in the next degree, (in most men,) those that concern conjugall affection; and after that riches and means of living (Tuck, ed. pp.235-6).

These are the chief goods of private life – “the dearest to a man” or “most men” – and, of goods enabled by public safety, they are items allotted to private persons. Hobbes thinks that the first kind of good (life and limb) is inalienable and that the second (conjugal

affection) is harmless and worthy of public protection. And although each citizen's "riches and means of living" are potentially the sovereign's, as required by the good of the commonwealth, they are never fair game for appropriation by other citizens. On the contrary, "the People are to be taught ... to abstain from fraudulent surreption of one another's goods" (Tuck, ed. p. 236). Only the sovereign can decide that one person's goods belong to another – by exercising the sovereign right of establishing definitively what belongs to whom.

A final development in *Leviathan* of doctrines stated by earlier political treatises involves idleness and compulsory labor. Hobbes repeats the point that laws should be passed to encourage mass participation in labor-intensive arts, such

as Navigation, Agriculture, Fishing, and all manner of Manufacture that requires labour (Tuck, ed. p. 239).

He adds manufacturing to arts listed in earlier treatises as possible protections against poverty. But he also sees how deploying a labor force extends into international affairs:

The multitude of poor, and yet strong people still increasing, they are to be transplanted into Countries not yet sufficiently inhabited; where nevertheless, they are not to exterminate those that they find there; but constrain them to inhabit closer together and not range a great deal of ground, to snatch what they find; but to court each little Plot with art and labour, to give them their sustenance in due season (Ibid.)

Evidently he endorses forced relocation abroad of the poor, presumably to colonies where they can find work in agriculture. If this brings colonists into contact aboriginals, they “are not to exterminate those that they find there.” Instead the new transplants should force indigenous people out of nomadism into farming.

4. More on economic liberty in *Leviathan*

A full survey of Hobbes’s account of economic liberty must examine his normative theory of international trade and must situate the economic liberty of practising an art for gain within *Leviathan*’s overall account of liberty, which brings into play chapters 21 (liberty), 22 (systems) and 24 (the “nutrition and procreation” of the commonwealth).

The following passage from chapter 21 describes the liberty of subjects in general terms:

The Liberty of a Subject, lyeth therefore only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the Sovereign has praetermitted; such as the Liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own aboad, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit and the like (Tuck, ed. p. 148).

The scope of liberty, according to Hobbes, is the range of actions that local law does not *prohibit* or, in positive terms, *permits*. Since the sovereign has full control of the legal machinery that governs not only local economic matters but also education, public worship,

transportation and military action, nothing *prevents* him from enforcing a regime of close regulation. But in chapter 30, as noted, Hobbes calls it inadvisable – bad law, in fact – for the sovereign to do so. Micromanaging the economy discourages initiative and prosperity, risks poverty and creates pretexts for rebellion. Accordingly, it serves the goal of public safety to prohibit less and permit more. It's striking that economic cases dominate Hobbes's list of such liberties and that he includes the liberty to choose a trade or art. Likewise he describes lawful private "systems" such as the "conflux of People to markets, or shews, or any other harmlesse end" (ch. 22, Tuck, ed. p. 155).

Economic liberties depend on the institution of money: a medium of exchange, usually a metal like silver or gold, universally recognised as precious, that represents values of other commodities – both raw materials and finished goods — and is means of paying salaries and taxes (Tuck, ed. p. 174). Hobbes distinguishes between money in the form of precious metal – good for exchange anywhere – and coin or currency that gets its value from the promise of a local sovereign or commonwealth to pay in precious metal, which makes currency and coinage less stable, liable to depreciation and less reliable as a medium of exchange.

But the sovereign, in order to secure a good life for individual citizens, has more to work with than a domestic money supply and laws operating within a home jurisdiction. Realizing that the raw materials of fishing, agriculture, and building are not always available locally, the sovereign promotes prosperity-through-industry for a domestic population by putting duties to the commonwealth in an international setting. He or she or they (since sovereignty can be exercised by a council) must decide what commodities citizens should procure abroad (Tuck, ed. p.173) and who is authorized to procure and trade them internationally.

“Noxious” imports in particular are to be prevented (ibid.), even if they “pleas[e] men’s appetites” (ibid.) Again and as noted, the sovereign must be careful about granting monopolies and must also internationalise policy for combating poverty by making use of opportunities for settlement and industry in colonies and plantations (Tuck, ed. p. 175)

5. Preconditions of economic liberty

More basic than trade or even money as a condition of economic liberty is publicly recognised individual property rights, which result from a sovereign’s authoritative declaration that something not currently needed for *public* defence belongs to a *private* individual or corporation (*Leviathan*, ch.24, Tuck ed. p. 171). Without *authoritative* (though revisable) declarations defining ownership of goods and determining who gains from gainful labour, incentives for industry will fail to develop.¹⁵ Creating these incentives is not just a matter of the many ending their war of all against all and establishing a sovereign whose word is final in dispute-resolution; it also involves, as we have seen, a sovereign’s refraining from unnecessary legislation –which counts as “bad” law-- and treating subjects equally in the adjudication of disputes and in distributions of goods.

Chapter 24 of *Leviathan* underlines the importance of the sovereign’s original division of land. This division is not to be driven by whim or impulse – even the sovereign’s whim or impulse. The division must be subject to norms of equity and the common good (ibid.). This requires the sovereign to set his or her individual appetites aside – for example, by abstaining from any opportunist confiscation of property for personal benefit and considering instead how land could be distributed to feed subjects and provide income to

people working in agriculture. The sovereign should also recognize that concentrating property in some few subjects could generate wealth that might enable them by manipulation to turn sovereign power against the state's interests or even raise armed forces against the commonwealth. The norm of equity, which is all about a suitably equal distribution among subjects of rewards as well as punishments and other "impositions," keeps the bigger picture in focus (cf. ch. 30; Tuck, ed. pp. 237-8).

There is at least one further precondition of economic liberty. This is the development of science or "philosophy" in Hobbes's sense of the term: roughly, inferences guided by method from or to causes, for the production of things that benefit human beings. The reason science is a precondition of economic liberty is that it is a precondition, as Hobbes sees things, of the arts of navigation (and indirectly fishing and import and export of commodities), the art of moving heavy objects, and architecture, among others. As we have seen, these are leading examples of the arts he connects to the commodious life promised by leaving the state of nature.

That Hobbes thinks the commodities of civilised life are derived from science (or "philosophy") is made particularly clear in *De corpore*, chapter 1, article 7:

But what the *utility* of philosophy is, especially of natural philosophy and geometry, will be best understood by reckoning up the chief commodities of which mankind is capable, and by comparing the manner of life of such as enjoy them, with that of others who want the same. Now, the greatest commodities of mankind are the arts; namely of measuring matter and motion; of moving ponderous bodies; or

architecture; of navigation; of making instruments of all uses; of calculating celestial motions, the aspects of the stars, and the parts of time; of geography, &c. By which sciences, how great benefits men receive is more easily understood than expressed. These benefits are enjoyed by almost all the people of Europe, by most of those of Asia, and by some of Africa: but the Americans, and they that live near the Poles, do totally lack them....What, then, makes this difference, except philosophy. Philosophy, therefore, is the cause of all of these benefits. (*De corp.* ch. 1, art. 7)

There is a strong correspondence between the list of arts in this passage and items mentioned in Leviathan's list in ch. 13 of commodities lost in a time of all-out war:

In such a condition [of war] there is no place for Industry; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters... (ch. 13, Tuck, ed. p. 89).

It is possible to distinguish in both passages between strictly science-based arts (e.g. navigation) and arts not based in science (fishing, agriculture). Both kinds of arts are beneficial in that they are sources of employment and income for subjects, and, as I read Hobbes, both are owed to Industry, or orderly effort that can only exist in conditions of peace.

This brings us to the beneficial science *par excellence*, namely civil science, which Hobbes thought had been inaugurated by his own *De cive*. Civil science is the science of making and keeping peace. It is the art of both citizenship or subjection and of rulership. On the one hand, it teaches the many the duties that are owed to the sovereign, most of which boil down to complying with the civil law. On the other hand, it teaches the duties of sovereigns that can be deduced from the goal of securing public safety. This science is a pre-condition of the reliable development of other sciences and the arts, the exercise of the economic liberties made possible by the arts, and the other elements of commodious life.

6. Conclusion

The question we have been considering is, “What sort of life can someone who leaves the state of nature reasonably expect within the Commonwealth?”. Hobbes’ answer is this. The subject can reasonably expect to work for a living in one of the productive arts of his choice, and to keep some of the proceeds above the level of subsistence. He can pursue the harmless pleasures of domestic life in a place of the subject’s choice. Lives of luxury and heavy consumption are to be heavily taxed. Since idleness is outlawed, the idleness of the idle rich is outlawed in particular. The subject will be expected to save some of the proceeds of work, and to pay tax for the provision of public goods like national defence. People engaged in small-scale personal enterprises like fishing or agriculture will not be subject to impoverishing tax, or to laws that interfere with productive work or the enjoyment of its untaxed rewards. What is more, the subject will have his claim to small-scale land ownership or fishing rights enforced against usurpers by the sovereign. This is the harmless liberty allowed by a sovereign who discharges the duties of sovereign and who acts on the

knowledge given by Hobbes's civil science between good and bad laws. Someone who exercises this harmless liberty does not merely live at subsistence level without anxiety about being attacked. He lives or can if he chooses live, an active, productive life with room for modest prosperity and its enjoyments. On the other hand, Hobbes's picture of the good life does not contain luxury or excessive consumption or high status.

So the prospect of a commodious life through the exercise of economic liberties is one of the incentives for someone of even lowly status to submit to a sovereign (if the sovereign rules through "good laws" and fulfils other duties of sovereignty). In this picture, economics is fully subordinate to politics, and stable co-operation for mutual gain is not available in the state of nature.¹⁶ More importantly, life in the state under a sovereign with unlimited rights can have aspects of a good life pre-theoretically conceived.¹⁷ Modest desires can be satisfied. Modest wealth can be retained. The contentments of family life can be largely unrestricted. The possibility of changing one's abode and employment is not ruled out. Life need not be micro-managed by an intrusive government. On the other hand, submission to the sovereign does not by itself deliver human beings from everything that makes life hard, including some kinds of labour, some kinds of non-violent disesteem, bereavement, and romantic disappointment. When all goes as it should—in accordance with the duties Hobbes prescribes to subjects and sovereigns—it is a joint effort between industrious subjects exercising economic liberties, practitioners of the science-based economically productive arts, natural scientists, and sovereigns who can apply Hobbes's science of politics.

University of Warwick

Key words: HOBBS, POLITICAL ECONOMY, LIBERTY, COMMODIOUS LIFE, PUBLIC SAFETY

REFERENCES

Beck-Thomsen, J, Christiansen, C. Jacobsen, S, and Thorup, M. 2018. in History of Economic Rationalities: Economic Reasoning as Knowledge and Practice Authority. Dortmund: Springer.

Evregegnis, I. n.d. 'The Political Economy of *De cive*' unpublished

Gaskin, J. C. A. ed. 1994. Hobbes, Human Nature and De Corpore Politico. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hont, I. 2010. The Jealousy of Trade. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Labiano, J. 2000. "A Reading of Hobbes' Leviathan with Economists' Glasses," International Journal of Social Economics, 27:134–146.

Josephson, P. 2016. "Hobbes, Locke, and the Problems of Political Economy," in Strain and Veuger: 9-29.

Prokhovnik, R and Slomp, G. 2010. International Political Theory after Hobbes: Analysis, Interpretation and Orientation, eds. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sorell, Tom. 2006. "Hobbes on Trade, Consumption and International Order," The Monist 89: 245-258.

Sorell, Tom. 2010. "Hobbes, Public Safety and Political Economy," in Prokhovnik and Slomp: 42-55.

Strain, Michael and Veuger Stan, eds. 2016. Economic Freedom and Human Flourishing: Perspectives from Political Philosophy. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Taylor, Quentin. 2000. "Thomas Hobbes, Political Economist: His Changing Historical Fortunes," Independent Review, 14: 415-433.

van Apeldoorn, L. 2018. "'The Nutrition of a Commonwealth': On Hobbes's Economic Thought," in Beck-Thomsen et al (2018)

van Apeldoorn, L. 2021. 'Hobbes on Property: Between Legal Certainty and Sovereign Discretion' Hobbes Studies 34 (2021) pp. 58-79.

Tuck, R. ed. 1991. Hobbes, Leviathan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tuck, R. and Silverthorne, M. eds. and trans. 1998. Hobbes, On the Citizen. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

¹ See Sorell (2010)

² A peace dividend is constituted by resources made available to a post-wartime government by the cessation of war.

³ See, for example, Labiano, (2000): Labiano claims that Hobbes is a prototheorist of capitalism. See also Quentin Taylor, "Thomas Hobbes, Political Economist: His Changing Historical Fortunes," *Independent Review*, 14 (2000). Taylor discusses the relation between Hobbes and Adam Smith and identifies the alleged invention of "*homo economicus*" as basis of most commentators' ascription to him of a place in the history of economic thought. Josephson (2016) compares Hobbes unfavourably to Locke on property ownership. Laurens van Apeldoorn (2018) claims (questionably, in my view) that Hobbes does not apply what he regards as scientific methodology to economic matters.

⁴ I use the Tuck (1991) edition.

⁵ <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/94859?redirectedFrom=industry#eid>

⁶ This sense of 'industry' is evidently conveyed by one of the OED usages: "P. WHITEHORNE tr. N. Machiavelli *Arte of Warre* VII. f. xciii The firste industrie is, to make the walles crooked, and full of tournynges, and of receiptes."

⁷ Sorell (2006).

⁸ Gaskin 1994). Gaskin's title refers to the two Parts of *The Elements of Law*. References are by chapter and article or section.

⁹ I use the edition and translation by Tuck and Silverthorne (1998).

¹⁰ This section of *De Cive* together with its counterparts in *Leviathan* (see next section) seem to me to disprove van Apeldoorn's thesis that Hobbes "never subjects economic phenomena to ... a scientific analysis." See van Apeldoorn (2017, 24). Even more dubious is Apeldoorn's claim that, for Hobbes, "in order to know what rights and duties individuals have, it is not necessary to know anything about the material conditions of their lives, that is, whether they have access to food, cloths (sic), shelter and other means to commodious living." This is clearly false since extreme poverty frees subjects of the duty not to steal – food, for example.

¹¹ In an unpublished essay focused on *De Cive's* treatment of political economy ('The Political Economy of *De cive*'), Evrengis instructively reads Hobbes as saying that there is a "division of labour" between the sovereign and the citizen: the latter supplies industry, while the former supplies security – partly through the taxed proceeds of industry. This gives the impression that sovereign and industrious citizen are embarked on the same enterprise, with different roles for each. It's true that both industry and security are components of public safety—industry, a part of a commodious living, is better than mere survival – but public safety is for the *sovereign* to pursue, not the citizen. The citizen's role is to obey and abstain from private judgement about the means to survival and prosperity. It's true that obedience includes working, since idleness is outlawed. But industry, in other respects, is controlled by each citizen in each case, with the understanding that some proceeds are *not* to be confiscated – and certainly not confiscated to the of impoverishment, which would eliminate the obligation to obey. It's not a matter of industry in return for security or industry along with security. Instead, it's security along with one's choice of an art to practice for modest personal or domestic gain.

¹⁴ A referee has pointed out a broadly similar passage in *De cive* at chapter 12, section 9: "Taxes and tributes are simply the wages of those who keep watch under arms, so that the citizen's industry will not be hampered by enemy invasion" (Tuck and Silverthorne, eds. pp.137-138). Contexts are quite different for these passages, however. In this section of *De cive*, what's at issue is whether those who have no patrimony have anything to complain about when their earnings from labor are taxed. Hobbes says 'no' because there are costs even of the *opportunity* to earn by labor, namely costs of preventing invasion that would disrupt industry. *Leviathan* examines another issue: namely, what counts as equal imposition of taxes when subjects are both rich and poor. The rich, according to Hobbes, should be taxed more on two grounds: (a) their way of life depends on the labor of many others, who all need protection, while the poor work only for themselves and their families, who are fewer; and (b) the rich tend to squander and not save, which means their consumption liable to more taxation. Those who save not only practice personal thrift, which should be rewarded, but accumulate usable assets, which the sovereign can appropriate for the good of the public in times of public emergency.

¹⁵ For a recent overview of Hobbes's doctrines concerning property, see Van Apeldoorn (2021).

¹⁶ For broader relevant issues in the history of economics, see the Introduction to Hont, (2010), esp. pp. 7ff.

¹⁷ Departing from traditional philosophical treatments of the greatest good, *Leviathan* explicitly rejects the "repose of a mind satisfied" as a *summum bonum*. While we are alive, he insists, there is no such thing: "nor can a man any more live, whose Desires are at an end, than he, whose Senses and Imagination, are at a stand" (ch. 11, Tuck, ed. p. 70).