Hobbes and Tocqueville on Individualism, Equality, and Centralized Administration

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A Thesis
in
The Department of Political Science

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Public Policy and Public Administration at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2015

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: Hobbes and Tocqueville on Individualism, Equality, and Centralized Administration

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Public Policy and Public Administration

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Abstract

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There exists a connection between Hobbes and Tocqueville has thus far been inadequately explored in the academic literature. This paper seeks to correct this by providing a comparison of Thomas Hobbes and Alexis de Tocqueville on individualism, equality, and centralized administration. The role of and value placed on these three concepts within the authors' work will be explored. It will be argued that between Hobbes and Tocqueville there is significant agreement as to the consequences and implications that these three phenomena have upon a society. Despite this, however, while Tocqueville seeks to moderate equality and individualism, and advocates a decentralized governmental administration, Hobbes advocates centralized administration and a high degree equality and individualism. In other words, what Tocqueville seeks to avoid, Hobbes seeks to embrace. The irreconcilable difference comes from the values that the authors display; Tocqueville regards this excess as fundamentally detrimental to the human soul, and Hobbes regards Tocqueville's moderation as concerned with a prideful and superfluous understanding of humanity, positing instead that concerns over the soul actually inhibit what is truly important, namely the pursuit and satisfaction of private goals, manifested as material and appetitive goods.

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In reviewing the academic literature on Alexis de Tocqueville one finds a multitude of work that attempts to provide context to Tocqueville's work within the history of ideas. Peter Augustine Lawler, for example, provides and account of Tocqueville as an author greatly indebted to and deeply influenced by Pascal's account of human misery and Rousseau's account of history.[1] Lawler describes this as Tocqueville's belief that man's movement from away from the state of nature, his natural animalistic state, the process of becoming more human and less beast, which is movement away from his natural order, leads to a deep and insatiable spiritual longing and mental restlessness. With this restlessness man tends to experience profound misery that becomes more acute over the course of history as he gradually becomes more human and less bestial. Lawler argues that Tocqueville's thought is greatly defined by the concern that this tendency to misery leads modern man to experience his liberty as no good, and thereby leads him to willingly surrender it for the promise of greater distraction from his misery, namely in exchange for the potential of greater material goods.[2]

Pierre Manent also discuss Tocqueville's phenomenology of democracy as indebted to and as a response to Montesquieu.[3] Boesche also makes this connection in a work that treats Tocqueville in a much more peripheral manner.[4] Manent, however, provides a compelling account of the manner in which Tocqueville explain democracy and the act of being democratic in a manner comprehensible to democratic people.

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1 Lawler, Peter A. *The Restless Mind: Alexis de Tocqueville on the Origin and Perpetuation of Human Liberty*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993.

2 In addition to *The Restless Mind* one can find this thought articulated in *Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love*.

3 Manent, Pierre. *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*. Trans. John Waggoner. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

4 Boesche, Roger. *Theories of Tyranny: From Plato to Arendt*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Mahoney describes this as allowing democrats to evaluate themselves by stepping outside the democratic dogma that gradually develops over time, a friendly critique that pushes democratic people to understand themselves without abandoning their commitment to democracy.[5] Manent notes that in responding to Montesquieu Tocqueville hopes to provide remedy to and correct the mistakes of those "immoderate friends"[6] of democracy who claim to be friends of real liberty and genuine equality, but in fact fail to recognize that actualizing the democratic dogma in all aspects of personal and social life is an invitation for despotism or totalitarianism.[7]

Other authors worth noting who undertake a similar endeavor to Lawler and Manent include Engster and Boesche. Engster's account of Tocqueville as an author best understood as a moderate proponent of a form of democracy that employs a balance of statism, liberalism, and republicanism, thereby standing in contrast to both the contemporary progressive liberals and the libertarians,[8] is one that emphasizes the importance of regarding Tocqueville without resort to contemporary, ideological political divides. Boesche's account of Tocqueville emphasizes Tocqueville's aristocratic origins and his desire to moderate democracy with aristocratic values and institutions. Boesche points to Tocqueville's emphasis on the importance of the American inheritance of local politics, religion, and self-control in arguing that Tocqueville primarily aimed to unite democratic freedom and aristocratic culture.[9]

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5 Mahoney, Daniel J. "The Art of Liberty." *Public Interest* 124 (1996): 103.
6 Manent, Pierre. *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*. Trans. John Waggoner. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers: 130.
7 Mahoney, Daniel J. "The Art of Liberty." *Public Interest* 124 (1996): 106.
8 Engster, Dan. "Democracy in the Balance: The Role of Statist, Liberal, and Republican Institutions in Tocqueville's Theory of Liberty." *Polity* 30, no. 3 (1998).
9 Boesche, Roger. *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p 172.

One important question that remains unaddressed in the academic literature asks what exactly Tocqueville is addressing in his attempt to moderate democracy. If Tocqueville finds that democratic society is likely to fall victim to the advice of its immoderate friends it still remains necessary to provide an account of who these friends are, and what exactly makes them immoderate. In searching for an answer to this question it becomes apparent that most conspicuous among these friends is Thomas Hobbes. Comparing the two authors, or more specifically, in understanding Tocqueville's thought as a response to and correction of Hobbes, one's understanding of both Hobbes and Tocqueville can be improved. In regards to the work of Hobbes, this analysis sheds light on his continued relevance and importance for contemporary politics, especially as an author warranting significant attention for his influence of contemporary democracy. For Tocqueville, this analysis provides not only a better understanding of his historical context but also offers a compelling case for his continued relevance as a voice of dissent to the currently dominant, state-centered understanding of politics.

The connection between Tocqueville and Hobbes will be argued to be centred around their views of individualism, equality, and centralized governmental administration. Tocqueville's thought provides extensive treatment to these concepts, demonstrating the necessity of moderating the dominance of individualism and equality in democratic societies. Tocqueville argues that democratic societies are naturally prone to an excess of individualism and equality, but notes also that this excess leaves them prone to the growth of tyranny. Tocqueville is thus concerned with demonstrating the need to moderate the presence of individualism and equality within democracy societies.

Contrary to Tocqueville, Hobbes's conception of politics will be argued to be based on the dominance of individualism and equality in order to achieve his goal of the maintenance of civil peace. Hobbes makes no effort to moderate the prevalence of these two forces in his conception of politics because their dominance serves to support his political objectives. In vesting the sovereign with the responsibility of preserving civil peace Hobbes allows the sovereign a wide variety of means with which to achieve this end. It will be demonstrated that one important and often neglected aspect of the sovereign's task is the provision of public charity as a means to ensure that the subjects cannot justifiably break the peace. Hobbes's conception of public charity will be used as a means to illustrate his understanding of individualism, equality, and a centralized administration. In advocating immoderate conceptions of individualism and equality, as well as a highly centralized governmental administration, Hobbes will be shown to render the subjects less capable and less inclined to disobey the sovereign.

What is most interesting about viewing Tocqueville as a response to Hobbes is the similarity with which the two view the consequences of individualism, equality, and administrative centralization. Tocqueville values and advocates a decentralized and moderate liberalism in order to achieve what Hobbes hopes to avoid in his preference for the contrary. More specifically, Tocqueville advocates the necessity of administration decentralization, and a moderate existence of both individualism and equality, for the health of democracy. The reason for this is that Tocqueville finds that while democracy is premised upon the ability of citizens to partake in a degree of self-rule, democratic societies are prone to driving their citizens apart and rendering them incapable of self-government through the unrestrained development of these forces. Contrastingly, it will

be argued that Hobbes provides a conception of politics that is premised upon the need to drive subjects apart so as to strengthen the authority of the sovereign. Hobbes is also of the opinion that a higher degree of individualism and equality tends to reduce the ability of the subjects to engage in politics or act together towards common goals, but finds this a desirable outcome because through this the authority of the sovereign is strengthened.

The debate between Tocqueville and Hobbes will thus be framed in terms of their views and valuation of the manner in which individualism, equality, and administrative centralization affect the ability of citizens/subjects to act together to achieve common goods. The first and second chapters will deal with Hobbes and Tocqueville, respectively. By treating the authors separately the textual basis of these aspects of their thought will be developed. The third chapter will deal with the authors together, discussing the implications of what was developed in the first two chapters. It will be argued that Tocqueville's thought provides a response to and correction of the influence of Hobbes's thought on democracy.

Chapter 1: Hobbes

One of the most overlooked aspects of Hobbes's thought is his discussion of public charity. The influential C. B. Macpherson, for example, interprets Hobbes as thoroughly individualistic, and from this derives the conclusion that the sovereign ought therefore to have "no thought … a Welfare State."[10] While it is true that a Hobbesian society is thoroughly individualistic, this is actually integral to the manner in which Hobbes's thought forms the theoretical basis of the welfare state.[11] Hobbes's account of both individualism and public charity derive from the same concern; namely, Hobbes argues that both are necessary if the sovereign is to prove capable of maintaining the peace.

Macpherson's interpretation of Hobbes originates in his belief that Hobbes is a theorist of bourgeois values.[12] For Macpherson, Hobbes's thought relies upon an assumption of equally rational individuals, freedom through participation in a market society, and a possessive theory of property. It is in this light that Macpherson interprets the general thrust of Hobbes's philosophy as pre-liberal. A major issue with this interpretation, however, which becomes clear through other readings of Hobbes,[13] is that there are numerous passages and ideas that run counter to what can be characterized as bourgeois values. To characterize Hobbes as essentially bourgeois, or essentially

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10 "Hobbes: Leviathan." Edited by C. B. Macpherson. Middlesex, England: Penguin Classics, 1985: Introduction: 48.

11 The textual basis of this can be bound in the first, second, fifth, and ninth through fourteen laws of nature, as well as Hobbes's discussion of public charity found in chapter XXX of *Leviathan*. These aspects of Hobbes's thought will henceforth be termed public charity.

12 "Hobbes: Leviathan." Edited by C. B. Macpherson. Middlesex, England: Penguin Classics, 1985: Introduction: 48.

13 In addition to Seaman (below) one can also turn to Toennies or Thomas. See *The Social Origins of Hobbes's Political Thought*.

socialist, is to therefore provide a selective reading that interprets Hobbes in light of modern ideological frameworks rather than as existing prior to, and encompassing diverse aspects of, what are today often regarded as irreconcilably distinct branches of political thought.

Through analysis of Hobbes's thoughts regarding public charity it shall become clear that Hobbes's thought is not so readily characterized as to describe it as essentially bourgeois. Rather, within his account of public charity one finds that Hobbes's philosophy advocates a society premised upon thoroughly individualistic, and radically equal subjects living under a highly centralized and overarching state. The textual basis and defining characteristics of Hobbesian individualism, equality, and centralization will here be elucidated before their thorough exploration in the third chapter of this work. Hobbes's most explicit statements on public charity can be found in chapter XXX of *Leviathan*. Before proceeding with what Hobbes says plainly, however, it is important to first provide an account of the principles upon which what he says elsewhere is based. Thus, one turns first to the laws of nature as through their explication one can find more clearly the intentions and implications of seemingly unrelated passages throughout the text.

Hobbes's first law of nature establishes the precept that "*every man ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it*."[14] This law is "first and fundamental;"[15] it is this precept from which the second "is derived,"[16] and from which "there followeth a third,"[17] all the way up to the nineteenth. The point to be made is that

14 Leviathan, XIV: 4. Emphasis in original.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid, XIV: 5. Emphasis in original.
17 Ibid XV: 1.

Hobbes derives all subsequent laws, and much of his subsequent thought, from this fundamental aspect of his thought. By bearing this in mind Macpherson's confusion can be understood to derive from a misunderstanding of Hobbes's broader political goals, thereby allowing Macpherson to attribute Hobbes's individualism to Hobbes's "preliberal or premodern character" as an author developing "an ascending, but not yet liberal, bourgeois order bent on securing the social conditions of primary capital accumulation,"[18][19] rather than to the preservation of peace.

The second law of nature posits that "*a man be willing, when others are so too, ... 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*."[20] The subjects concede these rights to the sovereign, who is then entrusted with using this power to preserve the peace. In his discussion of the responsibilities of the sovereign Hobbes argues that the "office of the sovereign (be it a monarch or an assembly) consisteth in the end for which he was trusted with the sovereign power, namely, the procuration of the *safety of the people*."[21]

In vesting the sovereign with the responsibility of preserving the peace the matter arises of determining and addressing the causes the can undermine the existence of peace. To begin, Hobbes addresses a number of his concerns over the causes of civil disorder as he continues to expound his laws of nature. The third law of nature obliges "*men* [to] *perform their covenants made*," which provides Hobbes's foundation of justice.[22]

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18 Seaman, John W. "Hobbes on Public Charity & the Prevention of Idleness: A Liberal Case for Welfare." *Polity* 23, no. 1 (1990): 105.

19 While the accumulation of capital provides an important aspect of Hobbes's thought it is neither fundamental nor the basis from which other precepts are derived. This will be discussed in more detail below.

20 Leviathan, XIV: 5. Emphasis in original.

21 Ibid, XXX: 1. Emphasis in original

22 Ibid, XV: 1-2. Emphasis in original. Recall Polemarchus's conception of justice in *The Republic.*

Hobbes is here addressing, and has begun to provide remedy for, man's natural tendency towards selfishness, or self-interestedness, in a manner that inclines man to breach a convent when it suits him. The point to be made is that Hobbes has begun to point to human nature as the cause of civil disorder.

The fourth law of nature continues in this same vein; Hobbes continues to address sociability in asserting that "*a man which receiveth benefit from another of mere grace endeavour that he which giveth it have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will*."[23] This Hobbes terms gratitude. The fifth law deals with "complaisance," as Hobbes endeavours to have "*every man strive to accommodate himself to the rest.*"[24] Hobbes here appeals to the analogy of

> stones brought together for building of an edifice. For as that stone which (by the asperity of irregularity of figure) takes more room from others than itself fills, and (for hardness) cannot easily be made plain, and thereby hindereth the building, is by the builders cast away as unprofitable and troublesome, so also a man that (by asperity of nature) will strive to retain those things which to himself are superfluous and to others necessary, and (for stubbornness of his passions) cannot be corrected, is to be left or cast out of society as cumbersome thereunto.[25]

In this passage it becomes clear that Hobbes has expanded his attempt to remedy the social issues that arise from human nature. In the first development of this, the necessity of dealing with sociability and norms of conduct found in laws three and four, Hobbes argues for the necessity of man to accommodate himself to others so as to prevent the

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23 Ibid, XV: 16. Emphasis in original.
24 Ibid, XV: 17. Emphasis in original.
25 Leviathan, XV: 17.

possibility for the existence of conflict that might escalate into something that necessitates breaking the peace, thereby reverting man to the state of nature.[26][27] A second development of this principle, however, found in this law, is that Hobbes has also, rightly, begun to address disparities in wealth and property. Hobbes will again address this issue in laws nine through fourteen, discussed below. Thus far Hobbes has pointed to human nature as the cause of civil disorder, and with this law has created a distinction between how human nature causes issues for sociability and wealth.

The sixth law returns again to, and develops, the issue of justice as Hobbes argues states that "*upon caution of the future time, a man ought to pardon the offences past of them that, repenting, desire it*."[28] The seventh law continues this development in stating "*that in revenges … men look not at the greatness of the evil past, but the greatness of the good to follow*."[29] Similarly, the eighth law lays down the precept that "*no man by deed, word, countenance, or gesture, declare hatred or contempt of another*."[30] The theme among these three becomes evident in the ninth and tenth laws, which deal with pride and arrogance respectively. The ninth law states that every man must "*acknowledge* [each] *other for his equal by nature*"[31] and the tenth that "*at the entrance into conditions of peace, no man require to reserve to himself any right which he is not*

26 In chapter XXX, section 20, Hobbes discusses this again in his condemnation of popular men who, through various means, are able to sway and influence others in various manners that, Hobbes argues, tends to undermine the authority of the sovereign.

27 Harvey Mansfield briefly discusses this in his work entitled *Manliness*. Mansfield argues that a Hobbesian society is one marked by an unhealthy predominance of femininity. Mansfield is here concerned about an excessive tendency and valuation of accommodation and sensitivity, predominantly feminine qualities, at the expense of assertiveness, which he characterizes as a manly quality. The point to be made is that a balance between assertiveness and accommodation is necessary to a healthy society and Hobbes here creates a disharmony in the prevalence of these two qualities.

28 Leviathan, XV: 18. Emphasis in original.

29 Ibid, XV: 19. Emphasis in original.

30 Ibid, XV: 20. Emphasis in original.

31 Ibid, XV: 21. Emphasis in original.

content should be deserved to every one of the rest."[32] Here Hobbes is, first, attempting to remedy the causes of man's natural inclination to seek an eye for an eye, a conception of justice that Hobbes rightly acknowledges leads one to create disorder through taking justice into one's own hands. This right, like all others necessary to the preservation of peace, is conceded to the sovereign. This is consistent with the argument established above that, for Hobbes, in order to maintain civil peace there must be a conscious effort to mold human nature in order to undermine the existence of certain human traits. Second, the ninth law states that everyone who agrees to be subject to the social contract enters into this agreement on equal terms.[33] The same assumption, that men would only agree to the social contract upon equal terms, also underlies the tenth through fourteenth laws; the relevance of this will be discussed below.

The eleventh law states that "*if a man be trusted to judge between man and man"* he must "*deal equally between them*."[34] Hobbes terms this distributive justice, and it involves "the equal distribution to each man, of that which in reason belongeth to him."[35] The implications of this become more clear after dealing with the twelfth law, which posits that "*such things as cannot be divided be enjoyed in common, if it can be; and if the quantity of the thing permit, without stint; otherwise proportionably to the number of them that have right."*[36] While the eleventh law does not necessarily require that divisible things be distributed equally, as that which "in reason" belongs to one man

32 Ibid, XV: 22. Emphasis in original.
33 Even if Hobbes recognizes that this type of equality can never actually exist given the natural difference of character between people, the perception of equality and inequality are integral to Hobbes's thought. In asserting that one must acknowledge others as equals Hobbes's is therefore affirming the Machiavellian emphasis upon perception over reality.
34 Leviathan, XV: 23.
35 Ibid, XV: 24.
36 Ibid, XV: 25.

could be, justifiably, more or less than that which belongs to another man. Given the ninth and tenth laws, however, "reason" has thus far been used to advocate equality and an equality of things.[37] One may assume that until Hobbes shows otherwise, and justifies inequalities, that the eleventh law advocates "not simply equally recognized rights to divisible things, but equally recognized rights to equal amounts of divisible things."[38] This argument gains further strength if one considers, first the twelfth law in conjunction with the eleventh, in which things that can be divided be done so proportionately among those that have a right to them, meaning, as established in the ninth law, everyone, and second, Hobbes's explicit identification of material inequality as a source of disorder. The implication of this is that Hobbes's laws of nature provide a radically (even by contemporary standards) egalitarian conception of property in which significant distinctions in wealth are unjustifiable in theory, even if in practice they are unavoidable.

The thirteenth law makes clear that Hobbes had indeed been holding to his egalitarian tendencies for the eleventh and twelfth laws. With the thirteenth law Hobbes posits that those things which "can neither be divided nor enjoyed in common" be determined by either first possession or by lot.[39] The fourteenth law creates a distinction between arbitrary and natural lots. The former is "that which is agreed upon by competitors", meaning among men through convention and contract, and the latter is based on first possession. The provisions made here dealing with inequality are an

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37 It will be demonstrated below that the Hobbesian subject is actually supposed to defer to the sovereign's reasoning rather than rely on his or her own. The Laws of Nature can thus be assumed to be the will of the sovereign and the guiding principle of reason to which the subjects are obliged to adhere. The importance of education in condition the subject in this regard is thus integral to Hobbes's conception of politics.

38 Seaman, John W. "Hobbes on Public Charity & the Prevention of Idleness: A Liberal Case for Welfare." *Polity* 23, no. 1 (1990): 117.

39 Leviathan, XV: 26.

afterthought, as Hobbes ties up loose ends to his argument, recognizing that not at all things can be equal. The greater emphasis, and more fundamental (signified by their placement ahead of the others, closer to the most important first and second laws) is placed upon laws eleven and twelve, thereby showing that Hobbes places greater importance on advocating material equality than providing justification for material inequalities to exist. Thus, Hobbes provides a radically egalitarian conception of property that justifies many modern redistributive polices that would have been entirely novel in his own time.

The above discussion should make clear that, for Hobbes, the fundamental cause of civil disorder is human nature itself.[40] Human nature signifies for Hobbes two distinct and rival components. First, the fundamental material elements of man's being, those *"vital*" to his being, such as the course of blood, and those "*voluntary*."[41] Hobbes clarifies the meaning of voluntary when discussing manners. Voluntary actions are those that tend "not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life, and differ only in the way; which ariseth partly from the diversity of passions in divers men, and partly from the difference of the knowledge or opinion each one has of the causes which produce the effect desired."[42] Thus one can see that Hobbes posits an element of uniformity of object of man's actions. The differences in the manner of means towards man's goals are thus for Hobbes based on experience, cultural construction, education, etc. Hobbes immediately provides a distinction between the natural man and the artificial

40 In interpreting Hobbesian charity as such my own account differentiates from the work of Seaman. While Seaman is primarily concerned with providing a response to Macpherson, and thus focuses on the textual basis of Hobbes's account of charity rather than the broader implications of this aspect of Hobbes's thought, my own interest is in coming to a comprehensive understanding of this matter.

41 Leviathan, VI: 1.

42 Leviathan: XI: 1.

man.[43] The purpose of this distinction will be demonstrated to allow for Hobbes to create a distinction what is essential to man is what is, in contemporary terminology, socially constructed, and thus socially constructed.[44] Thus far in the laws Hobbes has begun to address some aspects of this issue, this discussion is taken up again in later chapters of *Leviathan*, and it is at this point that Hobbes makes a serious and integral distinction in the causes of civil disorder. While human nature is the fundamental issue, property becomes a natural development of this cause because it is the same nature that makes one combative, proud, etc., that causes one to desire excessive wealth and property, even in the face of material suffering or starvation. Thus, it is man's pride, greed, etc. that make massive distinctions in property and wealth an inevitable reality, and, as Hobbes rightly acknowledges, a source of civil disorder that he attempts to address.

In Chapter XXX of *Leviathan* civil peace and the sources of civil disorder are returned to in the context of state provided charity. Here Hobbes again posits the notion that the foremost concern of the sovereign, guaranteeing civil peace, necessitates provisions for public charity in order to provide remedy for the concerns about poverty raised above. Hobbesian charity is not a policy based on a conception of obligation or morality but is, rather, a understood as a means to procure "*the safety of the people,*"[45] and to preserve the peace;[46] the moral implications are merely an after thought. Hobbes is thus rejecting the Christian understanding of charity has a moral duty and instead positing an understanding of charity based on utility. Thus, like Hobbes's thought

43 Ibid., Introduction: 2
44 See the discussion of man's malleability discussed above, especially in the fifth Law of Nature.
45 Leviathan, XXX: 1.
46 De Cive, VIII: 2.

generally, charity is a political tool, to be used out of necessity by the sovereign to achieve his goal of civil peace, rather than a voluntary act done for its own sake.

Hobbes argues in favour of a conception of government in which the sovereign enacts policy for the "Prevention of Idlenesse."[47] The sovereign must undertake positive measures to ensure that the "multitude of poor (and yet strong) people" are provided means of employment.[48] Hobbes's reasoning is that if people cannot find work, there will be poverty; as stated above, the laws of nature acknowledge that poverty creates civil unrest; therefore, if it is the sovereign's job to prevent civil unrest, it must provide for the poor. One manner to do this is for the sovereign to create work opportunities to employ those who would otherwise be unemployed. This provides theoretical justification for the type of make-work projects that form an integral part of contemporary economic policy. The prevention of idleness has as a primary assumption that belief that it is governmental responsibility to ensure that each person is, if able, guaranteed the necessary means to live. This, however, is only the first of two charitable policies explicitly discussed by Hobbes.

In contrast to his position on idleness, Hobbes' argument for public charity does not make explicit appeal to civil peace. Hobbes argues that people who "by accident unevitable, become unable to maintain themselves by their labour" should be provided for by the "Laws of the Common-wealth," because to rely on "uncertain" private charity would be an act of "Uncharitablenesse" on behalf of the sovereign.[49] Hobbes does not provide an elaboration on what this uncertainty is exactly.[50] Nonetheless, one can begin

47 Leviathan, XXX: 19
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid, XXX: 18.
50 One can infer that this uncertainty is due to the fact that private charity it is not reliable, or something that the subjects can expect, or are owed. If the duty of the sovereign is to ensure that

to see in Hobbes's argument the beginnings of a conception of charity in which the sovereign is obliged to fill this role in its entirety, thereby undermining the need for or justification of private charity. Given the lack of justification as to why the sovereign ought to provide public charity in the immediate vicinity of this discussion, it is necessary to look elsewhere to determine why Hobbes might advocate this position.

From another passage in *Leviathan*, Hobbes makes an argument advocating the right of the destitute to steal when "necessary for his life" and being "unable to preserve himselfe any other way."[51] Seaman notes that Hobbes' argument is premised on the belief that the destitute have "three conceivable ways to acquire the necessities of life: theft … money, or charity."[52] Based on Hobbes argument it is plain that those who meet his standard of being unemployed due to "accident unevitable" are unable to sell their labour to survive, and therefore theft and charity are the two remaining alternatives. Hobbes obviously cannot advocate a system of government that condones widespread theft, as this would be to promote a legal system that would likely result in widespread disorder and a "pervasive" sense of "insecurity" among citizens who already, as Hobbes notes,[53] lock their doors, out of mistrust for their neighbours, would be quite imprudent. To avoid this scenario, then, Hobbes must provide a "peaceable route for the destitute" to

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the subjects do not have reason to break the peace the implication is that public charity becomes an entitlement that is owed to the subject, and, failing to receive this entitlement, the subject will only then be justified in breaking the peace. An additional point to note is that this uncertainty could be attributed to the belief that the sovereign is better equipped to provide charity than private forces because the sovereign is supposed to act in the interest of the common good, while private forces would be then understood as acting in their own interests in providing charity. This notion, however, involves a degree of mental gymnastics, as public forces are just as capable, if not more capable due to their authoritative position, of acting for their own private benefit as private forces.

51 Leviathan, XXX: 19.

52 Seaman, John W. "Hobbes on Public Charity & the Prevention of Idleness: A Liberal Case for Welfare." *Polity* 23, no. 1 (1990): 111.

53 Leviathan, XIII: 10

receive charity "through the public provision … by the sovereign"[54], the result being, indirectly, a policy that, along with its sister policy, justice, helps to secure civil peace. Seaman remarks that Hobbes even goes so far as to insist that "charity, along with justice, is one of the 'twin sisters of peace.'"[55]

One can infer from these three passages, idleness, charity, and theft, that the underlying principle of Hobbes's advocacy of what, by contemporary standards, would be regarded as welfare policies is not a moral imperative, as might now be understood as the basis of, or appealed to in the justification of, similar policies, but is a matter of political necessity. Hobbes regards these policies as indispensable to the maintenance of order and the prevention of periodic, inevitable political instability that would otherwise develop. The ethical concerns for providing charity are here an afterthought; the sovereign does not provide charity out of love, or compassion, but out of the desire to secure the continuity of his own power, which is then justified as a public good in that it prevents the can reduce the possibility that the subjects might suffer, directly or indirectly, as a result of a weakening of the sovereign's power.

Hobbes's conception of charity is one in which the existence and justifiability of charitable acts by private individuals or groups becomes undermined and replaced by public charity provided by the sovereign.[56] In turning to Hobbes's view of factions this becomes clear. For Hobbes a faction is a type of government within a government, or a form of authority apart, and not directly deriving from, the authority of the sovereign.[57]

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54 Seaman, John W. "Hobbes on Public Charity & the Prevention of Idleness: A Liberal Case for Welfare." *Polity* 23, no. 1 (1990): 111.
55 Ibid.
56 Note also that among the charity is not counted among the virtues attending the laws of nature. One can infer that charity is therefore not one of the virtues or practices to be cultivated among the subjects of a Hobbesian commonwealth.
57 De Cive, XIII: 13.

Factions tend to undermine the authority of the sovereign in that they create loyalty from one person to another, at the expense of one's loyalty to the sovereign, and in recognizing this Hobbes notes that factions are a principal cause of civil unrest and civil war.[58] This leads Hobbes to make provisions to deal with the existence of factions in a number of ways, based on the source of said faction. In providing public charity the sovereign is undermining two sources of faction. First, the sovereign is undermining the potential for the rich to use their wealth to create patron-client relationships, to buy friends, etc.[5960] Thus, in providing public charity the sovereign prevents the rich from gaining the loyalty of the poor, without which would otherwise undermine the authority of the sovereign. The same logic is similarly employed to undermine the influence of the charismatic, the great, and the educated.

Second, in vesting the sovereign with the duty to provide charity Hobbes thereby appropriates what was within the Christian tradition understood as a private, religious responsibility and instead reserves this obligation for the sovereign.[61] Within the context of Hobbes's position on religion more broadly, the manner in which Hobbes attempts to secularize charity is fundamental to understanding this aspect of his thought. Hobbes's primary goal is to provide a pragmatic conception of politics in which the sovereign authority is no longer liable to instability and disorder, as he rightly attributes to both his own era and that which precedes him. In doing so, Hobbes, at great length,[62] addresses

58 Ibid, X: 12, Leviathan, XXXIX: 5.
59 De Cive XIII: 13, Elements of Law 2.5.7, Leviathan, XXII: 31.
60 Note that even artists, let alone the poor, are no longer patronized by the rich but are instead obliged to enlist governmental support through grants.
61 Tocqueville understands private charity as one part of the act of "making democracy more moral by means of religion," the need for "regulating [one's] desires" and turning away from the material world and towards virtue (Democracy in America, 517).
62 Approximately one third of *De Cive* and half of *Leviathan*,

the manner in which religion causes political turmoil. The crux of the issue for Hobbes is that "*a kingdom divided in itself cannot stand;*"[63] his attack is directed at the dualism of temporal and spiritual power. Hobbes seeks to unify these forms of authority under the sovereign, thereby avoiding the existence of the subject's conflicting obligations between temporal and spiritual authority. Thus, in appropriating private charity and vesting this responsibility with the sovereign alone Hobbes undermines the influence of both religion and the wealthy, an influence that would otherwise undermine the authority of the sovereign.

Hobbes's attack on the duality of spiritual and temporal authority can be seen in a number of aspects of his thought. First, Hobbes notes that politics finds its origin in human nature; one's natural inclination to fear death causes man to unite under a sovereign power.[64] Thus, for Hobbes, man's fear of death is good in that it causes him to become political, to enter in society and to authorize a sovereign power to govern over him. For Hobbes death is one of the greatest evils (next to suffering) that can befall man. Religion, in contrast, has as a fundamental tenant the belief that death is not the greatest evil man might encounter but rather that the worst thing that can befall man is a failure to achieve salvation or eternal punishment. Thus, for Hobbes's this aspect of religion is detrimental to man's political inclinations in that it reprioritizes his values away from this world and inclines him towards the afterlife. This tension leads Strauss to posit that "religion therefore denies the foundation of Hobbesian politics."[65]

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63 Leviathan, XVIII: 16. Emphasis in original.
64 Ibid, XIII: 9/14, XX: 1, De Cive, epistle dedicatory.
65 Strauss, Leo. *Hobbes's Critique of Religion and Related Writings.* Trans. Gabriel Bartlett and Svetozar Minkov. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011: 26.

This aspect of Hobbes's thought can also be seen in his interpretation of scripture. Hobbes posits that the eternal life promised by salvation is not a transcendent one but is instead immanent; Hobbes interprets the biblical stories of Adam, Abraham, and the Israelites as promising "eternal life … on earth."[66] Reinterpreting scripture to serve his own political goals is typical of Hobbes's criticism of the manner in which theologians had hitherto interpreted scripture. Hobbes is critical of the interpretation of scripture that goes beyond a literal interpretation and instead infuses scripture with philosophy.[67] With this in mind Hobbes proceeds to deny the existence of spirits, angels, miracles,[68] etc. in favour of his own theory of images and ideas, and the allegedly more likely scenario that these have as their origin ignorance and the imagination.[69] In denying the existence of angels, spirits, or the possibility of divine inspiration, Hobbes attempts to secure the authority of the sovereign over spiritual matters by denying the possibility that anyone except the sovereign has access to the divine. Thus, spiritual authority becomes subsumed to and unified with the temporal authority.

If the Kingdom of God is, as Hobbes suggests, an earthly paradise, then the consequence of sin is not eternal damnation in Hell, but is instead an earthly punishment. Instead of eternal torment the consequence of sin becomes suffering and death, which, as established above, Hobbes regards as the greatest of evils. In reinterpreting this aspect of theology Hobbes thus places his own philosophy, and his own conception of the

66 *Leviathan,* XXXVIII 3. See also XXXV 2, 3, and XXXVIII in its entirety.

67 See *Leviathan* Review, and first appendix. It is worth noting that Hobbes is concerned more with the infusion of scripture with what he regards as bad philosophy than with philosophy generally. In this respect one can see Hobbes's break with Aristotle and the scholastic tradition. For further reading on Hobbes's criticism of scholasticism and theology consult *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* by Strauss.

68 See *Leviathan* XXXIV and *De Cive* XVII: 28.

69 One should note here the similarity of Hobbes's account as to the scientific implausibility of the existence of these spiritual matters to the contemporary scientific discredit of the same phenomena.

sovereign, as the answer to man's spiritual needs. The sovereign is able to satiate man's needs and provide him security in order to avoid these evils. The Hobbesian sovereign is therefore actually the key to deliverance in Hobbes's thought, as it is only he who can provide this security and mitigate these evils. Hobbes describes this as a "civil commonwealth, where God himself is sovereign … wherein he reigneth by his vicar or lieutenant."[70]

In taking this approach to religion, Hobbes successfully, and very pragmatically, provides the theoretical means by which to unify temporal and spiritual authority in a single entity. In making this argument, and framing it on his own terms, Hobbes makes a compelling argument in that, he would argue, the sovereign can realistically meet these goals, at least better than has hither to been possible, because of the simplicity and practicality of mitigating the possibility of suffering and death rather than providing for the complexity and ambiguity of providing transcendent salvation. It is in this mitigation of suffering and death that the sovereign becomes vested with the responsibility to provide charity, formerly occupied by spiritual authorities, but now subsumed to the sovereign.

Hobbes's active attempt to undermine the influence of any political authority that does not derive from the sovereign, including both faction and religion, displays a strong tendency towards the centralization of authority within the Hobbesian state. Recalling Hobbes's notion that power cannot be divided, the tendency towards centralization is both unavoidable and necessary based on the principles Hobbes established in the laws of nature. Just as all power is to derive from the sovereign, all action is also to derive from sovereign. It has been demonstrated above that charitable action is reserved for the

70 Leviathan, XXXVIII: 5

sovereign on the grounds that affection should not be developed between a citizen and a benefactor, or between a citizen and a rival political authority, but that for the stability of society as a whole Hobbes argues that the sovereign should be the sole provider of charity and thus the sole recipient of the affection this creates.

In recalling the laws of nature it becomes evident that Hobbes has again extended the causes of civil disorder, and thus the elements of society that the sovereign has the moral responsibility to shape and control so as to prevent a return to the state of nature. While human nature remains the fundamental area of concern for the sovereign in this regard, and wealth is still a development from this, a further development is here made in Hobbes's concern over the relationships that form between citizens. In extending the principles developed above beyond the immediate context of charity the implication arises that, based on Hobbes's principles, all political action[71] that could possibility create a bond between private citizens must derive from the sovereign's will, lest loyalty be divided. The sovereign is here the sole actor who can justifiably engage in politics, and citizens must defer to the will of the sovereign in all political matters, and only justifiably engage in politics when acting as an agent of the sovereign.

From this one can see that Hobbes encourages an element of passivity in the subjects of the commonwealth, what likely seems that outcome of Hobbes' conception of charity is an uninvolved populace that praises the actions of the sovereign while they themselves take little to no part engaging in said activity except through observation and passive nonresistance. The passivity of the subject mentioned above is both encouraged

71 Politics properly understood in a broader sense than is now often posited. The political implications of art, science, and education, etc. are here encompassed. To a great extent this has significant implications for government grants for artists, governmental subsidization, or lack of subsidization, of scientific research, and government mandated curriculum of education.

and desirable for Hobbes as this is alleged to be necessary to the maintenance of the peace.[72] In encouraging this Hobbes also serves to undermine the ability of the subject to act. The ability to act politically is not something natural but must be learned through practice.[73] In denying the subject the possibility of acting, through encouraging only obedience, and not the ability to will and to act of one's own accord, Hobbes serves to undermine the possibility that this virtue can be fostered. Hobbes's position on charity is indicative of this trend as through private charity individuals can come to act in concert to achieve a certain end. Contrary to this is public charity, in which individuals do not learn how to act on their own behalf but are instead deferential to and dependent upon the sovereign to act in their stead.

In rendering the subjects incapable of political action Hobbes serves to create a new type of equality. Despite the provisions made to reduce material inequalities in the laws of nature and chapter XXX Hobbes is prudent enough to understand and acknowledge that material inequality is both inevitable and can also be beneficial. As stated above, Hobbes's concern is neither the well being of the subjects, nor the material well being that they might have, but rather the stability of the commonwealth. Instead, the type of equality that one finds in a Hobbesian state is a political equality among the subjects in their standing beneath the sovereign.

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72 Recall that the subject's first and foremost duty is to obey the sovereign. To obey does not mean to participate in any meaningful way but also to not resist (hence, to be passive).

73 This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter and will therefore only be introduced presently. One anecdote that should serve present purposes is to refer the reader to consider and evaluate the quality of political participation demonstrated in recent protest movements, be they the Montreal student strike, Occupy, or the WTO and G8 protests. Regardless of one's feelings on the goals of the protests, that the demonstrators are visibility lacking in their ability to articulate their messages, perhaps best seen in the resort to the banging of pots and pans, or to achieve their ends. More simply, the protesters do not know how to act politically and do not realize that they are lacking in this skill.

In the most straightforward sense Hobbesian equality derives from Hobbes's understanding of natural rights. From the laws of nature one can see that Hobbes ascribes to man a natural equality of rights in the state of nature that becomes formalized through the social contract. This aspect of Hobbes thought is therefore, as Macpherson and others rightly note,[74] proto-liberal in that is a theory of natural law. This, however, is only a superficial understanding of Hobbesian equality. More important is the extent to which Hobbes provides an understanding of equality that derives from the position of the subject beneath and in relation to the sovereign. As stated above, the sovereign is the only political actor in a Hobbesian society. In surrendering their right to act the subjects become equal in their inability, both in the literal sense and in that they have surrendered their right, to take political action.

Hobbesian equality can thus be characterized as the subjects' equality of weakness beneath the sovereign. This weakness derives from the depoliticization of the subject as the sovereign comes to take responsibility for what would otherwise require civic participation.[75] Hobbesian equality is especially dangerous when it takes form in a democracy. Democracies depend upon civic participation in order to remain healthy and to not lapse into a hierarchical and highly bureaucratic form of government in which elite technocrats undermine the need for and possibility of civic participation. The weakness that marks Hobbesian equality inhibits the possibility that individuals will either know how to, or feel justified in engaging in, political participation because the sovereign has declared for itself a monopoly over the right to engage in political action.

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74 See Macpherson's *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (especially II.4.iii) and Levin's *A Hobbesian Minimal State*.

75 Note the similarity to Plato's *Republic* here, as the sovereign, like the guardians, is the sole political force upon whom the rest are dependent.

Civic participation is understood as more than simply voting. While voting is integral to a democracy, this only suffices as a formality within the maintenance of institutional democracy. Of greater importance is the maintenance of democratic mores. Thus, the act of participating politically in a more meaningful manner than simply casting a ballot is here understood. Tocqueville regards the election as "the moment when common affairs are treated in common," the moment when "each man perceives that he is not as independent of those like him as he at first fancied."[76] Those elected, however, are only concerned with the "general affairs of a country"; the citizens of a democracy must take responsibility for "the particular affairs" of their own "district" so that "the same individuals are always in contact and they are in a way forced to know each other and to be pleasing to each other."[77] This will be treated in greater detail below. Similarly, the tendency of democracies to lapse into highly centralized and bureaucratic governments is also here treated rather than the possibility that democracies might lapse into tyranny. This also will be provided more extensive treatment below.[78] Suffice it to say at the moment that any society requires the satisfaction and fulfillment of basic necessities. Tocqueville discusses this as the building of schools, fire stations, etc. There is inevitability that either local communities take care of these necessities through the participation and activism of members of the community or that a centralized bureaucracy will do so for them.

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76 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 486.

77 Ibid., 487.

78 For a discussion of tyranny and democracy Tocqueville's thought is of the utmost importance. While the possibility of a democracy degenerating into an authoritative or totalitarian state is regarded by Tocqueville as a possibility, he anticipates that what is more likely is that a democracy will tend towards a centralized bureaucracy that is simultaneously democractic and authoritarian. For a discussion of Tocqueville's understanding of democratic tyranny see Beahm (p. 29-31) , Fishkin (p. 135), or Lawler (*American Views,* p. 52-65).

From Hobbes's account of charity three characteristics become evident as integral to the fulfillment of Hobbes's broader goals regarding the role of the sovereign as patron of peace. First, Hobbes's thought depends upon a high degree of individualism. The bonds between citizens are for Hobbes a source of instability that the sovereign must remedy; the preservation of authority and loyalty are fundamental concerns for the sovereign, and an important manner in which this can be preserved is through undermining the possibility that loyalty can or will become divided. In seeking to undermine the existence of community the sovereign is dependent on the existence of a large degree of individualism intended to push citizens apart.

Second, Hobbes's account of public charity also displays the role of equality in his conception of politics. In undermining the existence of bond and community the sovereign is of necessity obliged to take up the task of providing goods and services without which community would otherwise develop in order to address. The point to be made here, which is developed further below, is that when a high degree of community exists citizens are able to draw upon community support and participation in order to address community needs. A simple example would be to address the issue of graffiti or similar property damage. When citizens in a community are familiar with one another, engage in discussions of how to improve their community, etc. this type of issue can be addressed by friends and neighbours. If this issue exists however, and a community does not have these bonds of friendship and support the inevitability exists that either the issue will go unaddressed, which is unlikely in most cases, or that citizens will appeal to a greater authority to take responsibility for the issue and address it for them.[79] Principal among these goods that needs be addressed is the provision of charity. For Hobbes,

79 See Hayek (p. 1-8, 107-132), Smith (Book 1, Chapter 1), Mises, (p. 70-75).

individualism comes hand in hand with equality as they both work towards the same goal of civil peace. The best way for the sovereign to undermine the existence of competing sources of authority is to eliminate them; thus the sovereign's attitude towards religion, and thus equality through depoliticization.[80]

Lastly, Hobbes's conception of government is marked by a high degree of administrative centralization. In depoliticizing the citizens the sovereign becomes obliged to make up for the absence of civic participation that will inevitably follow. Citizens are supposed to be deferential to the sovereign, and consequently the sovereign must rely upon a high degree of administrative centralization and the existence of a powerful bureaucracy to fulfill his expanded functions and duties. The purpose is to remove the necessity of political participation so as to remove the possibility that politics might go awry and create disorder or instability

As the theoretical basis of these three aspects of Hobbes's thought, individualism, equality, and administrative centralization, has been developed, the implications will be discussed again in third chapter. First, however, the role of these three notions will be discussed in the context of Alexis de Tocqueville.

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80 The best way to prevent the influence of great individuals, however, is to ensure that there exist no great individuals.

Chapter 2: Tocqueville

Tocqueville's emphasis upon, and aptitude for, evaluating and understanding social forces provided him the insight with which to identify and foreshadow trends and movements developing within early American culture and society. Tocqueville's work provides his account of topics such as equality, tyranny of majority, and materialism

within both the United States and democratic societies more broadly, and has over the past twenty fives years garnered substantial attention from academics.[81] Tocqueville's work recognizes that democratic societies come to value the act of being democratic as something of inherent value, something to which a society should always strive, and as a basis of evaluation upon which a society ought to be held.[82] More specifically, Tocqueville correctly notes that within democracies there exists, on a conscious level, a significant break with the past; democratic citizens come to regard democracy as the only justifiable form of government, the extent to which something is democratic as the only basis upon which to evaluate something, and consequently display an inherent disdain for the past and for tradition.[83] Tocqueville notes, however, that beneath democracy there exist residual aristocratic cultural values[84] to which democracy itself is indebted for its own development, and from which democracy has not completely extracted itself.[85] Tocqueville regards these residual values as beneficial to the health of democracy, and thus as something to be preserved.

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81 Most notably are Mahoney, Lawler, Manent, and Boesche. Also worth attention are Horwitz, Engster, Maletz and Koritansky.

82 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 479-82.

83 Ibid., 426-28, 469-72.

84 These will be discussed again below but the principle aspects of aristocratic culture that will be treated are administrative decentralization, religion, and, to a lesser extent, individualism. The first is understood as a democratized version of feudal lordship and a respect for regional rights and autonomy, the second provides "wholly contrary instincts" to those of democracies, the desire to "raise [man's] soul" above his senses and earthly goods, much in the manner that the noble soul would see itself (Democracy in America, 419). The last aristocratic value, individualism, is understood as the democratization and universalization of the aristocratic notion of self-improvement, A key distinction lies in that democratic peoples regard this as the indefinite perfectibility of man, while aristocratic peoples see this as improvement within definite, impassable limts (See Democracy in America, 426-428).

85 Ibid., 7, 9, 273-5.

In coming to value democratization as a state of being of inherent worth, democracies tend to render themselves prone to extremes.[86] While Tocqueville is a proponent and admirer of democratic society, he is wise enough to understand that healthy democracies must be moderated by the existence of undemocratic values and institutions. In the previous chapter Hobbes as been demonstrated to advocate a political system that, first, lends itself to application in democratic society, and second, tends to result in very pragmatic extremes in regards to individualism, equality, and centralization. This chapter will demonstrate the manner in which Tocqueville, unlike Hobbes, seeks to moderate, rather than exacerbate, such excesses.

The most coherent and comprehensive account of Tocqueville's understanding of history and values can be found in the works of Peter Augustine Lawler.[87] Lawler argues that Tocqueville's understanding of history is indebted to his Rousseauean influences. Rousseau's understanding of history is, like Hobbes, one in which humans steadily move away from their natural, brutish origins towards a self-conscious and disordered state. Rousseau writes contrary to Hobbes, however, in his belief that "human beings, over time, move away from natural order and toward their self-created disorder by making themselves progressively more human. History, for Rousseau, is the growth of self-consciousness, restlessness, and misery."[88] Lawler describes Tocqueville's understanding

86 Ibid., 479-82.

87 Most explicitly this can be found in Lawler's *Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love* and *The Restless Mind*, but *Postmodernism Rightly Understood* is also worth reading in this context because it draws upon the conclusions made in *Pride,* and *The Restless Mind* and discusses their ramifications for contemporary political thought.

88 Lawler, Peter A. *The Restless Mind: Alexis de Tocqueville on the Origin and Perpetuation of Human Liberty*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993: 15.

of history as "the record of human beings becoming progressively more aware of and dissatisfied with" their "incoherent mixture of brutish and angelic qualities."[89]

Within Tocqueville's conception of history, Lawler argues, there exist residual cultural imprints upon man left over from his past.[90] Thus, just as contemporary humanity is left with pieces of its brutish past, democratic society is also left with pieces of its aristocratic past. Tocqueville recognizes this and discusses it at length throughout his writings.[91] In understanding this element of Tocqueville's thought the question arises as to what is to be done with these relics of a bygone era. Two different approaches are highlighted in Tocqueville's two principle works, *Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime*. The former deals with the American embrace of certain aristocratic notions that work to the benefit and health of American democracy. The latter deals with the French Revolution and its explicit rejection of the past, its desire to create something totally new, and the failure and issues that plague France up until and beyond Tocqueville's life.[92]

Throughout *Democracy in America* one finds repeated praise for and emphasis of the political value of the cultural residue that remains from America's European aristocratic and feudal origins. More interestingly, Tocqueville praises this aspect of American culture in light of their democratic obsession, and as a means to improve the

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89 Ibid.

90 One can see in this notion a clear break with modernity in Tocqueville. His recognition and embrace of man's residual identity displays a rejection of rationalism, and highlights Tocqueville's break with modernity. Lawler develops his account of this in *Postmodernism Rightly Understood.*

91 Lawler's *Modern and American Dignity* is also worth reading in this regard as it provides an account of Tocqueville's reconciliation of magnanimity and democratic justice. In short, an inherent tension exists between the democratic pursuit of equality and the potential for human greatness. A truly just society provides for both.

92 Tocqueville's concerns developed in *The Old Regime* are provided context and experiential account in Tocqueville's autobiographical *Recollections*. Unfortunately *The Old Regime* remains an unfinished work, and only what might equate to the first section of *Democracy* is written beyond notes and brief passages.

quality, and not the quantity of American democracy.[93] In fact, Tocqueville regards the health of American democracy as dependent upon the existence and maintenance of these aristocratic values, as they serve to moderate and temper the tendency that exists in democratic societies to endlessly render all aspects of society more democratic, and more egalitarian, as if these values are of intrinsic and not of instrumental value.[94]

Throughout *The Old Regime* one finds this same aspect of Tocqueville's thought inversed in his views of the French Revolution. In contrast to American democracy, French democracy does not begin with a valuation of and desire to remain within, or improve upon, the traditions of the past, but is instead a conscious and polemical attempt to destroy tradition and build something entirely new and entirely novel.[95] Tocqueville recognizes this in arguing that the French Revolution is most comparable to religious revolutions of the past.[96] The French Revolution was not confined to France, but was understood by the revolutionaries as something encompassing more than the state; it was a revolution within not only society but also within man himself, tearing down convention and tradition and building something entirely new.[97]

A revolution, be it within society or man, is a revolt against established power structures. One major aspect of this was a revolution against religion itself, for the state

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93 One can see here the interesting and ironic idea that perhaps a true friend of democracy, and the one who provides the best advice to a democratic people, is actually one who advocates for less democracy. The implication of this is that the contemporary obsession with rendering life and politics increasingly and unceasingly more democratic is fundamentally flawed and is based upon a misunderstanding of democracy itself.

94 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 479-82, 513, 645.

95 Perhaps then, contrary to opinions found within the *Federalist* and *Antifederalist*, American democracy is not as novel as the founders believed, and surely not as novel as what was to come to France shortly after.

96 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "The Old Regime and the Revolution." Edited by Francois Furet and Francoise Melonio, Translated by Alan S. Kahan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001: 1.2, 1.3.

97 Ibid., 3.1.

and religion are intertwined.[98] Tocqueville notes that despite the fact that normally when one religion wanes in dominance it is replaced by another, in France Christianity was attacked with nothing posited as a replacement.[99] Values and opinions that stood in the way of change were similarly attacked. Within the void left by the destruction of tradition, Tocqueville notes that it was the state that became vested with the responsibility and necessity of replacing what had been left behind.[100] Local obligations and class relations that had formerly existed naturally and harmoniously began to deteriorate, as they were premised upon respect for tradition.[101] Tocqueville describes the result as an untempered, collective individualism.[102] Groups and individuals that formerly lived cordially but distinct from each other became antagonistic and entirely self-serving and respect between classes ceased. In the absence of obligations and duties that had once existed, both between the nobility, bourgeois, and the commoners, and between commoners, such as charity, France became entirely dependent on the existence of governmental power to provide structure to a society that had formerly been well-ordered in terms of social obligations and responsibilities.[103] It is worth noting that Revolutionary France and the time leading up to this, beginning with Louis XIV cannot be generalized as the norm of this era. More clearly, Tocqueville's argument is that the creation of bureaucracy in this era involved the usurpation of power that was traditionally held by the French aristocracy. Duties and responsibilities that these nobles previously held in relation to the people of whom they were lords was stripped from them and centralized as

98 Ibid., 3.2.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., 2.3.
101 Ibid., 2.4, 2.9.
102 Ibid., 2.9.
103 Ibid., 2.6, 2.7.

the responsibility of Louis XIV. The new centralized administration, however, proved inadequate and incapable of fulfilling this task, thereby sowing the seeds of the French Revolution.[104] Tocqueville discusses this extensively in *The Old Regime* and traces the consequences of French administrative centralization and the development of *bureaus* as disruptive to these established norms and detrimental to aristocrats and peasants alike.

The example of France provides Tocqueville a contrast to American democracy. While American democracy is premised upon respect for tradition, French democracy is premised upon a rejection of tradition. This distinction provides the basis of Tocqueville's views of the two countries. After developing Tocqueville's views in this regard, it becomes possible to go into greater detail of the manner in which Tocqueville praises the aristocratic aspect of American democracy. The three elements of democratic society that Tocqueville devotes the greatest attention to are the democratic pursuit of and emphasis upon equality, individualism, and centralized administration. Tocqueville notes that these aspects of democratic society, at the time of his writing in the mid 19th century, were already coming to be the dominant inclinations of American society. In the 19th century American society had already been taken ahold of by the gradual and endless pull towards the dominance of these values over all others, to the detriment of the health of democracy itself.[105] Despite this, Tocqueville emphasizes the existence of cultural and institutional residue left over from America's European past that serves to undermine this tendency, that serves to moderate and inhibit these tendencies, and that serves to delay the slow degeneration of democracy into a statist and authoritative regime.

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104 Ibid., 2.1 - 2.9.

105 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 479-84.

One of Tocqueville's principle observations is that the love for and endless pursuit of equality comes to be the dominant social force that characterizes democracies.[106] Love and valuation of democracy itself comes to be subsumed to the love of equality, and the extent to which something renders citizens of greater equality becomes the basis upon which politics is judged. In his analysis of American democracy Tocqueville notes that in addition to political equality there also existed "considerable social equality."[107] One principle result of this double equality, what could be termed formal and substantive equality, is the tendency for the democratic love of equality to be paired with the hatred of privilege.[108] This hatred "grows with progress toward equality, because 'amid the general uniformity, the slightest dissimilarity seems shocking;'"[109] fear of arousing these sentiments results in the widespread desire to simply to be a part of the majority. Tocqueville goes so far as to argue that "equality in its most extreme degree becomes confused with freedom,"[110] what is best, or even what will help strengthen and improve the quality of democracy itself.[111] Equality becomes the principle goal of governmental policy, thereby rendering the existing degree of social and political equality subject to indefinite increase.

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106 Ibid., 189.

107 Horwitz, Morton J. "Tocqueville and the Tyranny of the Majority." *The Review of Politics* 28, no. 3 (July 1966): 299.

108 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 189, .

109 Lawler, Peter A. *American Views of Liberty*. Vol. 5. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995, 162.

110 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 480.

111 Two articles by Clifford Orwin touch upon a similar phenomenon with the increasing dominance of compassions as the basis upon which policy is now judged. The act of increasing equality through governmental action is strongly based upon appeal to compassion as justification for these policies. Similarly, compassion can become the basis upon which all politics is judged, subsuming notions of the best or what is politically effective to the degree to which a policy is regarded as compassionate.

In developing his account of equality Tocqueville creates a distinction within the type of social equality that marks democratic society. In addition to the large degree of material equality to be found in democracies, there exists also a high degree of uniformity among citizens. Love of equality results in a great degree of influence of the majority over society itself through the creation and moral enforcement of public attitudes, mores, and ideas, through the dominance of ready-made opinions that "become a sort of religion whose prophet will be the majority" through "faith in common opinion".[112] This occurs for two reasons: first, "sameness … predominates in public opinion as a result of the people desiring equality," and secondly, it also "comes about by the need of all people to accept a number of things in their life that they don't have time to examine".[113] In an equal society all people need to work, and thus don't have time for leisure that would allow them to arrive at greater diversity of opinion and values that one finds within the leisure inclined class of an aristocratic society. Tocqueville recognizes that this type of agreement, the uniformity of opinions, is necessary to allow common beliefs to exist and thereby allow the body social to function.[114] The issue and danger with this is that there exists the potential and likeliness that these ideas and opinions to become too readily accepted and dogmatic, as described above. One can see that the result of the power accorded majority opinion is that intellectual authority within American society comes

112 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 410.
113 Beahm, Donald L. *Conceptions and Corrections of Majoritarian Tyranny*. New York: Lexington Books, 2002, 30. A detailed discussion of the causes of this can also be seen in Allen's work *The Spiral of Silence & Institutional Design: Tocqueville's Analysis of Public Opinion & Democracy* (1991).
114 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 550, 241, 246.

not from the government but from the majority, and the majority's insistence upon the acceptance of the their ideas.

Democratic equality is thus not limited to formal legal equality, and equality of social conditions, but naturally and gradually becomes a more extreme, and a more characteristically democratic form of equality through homogeneity. Tocqueville argues that the development of this uniformity becomes tyrannical in nature as the majority comes to exert a high degree of influence over society, both controlling and shaping the ideas and mores of society, inhibiting freedom of thought and expression.[115] Thus, according to Tocqueville the danger of tyranny is not to be found within the government but within the people themselves. He describes this as tyranny over the heart and mind that "leaves the body and goes straight for the soul," one that says to those who do not conform, that in deviating from the norm, "you shall remain among men, but you shall lose your rights to humanity."[116] Tocqueville's understanding of tyranny of the majority, understood as the notion to either conform or be cast out, stands in contrast to that of Madison and the Founding Fathers.[117] Horwitz posits the fundamental distinction between Madison and Tocqueville to be that the former treated tyranny of the majority as a political problem and the latter as a social or cultural problem, albeit with profound political implications.[118] Horwitz notes that Tocqueville, unlike the majority of his

115 Ibid., 239-64.
116 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 244-245.
117 Other, broader, notable understandings of the concept of tyranny of the majority developed throughout history can be found in Hermens's The "Tyranny of the Majority" (1958).
118 Horwitz, Morton J. "Tocqueville and the Tyranny of the Majority." *The Review of Politics* 28, no. 3 (July 1966): 296.

American contemporaries, "was too wise to place institutions at the first level of political analysis," according them only a secondary influence over politics and men.[119]

The tyrannical nature of democratic equality, an immoderate and excessive kind of equality, one that does not seek merely and equality of social environment and legal significance, but seeks instead equality through uniformity, tends to undermine the democratic nature of society itself by inhibiting freedom of thought, thereby undermining a foundational underpinning of liberal democratic thought. Despite this trend, however, Tocqueville finds that within American culture there the exist forces that serve to moderate the tendency towards an excess of equality, instead creating a respect for diversity, the recognition that love of equality should not infringe upon freedom of thought, and the understanding that difference of social condition is both natural and unavoidable, and even has positive effects upon society that, if harnessed, serve to improve both individual citizens and society as a whole.

Some elements of American society that Tocqueville praises as moderating the tyranny of equality are bourgeois in origins. For example, Tocqueville praises capitalism as putting "a seed of power … within reach of the people,"[120] thereby allowing citizens to "procure by [themselves] the diverse objects that [their] education and habits have rendered necessary," and thus developing "the intellect" and their ability to "[change] their status" in society through their own effort and will.[121] Furthermore, Tocqueville describes the American system of commerce as creating a "land of prodigies" absent "any boundary" that plagues Europeans, disposing Americans to live "above the average

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119 Ibid.
120 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 5.
121 Ibid., 387.

level of humanity."[122] Tocqueville is here describing the constant "discontent" and constant agitation that plagues the American soul, causing him to raise himself "above the crowd" to "extraordinary greatness."[123] Thus, for Tocqueville, capitalism brings with it political advantages that tend to undermine the natural democratic love of equality.

Similarly, there exist forces of aristocratic origin within American culture that also tend to moderate the democratic love of equality. American religiosity, for example, tends to undermine the love of equality in a number of ways. First, religion in the United States is premised upon freedom and diversity.[124] Freedom of thought, speech, and religion naturally creates a wide variety of opinion and beliefs, which thereby tends to undermine the penchant for sameness mentioned above. Thus, the freedom of religion found within the United States tends to create a respect for difference that serves to inhibit the growth of homogeneity created by democratic equality.[125] Second, religion tends to devalue and reduce emphasis upon the material world. Thus, in creating a "general habit of behaving with a view to the future" religion tends to create the recognition that despite the obvious benefits of material equality, there are greater goals than this.[126] Without this view to the future, there comes to exist in democracies an "instability of the social state" that favours "the natural instability of desires," thereby placing greater emphasis upon the material pleasures and satisfaction that derive from material equality than is healthy to both individuals and society.[127]

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122 Ibid., 387-88.
123 Ibid., 527-29
124 Ibid., 417-24.
125 Ibid., 278-84.
126 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 522.
127 Ibid., 523.

Equality is also moderated by individualism. While equality serves to render citizens equal in their weakness, individualism both exacerbates and mitigates this tendency. Tocqueville notes that individualism "is a reflective and peaceable sentiment that disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of those like him and to withdraw" from "society at large" and to create a little society for his own use" in which man owes "nothing to anyone" and expects the same from others.[128] In this sense, individualism exacerbates the effects of equality through dividing citizens and inhibiting the growth of community by creating a weak duty "toward the species" while destroying existence of "devotion to one man," thereby "extend[ing] and loosen[ing]" the "bond of human affections."[129] Citizens become even more equal as individualism comes to dominate in the sense that they are equally incapable of acting together.

Despite this, individualism also moderates equality in the sense that it adapts and modifies aristocratic notions of self-improvement through "little sacrifices every day," bringing men nearer to virtue "insensibly through habits."[130] Tocqueville notes that aristocratic virtue regards it as "glorious to forget oneself," positing that "it is fitting to do good without self-interest like God himself."[131] In this sense individualism is paired with a notion of "human perfectibility", thereby adapting the aristocratic pursuit of virtue and modifying it for use democratic society.[132] Democratic peoples like to tell themselves that it is possible to attain "nearly the degree of greatness and knowledge that our imperfect nature permits," thereby reconciling a valuation of both equality and pursuit of

128 Ibid., 482.
129 Ibid., 483.
130 Ibid., 502.
131 Ibid., 500.
132 Ibid., 426.

greatness through the view that with hard work and determination all people can improve themselves to hitherto unimagined heights.[133]

For Americans self-interest is more a principle of doctrine that everyone believes, without generally acting upon,[134] because self-interest rightly understood is moderated by free institutions and local administration, thereby bringing citizens closer together and necessitating their ability and desire to act in concert.[135] Lawler describes individualism and self-interestedness as essentially "pridefully heartless" doctrines; the task placed upon institutions, then, is "to enlarge the American heart."[136]

As discussed above, equality inhibits true love between citizens and fosters only a weak form of love for all citizens, hardly worthy of the name love at all. To reverse this trend in American society, governmental decentralization compels citizens to work, independently and in unison, to actualize the needs of the society. People are thereby compelled, "against their inclination, 'to take part in public affairs,' [and thus] to be[come] citizens."[137] Working together serves to foster ties between citizens; citizenship enlarges the heart. These ties in turn lead to other activities that further enlarge the heart through the creation of community. Individuals learn the limits of their self-sufficiency, the folly of excessive independence, through free participation in governmental affairs. Thus, free, administratively decentralized institutions, Tocqueville demonstrates, help overcome the natural tendency towards the atomization of democratic mores. Individuals

133 Ibid., 427.
134 Ibid., 502.
135 Ibid., 487.
136 Lawler, Peter A. "Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love." *Polity* 28, no. 2 (1995): 220.
137 Ibid., 221.

"compelled to find it in their interest to act as if they were citizens actually become citizens."[138]

Despite these mitigating effects that individualism has upon the democratic pursuit of equality, individualism itself becomes a tendency with the potential to be pushed to tyrannical excess. Tocqueville argues that individualism has the potential to lead citizens "directly to independence" and to "drive them all at once into anarchy" or along a "path to servitude."[139] Individualism divides and alienates citizens from each other through the supposition and pursuit of lofty, unattainable, and dangerous notions of independence. Citizens no longer feel positive obligations towards one another, but instead become sole master of their future, or so they tell themselves, with no sense of duty towards others.[140] This creates a universal weakness among citizens as each becomes incapable of acting in concert with others. This danger inspires Tocqueville to note that collectivist thought is rooted in the enervating effects of individualism on the soul.[141] Individualism, as noted above, tends to "dissolve human connections," thereby rendering citizens overly weak and without the capacity for strong action or independent moral and civic judgment. The response to the weakening of the individual, and a reduction in his ability to act politically and achieve common goods is a strengthening of the state to make up for the inadequacies of the citizens.

The atomizing effects described above alter the nature of human social relationships and leaves gaps within society that facilitate the encroachment of

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138 Ibid.
139 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 640.
140 Ibid., 482-88, 545
141 Mahoney, Daniel J. *The Conservative Foundations of the Liberal Order*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2010, 18.

governmental intrusion into areas of life that it had previously been excluded. Maletz notes that despotism relies upon the existence of a majority of citizens who have become "walled up in their private lives," living apart from one another without meaningful bond, and thus "cool toward one another".[142] According to Koritansky the alienation of citizens from one another also inhibits the development of civic virtue. [143] When citizens become comfortable within and unwilling to act outside of their private lives, the knowledge of what it means to be a citizen ceases to be held in common. The act of learning what it is to be a responsible, free citizen is forgotten; dependence upon the benevolence of administrative officials becomes "so deep men fail to recognize it."[144]

In recognizing the potential dangers of excessive individualism, just as with excessive equality, Tocqueville appeals to the existence of aristocratic cultural forces within the United States to moderate this tendency. As with equality, Tocqueville again points to religion as having political utility as a means to overcome a number of these tendencies. In placing the object of man's desires outside of himself, religion thus serves to, first, overcome the democratic tendency towards excessive pursuit of private goals and, second, to reinstill the communal ties and feelings of affection between citizens.

Religion mitigates the pursuit of private ends in a number of ways. First, religion deemphasizes the value of material goods through emphasis upon the immaterial soul and the afterlife. In doing this self-interest becomes diverted away from the pursuit of material goals. Religion teaches that "one must prefer others to oneself to gain Heaven"

142 Maletz, Donal J. "Making Non-Citizens:Consequences of Administrative Centralization in Tocqueville's "Old Regime"." *Publius* 33, no. 2 (2003): 21.
143 Koritansky, John C. "Two Forms of the Love of Equality in Tocqueville's Practical Teaching for Democracy." *Polity* 6, no. 4 (1974): 494.
144 Ibid.

and that "one ought to do good to [others] out of love of God."[145] This understanding of one's duties encourages people to "sacrifice[e their] particular interests to the admirable," thereby restricting the dominance of self-interested individualism and adding an enlightened element to it."[146] This enlightened aspect of self-interest is what Tocqueville terms self-interestedness rightly understood, standing in contrast to selfishness.

Religion also serves to maintain the existence of community in a democracy through bringing people together, literally and figuratively. Literally, people are brought together to attend services and participate in activities. Figuratively, values and goals are brought together and homogenized to the extent that people pursue similar communal ends and direct their attention and activity towards actualizing together the multitude of common goods that form the basis of community.[147] Participating together in charity, education, and discussion encourages and teaches people how to act in concert, a skill that is not altogether natural for democratic people who are by nature instead predisposed to pursuit of independence.[148]

Learning to work together is an important skill for democratic people to learn. Working together on a small scale is lesson and practice for doing so on a larger scale when one wishes to participate in politics. In addition to religion, Tocqueville also points to decentralized administration as an institution of aristocratic origin that tempers democratic excess.[149] Decentralized administration is a valuation of local politics, much in the manner that feudal lords would govern their own communities and take

145 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 504.
146 Ibid., 505.
147 Ibid., 394.
148 Ibid., 275-77.
149 Ibid., 82-93.

responsibility for self-government. Tocqueville notes that "[c]ertain interests are common to all parts of the nation, such as the formulation of general laws and the relations of the people with foreigners. Other interests are special to certain parts of the nation, such as … the undertakings of the township."[150] The former Tocqueville terms governmental centralization, and the latter administrative centralization; the former is necessary and brings prosperity, the latter enervates a people through habituation to submission.[151] This work will deal exclusively with the latter. Tocqueville finds that American democracy is premised upon the existence of a large degree of administrative decentralization, and thus local self-government.[152] This serves to help combat individualism through creating the necessity for codependence among citizens. Independently, democratic citizens are weak in their equality, but when acting together, become a "collective force of citizens … powerful [enough] to produce social well-being" to a greater extent "than the authority of government" could by itself achieve.[153]

The distinction between administrative and governmental centralization becomes clear when considering volumes one and two of *Democracy in America* as separate entities, a concern often easily overlooked when the complete volume is ready as one work, rather than as being published separately. The first volume treats the government as a model of representation dependent upon public participation in politics and the second volume begins to posit an understanding of government as something apart from and above the people, but still acting in what the governing officials regard as in the interests of and on behalf of citizens. Thus, the distinction between the people and the

150 Ibid., 82
151 Ibid., 83.
152 Ibid., 79.
153 Ibid., 86.

government also becomes clear through the distinction between centralized administration and centralized government.

Tocqueville praises decentralized administration for its political effects. He notes that:

The inhabitant applies himself to each of the interests of his country as to his very own. He is glorified in the glory of the nation; in the success that it obtains he believes he recognizes his own work, and he is uplifted by it; he rejoices in the general prosperity from which he profits. He has for his native country a sentiment analogous to the one that he feels for his family, and it is still by a sort of selfishness that he takes an interest in the state.[154]

Through these effects decentralized administration serves to strengthen citizens by teaching them to work towards common goals. Democracy is premised upon the ability of citizens to act in this fashion, and through both religion and decentralized administration these skills become a fact of life because citizens are given the opportunity to learn them and the necessity of having them.[155] Furthermore, participation in local administration also serves to glorify and raise the standing of individual, thereby also mitigating some effects of excessive equality discussed above. Individuals "compelled to find it in their interest to act as if they were citizens actually become citizens."[156]

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154 Ibid., 62.

155 In contrast, one can see in contemporary society the absence of these skills and the diminishing necessity of having them. Examples abound of protests and protesters entirely without basic political skills despite their desire to influence government. It goes to show that political skills are not natural but must be learned through habit and practice on a small scale before transitioning to a larger arena.

156 Lawler, Peter A. "Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love." *Polity* 28, no. 2 (1995): 221.

In discussing and praising American administrative decentralization, Tocqueville notes that "no nations are more at risk of falling under the yoke of administrative centralization than those whose social state is democratic."[157] The reason that Tocqueville provides for this is that "beyond the people one perceives no more than equal individuals confused in a common mass."[158] More plainly, in regarding themselves as all equal and alike, democratic peoples tend over simplify and exaggerate the capability of government of providing for their needs. If a people regards itself as all alike, its understanding of what government needs to provide is simplistic in that government ought to provide the same to each person. If a people recognize themselves, however, as heterogeneous, then it follows that they more capable of understanding and appreciating the natural distinctions and differences that exist between individuals, regions, etc. Proponents of this type of view are more naturally disinclined towards administrative centralization because of their more complex understanding of humanity. Thus, democratic people have a simplified understanding of themselves deriving from their equality, which needs be moderated by the aristocratic understanding of people as essentially different from one another. The result is to inhibit what Tocqueville regards as the natural democratic tendency towards administrative centralization.

Just as excessive equality pushes democratic peoples towards centralized administration, so too does individualism. As discussed above both excessive equality and excessive individualism tend to weaken citizens, pushing them apart and reducing the capability of acting together.[159] This also promotes the rise of administrative

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157 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 91.
158 Ibid., 92.
159 Ibid., 87-92.

centralization. As citizens become less capable of acting together to achieve political goals, there arises the necessity for government to act on their behalf.[160] In acting on behalf of the citizens, however, the government further weakens their capability to act politically, thereby exacerbating and cyclically degenerating this already precarious democratic quandary. As stated above, Tocqueville argues that citizens' ability to engage in politics is developed out of necessity, and is not an innate human characteristic. Tocqueville's understanding of the relationship between these forces is thus cyclical in nature. Excessive equality and individualism tend to result in a centralized governmental administration. Both equality and individualism need to be moderated so as to not become extreme in character, thereby detracting from the health of society. Tocqueville points principally to residual aristocratic cultural forces as best able to moderate this trend. As these moderating forces become undermined and less influential over time, democratic governmental administration comes to be gradually more and more centralized. This in turn exacerbates the already existing tendency to push individualism in quality to excess, thereby necessitating greater and greater centralization of administration as citizens become less and less capable of participating in politics.

One of Tocqueville's principle concerns is to ward off or delay to the greatest possible extent the inevitable rise of administrative centralization in American democracy. Tocqueville's praise of American decentralization, however, is both ironic and humorous; he states that "in the United States, the majority, which often has the tastes and instincts of a despot, still lacks the most perfected instruments of tyranny."[161] Thus, what Tocqueville is actually praising is the American lack of know-how in terms of

160 Ibid., 90.

161 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 250.

administrative centralization. It is not so much a praiseworthy effort on behalf of Americans that Tocqueville applauds but their yet-developed science of administration.

The science of administration, the improvement of which inevitably results in administrative centralization, is the "method used to pursue the egalitarian and despotic goal of complete uniformity."[162] As administration becomes progressively more scientific it comes to meddle in the private lives of citizens more and more, indefinitely increasing the sphere of its control. This is the process by which "the power of the sovereign" becomes "extended … into the entire sphere of former powers;" there is no longer anything to contain it and "it overflows on every side and goes on to spread over the domain that individual independence has reserved for itself until now."[163] The purpose of scientific administration is to take "responsibility for the actions and the individual destinies of their individual destinies … to enlighten each of them … and, if need be, to render him happy despite himself."[164] Citizens are thereby rendered "perfectly orderly, predictable subjects" without "the willfulness that comes with discontent."[165]

According to Tocqueville, administrative centralization is a type of soft despotism, a kind of orderly, gentle and tranquil slavery the renders the citizen a child in the care of an adult. Tocqueville describes this type of administration as a schoolmaster who is willingly ceded power and responsibility with the objective of making society more equal. The citizen is seen to better off left to his own devices as an individual, freed from the necessity of engaging in politics and left to pursue material and appetitive

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162 Ibid., 163.
163 Ibid., 653.
164 Ibid., 653.
165 Lawler, Peter A. *American Views of Liberty*. Vol. 5. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995, 163.

satisfaction without being held responsible to care for anything beyond his own household. No longer does there exist the necessity of building social ties and community through mutual political action. This leaves the individual both "frightened by his apparently limitless independence" and "impotent and cold" towards others, a "weakness and vulnerability" that renders him hateful towards himself and towards his liberty.[166] One can see here the influence of Pascal on Tocqueville, in his recognition that the natural misery and disorder of contemporary democratic citizens comes to result in the devaluation of their own liberty. The joy and pride in human agency here ceases to exist as one willingly surrenders this in exchange for greater comfort.

Thus far, Tocqueville's account of the relationship between aristocratic and democratic mores has been developed. Additionally, Hobbes's conception of public charity has been dealt with in a similar manner. The commonalities between the two chapters lay in their treatment, or rather the differences of treatment, of administrative centralization, individualism, and equality. It is clear that the two authors have vastly different understandings of these aspects of their thought, leading to very different conclusions as to the role they should play in the authors' conceptions of government. The following chapter will provide analysis of the implications of what has been hitherto developed, and make more explicit connections between the two authors.

Chapter 3: The Two Authors Treated Together

At this point two contrasting views of politics have been discussed. The former, that of Thomas Hobbes, is one in which the sovereign makes conscious effort to depoliticize the subjects of the commonwealth, the latter, that of Alexis de Tocqueville, is

166 Ibid., 164.

one in which citizens must be highly politicized lest the democratic regime degenerate towards tyranny. It is important to note that despite his affinity for monarchy, Hobbes's thought is, and was intended to be, applicable to any form of government.[167] It is in the application of Hobbes's thought to democracy, and the observation of Hobbesian principles in democratic society, that one finds stark disagreement between the two authors. This chapter will demonstrate that Tocqueville's thought serves to provide correction to the dangers of the unchecked influence of Hobbes's thought on democratic society.

Thus far Hobbes's account of public charity has been elucidated in order to demonstrate the manner in which the principles of individualism, equality, and administrative centralization work in harmony within his thought to achieve his goal of civil peace. This has been explained as Hobbes's attempt to depoliticize the subject in order to remove one of the most important causes of civil disorder. It is important to now establish the basis upon which Hobbes justifies this project.

In turning to Hobbes's conception of values the reader finds that he denies the existence of an objective conception of morality, instead positing that values are merely opinions.[168] Furthermore, Hobbes reduces these opinions, or values, as akin to the assertion that what is pleasurable is good, and what is painful is bad.[169] This provides that basis of the assertion that Hobbes is a proponent of material relativism. Regardless of the truth of Hobbes's claims here, in regarding humans are merely sense-gratifying creatures the issue naturally arises as to how can maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Hobbes addresses this concern by identifying a number of traits that inhibit the pursuit of

167 De Cive, Preface.
168 Elements of law, 1.6.
169 Elements of law 1.7, De Homine XIV:XVII, XIV:XXIII.

pleasure. Chief among these are honor and pride, and Hobbes's work attempts to create a conception of man and government that undermines the predominance of these traits so as to allow man to pursue what is actually important, namely the satisfaction of his appetites.

Strauss notes that the biblical leviathan, king of the proud, signifies the task of the sovereign in overcoming man's natural pride.[170] Hobbes himself regards pride as "vain-glory," and is a "distraction" that causes "Rage and Fury … [and] excessive desire of revenge."[171] Pride distracts a person from what is important, instead filling his mind with desires that cause him to extend beyond what is his and desire more for himself than he would give to others. This itself, let alone the desire for revenge, is a clear breach of the laws of nature, and if acted upon thereby reinstates the war of all against all. This leads Strauss to posit that for Hobbes pride is the origin of injustice.[172] Honor, a matter concerned not with the satisfaction of pleasures but with the intangible, is dealt with in the same way. If Hobbes's view that a value is merely an opinion becomes accepted, honor loses credibility as something worth pursuing because it loses its objective significance and importance.

If Hobbes is correct in this, or becomes regarded as correct, politics itself becomes insignificant. Debates over the *telos*, religion, ethics, etc. become arbitrary, as what is actually important is the satisfaction of the appetites. Politics here becomes primarily administrative, and this is regarded by Hobbes as good because it frees man from pursuits of the ego and pride and allows him to devote his attention elsewhere.

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170 Strauss, Leo. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*. Trans. Elsa M. Sinclair. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936: 13.
171 Leviathan, VIII: 18-19.
172 Strauss, Leo. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*. Trans. Elsa M. Sinclair. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936: 25.

Thus, for Hobbes, man's depoliticization is something desirable, and by and large people will be better off for it. Without the need to engage in politics and participate amongst one's peers to achieve community goals one's time and mental faculties become freed from concerns that do not relate to the pursuit of one's goals and satisfaction of one's appetites.

A major issue with Hobbes's attempt to depoliticize the subjects arises when this principle is applied to a democracy. Within a monarchy it is unnecessary for the subjects to be politicized, as the maintenance of the regime does not depend upon their participation. In a democracy, however, the system is premised upon the notion that citizens can and should be involved in politics, and thus democracy necessitates public participation if it is to remain democratic. In this respect Tocqueville speaks directly to the implications of Hobbes's thought when applied to democracies when he praises the administrative decentralization of the United States.

Lawler notes that Tocqueville fears that man's natural tendency to misery will lead him to lose value in his liberty, and thereby inspire him to willingly surrender it.[173] For Tocqueville, the inevitable suffering and misery that mark each person's life brings creates an inherent danger for democracies in that citizens might one day find they are better able to pursue their material interests without their political liberty, and over time gradually surrender their rights to increase the security with which they might satisfy their appetites. In this sense Tocqueville identifies the inherent tendency to depoliticization that exists within a democracy. As stated previously, Tocqueville demonstrates the manner in which the Americans combat this tendency through the

173 Lawler, Peter A. "Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love." *Polity* 28, no. 2 (1995), 218.

preservation of aristocratic forces, thereby moderating their democracy instead of allowing it to tend towards its natural extremes.

For Tocqueville the politicization of democratic citizens serves a number of important functions. First, as a Lawler notes, the act of being and becoming a citizen, rather than a subject, helps to overcome the atomizing tendencies of a democracy.[174] Being a citizen, and thus being politicized, serves to enlarge the democratic heart by bringing citizens into proximity, by dealing with common issues together, thereby building ties of affection between citizens. The enlargement of the democratic heart is fundamental to Tocqueville's thought as this serves to moderate the growth and effects of individualism and equality within democracies.[175] Politicization, for Tocqueville, is as inextricably tied to his conceptions of equality, individualism, and administrative decentralization as the three are tied to depoliticization for Hobbes.

The building of ties between citizens, which must often be forced because democratic people naturally move away from each other, forms an integral part of the manner in which the democratic heart is enlarged. This highlights the contrast between Tocqueville and Hobbes on the matter of personal relationships. While Hobbes is primarily concerned about the rise of factions and feelings of affection that tend to undermine the subject's loyalty to the sovereign power, thereby undermining the power structure upon which Hobbesian society is premised,[176] Tocqueville posits that in a democracy bonds and feelings of affection between citizens are not only necessary but

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174 Ibid., 221.
175 Ibid., 222
176 For a detailed account of Hobbes on friendship see Timothy Fuller's *Hobbes on Getting By with Little Help from Friends*, or Travis D. Smith's *Social Friendship in the Founding Era,* published in *Friendship & Politics: Essays in Political Thought.*

must be cultivated and supported by institutions.[177] It is with this in mind that Tocqueville notes that "as [each citizen] becomes individually weaker and consequently more incapable in isolation of preserving his freedom, does not learn the art of uniting with those like him to defend it, tyranny will necessarily grow with equality."[178]

Tocqueville describes and praises the fact that in the United States "Americans of all ages, all conditions, [and] all minds constantly unite … to give *fetes*, to found seminaries, to build inns, to raise churches, to distribute books, to send missionaries to the antipodes … [to] create hospitals, prisons, [and] schools;" in short, he praises the Americans' ability to freely act together to bring about common goods. Contrastingly, Tocqueville notes that in democratic Europe one finds instead that "at the head of a new undertaking, you see the government," a centralized administration, and not the people, working to achieve political goals on behalf of the country.[179] In an aristocratic society "men have no need to unite to act because they are kept very much together," beneath the "head" of the "wealthy and powerful." Under these great persons "a permanent and obligatory association that is composed of all those he holds in dependence to him, whom he makes cooperate in the execution of his designs."[180] Democracy is a system of government and a way of being that inhibits the growth and propensity of these people, one in which the great mass of people are weak in their independence, resulting in a collective impotence if they never learn to work together.[181]

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177 Two accounts of note on Tocqueville and friendship and personal relationships are John von Heyking's *Tocqueville and the Displacement of Democracy*, and George Carey's *It is Not Good for Man to Be Alone : Tocqueville on Friendship*, published in *Friendship & Politics: Essays in Political Thought.*

178 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 489.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid., 490.

181 Ibid.

Here Tocqueville demonstrates one of the inherent problems with the application of Hobbes's thought to democracy. Hobbesian authority is premised upon the assumption that the subjects should be atomized and incapable of acting in unison and must instead defer to the sovereign. Tocqueville has here been shown to criticize this tendency in Europe and praise the manner in which American democracy tends to enlarge the heart and build ties where citizens would otherwise have none. He warns of the danger of this Hobbesian principle when he remarks that if

men who live in democratic countries had neither the right nor the taste to unite in political goals, their independence would run great risks, but they could preserve their wealth and their enlightenment for along time; whereas if they did not acquire the practice of associating with each other in ordinary life, civilization itself would be in peril.[182]

The danger here is in that taste and practice, as shown previously, work hand in hand. If one is discouraged or uncultivated the other surely follows. Without practice and the necessity of working together, citizens never learn how to become citizens, and gradually come to lose this ability.

Tocqueville goes so far as to criticize his contemporaries who "judge that as citizens become weaker and more incapable, it is necessary to render government more skillful and more active in order that society be able to execute what individuals can do longer do."[183] The danger for Tocqueville lies in the fact that a government

182 Ibid.
183 Ibid., 491.

can no more suffice on its own to maintain and renew the circulation of sentiments and ideas in a great people than to conduct all its industrial undertakings. As soon as it tries to leave the political sphere … it will exercise an insupportable tyranny even without wishing to; for a government knows only how to dictate precise rules; it imposes the sentiments and the ideas that it favors, and it is always hard to distinguish its counsels from its orders.[184]

In removing the ability for and necessity of citizens acting in concert a government is thereby undermining the democratic character of the society. From Tocqueville's perspective, when citizens cease to take part in the administration of politics, when citizens become depoliticized, they cease to rule themselves and the government itself comes to rule on their behalf. There need not be malicious intent, and there could very well be none for a long while, for the government is still comprised of elected citizens. Over time, however, Tocqueville anticipates that this system will degenerate into tyranny because the souls of the citizens will cease to be democratic, in the proper sense, and will become habituated to merely following precise rules, even when it is presented as counsel.

To illustrate Tocqueville's views on the politicization of citizens with examples, three disparate passages will be demonstrated to be of particular relevance. First is Tocqueville's essay entitled *On the Penitentiary System* (1833) in which he illustrates the effects of alienation and arbitrary authority on the souls of the inmates. Second is

184 Ibid., 491-92

Tocqueville's appeal to Chinese politics as the model of despotism.[185] Lastly, Tocqueville's accounts of his own activity during the revolutionary turmoil of 1848 demonstrate a practical account of his views of political participation and democratic citizenship.

On the Penitentiary System recounts Tocqueville's visits to a Pennsylvania Quaker prison, during which time he observed and learned about different practices employed in the punishment and rehabilitation of prisoners, many of which differed from the penal institutions of France. During this time Tocqueville had the opportunity to speak with both prison officials and prisoners, and the description that he provides of his findings are quite relevant to his account of the democratic tendency towards tyranny.[186] Tocqueville writes of the effects of physical and mental separation of inmates who at times "experience total seclusion" in order to be "subdued" with ease, leaving them open to rehabilitation than can be achieved without this seclusion.[187] Returning to Hobbes, if Tocqueville is correct about the effects of isolation on the soul, Hobbes's preference for isolation opens up the potential for the sovereign to habituate the subjects and shape their souls as he sees fit.[188] Shaping the subjects is therefore only a matter of skill and will, not wishful thinking.

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185 Tocqueville follows Montesquieu in this regard. See *The Spirit of the Laws* XIX 17-20. Manent's *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy* provides a strong account of Montesquieu's influence on Tocqueville's thought.

186 Boesche notes, however, that Tocqueville himself never explicitly addressed this comparison.

187 de Tocqueville, Alexis, and Gustave de Beaumont. "On the Penitentiary System in the United States and its Application in France; with an Appendix on Penal Colonies and also Statistical Notes." Translated by Francis Lieber. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1933: 298-99.

188 Ted H. Miller's *Mortal Gods* provides a strong account of the implications of Hobbes's understanding of man as essentially malleable, a blank parchment upon which the sovereign can print an image, thereby shaping the subject into the model subject.

Tocqueville notes that there is more equality in a prison than could ever be hoped for in society.[189] All inmates eat the same food, wear the same dress; the only distinction comes from their natural qualities and capabilities. The result is equality through uniformity amongst the prisoners. Additionally, the prisons are all equality in their powerlessness beneath the absolute authority of the guards. When attempting to alter the hearts and minds of the prisoners, to rehabilitate them and one day reintroduce them into society, Tocqueville found that achieving a high degree of equality is also an important factor in rendering the inmates open to change.

The second example illustrating Tocqueville's views of politicization is his frequent use of China as "the most perfect emblem of the king of social well-being that a very centralized administration can furnish to peoples who submit to it."[190] Tocqueville describes this as "tranquility without happiness," a society that "always runs well enough" but "never very well;" he even goes so far as to predict that when the Europeans really discover and open relations with China in a meaningful way, they will discover "the most beautiful model of administrative centralization that exists in the universe."[191]

For Tocqueville the tranquility and administrative centralization that mark Chinese politics has resulted in a "kind of immobility" in which the people "could not change anything;" they "still made use of the formula without seeking the sense of it; they kept the instrument and no longer possessed the art of modifying and reproducing it."[192] Tocqueville sees China as a country that has "subsisted peacefully for centuries" in

189 de Tocqueville, Alexis, and Gustave de Beaumont. "On the Penitentiary System in the United States and its Application in France; with an Appendix on Penal Colonies and also Statistical Notes." Translated by Francis Lieber. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1933: 32.
190 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 86N.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid., 438.

which "order reign[s]" and revolutions are very rare.[193] There is a static element to Chinese culture and politics that Tocqueville deplores as unhealthy upon both soul and society.

There is no drive to change or improvement in a society that is too well ordered to motivate this type of behavior. Ultimately, this is the purpose of Hobbesian charity. The tranquility and stability that Tocqueville regards as unhealthy, Hobbes would regard as freeing the subjects from their petty, egoistic desires; tranquility and stability allow one an environment in which to be industrious, and to improve one's material well-being. The science of administration, for Hobbes, is something that needs to be perfected, as Tocqueville regards the Chinese have done. It is in recognizing the rise of Hobbesian principles in Europe that Tocqueville recognizes that China will be regarded as the model of administrative centralization.

The first example used to illustrate Tocqueville's thought, the prison, displayed some of the causes of, or characteristics that allow for despotism to develop. The second example, China, provides a practical example of what Tocqueville regards as an excess of stability. The last example to be provided, that of the revolutionary turmoil of 1848, demonstrates one concrete idea as to how Tocqueville attempted to attempted to inhibit the instability and tendency towards disorder that marks a democracy with politicized citizens, the type of disorder that Hobbes would wish to avoid at all costs.

In Paris 1848, revolutionary mobs took to the streets and shut down the city for a number of days. Tocqueville opted to take to the streets and help direct and moderate the actions of Parisian citizens in an attempt to ensure that thought and action did not become overly radical. For Tocqueville, political turmoil is not something to necessarily be

193 Ibid., 439.

quelled or quashed out of hand, but, if guided by the proper mores, can serve to both improve society and affirm and bolster citizens' rights and liberties.[194] Turmoil also serves to create bonds between citizens as they act in unison to achieve political goals. This can help mitigate the naturally individualistic character of democracies, resulting in citizens who use their freedom responsibly. For Tocqueville the act of living in a democracy is not an inherent skill that everyone possesses, but is something that is learned; it is a skill that, consequently, must be experientially taught and nurtured over time if freedom is to persist.[195] In hindering all potential disorder that comes with citizens' freedom, a democracy will come to destroy itself by stifling the mores necessary to allow democracy to continue. Thus, in applying Hobbes's thoughts regarding turmoil to a democracy, Tocqueville is suggesting that over time the mores necessary to preserve a democracy will gradually be lost.

These three examples provide some practical and more substantive qualification to what has been established of Tocqueville's thought. Thus far, it has been established and demonstrated in the examples provided that one of the most fundamental aspects of Tocqueville's thought regarding democracy is his concern for the effects that democracy has upon the human soul. Consistently appealing to the effects of mores and institutions on the soul demonstrates that Tocqueville is primarily concerned with the well being of individuals, not society as an abstract concept. In returning to charity, if this approach is applied, the most important element of charity is not the effect that it has on society, or

194 A more comprevensive account of this story can be found in Tocqueville's memoirs, *Reflections,* section 2:2.
195 Tocqueville discusses this as the development of the "spirit of liberty;" see *Democracy in America* 63, 66, 284.

the recipient of charity, as Hobbes supposes, but rather the effects that charity has upon the soul of the person who gives charity.

As previously established, Tocqueville describes the need to enlarge the democratic heart as a fundamental concern for democracies. Charity plays a major role in this process in bringing citizens together to achieve communal ends. Charity can be raising money for a community initiative, such as dealing with issues like graffiti, or Christmas caroling to bring in food donations for poor families. The most important part here is that citizens are brought together both physically and figuratively. Neighborhood residents come together literally to organize the project, and then proceed to engage others. This can involve going door-to-door and meeting neighbors, or creating a presence in a common location that will bring people out of their houses to meet each other, people who "would not have come forth on their own."[196] What is often forgotten is that both the organizers and the donators receive something from this action, not merely the person who receives the charity. Those who provide charity have met new people, with whom they have begun to build ties to achieve future goals. Furthermore, their physical presence in the act of charity has fostered the spirit of generosity and initiative. The feeling of pride and satisfaction that comes with a charitable act is fundamental to the human condition, and is far more satisfying than the hedonistic satisfaction of material desires. Tocqueville argues that "the human mind is developed only by the reciprocal action of men upon one another."[197]

In addition to the effects of charity on those who give, the intimate nature of private charity also has positive effects on those who receive. The ability to point to a

196 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 475.
197 Ibid., 491.

person, or to a group of people, and identify the source of generosity is similarly important for the soul. It creates feelings of affection, debt, and the desire to one day be able to repay the act of kindness. The bonds that are created here are the type of feeling that allow for the potential that the recipient of charity desires to join in future giving when they are able to do so. A sense of community is here created between people who would otherwise never have met, overcoming the natural democratic push apart.

In Hobbes's conception of charity everything described above is lost because no concern is devoted to the effects of generosity on the soul. No longer are people brought together to achieve common goals, but citizens are in fact discouraged from doing so. Administrators and paid officials become responsible for the allocation of resources to achieve public goals that are determined by physically and figuratively removed officials. Lacking here is a clear decision-maker or generous soul; charity is no longer a voluntary act but is instead a public obligation. Citizens do not come together and build relationships with one another, but participate only in paying their taxes. Hobbes's subjects are passive participants, supportive only insofar as they do not dissent or resist the sovereign. The subjects do not act, and are therefore unable to receive moral praise as their representative engages in charitable acts. The sovereign, however, is also incapable of receiving moral praise, and does not have a soul to be improved through charitable action, because it is artificial, and not a real person. Furthermore, the sovereign is not engaging in charity through any moral choice but due to the established responsibility it has been vested with. Here the truly meaningful effects of charity are neglected, because the focus of charity is not the individual both society as an abstract concept.

Just as those providing charity do not benefit from Hobbesian charity, the recipients of public charity are not as well off as they would be if their fellow citizens were providing it. These individuals are provided with the means to life but are the passive and dependent recipients of something to whom they have nobody to be thankful. There is in fact nothing to even be thankful for in receiving charity from the sovereign; the act not done out of generosity, and was not something uncertain that one can feel relief for having been given. Instead, public charity is something one expects and can rely on,[198] and is thus nothing of significance that would change one's habits or attitude.

John M. Parrish indirectly touches upon this issue in Hobbes's thought, the absence of any meaningful provider of charity, that is, a being from whom the voluntary, selfless, and thus moral, act derives, in his work entitled *Paradoxes of Political Ethics*. While Parrish does not explicitly deal with charity, he discusses this issue in the context of that which is contrary to charity, the "dirty" aspects of politics: those acts of "brutality, intemperance, dishonesty, and selfishness."[199] Parrish calls this the dirty hands problem; nobody within a political society desires to be attributed with these acts due to their immoral nature. Parrish remarks that Hobbes' conception of representative government purports "to show that the sovereign and subject can *both* be exonerated from moral blame in the pursuit of shared public ends."[200] The sovereign justifies its actions "on the grounds that in acting" it aims "not at [its] own private ends but rather at the public benefit" while, conversely, the subjects "evade moral responsibility" because "they are

198 Recall that Hobbes regarded the uncertainty of private charity as something dangerous, and thus to be avoided. If Tocqueville is correct, however, and the case has been made that he is, the uncertainty of private charity is actually something desirable.
199 Parrish, John M. *Paradoxes of Political Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 1.
200 Ibid., 155.

obligated as political subjects to obey an authority above and beyond their own moral judgments."[201] Thus, Hobbes provides an account of political action in which no person can be attributed moral praise or condemnation. The same principle applies to political charity as to dirty hands.

In Tocquevillean terms, losing the political benefits of private charity upon the souls of citizens undermines his notion of self-interest rightly understood, and lends itself to administrative centralization. Tocqueville appeals to Montaigne, defining self-interest rightly understood as "follow[ing] the right path for the sake of righteousness … follow[ing] it for having found by experience that all things considered, it is commonly the happiest and most useful."[202] The Americans do not claim that "one must sacrifice oneself to those like oneself because it is great to do it" but instead state "boldly that such sacrifices are as necessary to the one who imposes them on himself as to the one who profits from them."[203] This is an "enlightened love" of oneself that constantly brings one to aid others "and disposes [oneself] to willingly sacrifice a part of their time and their wealth" to do good.[204] This is not to be confounded with selfishness. Despite affirming the dominance of self-interest, Tocqueville notes that this doctrine is distinct and unique in that there exists know-how of when to pursue one's interest, and when to sacrifice it for the great good. That is to say, sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice part of the whole in order to save the rest.

Self-interest rightly understood is very much a doctrine that is very much indebted to the precarious relationship Tocqueville describes regarding equality, individualism,

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201 Ibid.
202 de Tocqueville, Alexis. "Democracy in America." Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 189, 501.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid., 502.

and administrative decentralization. The know-how necessary for maintenance of this doctrine is one that depends upon community and local involvement. Without this intimacy there exists no knowledge of one's neighbors that would inspire sacrifice. The enlightened nature of self-interest rightly understood[205], if undermined, tends towards the dominance of the "spirit of improvement," the democratic belief in and penchant for man's perfectibility, "spreads to a thousand diverse objects … the kinds of improvement that can only be obtained by paying … a sort of permanent fever" that is "almost always costly."[206] For these people, vested with government over themselves, but lacking in enlightenment, "a host of needs arises in them that they had not felt at first, and which one can satisfy only by having recourse to the resources of the state."[207] If in becoming equal, however, "citizens remained ignorant and coarse, it is difficult to foresee what stupid excess their selfishness could be brought to, and one cannot say in advance into what shameful miseries they would plunge for fear of sacrificing something of their well-being to the prosperity of those like them."[208]

Self-interest rightly understood is thus a doctrine that results in a harmonization of the individual with the community, benefiting both. The individual is not expected to entirely sacrifice himself to a common good, but through knowledge of and familiarity with his community learns when and what to sacrifice and when not to sacrifice parts of himself. If the individual loses his sense of community, loses is stake in community involvement, or does not learn the benefits and necessity of working together with his neighbors to achieving common goods, in short if self-interest becomes unenlightened,

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205 Ibid., 359.
206 Ibid., 202.
207 Ibid.
208 Ibid., 503.

all that is left is a selfish concern for oneself. Tocqueville notes that the democratic spirit of improvement, however, does not disappear. The spirit instead turns itself from pursuit of meaningful ends and towards the perceived limitlessness of governmental resources. Access to the resources, however, creates in man a perceived need for things hitherto unimagined and unfelt, creating rise to excess and selfishness at the expense of the state coffers. As self-interest rightly understood has disappeared, however, those needs and appetites to which becomes encouraged to satiate become selfish and imaged, and only in the interest of individuals who are now disinclined to and fearful of sacrificing what belongs to them. In exacerbating the influence and pushing society towards a dominance of individualism and equality, Hobbes invites these issues to take hold of a democracy.

The connection between individualism and self-interest should be apparent thus far. Tocqueville has been shown to demonstrate, however, that taken on its own individualism is prone to and extreme, a kind of selfishness that needs be moderated. Given Hobbes's failure to moderate individualism within his conception of government, and his preference for what Tocqueville would regard as an excess of individualism, Hobbes also fails to moderate and enlighten self-interest. Given Hobbes's preference for centralized administration, however, the connection that Tocqueville makes between unenlightened self-interest, what he terms selfishness, actually works to the advantage of Hobbes's broader political goals as developed in the first chapter.

The distinction presented thus far, the distinction between the conceptions of politics presented by Tocqueville and Hobbes, should be clear. There is a fundamentally irreconcilable divide between the two authors on their views and valuation of equality, individualism, and centralized governmental administration. What is perhaps most

interesting is that the two authors are not entirely in disagreement in the debate as presented. What Tocqueville seeks to moderate in a democracy, Hobbes seeks to push further. More specifically, the two authors are not in disagreement of the consequences of these three aspects of society. In other words, what Tocqueville seeks to avoid, Hobbes seeks to embrace. The irreconcilable distinction, however, comes from the values that the authors display; Tocqueville regards this excess and fundamentally detrimental to the human soul, and Hobbes regards Tocqueville's moderation as concerned with a prideful and superfluous understanding of humanity, positing instead that concerns over the soul actually inhibit what is truly important, namely the pursuit and satisfaction of private goals, manifested as material and appetitive goods.

It is important to consider Tocqueville's thought in the context of Hobbes. It has been demonstrated that in attempting to remedy the potential for and likelihood of an excess of individualism and equality in democratic society, Tocqueville's thought tends contrary political goals to that of Hobbes. Thus, in understanding the consequences of the application of Hobbes's thought to democratic society one comes to understand what Tocqueville is providing a response to in his writing. Regarding the two authors as such provides, first, a better context within which to understand Tocqueville's thought, and second, a better understanding of the implications of Hobbesian politics when applied to both contemporary and democratic societies. Furthermore, the debate between Hobbes and Tocqueville is one of particular importance given the contemporary debate over the role and size of government. Most importantly, however, if one considers the manner in which the debate is framed in this paper the issue is not solely one over the degree to which government is administratively centralized. Just as important is the degree to

which individualism and the pursuit of equality come to dominate society. In this sense the contemporary debate over the size and role of government is incorrectly framed as merely an economic issue. Regarding politics as primarily, or subsumed to, economics is a Hobbesian outlook,[209] but Tocqueville reminds the contemporary reader that what is more important is the individual soul or character.

Conclusion

In comparing Hobbes and Tocqueville on equality, individualism, and centralized administration, it becomes evident that understanding the two authors together provides an improved understanding of their continued influence. Additionally, for Tocqueville,

209 If people are understood as primarily matter in motion, it makes sense that economics should take precedence over politics because the division of material goods is most important to the satisfaction of our appetites.

one also arrives at an improved understanding of the generation of the phenomena he observes in democratic societies and writes with a mind to correct. The fundamental and irreconcilable point of contention between Hobbes and Tocqueville derives from their agreement as to the consequences of the role these three forces on society. The disagreement between Hobbes and Tocqueville derives from their valuation of these consequences on society; the former is concerned primarily with securing and maintaining civil peace while the latter is concerned with the individual soul.

It has been demonstrated that Hobbesian principles, when applied to a democracy, tend to result in atomistic and selfish individuals who take little to no part in self-government and are instead deferential to the sovereign's will. For Hobbes this has been argued to be desirable because it not only provides security and stability to the individual and state, but also frees the subjects from concerns over intangible and egoistic matters such as politics and honor. Instead, Hobbes seeks to allow the subjects to free their time and minds for more important matters, such as the pursuit of material well-being and the satisfaction of their appetites.

Tocqueville, in contrast to Hobbes, emphasizes the need for democratic peoples to be especially wary of this individualistic atomization. Tocqueville notes that democracies possess an inherent tendency towards the separation of individuals, two principal reasons being their valuation of equality and individualism. Tocqueville demonstrates a number of manners in which a democratic society can overcome this tendency if institutions and mores are properly cultivated so as to provide a moderating effect. Tocqueville thus shows particular concern for the manner in which the it is

possible to create ties and bonds of affection between citizens who are otherwise inclined to find none.

Hobbesian principles render a society undemocratic in that citizens cease to participate in politics in any meaningful way. The right to cast a ballot, or equality of conditions, are not sufficient characteristics to term a society democratic. The process of democracy and the impact that democracy has on the souls of citizens are both fundamental to Tocqueville's conception of democracy. In this sense Hobbes's emphasis on preserving a political system as an abstract concept, even when justified as providing subjects the opportunity to pursue their own private interests, is, for Tocqueville, a conception of government that is not only apolitical but also takes no interest in the effects that it has on the character or souls of its people. The process of democracy and the effects that this has on one's soul is inextricable from Tocqueville's thought, and in emphasizing this aspect of politics Tocqueville demonstrates the fundamental failing of Hobbesian thought as a viable conception of politics that treats people as more than bodies and attempts to address the problem of the restless mind.

Considering this debate within the context of Hobbes's public charity demonstrates the complexity and nuances of Tocqueville's understanding of politics. While Hobbes is primarily concerned with charity as the means to achieve a goal, namely to ensure that each subject has their material needs satisfied so as to remove the possibility that they could justifiably break the law, thereby undermining the sovereign's authority and risking a return to the sate of nature, Tocqueville is more concerned with the effects that charity have upon the soul. More important than the satisfaction of material needs are the qualities that the act of engaging in charity has upon both the

individual who provides the charity and the individual who receives the charity. While Hobbes is concerned with the division of goods, the 'who gets what' question, Tocqueville demonstrates that politics properly understood is significantly more complex than mere economics.

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