Are Hobbesian states as passionate as Hobbesian individuals?

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Abstract

This article deals with the possibility of ascribing passions to states in Thomas Hobbes's political theory. According to Hobbes, the condition of sovereign states *vis à vis* one another is comparable to that of individuals in the state of nature, namely, a state of war. Consequently, the three causes of war (competition, diffidence, and glory) identified in chapter XIII of *Leviathan* could also be relevant to interstate relations. Since these war triggers are mainly passions, one could presume that state action is motivated by passions as well. Some argue that it is just a figurative way of speaking. Others claim that the passions of war affect only sovereign rulers. I explore an alternative answer based on the ability of sovereigns to direct the preexisting passions of their people.

Keywords: Hobbes; passions; states; international relations.

1. Introduction

In chapter XIII of *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes claims that while the state of nature as a war of all against all may not have existed among "particular men", it certainly exists among sovereign states (L, XIII.12, 196).[1] The best example of the state of nature is international relations. Commonwealths are in a latent state of hostility towards each other (DCv, XIII.7, 144).[2] This is the intended meaning of Hobbes's famous formulation: "man is a wolf to man", which "is true of… relations between commonwealths" (DCv, Preface, 3-4). In chapter XXX of *Leviathan*, Hobbes asserts that the rules that guide individual behavior in the state of nature are the same that regulate the behavior of sovereign persons: "the Law of Nations and the Law of Nature

[1] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Henceforth referred to as L and LL.
[2] Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), referred to as DCv.

is the same thing" (L, XXX.30, 552). The sovereign's right to protect its people against foreign enemies is identical to the individual's right to protect his or her body in the state of nature. It is no accident then that Hobbes depicted states as artificial men (L, Introduction, 16).

In view of this, it could be argued that Hobbes's reasoning about the war of all against all is especially germane to the situation of sovereign states towards one another. If their condition is comparable to that of individuals in the state of nature, the three causes of war, i.e., competition, diffidence, and glory (L, XIII.6, 192), might also apply to the sovereign states. I explore one aspect of this analogy, namely, in the fact that Hobbes's description of war's triggers in the state of nature is an "inference made from the passions" (L, XIII.10, 194). As such, we may conclude that state warfare should also be motivated by passions. Some interpreters concur with this. David Gauthier speaks of "interests and values" of states, which are "subjective and selfish" like "Hobbesian men".[3] Hedley Bull claims that "all of what Hobbes says about the life of the individual men in the state of nature may be read as a description of the condition of states in relation to one another".[4] In Glen Newey's terms, "non-state corporations" and "sovereign states" are actors "to which the state-of-nature motives of competition, diffidence and glory can be ascribed".[5] David Armitage argues that "the commonwealth once constituted as an artificial person took on the characteristics and the capacities of the fearful, self-defensive individuals who fabricated it".[6]

None of these commentators, however, address the question explored in this article which is in what sense states are selfish, distrustful, or glorious, and passions can be attributed to states. Section 2 considers one possible answer: the metaphorical attribution thesis, which holds that if Hobbes's theory leads us to attribute passions to states, it is only figuratively. It then shows why this account is inadequate. Section 3 reviews a second possible answer: the reducibility thesis, which argues that it is individual rulers who are competitive, distrustful, and proud, not the states. I point out some problems with this thesis and present an alternative reading of Hobbes as proposing a passionate compound account in which sovereigns must rearrange the

[3] David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan* (Oxford: OUP, 1969), 207; Glen Newey, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hobbes and Leviathan* (London: Routledge, 2008), 208.
[4] Hedley Bull, "Hobbes and the International Anarchy," *Social Research*. 48(4) (1981), 720-1.
[5] Newey, *Guidebook to Hobbes and Leviathan*,166.
[6] David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 64.

preexistent passions of the people and mobilize them in a coherent way towards war. State passions that elicit war are those in which the sovereign power (an individual or a group) manages to shape the wills of its citizens and infuse them with a coherent direction. In Section 4, I justify this thesis by delving into each cause of war: competition, diffidence, and glory. Finally, I address cases in which the passions promoted by the sovereign to conduct war are not entirely shared by its people.

In trying to solve the interpretative puzzle of whether passions explain the occurrence of war between states in the same way they explain it for individuals, I draw from Hobbes's main political work, *Leviathan* (1651) and other works such as *Elements of Law* (1640), *De Cive* (1642/1647), the *Anti-White* (1643), *De Corpore* (1655), *De Homine* (1658), the *Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws* (1666/1681), the *Latin Leviathan* (1668), and *Behemoth* (1668/1681). I reconstruct an argument from premises set out explicitly by Hobbes to arrive at what, as Gregory Kavka claimed, "may be fairly dubbed" a "Hobbesian" conclusion.[7]

My article contributes to Hobbes studies by presenting an original solution to a textual problem. Unlike other readings, the Hobbesian answer I defend allows us to reflect on the relationship between the passions of those in power and the passions of those governed. To go to war and wage it effectively, I claim, sovereigns must tap into the emotions of their people. More broadly, the Hobbesian reasoning I put forward highlights the role of passions over reason in the origination and conduct of war. Hobbes describes a state of nature delimited by competitive ambition, mistrust, and glory. Embedded in this "known disposition" to fight (L, XIII.8, 192), actors can behave in accordance with rational decision-making. As we will see, attacking preemptively is a rational course of action when the general climate of mistrust is taken for granted. But the prudential thing to do will always be determined by this framework of passions. Likewise, the moral thing to do, "to endeavor peace" (L, XIV.4, 200), the "first and fundamentall law of nature" (L, XIV.4, 200), will also be constrained by this passionate background, since it is valid only when it is possible to achieve peace. If not, one must employ all means of war to ensure one's safety (L, XIV.4, 200). If, as mentioned above, Hobbes equates laws of nature with the laws of nations, then elucidating how passions work at the state level provides

[7] Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), xii.

us with conceptual tools for understanding not only how war is provoked, but also how the passions determine rational and moral courses of action. In this regard, my article can also be read as a contribution to the Hobbesian tradition in International Relations.[8]

2. The metaphorical attribution thesis

One possible solution to the question of the attribution of passions to states is what I call the metaphorical attribution thesis. George Kateb, for example, denies the legitimacy of this attribution, arguing that Hobbes's personifications of states is "the most ingrained kind of political irrationality" because it applies to them terminology that is only sensible when used for individuals.[9] The vocabulary of passions should be restricted to individuals. If it is possible to ascribe passions to states it is due to Hobbes's careless fondness for hypallage. Therefore, it only makes sense figuratively, which is why I refer to this as the metaphorical attribution thesis. I identify four reasons why passions can be attributed to states in a non-figurative way.

2.1. Passions are motions

To find out whether these alleged state passions are real or metaphorical we must clarify what the notion of passion consists of. As the title of chapter VI of *Leviathan* indicates, Hobbes holds passions to be "the interiour beginnings of voluntary motions" which are "commonly called ENDEAVOUR" (L, VI.1, 78). Passions are simply endeavors or motions that affect certain bodies, i.e., "animals". Animal bodies have two sorts of motions: vital and voluntary (L, VI.1, 78). Vital motion is the regular motion of the body controlled by the heart. Voluntary motions or endeavors are the passions, which are "voluntary" in a Hobbesian sense, namely, as physical responses to the action of an external object in the animal body. External things transmit motions that first generate a sensation and then are communicated to the heart (L, VI.9, 82). Voluntary motions are connected to the vital motion of the body under a criterion of self-preservation. If the motion produced by the external thing "helps" the body's vital motion controlled by the heart (L, VI.10, 82), then it will make the

[8] The scholarship of the Hobbesian legacy in international relations is huge. For an outline of the "Hobbesian Tradition", see Michael Williams "Recasting the Hobbesian Legacy in International Political Theory" in *International Political Theory after Hobbes*, ed. Raia Prokhovnik et al. (London: Palgrave, 2010), 147-67. Also, Theodore Christov, *Before Anarchy. Hobbes and his Critics in Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6-24, glosses the interpretations of Hobbes's international thought during the 20th century and the present.

[9] George Kateb, "Hobbes and the Irrationality of Politics," *Political Theory* 17 (3) (1989), 381.

body move toward that thing, a reaction "called appetite or desire" (L, VI.2, 78). If the external object hinders the vital motion (L, VI.10, 82), the body will react moving "fromward", a motion "generally called aversion" (L, VI.2, 78). These desires and aversions are nothing more than the "voluntary motions" that precede action. The last appetite or aversion that precedes action is what Hobbes calls "will", which is "the act (not the faculty) of willing" (L, VI.53, 92). For Hobbes, passions are acts of volition, appetites, or aversions whose function is the preservation of the body, the continuity of its vital motion.

2.2. The state is a body in motion

One could object that this sort of motion is only applicable to animal bodies, and not to an artificial being such as the state. There are reasons to doubt this. *Leviathan*'s subtitle reveals that the state has both "matter" and "form". It possesses "similar parts or muscles" (L, XXII.1, 348), "parts organicall" (L, XXIII.1, 376), needs "nutrition" (L, XXIV.1, 386) and is susceptible of "infirmities" (L, XXIX.2, 498). It could be argued that Hobbes's homology of the state with a human body is only figurative, a residue of an organicist political tradition. However, he is adamant in his attribution of movement to the commonwealth. In his *Critique* to Thomas White's *De Mundo*, he analyzes on what grounds we can affirm that a river, a human being, and a state are "the same entity" (AW, XII.4, 190).[10] The criterion that explains identity in all three instances is kinetic, the continuity of the movement that governs it. If the body's "movement or flux is one and the same" (AW, XII.4, 190), he argues, then the entity in question is the same.[11] The continuity of the body's vital motion determines its identity. Because "life is but a motion of limbs", Hobbes also attributes artificial life to automata (L, Introduction, 16). So, if movement is a property predicable of the state, then the state must be treated as an actual body. Indeed, Hobbes thinks that speaking of bodies metaphorically "is but an absurd speech" (L, VI.2, 78). The state is, as Philippe Crignon explains, a body among other bodies, an artificial body that owes its identity to its peculiar internal motion.[12] His reworking of the organicist tradition, Annabel Brett has proposed, is the dynamic conception of the state as something that moves itself.[13] This subsection has provided

[10] Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White's* De Mundo *Examined*, ed. Harold Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976), referred to as AW.
[11] This contention is reiterated in Thomas Hobbes, *Concerning Body*. In *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. I, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839), XI.7, 137. Referred to as CB.
[12] Philippe Crignon, *De l'incarnation à la représentation* (Paris: Garnier, 2012), 109.
[13] Annabel Brett, "The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-wealth: Thomas Hobbes and Late Renaissance Commentary on Aristotle's Politics," *Hobbes Studies*, 23(1) (2010), 96.

reasons to consider that motion can be attributed to the state in a substantial, non-figurative, way. A continuous motion or flux is, in fact, what accounts for the identity of the state.

2.3. The sovereign power is the unifier of motion

If the state has a motion of its own, we still need an explanation of how this motion is obtained. In the *Critique* Hobbes ventures an answer: through the unity of the government's actions. If the "continuous order and the movement of the government" remains the same, we can say that it is the same state (AW, XII.4, 191). Drawing on this passage, Sean Fleming asserts that sovereignty is what confers a corporate identity on a people.[14] As we learn from *De Cive*, the institution of a sovereign power operates by unifying many voluntary motions into one. When a multitude agrees that the will of a representative "is to be taken as the will of them all" then it "becomes one person, for it is endowed with a will and can therefore perform voluntary actions" (DCv, VI.1.Ann., 76-7). We should remember here what was claimed in 2.1: for Hobbes, wills or volitions are motions. So, as Mikko Jakonen summarized it, "governing the commonwealth means to control the motions of the people".[15] Now, the specific motion of a state depends on the sort of institution that governs it. The sovereign power instituted by the multitude will instill different sorts of motions to the political corporation depending on it being a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy (DCv, X.16, 125). As we will see in section 4, the various institutions of sovereign power differ in their ability to unify the movement of the state. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes reiterates that the people "should receive their motion from the authority of the soveraign" (L, XXIX.20, 516). By its authority, the sovereign "is inabled to conforme the wills of them all" (L, XVII.13, 260). To will as one means being able to move and act as one, especially when ensuring internal peace and going to war.

In sum, the state is an artificial body and sovereignty is its artificial soul, that gives "life and motion to the whole body" (L, Introduction, 16). When the sovereign is removed, the members stop receiving their motion from the state, which in turn becomes a corpse (L, XXIX.23, 518). Hobbes also explains how the sovereign infuses motion to the people. In chapter XXX he argues that the laws do not "bind the People from

[14] Sean Fleming, *Leviathan on a Leash* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 117.
[15] Mikko Jakonen, *Multitude in Motion: Re-Readings on the Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (PhD Thesis, University of Jyväskylä, 2013), 116.

all voluntary actions" but "*direct and keep them in such a motion*, as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires" (L, XXX.21, 540, my emphasis). Sovereigns are to enforce the law of "compleasance" and ensure that people are willing to live in society. Those who, "for the stubbornness of [their] passions, cannot be corrected", must be expelled (L, XV.17, 232).

I have shown how the motion that gives identity to the state is generated by the unifying action or motion of the sovereign institution. Hobbes argues that the institution of a sovereign power establishes a unique principle of motion for the political body. As long as this principle endures, the state remains the same. In addition, he clarifies that the sovereign institution acts by conforming the wills of its people, that is, their voluntary motions.

2.4. State motions are construable as passions

The question of individuation has a final rearticulation in *De Corpore*, where Hobbes examines the criterion according to which a body's identity remains the same or changes. In this question, he includes "whether a city [*civitas*] be in different ages the same or another city" (CB, XI.7, 135). He then considers the "beginning of motion" as principle of individuation (CB, XI.7, 137). If the origin of motion of a thing persists, the thing will be the same. In the case of the body politic, this means that it will be the same if its "acts proceed continually from the same institution" (CB, XI.7, 138). States retain their identity if their origin of motion, their sovereign institution, remains the same.

To describe the individuating function of the sovereign power, Hobbes falls back on the terminology he uses to define passions: the "beginning of motion". Andrea Bardin underscores that "the physical concept of conatus as beginning of motion" seeks to explain all motions, both of natural and artificial bodies.[16] The sovereign institution is the "endeavor" that both *initiates* and *conducts* the state's motion. It initiates because it generates a coherent motion out of several incoherent wills. It conducts because it preserves its internal motion and thus maintains the state's identity throughout its actions. Hence, motions originated by the

[16] Andrea Bardin, "Liberty and representation in Hobbes: a materialist theory of conatus," *History of European Ideas* (2021), 9. See also Douglass Jesseph, "Hobbes on 'Conatus': A Study in the Foundations of Hobbesian Philosophy," *Hobbes Studies*, 29(1) (2016), 83.

sovereign institution are construable as passions since they transmit the will (the desires and aversions) of the political body. Through legislation the sovereign power leads the people's motions and is thus "inabled to conforme" their wills (L, XVII.13, 260). Affecting the subjects' desires and aversions, the sovereign "keeps them in such a motion" (L, XXX.21, 540) that preserves internal peace and cohesion against foreign enemies.

This version of the state does not replace or cancel, but supplements, Hobbes's sophisticated elaboration of its fictive personality. The establishment of a unique principle of motion depends on a representation "by fiction". As is well known, a multitude becomes one person when represented by an individual or an assembly (L, XVI.13, 248). Each member of the multitude pledges to "owne and acknowledge himselfe to be author of whatsoever" the representative does (L, XVII.13, 260). They authorize the will of the sovereign power to function as the will of all. On this account, the state is an *artificial* body. At the same time, the person of the commonwealth is upheld by a particular configuration of real human beings whose motions are led by a representative and whose actions have effects in the real world. The covenant is not enough if not enforced by an effectively awe-inspiring power (L, XVII.12, 260). To function as the will of them all, the sovereign must be able to "conform" and "direct" their wills. In this regard, the state is an artificial *body*. Sandra Field has expounded this difference in terms of the sovereign's *potestas* and *potentia*, between its "entitled capacity" and its "effective capacity". Hobbes's challenge is "to bring that effective power to coincide with right".[17] I claim similarly that the fictitious personhood of the state and the juridical prerogatives with which it has been endowed need to be backed up by kinetic support, by the exercise of power through movement. To hold sovereign power means being authorized by the people, but also being able to move and direct that people.

Hobbes recognizes that the state has a distinctive motion as a body politic. This motion begins when the sovereign power is instituted. As long as this centralized generation of motion persists, the state remains the same. This motion also conveys the will of the state. To deliver this motion, the sovereign power reshapes the wills of the multitude in a coherent way and gives them a direction. Just as passions express the voluntary motions of an individual (Section 2.1), the voluntary motions initiated by the sovereign power can be construed as the desires and aversions of the state. The motions of the state are its voluntary motions, i.e., its passions.

[17] Sandra Field, "Hobbes and the Question of Power," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 52 (1) (2014), 79-80.

Since Hobbes is referring to motions that are real features of the political body, the attribution of passions to states can be interpreted in a non-figurative way. In what follows I elucidate why these passions should be attributed to the state as a whole and not simply to the sovereign.

3. The reducibility thesis

Another possible approach to attributing passions to states is to maintain that those conflictive passions affect only sovereigns. It is the human individuals that govern the commonwealths who are competitive, diffident, and proud, not the states. I call this position the reducibility thesis. Glen Newey takes this approach when he claims that "Hobbes thought that the state of nature obtained between both individual humans in the state of nature and persons who exercise sovereign power in international affairs".[18] Haig Patapan explains events in Hobbesian international relations as products of the glory of sovereigns, who pose "the same problems that Hobbes discerned in the glory seeker in the state of nature".[19] Scholars who underscore Hobbes's lack of a genuine notion of group persons also support this view. Otto von Gierke argues that Hobbes dissolves group personhood "into representing and represented individuals", suggesting that the actions of the state can be reduced to the actions of the sovereign.[20] The most articulate objection, though, comes from Christian List and Philip Pettit, who hold that Hobbes falls into "an easy translation from talk of group agents into talk of individual agents".[21] According to them, Hobbes would end up presenting a "thin", "redundant" or even "degenerate" version of collective action.[22] On this account, Hobbes's artificial men are to be equated for practical purposes to sovereigns, and the landscape of international relations would boil down to the effects of the passions that impinge on the natural body of state rulers.

My previous reasoning that calls into question the metaphorical attribution thesis may appear to reinforce this reducibility thesis. After all, sovereign rulers are the ones who generate and conduct the motions of the state. One could argue that what they will is what counts as what the entire political corporation wills.

[18] Newey, *Routledge Guidebook*, 162.
[19] Haig Patapan, "The Glorious Sovereign: Thomas Hobbes' Understanding of Leadership and International Relations," in *British International Thinkers from Hobbes to Namier*, ed. Ian Hall & Lisa Hill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12.
[20] Otto von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*. 1500 to 1800, ed. Ernest Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 84.
[21] Christian List and Philip Pettit, *Group Agency. The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 76.
[22] List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, 76.

However, I explore a non-reductionist way of understanding state passions. My thesis is that passions, especially those that function as drivers of state wars, are not emotions that occur simply in the minds of sovereign rulers. Instead, the mobilization of the body politic is a dynamic process that entails the sovereign's recognition and reshaping of the passions of the people. I call this the thesis of the passionate compound.

In my interpretation, the motion of the commonwealth is a whole. As Hobbes explains, "the cause of the whole is compounded of the causes of the parts" (DCo, VI.2, 67). The components of this whole are two: (i) the incoherent and preexisting motions of the multitude; and (ii) the superimposing and coordinating motions of the sovereign institution. In causal relations, Hobbes distinguished between the "material cause" or the "patient" and the "efficient cause" or the "agent" (DCo, IX.3, 121). In order to elicit an effect, both the active and the passive factors must be in place. As we have seen in Sections 2.3 and 2.4, the sovereign power plays an active role in the causation of the state's motion. It acts as a vector of the state's movement, initiating it and deciding where to move. Now we can expand that contention and claim that the sovereign operates as an efficient cause on a material cause, i.e., the voluntary motions of its people. Samantha Frost has emphasized the synergy, "in both the philosophical causal sense as well as in the affective sense", of the actions of the sovereign and the will of the people.[23] This also means that the will of the sovereign power does not operate in a void. The sovereign understood as the initiator of the state's motion will necessarily encounter a reaction in the patient: "reaction is nothing but endeavour in the patient to restore itself to that situation from which it was forced by the agent" (DCo, XXII.19, 348). The patient certainly does its part and needs to be taken into account. So, the motion of the state is the result of a compound of two factors: the voluntary motions of the sovereign and that of the people. This compound motion of the state is the kinetic ground that supports the attribution of passions (i.e., voluntary motions) to the state.

I have already established that the sovereign power's success in maintaining the state's identity amounts to acting in a "continuous" way. In *De Corpore* Hobbes refers to the continuity of motion when discussing the impression of a habit in the material cause. Habit is "an easy conducting of the moved body in a certain and *designed* way". It is achieved "by the weakening" of contrary endeavors and "by the *long continuance of*

[23] Samantha Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 172.

action" (DCo, XXII.20, 349, my emphasis). Moreover, to impress a habit, Hobbes argues, one needs a particular "skill" that consists in "*compounding* many interrupted motions or endeavours into one equal endeavour" (DCo, XXII.20, 349, my emphasis). Analogously, it is possible to interpret the way the state motion is shaped in light of a compound of endeavors. In the Introduction of *Leviathan* Hobbes identifies the material cause of the state with the human individuals that compose it (L, Introduction, 19). To get to know the nature of the state, one needs to know the stuff it is made of. Above all, the sovereign, acting as the efficient cause, needs to know the material cause on which it acts. "He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself not this or that particular man, but man-kind" (L, Introduction, 20). Since passions tend to operate similarly in all human beings, sovereigns must read humanity in themselves to understand how the passions of their people work (L, Introduction, 19). This is a difficult skill, however, because everyone tries to hide their true feelings (L, Introduction, 18). Because sovereigns are in charge of international relations, they must not only be familiar with the passions of their people, but also know how the passions of the people of other nations work. This is why Hobbes exhorts them to discover "man-kind" in themselves.

To impress a continuous motion on their people and compound their endeavors into one, sovereigns must be attentive to how that people feel. But to lead them effectively to war, they also need to know how the people of other nations feel. Further evidence for this passionate compound thesis can be obtained from Hobbes's reference to war as a "unanimous endeavour against a forraign enemy" "governed and directed by one judgement" (L, XVII.5, 258). In my analysis, this unanimous endeavor should be understood as the preexisting matter of passions. The sovereign power enjoys a juridical prerogative that validates its active function: "the right of making warre and peace to other nations" (L, XVIII.12, 274). In such capacity, it acts on the material cause, i.e., governs and directs the endeavors or voluntary motions of its citizens fittingly.

There is a way of attributing passions to states that would not fall into a metaphorical license, nor an easy translation into the state of mind of the rulers: the thesis of the passionate compound, according to which the sovereign power conducts the preexisting endeavors or passions of the multitude by reshaping them and creating a new endeavor. The sovereign initiates a specific movement by infusing a coherent direction to the voluntary motions of its subjects. In line with the Hobbesian model of causality, it operates as an efficient or

active cause. Conversely, the people's wills are the material cause that is conformed by the active contribution of the sovereign. Viewed in this way, the voluntary motions of the commonwealth, its desires and aversions, are constituted conjointly by the voluntary motions of the sovereign as an agent and the disordered motions of the people as a patient. As we shall see in the next section, this passionate compound is particularly germane to the attribution of passions to states in the case of war.

4. Three passions of war

4.1. Desire and hope

The first cause, competition, is not a passion, but is engendered by passions, namely, desire and hope. Competition leads to war because "the way of one competitor to the attaining of his *desire* is to kill, subdue, supplant or repell the other" (L, XI.3, 152, my emphasis). Without desire, there would be no competition. Human beings strive both to fulfil present desires and to acquire the means that will also enable future fulfillment (L, XI.2, 150). And those means are defined by Hobbes as "power" (L, X.1, 132). Even if we do not desire the same things, any object of desire of one person might be reinterpreted by another as an instrument for the fulfillment of his or her future desires. Hence, we end up in a zero-sum scenario: the object of desire one attains is a potential instrument taken away from the others. As Arash Abizadeh points out, Hobbes is thinking of "goods that are intrinsically, not incidentally, scarce".[24] Desire, nonetheless, is not enough to elicit war. Additionally, there should be an "equality of hope in the attaining of our ends" (L, XIII.3, 190).

Hobbes tells us that competition "maketh men invade for gain" (L, XIII.7, 192). When we examine his description of invasions, it is quite evident that they are activities that suit both individuals and groups. Invasions are carried out "with forces united" (L, XIII.3, 190). These forces can be construed as small "systems" or gangs of individuals gathered by "one interest or one businesse" (L, XXII.1, 348), that is, the desire and expectation of obtaining gain. Desire and hope for gain are feelings that "dissociate and render man apt to invade and destroy one another" (L, XIII.10, 194), but at the same time, they join people together. In

[24] Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory," *American Political Science Review* 105 (2) (2011), 310.

chapter XVII of *Leviathan*, Hobbes mentions that in the past, plunder was an honorable trade that kept small families united around a purpose (L, XVII.2, 254-6). Conquering groups stirred by desire for gain also include political corporations: "as small families did then, so now do cities and kingdoms, which are but *greater families* (for their own security), enlarge their dominions" (L, XVII.2, 256, my emphasis). Indeed, war and invasion are sometimes "necessary for the citizens to prosper" because they can increase their wealth (DCv, XIII.14, 149) and help finance a tax exemption for the poorest (DCv, XIII.14, 150). States struggle to make a profit, too. The difference between a gang raid and a state invasion is one of identity and continuity of motion. Leagues dedicated to looting depend on a contingent "similitude of wills and inclinations" (L, XXII.28, 370). A state, by contrast, operates with a continuous flux of passions administered by the sovereign power. As long as it is a true union, it maintains a regular motion towards an object of "common interest" (L, XIX.4, 288), which in this case is described as an "appetite… of enlarging dominion" (L, XXIX.22, 518), "limited… by externall accidents, and the appetites of their neighbours" (L, XXIV.8, 390-2).

The issue of the continuity of motion is also germane to the superiority of monarchy over sovereign assemblies, which are unsuitable "for the government of a multitude, *especially in time of warre*" (L, XVI.17, 250, my emphasis). In assemblies the "inconstancy" of human beings is aggravated by the fickleness of numbers: the decision supported by a majority one day may be a minority opinion the next (L, XIX.6-7, 290). Also, in assemblies, passions do not converge but block each other "and reduce their strength, by mutuall opposition, to nothing" (L, XVII.4, 256). In sum, a monarch is better equipped to guide the passionate components that sustain a war for gain. This does not mean that those passions can be narrowed to the emotions of the individual sovereigns in power. During a conquest, the preservation of the state's motion depends not only on the sovereign or on the forces raised, but also on extracting money from subjects to finance it (L, XVIII.12, 274). The state's endeavor has to inhere both in the citizens that fight and in the ones that give monetary support. All are comprised in the "appetite" for dominion. Hence, this cause of war is neither explicable as the contingent aggregation of the citizens' passions, nor in terms of the psychological state of mind of the ruler in charge. One state competes against another on the basis of a continuous flow of movement that, while steered by the sovereign power, fuels a collective quest for prosperity.

4.2. Diffidence

If two parties desire the same thing, a commodity or an instrument of power, and have fairly equal expectations of attaining it, they "become enemies" (L, XIII.3, 190) and the danger of an invasion or an attack looms.[25] Owing to this generalized state of anxiety and misgivings, they try to defend their interests by means of preventive attacks. This is the most "reasonable" way of ensuring one's safety (L, XIII.4, 190). Violence breaks out not by virtue of the aggressive nature of human beings, but "for safety", "to defend" (L, XIII.7, 192) one's position against a presumptive attack, and to the extent that it is what "conservation requires" (L, XIII.4, 190) in that situation.

What Hobbes signifies by diffidence is a "degree" of fear originated by "distrust" towards others (EL, IX.9, 53),[26] or simply a "fear from each other" (LL, 191).

Analogously, fear is the dominating feature of international relations. States expand their territories driven by "fear of invasion" (L, XVII.2, 256). This is reiterated in *De Cive*: all states, even those that maintain peaceful relations with their neighbors, vigilantly guard their frontiers and thus "admit their fear and distrust of each other" (DCv, Preface, 10-1). Distrust, then, is an expression of hostility (DCv, XVII.27, 231). Fear of external enemies serves as a binding element for the political corporation (L, XXV.16, 412), because this sort of fear is experienced in a collective fashion. Hobbes argues that the size and power of "the enemy *we* fear" is constantly compared with our own (L, XVII.3, 256, my emphasis). His lifelong brotherhood with fear ratifies this contention. Faced with the imminent arrival of the Spanish Armada, his "mother had so much fear that she gave birth to twins: myself and fear at once. This is why, I believe, *I hate the enemies of the fatherland*"

[25] I reconstruct the problem of diffidence and anticipatory violence without resorting to the distinction between dominators and moderate agents. For an alternative reading, see Daniel Eggers, "Hobbes and game theory revisited: Zero-sum games in the state of nature," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 49 (3) (2011), 201-6.

[26] Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. John Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 53, henceforth referred to as EL. As Richard Tuck explains in "Hobbes's moral philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, ed. Tom Sorell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 161, while diffidence is defined as "constant despair" in *L*, VI.20, 84, this formulation does not quite convey the nature of the feeling.

(*Vita*, lxxxvi, my emphasis).[27] The collective feeling of fear serves not only to develop an external enmity, but also to consolidate a national identity.[28]

Hobbes is careful to point out that these images of aversion must be directed by the state. Sovereigns must "forewarn" and "forearm" their citizens (DCv, XIII.7, 144). The preservation of the state's identity entails, among other things, delineating an external source of fear against which the sovereign power is the sole guardian. Hobbes's warning extends also to internal enemies, i.e., groups sponsored by foreign nations to propagate pernicious doctrines and undermine the power of a state (L, XXII.27, 368).[29] Now, diffidence may lead to an aggressive action or may temporarily prevent states from attacking each other. Given that sovereigns might not know what forces other commonwealths possess and fear they are greater than expected, they may promote cautious behavior.[30] In a passage of the *Dialogue*, Hobbes considers that "mutual fear may keep them quiet for a time" (D, 12).[31] As long as this fear lasts, states will hold their positions. These contingent moments of rest or peace are not exceptions to, but foreseeable components of, Hobbes's state of war. War is like "foul weather", not "actual fighting", but "the known disposition thereto" (L, XIII.8, 192). Thus, "upon every visible advantage" (D, 12), battle will be resumed.

Focusing on fear, we can also verify the superiority of monarchy over a sovereign assembly. For Hobbes, panic is a passion specific to "a throng, or multitude of people", a kind of fear in which everyone acts by imitation, copying the fear of others, but without a clear notion of its origin (L, VI.37, 86). In the words of Mikko Jakonen, panic "introduces the disordered motion typical of the multitude".[32] Whereas monarchs will be able to detect the origin of their fear (e.g., a real threat from a neighboring state) and impress a coherent

[27] Thomas Hobbes, *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita Carmine Expressa*, in *Opera Philosophica Quae Latine Scripsit*, vol. I, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1849). Referred to as Vita.
[28] On the topic of negative association as key to the formation and maintenance of Hobbesian political corporations, see Ioannis Evrigenis, *Fear of enemies and collective action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121-2 and 126-8; Andrés Rosler, "El enemigo de la república," in Thomas Hobbes, *Elementos filosóficos. Del ciudadano* (Buenos Aires: Hydra, 2011), 42; and Christov, *Before Anarchy*, 73.
[29] Ionut Untea, "External Authority or External Threat? Thomas Hobbes and the Politically Troubled Times of Early Modern England," in *The Representation of External Threats*, eds. Eberhard Crailsheim & María Dolores Elizalde (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 230, regards the Pope's intromissions and the creation of an internal Catholic enemy in this way.
[30] As Silviya Lechner, *Hobbesian Internationalism: Anarchy, Authority and the Fate of Political Philosophy* (Cham: Springer, 2019), 49-50, asserts: "Hobbes connects the premise of diffidence to a premise of incomplete knowledge… prior to interaction the identity of agents remains opaque".
[31] Thomas Hobbes, *A Dialogue Between a Philosopher and a Student, of the Common Laws of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Referred to as D.
[32] Jakonen, *Multitude*, 96.

motion on the commonwealth accordingly, an assembly is susceptible to being affected by panic. Also, a sovereign assembly might be too prone to dismiss fear, as Daniel Kapust explains, because no member wants to be considered a coward in front of their peers.[33] Therefore, everyone adopts an aggressive stance and avoids participating in the passion of fear, even though it is a relevant factor in the relationship with an enemy state. By excess or by defect, collective bodies are incapable of adequately compounding the passion of fear.

In mechanistic terms, fear is decisive for the movement and rest of the state. It can mobilize citizens to engage in combat against a loathed enemy or provoke a mistrustful quiescence, a state of permanent alert in the face of an alien threat that holds the community together. This kinetics is consistent, and attributable to, a political corporation as a whole only when guided by a sovereign power. A multitude that panics without a clear understanding of the source of its terror cannot wage a war. A league may temporarily assemble out of concern about an external menace (L, XXII.29, 370), but when "they have no common enemy", they will separate due to the difference of their interests and fall back into a war of all against all (L, XVII.5, 258). Only a state with a principle of motion can maintain a continuous flow of fear that draws people together, alerts them to possible invasion or mobilizes them for a preemptive attack.

4.3. Glory

As Hobbes elucidates in chapter VI of *Leviathan*, glory is an "exultation of the mind", the "joy arising from imagination of a mans own power and ability" (L, VI.39, 88). This satisfaction entails comparison (DCv, I.2, 131)[34] for the bliss resulting from the conception of our own power depends on the corroboration that we are more powerful than others (L, XVII.8, 258). Power is "the excess of the power of one above that of another" (*EL*, VIII.4, 48).

Hobbes thinks that human beings fight "for reputation" (L, XIII.7, 192) for two reasons. There are exceedingly glorious people who fall into aggressive behavior because they gloat over "the pleasure of contemplating their own power" (L, XIII.4, 190). This set of people are usually characterized as "conquerors"

[33] Daniel Kapust, "The Problem of Flattery and Hobbes's Institutional Defense of Monarchy," *The Journal of Politics* 73 (3) (2011), 686 and 690.
[34] On the comparative and subjective aspects of power, see Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 39-40; and Yves Zarka, *Hobbes and modern political thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 75.

or "aggressors".[35] At the same time, glory is a universal passion, because we all want others to value us as we value ourselves. If they despise or underestimate us, we will try to extract from them by force the valuation that we think we deserve (L, XIII.5, 190). As Gauthier argues, no one can willingly admit the inferiority of power that comes with contempt.[36]

Thus, everybody seeks to rejoice by judging themselves more powerful than others and is therefore willing to exert violence if that judgement is not recognized. Hobbes defines this state of mind as "pride" or the "breach" of the ninth law of nature, "that everyman acknowledge other for his equall by nature" (L, XV.21, 234). On the face of it, this thirst for glory may come across as an irrational or delusional passion that drives people to fight "for trifles" (L, XIII.7, 192).[37] To be glorious in the state of nature is, however, a good proxy for sanity and good sense. More precisely, to succeed in assigning oneself a higher value than one's neighbors means to unbalance the condition of symmetry by which all human beings are "in the same danger" (L, XIII.1, 188). Power is only useful if it is "eminent": distributed equally, it is of no use (DH, XI.6, 98).[38] Those whose self-assigned values are acquiesced to by potential competitors are thereby powerful, because "reputation of power is power" (L, X.5, 132).[39] Hence, the prideful conception of one's own power, when endorsed by others, betokens power and higher chances of survival.

Hobbes acknowledges glory's collective dimension in his description of the causes of war. Glory causes people to engage in violence in response to "undervalue" that was directed at themselves "or by reflexion in their kindred, their friends, their nations, their profession, or their name" (L, 192, XIII). The worth of one's family, trade, gang, or nation reflects on one's own worth. Individuals experience glory when they

[35] There is no consensus on this issue. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*, 116, distinguishes "dominators" as those "who possess… the desire of power over other people", from "moderates", whose "considerations of safety [are] their primary motives". Pärtel Piirimäe, "The explanation of conflict in Hobbes's Leviathan," *TRAMES* 10 (60/55) (2006), 7, and Ioannis Evrigenis, "The State of Nature," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. Kinch Hoekstra & Aloysius Martinich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 230, understate this distinction.
[36] Gauthier, *Logic*, 16.
[37] Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 38-9; Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on civil association* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), 127-8; Delphine Thivet, "Thomas Hobbes: A philosopher of war or peace?," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16 (4) (2008), 714; and Julie Cooper, "Vainglory, modesty, and political agency in the political theory of Thomas Hobbes," *The Review of Politics* (2010), 248, held this contention to some extent.
[38] Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine* in *Opera Philosophica Quae Latine Scripsit*, vol. II, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1849). Referred to as DH.
[39] On reputation as a positional good, see Barbara Carnevali, "Glory. La lutte pour la réputation dans le modèle hobbesien," *Communications*, 93 (2013), 54.

manage to assert the value they attribute to themselves or to the groups they belong to. On this account, rejoicing in the power of a group is a feeling that can be shared by all its members.[40] This collective facet of glory through reflection is evident when Hobbes refers to the revolt of the "so-called Beggars" in Holland during the 16th century, stressing how powerful contempt and undervalue are as sources of sedition against the government. (LL, XXX.16, 537). In *Behemoth* Hobbes claims that the driving force of the Parliamentarian army during the civil wars was simply spite (B, 253).[41] Glory mobilizes groups of people to conflict.

It is in the interest of states, as it is of individuals and groups in state of nature, to be glorious. A good deal of the success in international relations depends on the capacity of states to uphold their pride. Since a glorious state is literally the one that enjoys more recognized power than its rivals, it is less likely to be attacked. As with the two previous causes of war, the glorious motivations of a political corporation are not reducible to the mental states of its representative(s). The glory of sovereigns consists in the "vigor of their subjects" (L, XVIII.20, 282). In a clear allusion to the ends for which human beings quarrel, i.e., "gain", "safety" and "reputation" (L, XIII.7, 192), Hobbes claims that "no king can be rich, nor glorious, nor secure; whose subjects are either poore, or contemptible, or too weak through want or dissention, to maintain war against their enemies" (L, XIX.4, 288). Conversely, the vain aspiration to glory on the part of rulers will have counterproductive effects, making life painful for both kings and subjects (D, 16). Sovereigns cannot elicit by themselves emotions that are not in their people.[42] Hobbes recounted the situation of a defeated Charles I, who complained about the harsh treatment his people gave him, "which made them pity of him, but not yet rise in his behalfe" (B, 305).

The feelings needed to undertake a war for reputation cannot emerge either from a contingent accumulation of arrogant individuals. To ascertain the state's power internationally, sovereigns need to mobilize and administer the glory of their people in a coherent and durable way. Those who face the risk of losing their lives for reputation are in a position to reflect on the appropriateness of war. For Hobbes, the obligation to carry out a dangerous mission assigned by the sovereign depends on its "intention" or "end" (L,

[40] Slomp, *Political Philosophy of Glory*, 52, maintains that "[f]or Hobbes, as for Thucydides, ambition and pride characterise not only the behaviour of single individuals, but also the actions of entire peoples and nations".
[41] Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth,* ed. Paul Seaward (Oxford: OUP, 2009). Referred to as B.
[42] This point of the Hobbesian theory was raised by Gerald Gaus, "Hobbes's idea of public judgement," (n.d., 18).

XXI.15, 338). Hence, the mobilizing force of the citizens' individual glory may dwindle, leaving rulers with no other resource than "pressure" (L, XVIII.20, 282). And even if motivation remains strong, individual prides will not engender a harmonious effort, but more probably lead citizens to compete with each other for "preeminence". Herein lies a further Hobbesian argument for monarchy over sovereign assemblies. Whereas the monarch's glory will coincide with that of the commonwealth because in a monarchy private and public interests coincide (L, XIX.4, 288), members of a sovereign assembly will not act for glory in a coordinated manner. Instead, they will fight each other to monopolize the glory attributed to the state: "a monarch cannot disagree with himselfe out of envy or interest, but an assembly may, and that to such height as may produce a civill warre" (L, XIX.7, 290).

The sovereign must galvanize the subjects' emotional energy convincing them of the direction in which they are moving as a body politic. Corporate glory expresses a collective motion of affirmation of the state's identity and power. While this glory 'reflects' on its participants, it is not simply attributable to them individually. Citizens may feel glorious as parts of a common enterprise and a common superiority *vis à vis* other states. But that glory is attributable to the state only when it is soundly administered by the sovereign power.

4.4. A disjointed compound?

I have presented a schematic version of how state passions can be construed. In reality, however, it is not easy to determine if the passions of the people, the sovereign, and the commonwealth are conjoined. For instance, while the sovereign may decide to attack a foreign nation for glory, soldiers may obey because they fear punishment. A corporation of merchants might promote war on account of the profits they hope to make. Even though Hobbes claims that wars are "unanimous" endeavors, this is often not the case. The disjunction is exacerbated, as we have seen, when sovereign power is held by a democratic assembly. Although individuals might experience fear in private, since they do not want to be considered cowards, they take the most reckless positions in public. Hence, what is shown in public as the will of the commonwealth does not coincide with the voluntary motions of the individuals who constitute it. In short, it is difficult to gauge whether the passions attributed to the state as a whole in a war are the passions that drive each individual to wage the war effort.

My claim is that the direction of motion set by the sovereign must take into account the wills of the people and be sufficiently, but not unanimously, shared by them. To what extent the sovereign power can pressure a people who does not share its passions is an empirical question. At the beginning of *Behemoth*, Hobbes ventures into this kind of exercise as he enumerates the different "sorts" that intervened in the English civil wars and clarifies their motivations. From ministers who claimed to have a divine right to government (B, 108) to gentlemen infatuated with Greek and Roman institutions (B, 110), to those betting on staying in the winning party and benefitting from the war (B, 110), the emotions that drove the majority were too dissonant with the war effort of Charles I. One of the characters of the dialogue concludes that with such a people "the King is already ousted of his government" (B, 111). Charles' inability to conform their wills and impress a coherent motion to the body politic determined his fate.

This might also explain the prominent role that the concept of "popularity" acquired in *Leviathan*. Popularity is particularly relevant in the army. To adequately execute their office, commanders must be popular, and therefore loved and feared (L, XXX.28, 550). Similarly, when sovereigns are popular, their power is strengthened because soldiers love them and their "cause". A popular sovereign will be able to "turn the hearts" of the people, that is, unite their endeavors and lead them to war (L, XXX.29, 550). One might think that popularity is too demanding a requirement for rulers as a means of reshaping the wills of their subjects. But Hobbes makes it clear that occupying the seat of the sovereign is itself a "popular quality" (L, XXX.29, 550). If sovereigns preserve the popularity inherent in their office, their ability to consistently lead and reshape the voluntary motions of the people is guaranteed.[43] Hobbes offers a theoretical model to think about the attribution of passions to states that is rooted in the joint operation of the passions of the sovereign as the efficient cause and the passions of the people as the material cause. In any war there are multiple motivations that drive individuals into battle. These may differ from the main passion that drives the body politic to war, i.e., the will of the sovereign power. The extent to which the passions that lead the war effort must be shared by the people can only be answered empirically. Nevertheless, Hobbes believes that if the sovereign remains popular, it will tap into the hearts of its people effectively enough to lead the motion of the body politic.

[43] The concept of popularity features only negatively in the *Elements* (EL, IX.7, 175-76) and *De Cive* (DCv, XIII.13, 149) associated with subjects who, on account of their popularity, can form factions and rebel against the sovereign power.

Conclusion

This article is built on the premise that international relations, and the "posture of war" among sovereign states are actual examples of the state of nature. As such, the three causes of conflict that Hobbes identifies as dominant in that condition may be relevant to account for the behavior of states. And since these drivers are mainly passions, states can be thought of as motivated by passions. This attribution of passions to states should not be dismissed as a figurative way of speaking or resolved by invoking the frame of mind of individual rulers. States can be construed as moveable bodies whose kinetics are guided by the sovereign power. A state preserves its identity if its governing institution manages to impart a permanent motion to it, if the sovereign reads its subjects' passions and forms a coherent will out of them. This feature of the sovereign's office is particularly important in the face of war, when the entire community must be mobilized through desire, fear, and glory. Focusing on each cause of conflict, I have explained how sovereign representatives and citizens contribute to generating what I consider to be state passions.