The Review of Politics 81 (2019), 21–46.

doi:10.1017/S0034670518000931

# War by Other Means? Incentives for Power Seekers in Thomas Hobbes's Political Philosophy

*Eva Odzuck*

**Abstract:** The problem of the power seeker is of crucial importance for Hobbes's political philosophy. While education might aid in changing the behavior of some people, Hobbes is clear that there are limits to the effectiveness of education and that incurable, unsocial power seekers will persist. In my analysis, I ask whether and, if so, how Hobbes can also get these incurable power seekers on board. The result of my findings that Hobbes provides a huge variety of treatments for power seekers, including incentives to betray and exploit their fellow citizens by employing a public gesture of civility, has implications for Hobbes research: it shows the complexity and costs of Hobbes's "solution" to the problem of war and corrects a widespread developmental hypothesis about the concept of honor in Hobbes's works. Thereby, it can also enrich a recent diagnosis about the decline of honor in modern societies.

Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy stems from an era of bloody wars. Peace is acknowledged to be the practical goal of his theory of the absolute state.[1] The title "prince of peace" was bestowed on Hobbes and should transport the message that we can learn important lessons about peace from the previously named "monster of Malmesbury."[2] Although Hobbes's theory of

Eva Odzuck, Dr., is Assistant Professor at the Institute for Political Science, Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Kochstr. 4, 91054 Erlangen, Germany (eva.odzuck@fau.de).

I am grateful to audiences in Baltimore, Erlangen, and Florence, to my anonymous reviewers and to Ruth Abbey, Yannis Evrigenis, Clemens Kauffmann, Sharon Lloyd, Sam Zeitlin, and Catherine Zuckert for providing helpful comments. Kinch Hoekstra's ongoing help allowed me to see how to build on and where to go beyond my previous reading of Hobbes, as indicated in n. 5.

[1]Kinch Hoekstra, "The End of Philosophy: The Case of Hobbes," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, n.s., 106, no. 1 (June 2006): 32; Mary G. Dietz, *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 7.

[2]Bernard Gert, *Hobbes: Prince of Peace* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), ix. See also Delphine Thivet, "Thomas Hobbes: A Philosopher of War or Peace?," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (2008): 721.

the absolute state is in many ways distant from modern self-understandings of liberal democracies, newer research claims that liberal democracies can learn how to educate citizens to behave peacefully from Hobbes.[3] In fact, there is a growing tendency in Hobbes studies to focus on the topic of education and to show that, for Hobbes, the solution to the problem of war depends heavily on the "soft power" of education.[4]

In this paper, I purport to shed light on the character, limits, and costs of Hobbesian education as a solution to the problem of war by exploring the role of the incurable power seeker in Hobbes's political philosophy.[5] According to a famous Hobbesian argument, it would be rational for humans to seek and increase power in the natural condition to secure their self-preservation.[6] Also, Hobbes suggests most people can be easily

[3]S. A. Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes: Cases in the Laws of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Samantha Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker: Hobbesian Reflections on Ethics and Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Kinch Hoekstra, "Hobbesian Equality," in *Hobbes Today: Insights for the 21st Century*, ed. S. A. Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 76–112.

[4]Jeremy Anderson, "The Role of Education in Political Stability," *Hobbes Studies* 16, no. 1 (Jan. 2003): 95–104; Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory," *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (May 2011): 298–315; Teresa Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Education," *Oxford Review of Education* 36, no. 5 (Oct. 2010): 607–26; Stephen Holmes, introduction to *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, by Thomas Hobbes, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); S. A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's Leviathan: The Power of Mind over Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*.

[5]First thoughts about the problem of the power seeker can be found in my book *Thomas Hobbes' körperbasierter Liberalismus: Eine kritische Analyse des "Leviathan"* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016). There, I explore the hypothesis that Hobbes might have intended to actively encourage the power seekers to exploit their fellow citizens. My point in this paper is to argue for the more balanced claim that Hobbes does provide a complex solution to the problem of the power seeker that goes beyond just stripping off the followers and includes a set of (sometimes surprising) strategies. By focusing on the power seekers, and on incentives for power seekers, this paper can also be seen as a case study and application of the Hobbes hermeneutics I have proposed in Odzuck, "'I Confessed to Write Not All to All': Diversified Communication in Thomas Hobbes's Political Philosophy," *Hobbes Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 123–55.

[6]"And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himselfe, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him … . And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him" (L 13, 190, 12–23). References

convinced that it would be rational to behave differently in society: appeals to reason and passion[7] would help convince individuals to behave peacefully and moderately within the framework of a sovereign state, on the condition that others behave so as well. Most people, then, are supposed to readily accept Hobbes's first and fundamental law of nature, "*That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of attaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre*" (L 14, 200, 1–3). There are, however, notable exceptions. According to Hobbes, there are people who take "pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest" (L 13, 190, 17) and who might want to use "all helps and advantages of war" even in society. Those people will not follow the law of "complaisance," they "cannot be corrected" because of "the Stubborness of [their] Passions" and therefore have to be called "*Stubborn, Insociable, Froward, Intractable*" (L 15, 232, 11–19). I ask whether and, if so, how Hobbes can also get these incurable, unsocial power seekers on board. My findings—that Hobbes provides surprising ways to deal with the problematic stability and persistence of unsocial passions, including moral and systemic incentives for some individuals to make use of their (supposed) natural superiority and to betray and exploit their fellow citizens by employing a public gesture of civility—have implications for Hobbes research and beyond: First, it provides evidence in support of the claim that Hobbes's solution to the problem of war is complex and cannot be reduced to either force or education. Likewise, the persistence and integration of a certain "morality of the power seeker" into society casts into doubt a simple developmental hypothesis about the concept of honor in Hobbes's works[8] and sheds light on the limits and costs of Hobbes's solution. Second, the finding that Hobbes's works (which, according to some commentators, form the starting

to Hobbes's writings are given as follows: to *Elements of Law* (*The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinard Tönnies, 2nd ed. [London: Frank Cass, 1969]) as (EL chapter, paragraph, page); to *De Cive* (*On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998]) as (DCv chapter, paragraph, page); to *De Corpore* (in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth, vol. 1 [London: John Bohn, 1839]) as (DCor chapter, paragraph, page); to the English *Leviathan* (*Leviathan Volume 2 and 3: The English and Latin Texts (i and ii)*, ed. Noel Malcolm [Oxford: Clarendon, 2012]) as (L chapter, page, line); to the Latin *Leviathan* as (LL chapter, page, line).

[7]L 18, 196, 23–28.

[8]Laurie M. Johnson Bagby, *Thomas Hobbes: Turning Point for Honor* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009); Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); François Tricaud, "Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature from 1640 to 1651: Evolution and Ambiguities," in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, ed. G. A. John Rogers and Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107–24.

point of the decline of honor in modernity) contain elements of a morality of "natural honor of the powerful" might work as a correction to the influential "decline-of-honor hypothesis."[9]

I proceed in the following way. (1) First I outline the general political problem of the power seeker that stems from the relation between the quest for power and the willingness to obey. (2) I briefly present and discuss previous efforts to explain the problem of the power seeker and its solution in Hobbes's political philosophy that concentrate on education as a means to change the power seekers. (3) I then attempt to shed light on the character and the limits of education in Hobbes. First, I argue that the stability of the passions and the role of the passions in thinking enable a kind of "channeling" rather than a "reshaping" of desires (3.1). Second, I turn to the case of the unsocial power seeker who, according to Hobbes, cannot be easily educated and keeps his unsocial, bellicose attitude in society (3.2). Third, I argue that the Hobbesian solution is more complex than often assumed since it provides different treatments for different types of power seekers, including incentives for the incurable, unsocial type to increase his power by exploiting his fellow citizens under the public mask of civility (3.3). (4) Finally, I briefly summarize my results and show how they can inform both Hobbes research and a recent hypothesis about the decline of honor in modern societies.

## 1. Different Passions and the Problem of the Power Seeker

Hobbes distinguishes different passions with respect to their relation to intelligence, obedience, and peaceful behavior.[10] On the one hand, there are bodily passions whose ends are the well-being of the body, sensual pleasures, and commodious living. These bodily passions "disposeth men to obey a common Power" and thus are conducive to obedient behavior.[11] Besides the political aspect of their conduciveness to obedience, these bodily passions can be evaluated from an epistemological point of view. According to Hobbes, these bodily passions are responsible for slow and unfocused thinking, and people in whom these bodily passions dominate belong to the dull segment of the population.[12]

[9]Bagby, *Thomas Hobbes*; Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

[10]See Odzuck, "'I Confessed to Write Not All to All.'"

[11]Compare L 11, 152, 11–14.

[12]See EL I, 10.2–3, 49–50: "men whose ends are some sensual delight; and generally are addicted to ease, food, onerations and exonerations of the body … less consider the way either to knowledge or to other power; in which two consisteth all the excellency of power cognitive. And this is it which men call DULNESS; and proceedeth from the appetite of sensual or bodily delight." Compare also L 8, 110, 22–29: "The Passions that most of all cause the differences of Wit, are principally, the more or lesse Desire

On the other hand stands the striving for power and glory. Those passions are more conducive to epistemological goals but more problematic for the political goal of producing obedient citizens: people with strong passion for power or glory[13] cannot easily be convinced by an argument appealing to the fear of death or the joys of commodious living[14] and pose a real problem for the erection and continuity of the sovereign state:

> Competition of Riches, Honour, Command, or other power, enclineth to Contention, Enmity, and War: Because the way of one Competitor, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repell the other. … all men that are ambitious of Military command, are enclined to continue the causes of warre; and to stirre up trouble and sedition: for there is no honour Military but by warre; nor any such hope to mend an ill game, as by causing a new shuffle. (L 11, 152, 5–7; 15–19)

It is obvious that the power seeker poses a serious problem for Hobbes's theory of the absolute state: the willingness to behave peacefully and to obey the laws of the sovereign differs as a consequence of different passions. The will to power especially (for, if we may believe Hobbes's words, riches, knowledge, and honor are all different sorts of power) poses a real problem, since it seems to conflict with the acknowledgment of and obedience to a sovereign. Why should a person who seeks glory and power subject herself to a sovereign, when her willing subjection might be regarded as an act of cowardice, neediness, or the confession of a lack of power? Hobbes's solution to the bloody era of civil wars—the erection of the sovereign state—depends on his ability to convince the power seekers to obey the laws of the sovereign.

## 2. Education as a Solution to the Problem of the Power Seeker?

There are important studies in Hobbes research that explicitly address this problem and discuss Hobbes's supposed solution to it.[15] Many of these studies focus on education as Hobbes's solution to the problem of power seekers.

of Power, of Riches, of Knowledge, and of Honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is Desire of Power. For Riches, Knowledge and Honour are but severall sorts of Power. And therefore, a man who has no great Passion for any of these things … cannot possibly have either a great Fancy, or much Judgment."

[13]While, of course, any of the aforementioned passions can occur in any person, in principle, Hobbes seems to assume that—owing to nature and nurture—some passions will dominate in some people, and thus establishes a dividing line between the dull part of the population and the intelligent power seekers with strong passions. Consider again EL I, 10.23, 49–50 and L 8, 110, 22–31.

[14]Compare DCv I, 4, 26.

[15]Compare Michael P. Krom, *The Limits of Reason in Hobbes's Commonwealth* (London: Continuum, 2011), 78; Gabriella Slomp, "Glory, Vainglory, and Pride," in *The*

Leo Strauss claimed that Hobbes combined a scientific explanation (glory is but an imagination and thus bears no ontological reality) with a passionate rhetoric (frighten men to death and thus create the impression of the greatest evil by the reality of fear).[16] But Hobbes's psychology might provide reasons to be skeptical about the success of both the scientific explanation and the passionate rhetoric. If power seekers strive for power and glory, and if they are successful, that is, superiority and victory or domination provide a good and strong feeling, why should they care at all about its ontological status? Also, it is not clear that the fear of death would do its job with regard to educating all power seekers. Hobbes is quite clear that some people take "pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires" (L 13, 190, 16–18). Can we really suppose that these people, who love to risk their lives in favor of contemplating their power, could be educated by appealing to the fear of death?

S. A. Lloyd convincingly argues that simply threatening power seekers is not a convincing solution to the problem, given Hobbes's complex psychology.[17] But her optimistic claim that people simply have to be educated in *the* truth can be questioned, too, given the huge emotional and intellectual differences between people and the possibility that different, possibly contradictory doctrines might be conducive to peace. If people are driven in different directions by their passions and, accordingly, have different interests, "truths" about these *interests*, which are called "self-evident," might also differ.[18]

*Bloomsbury Companion to Hobbes*, ed. S. A. Lloyd (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 132; and Julie E. Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty, and Political Agency in the Political Theory of Hobbes," *Review of Politics* 72, no. 2 (June 2010): 241. Jean Hampton, "Hobbesian Reflections on Glory as a Cause of Conflict," in *The Causes of Quarrel: Essays on Peace, War, and Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Peter Caws (Boston: Beacon, 1989), 78, declares that in her earlier works on Hobbes she "downplay[ed] the impact of glory-pursuit on warfare on Hobbes's behalf" and thus acknowledges the existence of the problem in her later works.

[16]Compare Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 15: "And as reason itself is powerless, man would not be minded to think of the preservation of life as the primary and most urgent good, if the passion of fear of death did not compel him to do so."

[17]Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, 332: "Traditional interpretations assume that all socially disruptive behaviors and attitudes are to be handled in the same way: Threaten to punish them … . Hobbes offers an entirely different solution … : Educate people in the truth."

[18]Compare Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, 343: "True doctrines, Hobbes maintains, cannot be contrary to the basic human interests in peace, preservation, flourishing, and piety, and all truths hang together in a perfectly coherent way." Compare Hoekstra, "End of Philosophy," 32: "Hobbes's eirenic project, this suggests, is independent of, and perhaps even in tension with, a philosophy with truth as its

Gabriella Slomp provides an analysis of honor in Hobbes that looks similar on the surface. She claims that Hobbes was an optimist concerning education and that (most) glory seekers might be reformed. Hobbes's recommendation to teach *Leviathan* in universities "is a sign that, for him, the shaping of preferences, inclinations and desires could and should be achieved not through indoctrination but via rational discourse."[19]

While the three studies cited differ a great deal, they all come to a similar conclusion, namely, that Hobbes's solution to the problem of the power seeker is to educate people:[20] Strauss maintains that it is an education in the doctrines of a new natural science, assisted by the rhetorical force of the fear of death; Lloyd maintains that it is an education in moral truths and/or in truths about basic human interests;[21] and Slomp

primary aim." Compare also Christopher Scott McClure, "War, Madness, and Death: The Paradox of Honor in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Journal of Politics* 76, no. 1 (Jan. 2014): 123, who claims that Hobbes's theory "rests on an intentional incoherence."

[19]Gabriella Slomp, "Hobbes on Glory and Civil Strife," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's "Leviathan,"* ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 193–94. Since Hobbes discusses universities explicitly as probable tools for indoctrination, allows the sovereign to limit the freedom of research and permits him to determine what political doctrines are sound, I am not convinced that the recommendation to teach the *Leviathan* (instead of Aristotle) should be taken as a promotion of "rational discourse." Compare Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan," 616. Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000), 112–17, formulates a much more balanced claim about the role of reason and passion in rhetoric and teaching.

[20]A similar account can be found in Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty, and Political Agency," whose claim is that Hobbes planned to educate power seekers in the virtue of moderation, and also in Tracy B. Strong, "Glory and the Law in Hobbes," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 61–76. More balanced is Hoekstra's claim that education might work at least for stripping off the followers from unsociable power seekers (Kinch Hoekstra, "Hobbes and the Foole," *Political Theory* 25, no. 5 [Oct. 1997]: 627–28). See section 3.3.

[21]In "All the Mind's Pleasure: Glory, Self-Admiration, and Moral Motivation in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*" (to appear in *Cambridge Critical Guide to "De Cive,"* ed. Robin Douglass and Johan Olsthoorn), Lloyd offers a more fully developed approach to education that considers the crucial role of the unsocial passions (their limitations and potential) for education. While in *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* Lloyd focused more on the "widespread" and "powerful" "desire to justify oneself" (249), it is interesting to see her approach develop in the direction of other (more?) powerful passions with more disruptive potential. Although our two basic claims—"power of mind over matter" (Lloyd) and "power of passions over reason" (the position taken here)—have different points of departure, I have learned in important and good conversations with S. A. Lloyd and from her latest paper that they are not (at least in every detail) mutually exclusive, but can be developed in very similar directions.

maintains that it is an education that can change desires "via rational discourse."[22]

## 3. The Limits of Education and the Persistence of Unsocial Passions

But do we really have good reasons to assume that Hobbes is an optimist concerning education—or, to be more precise, do we have good reasons to assume that Hobbes thought that education might actually *change every power seeker*? In what follows, I contribute to a more complex image of the Hobbesian power seeker, and thereby offer a more complex notion of the Hobbesian solution to the problem of war. Here (and in earlier work) I follow Kinch Hoekstra's claim that Hobbes created different arguments for a heterogeneous audience.[23]

### *3.1. Passions Set Limits to Education*

I agree with Lloyd and others that the focus on education is a necessary addition to an oversimplified threatening-hypothesis.[24] Recent research convincingly argues that (in addition to coercion) education does play a central role in Hobbes's theory.[25] In line with this research, I think it is highly important (and less analyzed) that there are limits to education rooted both in the content and stability of the different passions. First, the comparable stability of the passions sets severe limits on education. That stability is not spelled out, but it is presupposed in Slomp's reconstruction of Hobbes's solution. Despite her claim that Hobbes believed in the possibility of *reshaping* desires, her reconstruction of Hobbes's argument for the glory seeker is framed more in terms of *channelling* than in terms of shaping or remolding desires, and I would like to follow that promising path further. Slomp maintains that Hobbes believes in the possibility of "remoulding desires" and in the "shaping of preferences and inclinations."[26] Hobbes's "specific message"

[22]Slomp, "Hobbes on Glory and Civil Strife," 194.

[23]See Hoekstra, "End of Philosophy," 57, and Odzuck, "'I Confessed to Write Not All to All.'" Compare also Ioannis D. Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy: The Rhetoric and Science in Hobbes's State of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16, 21, and Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 227. For me, in contrast and addition to Hoekstra, Evrigenis, and Lloyd, the focus is on the diversity and heterogeneity of *passions*.

[24]Compare Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, 332. Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan," 623n11, convincingly criticizes a too sharp distinction between education and coercion as "overdrawn." See also Anderson, "Role of Education," 203.

[25]Compare Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*; Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*; Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War."

[26]Slomp, "Hobbes on Glory and Civil Strife," 194.

for the glory seeker, which she reconstructs, is not a message that seeks to change or replace glory (or the desire to be superior) by another passion (or by another object of that passion), but a message that assures the glory seeker that it is only in society that he can find the perfect conditions for acting out his desire for glory.[27] Her reconstructed "specific message" articulates a prudential rule that does not intend or presuppose to alter the passion of glory, but simply holds that in order to act out one's passion for glory and to achieve and secure the aim of feeling superior, the state and society must be perceived as a necessary means. The lesson for the glory seeker is thus instrumental and quite easy: since the sovereign guarantees stability and provides conditions where superiority and glory are possible, one has to regard the sovereign and his laws as a necessary means for the realization of glory.

If we take that kind of education as an example, it is not really a remolding of one's desires, but rather a kind of channelling[28] of them: the glory seeker might act out his quest for glory without the need to suppress or change it; the only limit to this quest is the power of the sovereign and the secure condition that he provides by his laws.

Hobbes has good reasons to propose such a limited form of education owing to his views on the role of the passions in thinking. In the above quoted passage of *Leviathan* chapter 8 that deals with the connection between passions and intellectual capacities, the will to power is described as a strong, forceful passion, which is responsible for the speed and goal-orientedness of one's thoughts and, therefore, for intellectual differences. But it is precisely that *strength* of a certain passion and its relation to thoughts—the passion directs the thoughts, that is, it decides the direction and the goal of one's thinking—which renders it unlikely that this passion can be changed by the thoughts, which by themselves have no power to move or to choose a direction. The problem of changing passions via rational discourse thus corresponds with Hobbes's own psychological and epistemological premises: since deliberation is defined by Hobbes as an "alternate Succession of Appetites, Aversions, Hopes and Fears" (L 6, 92, 7) and described in ways that do not necessarily include or presuppose a distinguished form of reason,[29] and since Hobbes claims that most people resemble children who might have the potential to use a developed form of reason but

[27]Ibid., 195.

[28]For this idea of channelling the desires, compare Krom, *Limits of Reason in Hobbes's Commonwealth*, 96. Abizadeh holds that the sovereign can both channel and shape the subject's passions ("Hobbes on the Causes of War," 299–300). But he concentrates on education and the priority of the shaping-solution and thus abstracts from the problem of stubborn, unchangeable passions: "Leviathan solves the problem of war above all by a state-sponsored ideological program" (300).

[29]Hobbes claims, "Beasts also Deliberate" (L 6, 92, 8–9).

do not,[30] we should be wary of excessively optimistic claims about how reason or rational discourse can influence the passions.[31]

### 3.2. *The Passions of the Power Seeker as a Limit to Education*

The general claim that passions are comparatively stable and hard to change via education is rendered specific by Hobbes in a claim about two passions that are related to the will to power and pose special problems for the irenic, egalitarian morality of Hobbes's laws of nature doctrine. In chapter 10 of *Leviathan* Hobbes considers the possibility of changing the laws of honor: while traditionally honor has been bestowed on people of power and courage, Hobbes considers the possibility that the sovereign demands, by his laws, to honor people who refuse *private* duels. Especially in the Latin edition, Hobbes utters severe doubts concerning the possible success of that method. He claims that the will to battle and the promptness to fight are stronger than laws and set limits to education:[32]

> How this [to ordain Honour for them that refuse, and Ignominy for them that make the challenge] may be done, I do not see. For **promptness to fight** is always a sign of courage—which, in the natural state of mankind, **is the greatest virtue**, if not the only one. To refuse to fight, however, becomes a virtue not by nature but by laws, and **nature is stronger than laws**. (L 10, 142, n. 40, emphasis mine)

In this passage, we can see that Hobbes expresses his view that there are natural limits to education. While it might be possible to avoid the most bloody and unsocial consequences of some passions, by convincing the passion-driven actors that the condition created by the sovereign's laws is a rich hunting ground, the passions themselves cannot easily be changed. The natural endowment of passions sets limits on educational ends. The natural promptness to fight is, according to Hobbes, stronger than education and laws, which means that it persists even in society. While maybe not all people might be described as "warriors by nature," Hobbes assumes, as we have seen, that there are people with strong bellicose and antisocial passions. Given the above-quoted passage of *Leviathan* 13, Hobbes assumes that there are people who are moderate by nature and can easily be satisfied with

[30]L 5, 74, 1–15.

[31]Compare Adrian Blau's proposal to describe reason as the "counselor of the passions" in "Reason, Deliberation and the Passions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. A. P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 195–220. It should be mentioned that Blau questions the suitability (or at least limits the range) of his analogy himself at the end of his article: "So, reason can counsel the passions, but it rarely does" (216).

[32]Compare Hobbes's notion of natural honor in L 10, 140, 1–6, which I will discuss later.

security and the well-being of their bodies, while others take "pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest" (L 13, 190, 17). For our hypothesis that Hobbes does not believe it is possible to change every power seeker, we can find more textual support in the formulation of the fifth law of nature. Here, Hobbes expresses his view that men's suitability for society is different by nature. Within the image of society as an edifice, he claims that some men's affections resemble a hard stone "which, by the asperity, and irregularity of Figure, takes more room from others, than it selfe fills; and for the hardnesse, cannot be easily made plain, and thereby hindereth the building." Those men, "for the Stubborness of [their] Passions, cannot be corrected," and can therefore be called "*Stubborn, Insociable, Froward, Intractable*" (L 15, 232, 1–19). In my view, these "insociable power seekers" deserve more attention from Hobbes scholarship, since the stable antiegalitarian and bellicose attitudes of the (provisionally labeled) "insociable power seeker" pose a more enduring threat to the commonwealth than the power seeker that can be tamed. While important studies contribute considerably to a more complex image of the Hobbesian power seeker,[33] the problem of *stable* antisocial attitudes for the Hobbesian theory is still underanalyzed in Hobbes research—possibly the result of a recent focus on education and Hobbes's supposed pedagogical optimism. Arash Abizadeh, who recently offered a convincing argument for the importance of education in Hobbes's system, rightly points to chapter 30 of *Leviathan*, where Hobbes develops an ideological program of civic education modeled after religious preaching and repetition. But although Abizadeh describes that kind of education as an "elitist," "trickle-down" view of socialization for the common people,[34] he does not discuss the problem that this kind of education is, according to Hobbes, suited *only* for "the common people." Hobbes describes the natural endowment of passions and the preeminence of certain interests

[33]One of the most distinguished analyses of different types of characters (fools, hypocrites, zealots, and dupes) that are especially challenging for political education can be found in Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, 295–355. However, Lloyd does not focus on the problem of *stable*, unchangeable passions. While she offers intriguing hypotheses about how different characters threaten social stability (fools, for example, "are easily talked into rebellion by others": 325), she claims that Hobbes was an educational optimist also with respect to these characters: "How are such folk to be made better moral judges? … : Educate people in the truth" (332). Slomp, on the other hand, takes Hobbes at his word when he describes the "insocial power seeker" as "intractable," concludes that those "cannot be taught," and concentrates on the power seeker that *can* be educated ("Hobbes on Glory and Civil Strife," 193). McClure, in comparison, draws a highly optimistic image that does not consider the potential problems of bellicose people that *cannot* be tamed for society: "Hobbes … is clearly confident that … individuals who are naturally disposed to courageous actions can be tamed through education" ("War, Madness, and Death," 122).

[34]Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War," 312.

as setting limits on educational effectiveness. Far from expressing a general pedagogic optimism, there is textual evidence that Hobbes divides mankind into "the common people" on the one hand and "the rich, potent and learned" on the other hand.[35] Since Hobbes holds that only the minds of the common people are like clean paper, "fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them," it seems plausible to assume that Hobbes's pedagogical optimism that recommends ideological indoctrination extends only to "the common-people" (L 524, 30,1–12).[36]

### *3.3. Moral and Systemic Incentives for Unsocial Power Seekers*

I concentrate on the unsocial, unchangeable power seeker to contribute to a more complex image of the Hobbesian power seeker and its different subtypes. If the unsocial power seeker cannot be educated, we should ask what he does in society and whether there are, within the Hobbesian commonwealth, systemic incentives for him to obey the sovereign's laws.

Kinch Hoekstra and Samantha Frost have done much to create sensitivity to the fact that Hobbes differentiates sharply between outward behavior and inner conviction.[37] We can use the findings of both to explain the phenomenon of the power seeker in society: if the unsociable power seekers cannot be changed substantively, they must at least be stripped of their followers[38] *and* be convinced of the necessity and utility of displaying an outward gesture of equity, trustworthiness, and orientation toward peace.[39]

[35]This distinction might be related to the one between power seekers and dull people from *Leviathan* 8, 110, 22–31.

[36]In the Latin *Leviathan*, Hobbes further qualifies this claim by stating that even the common people's minds are not like clean paper (LL 47, 1127, 11–13). One might speculate that he indicates here the necessity of teaching materialism before successfully appealing to the fear of death. Afterwards, appeals to the fear of death might work—at least for most people. Others, including the unsocial power seekers, might find different incentives, described below in section 3.3.

[37]Hoekstra, "Hobbes and the Foole," and "Hobbesian Equality," 111 ("Substantial equal treatment need not be based on the truth of or sincere beliefs in equal worth or equal capacities"); Samantha Frost, "Faking It: Hobbes's Thinking Bodies and the Ethics of Dissimulation," *Political Theory* 29, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 46 ("A contrived or even feigned self-presentation has the effect of constituting an environment in which peace is apparently possible").

[38]See Hoekstra, "Hobbes and the Foole," 627–28, who argues that Hobbes's solution consists in altering the payoff scale and in stripping off the followers from the power seekers.

[39]Frost focuses on the irenic results of faking peace and reads Hobbes's theory as an ethical theory. See Frost, "Faking It," 42. My emphasis here is to clarify the incentives for faking one's intentions and the role of the economic realm to create and stabilize peace.

In his *Laws of Nature*, Hobbes is at great pains to explain how one's outward behavior will be interpreted by one's fellow citizens and that it is necessary to *behave* in a way that is perceived by others as peaceful and oriented toward equity.

To explain the stability and hardness, but also the unsociability, of some men's passions, Hobbes employs, as we have seen in the citation from the fifth law of nature, the image of hard stones with irregular figures. But unlike stones, human beings are bodies driven by their passions, and even if some individuals have stronger passions that influence their relation to their fellow citizens and make them unsociable, these individuals can nevertheless employ certain signs to indicate a willingness to accommodate themselves to the rest. Unlike stones, whose irregularities can be seen by the naked eye, humans, even if they feel superior and want more than other people, can display a modest public self and assure their fellow citizens that they are perfectly suitable for society. That difference between stones and people might explain Hobbes's focus on outward behavior in his explanation of the laws of nature. There, Hobbes employs language that points to the outward behavior, to certain signs that will be interpreted as indications of an inner conviction. In the context of the sixth law of nature, Hobbes explains that a pardon "not granted to them that give caution of the Future time, is **signe** of an aversion to Peace; and therefore contrary to the Law of Nature" (L 15, 232, 23–25, emphasis mine). The action is forbidden because it could be understood to indicate an inner conviction, the aversion to peace. In the formulation and explanation of the eighth law of nature, Hobbes also makes it clear that it is essential to avoid certain signs—i.e., deeds, words, countenance—that could be interpreted as signs of hatred or contempt and thus provoke a fight.[40]

This focus on the outward behavior[41] and how it might be interpreted as a sign of certain inner convictions or intentions makes a lot of sense if Hobbes is, as we suppose, skeptical concerning the possibility of changing, extinguishing, or remolding certain passions. Power seekers who take pleasure in contemplating their own power and superiority may perhaps not be changed with respect to the object of their pleasure (their own power), but they can understand how a discrete behavior might be a perfect means to secure and even increase their superiority. In his explanation of the ninth law of nature, Hobbes claims that even if nature has made man unequal, men should display an as-if modus, admitting and acknowledging equality—even against their inner conviction of superiority (L 15, 234, 19–22).[42]

[40]L 15, 234, 1–5

[41]Compare Frost, "Faking It," 39.

[42]Compare ibid., 40: "Even if one thinks one's interlocutor a cad, an idiot, or an insufferable bore, for the sake of peace, one must keep one's scorn to oneself and feign, at the very least, a modicum of respect." See also Hoekstra, "Hobbesian Equality."

Another example of Hobbes's focus on outward behavior is important to our argument and in line with the findings of Frost and Hoekstra but has not, to my knowledge, hitherto been thoroughly discussed in Hobbes research: outward behavior is also crucial to his famous definition of peace. As is well known, war is defined by Hobbes as the time in which "the will to contend by battle is *sufficiently known*." This definition thus does not presuppose, as a condition of peace, that is, "all other time," the *absence* of the will to contend by battle. Quite the contrary: the definition only forbids the public *expression* or *display* of this will, that is, *making publicly known the will* to contend by battle. By consequence, the definition allows the *persistence* of the promptness to fight and the will to battle—as long as this will is not publicly expressed.

> For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein **the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known**. … So the **nature of War**, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but **in the known disposition thereto**, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE. (L 13, 192, 11–19, emphasis mine)

Hobbes's focus on outward behavior and his toleration of (silent) bellicose attitudes even in times of peace and society thus allows the unsocial, bellicose power seeker, in principle, to stay in society—as long as they hide their unsocial passions.[43] But given our previous considerations along the lines of Slomp's reconstruction, we must also ask for the motivation and different possible incentives of the power seeker. Obedience to the sovereign's laws and the display of an outward behavior of equity, peace, and trustworthiness should, according to the rationality of the power seeker, pay off. Slomp's general argument that, because sovereignty and stability are preconditions for glory, glory seekers can be convinced to behave in a way that secures these conditions, is brilliant. But, in my view, it is possible and necessary to specify differences between power seekers with respect to their notion of honor.

[43]One might object that it is wrong to describe Hobbes's natural law teaching as focused on outward behavior because Hobbes claims that there is also an obligation "in foro interno." The intelligent power seeker, however, could reply in the following manner: The in foro principle (L 15, 240, 12–14) is formulated in such an impersonal, abstract way that it allows, in principle, to fulfill "the desire," that the laws of nature "should take place" by the desire that *others* (the dull fellow citizens) follow the laws of nature. Also, the advantage of expressed desires is, that they can be faked, too, as Hobbes warns the reader several times: "The formes of Speech … as *I love, I feare, I joy, I deliberate, I will* … I say, are expressions, or voluntary significations of our Passions: but certain signes they be not; because they may be used arbitrarily, whether they that use them, have such Passions or not" (L 6, 94, 1–23). See also Hobbes's discussion of dissembling, lying, and counterfeiting in L, Introduction, 18, 23–28.

To that end, it might be useful to take into account Hobbes's abovementioned discussion of honor in chapter 10 of *Leviathan*. There, he explains the connection between power and honor: "*Honourable* is whatsoever possession, action, or quality, is an argument and signe of Power" (L 10, 140, 1–2). He goes on to explain that dominion and victory are honorable, because they are acquired by power, and servitude, for need or fear, is dishonorable (L 10, 140, 5–6).

How then, does the subjection and servitude to the sovereign, which is, in principle, dishonorable, according to Hobbes, pay off in terms of honor and glory for the power seeker? Can we reconstruct different arguments that assure the different types of power seekers that their subjection to the laws of the sovereign is not dishonorable?

To answer that question, and to mark the difference between different types of power seekers,[44] we have to take into account that Hobbes distinguishes between two kinds of honor—civil honor and natural honor. On the one hand, the commonwealth might bestow public worth on a man "by offices of Command, Judicature, publike Employment; or by Names and Titles, introduced for distinction of such value" (L 10, 136, 8–10). One motivation for the power seeker to obey his sovereign might be the power and glory of an office or title bestowed on him by the sovereign. If the sovereign is regarded and accepted as the source of glory (understood as civic honor), the power seeker has an incentive to obey the sovereign and his laws.

There might, however, be power seekers who focus more on the natural laws of honor instead of the civil honor, and Hobbes's theory does in fact provide reasons for that. First, the public worth or civic value is fragile and temporary because it is dependent on the will of the sovereign which can, as Hobbes's example of the king of Persia shows, change quickly.[45] Furthermore, one might think of that subjection and dependency as "servitude for need," which would, in Hobbes's own terms, as we have seen above, be dishonorable.

But the problem of the fragility and dependency on the will of the sovereign can be solved by concentrating on the *natural* laws of honor. Hobbes classifies many possessions, actions, and qualities that are honorable by nature and that are either not hindered by, or even find perfect conditions in, peace, stability, and a legal system. Thus, he shows that the power seeker is not really dependent on the public worth bestowed on him by the sovereign but might find additional incentives for obeying the sovereign's laws in the natural laws of honor:

[44]This list might not be exhaustive.

[45]Compare L 10, 138, 22–34. See esp. L 10, 138, 29–31: "So that of Civill Honour, the Fountain is in the Person of the Common-wealth and dependeth on the Will of the Soveraigne; and is therefore temporary."

> All Actions, and Speeches, that proceed, or seem to proceed from much Experience, Science, Discretion, or Wit, are Honourable; For all these are Powers. … To be Conspicuous, that is to say, to be known, for Wealth, Office, great Actions, or any eminent Good, is Honourable; as a signe of the power for which he is conspicuous. … Covetousnesse of great Riches, and ambition of great Honours, are Honourable; as signes of power to obtain them. (L 10, 140, 18–30; 142, 4–5)

In addition to the possibility of obtaining public worth and civil honor from the sovereign, the power seekers can be motivated by the prospect that a huge variety of actions, honorable by nature, will be possible within the laws of the commonwealth. To be clear, not all honorable actions will be tolerated by the sovereign. Although some unjust actions are honorable by nature, the power seeker will have to limit himself to honorable actions that are just by definition of the laws. Hobbes is very clear that natural and civic honor might conflict, because unjust actions (including "Rapes, thefts, and other great, but unjust, or unclean acts": L10, 142, 11–12) can, of course, be signs of power and therefore honorable.[46]

The space of honorable actions is thus limited for the power seekers owing to the fact that, as subjects, they are bound to the laws. Also, the public worth and the private worth of a person, or in Hobbes's terms, natural "worthinesse," can differ. Hobbes closes his chapter on honor in *Leviathan* with a definition of "worthinesse" that introduces the notion of natural fitness. According to Hobbes, there are differences in worthiness between people that relate to their specific fitness and that might be different from the order of value and worth introduced by the sovereign.[47] But given Hobbes's claim that the civic value bestowed by the sovereign is fragile anyway and might change owing to the will of the sovereign, the power seeker might be motivated to maximize his power and glory by his own efforts. He might want to use the conditions created by the laws of the sovereign as a perfect means for playing his fitness card, that is, his natural superiority, and acquiring the things or offices by which he is, according to Hobbes, worthy by nature.

Hobbes's notion of natural honor and great, honorable actions, his insistence on the intellectual superiority of power seekers and his concept of natural worthiness can also deliver incentives for the unsocial power seeker

[46]"Nor does it alter the case of Honour, whether an action (so it be great and difficult, and consequently a signe of much power,) be just or unjust: for Honour consisteth onely in the opinion of Power" (L 10, 142, 7–9).

[47]"WORTHINESSE … consisteth in a particular power, or ability for that, whereof he is said to be worthy: which … is usually named FITNESSE, or *Aptitude*. For he is Worthiest to be a Commander, to be a Judge, or to have any other charge, that is best fitted, with the qualities required to the well discharging of it; and Worthiest of Riches, that has the qualities most requisite for the well using of them" (L 10, 148, 10–17).

to accept some limits set by the laws of the sovereign. From the perspective of the power seeker, Hobbes's claim that a person who has the "qualities most requisite for the well using of riches" is worthiest of riches (L 10, 148, 10–17) can be understood in a distinct way. Combined with Hobbes's claim that the power seekers differ substantively from the dull people with respect to their intellectual capacities, this claim that a person with the "qualities most requisite for the well using of riches" is worthiest of riches allows the power seekers to draw the conclusion that the power seeker is worthier of riches than the dull person.

Even if there are restrictions imposed by the laws, we can see that the Hobbesian commonwealth provides perfect possibilities for the intelligent power seekers to increase their riches and power by exploiting the dull people. Hobbes's theory of justice differs from the Aristotelian one in that contracts are *just* owing simply to the voluntariness of an agreement. Of course one can barter goods of different worth, or resell goods for more than one paid for them. Of course one can profit from other people's misfortune, dullness, and inexperience, because "the value of all things contracted for, is measured by the Appetite of the Contractors: and therefore the just value, is that which they be contented to give" (L 15, 228, 33–35).

This formal criterion of justice enables a wide variety of possibilities for making contracts with dull people,[48] who are inexperienced in commerce, who have no knowledge about the worth of the bartered goods, or who are in a special situation of pressure.[49]

If we combine the Hobbesian premises, such enrichment gained by making covenants with dull people would not only be just, but those power seekers would be deserving of their power, riches, and honor, at least by Hobbes's criterion of natural honor, which holds that one's natural superiority or fitness defines one's worthiness. Besides the consideration that the power seeker might be encouraged by Hobbes's morality of the "natural laws of honor" to use contracts to get what he naturally deserves owing to his natural worthiness, he might, in addition, be encouraged by Hobbes's proposed taxation policy. The economic realm is, given Hobbes's premises, a perfect realm for

[48]In "Trust in Thomas Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in *Trust and Happiness in the History of Political Thought*, ed. Laszlo Kontler and Mark Somos (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 132, I show that Hobbes describes "trust"—a necessary ingredient of mutual covenants—as an epistemologically low-ranked passion, a passion for people who do not know, but simply believe in the good intention of their fellows (see L 5, 66, 32–35 and L 12, 176, 22–25).

[49]Compare Hobbes's claim that fear and liberty are consistent: "And even in Commonwealths, if I be forced to redeem my selfe from a Theefe by promising him mony, I am bound to pay it" (L 14, 212, 24–26). See also L 21, 326, 1–4: "Feare, and Liberty are consistent; as when a man throweth his goods into the Sea for *feare* the ship could sink, he doth it neverthelesse very willingly … : It is therefore the action, of one that was *free*."

the power seeker, since wealth (and the property laws of the sovereign) provides him with the means to secure his power in the future: "Riches, are Honourable; for they are Power" (L 10, 140, 8–9). The turn to economy is thus a necessary consequence of Hobbes's premises that power seekers can act with an eye to the future and should secure their power by the acquisition of wealth.[50] The power seeker might want to secure his current power by the acquisition of more power, because what is true for the natural condition is true also for the commonwealth: "he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more" (L 11, 150, 25–26).

The taxation policy that Hobbes recommends to the sovereign in *Leviathan* chapter 30 might provide further motivation for the intelligent power seeker to profit from his natural superiority and to increase his wealth, since the policy assures the intelligent power seeker that he will not pay more taxes than the poor part of the population: "Seeing then the benefit that every one receiveth thereby, is the enjoyment of life, which is equally dear to poor, and rich; the debt which a poor man oweth them that defend his life, is the same which a rich man oweth for the defence of his" (L 30, 538, 3–6).[51] "Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinall vertues" (L 13, 196, 13–14)—but could they not also be lucratively employed in society?[52] Channeling the warlike passions of the stubborn, unsocial power seekers into economics seems to be a promising strategy to address this problem.[53]

[50]I therefore do not agree with Hont that "there is no place for an economy in [Hobbes's] politics in any important sense" (Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005], 2). For further discussion and actualization of Hobbes's economic principles, see Neil McArthur, "Thrown amongst Many: Hobbes on Taxation and Fiscal Policy," in Lloyd, *Hobbes Today*, 188–89, and Jan Narveson, "Hobbes and the Welfare State," in *Hobbesian Applied Philosophy*, ed. Shane Courtland (New York: Routledge, 2017), 231. Compare the more critical and balanced view of Susanne Sreedhar, "Duties of Subjects and Sovereigns," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hobbes*, ed. S. A. Lloyd (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 166–67.

[51]Sreedhar, "Duties of Subjects and Sovereigns," 166–67, has argued convincingly that this argument is flawed in the sense that the rich certainly do have a greater benefit than the poor from that taxation policy, because they "*just are* safer than the poor …. Not only do they enjoy more protection from the police, but they also have access to better defense in court."

[52]In addition to physical force, one could think about implicit threats, inequalities of power, and conditions of urgency that could be used lucratively by power seekers to profit from the misfortune, dullness, or inferiority in power of their fellow citizens. See also Hobbes's claim that fear and liberty are consistent in n. 49.

[53]I am grateful to Catherine Zuckert for highlighting that perspective. In this respect, I agree with Macpherson, who claims that Hobbesian people "support a sovereign in order to permit themselves to go on invading each other" (C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1962],

Motivated by Hobbes's ideas, the intelligent power seeker might try to use (or stretch and influence) the laws in order to profit from the dullness and inexperience of his fellow citizens.

One might argue that Hobbes explicitly condemns deception and betrayal in several places in his works, so the possibility of the unsocial power seekers concluding that they have the right to exploit their fellow citizens is obviously wrong. And indeed, there are places where Hobbes seems to morally condemn deception and betrayal—for instance, in *Leviathan*, chapter 6, where Hobbes defines magnanimity as "contempt of unjust, or dishonest helps" (L 6, 110, 1–4).

It should, however, be observed that there is no perfectly clear, unequivocal moral condemnation of deception and betrayal in Hobbes's political philosophy, but rather a certain ambiguity. In some places, Hobbes clearly abandons the morality of moderation, equity, and peace, adopting the perspective of power, effectiveness, and greatness. In the above-cited passage of *Leviathan*, chapter 10, Hobbes reminds the reader of Mercury's frauds and thefts and considers the greatness of unjust or unclean acts: as we have seen, Hobbes claims that for an action to be honorable, it does not matter whether it is just or unjust, as long as it is a great and difficult action, and consequently a sign of much power. Hobbes even points to rapes and thefts and other great but unjust or unclean acts, which are nevertheless signs of power and, as such, honorable by nature. Furthermore, there is also a certain ambiguity in the definition of pusillanimity and magnanimity. While in the cited passage from chapter 8, Hobbes seems to employ a distinct moral perspective in defining magnanimity, in chapter 6, magnanimity and pusillanimity are defined not in terms of honesty but in terms of effectiveness and the perspective of success: "*Desire* of things that conduce but a little to our ends; And fear of things that are but of little hindrance, PUSILLANIMITY. *Contempt* of little helps, and hindrances, MAGNANIMITY" (L 6, 86, 1–3).[54]

These two criteria can, of course, conflict: What about a means that would be dishonest but very effective? Hobbes's answer to the fool can, as Hoekstra has convincingly argued, be regarded as a warning about the risks of uttering and expressing one's intention to betray and break a contract, and thus as a warning of the consequences of being a loud or an explicit fool.[55] In extending Hoekstra's image of the loud fool, we can draw an analogy between the fool and the power seeker: Hobbes's ambiguity with respect to deception and

100). Macpherson, however, did not draw the conclusion that the power seeker reckons on the dullness of his fellow citizens.

[54]Compare Odzuck, "Trust in Thomas Hobbes's Political Philosophy," 139. For the perspective of greatness and effectiveness, compare again L 10, 142, 4–6.

[55]Compare Hoekstra, "Hobbes and the Foole," 631: "A Silent Foole can sometimes reasonably expect to gain from breaking a covenant. The Explicit Foole, however, cannot even reasonably expect an overall gain from his actions."

betrayal, his focus on outward behavior, and his definition of natural worthiness could thus be understood as a warning for the loud and explicit power seeker about the disadvantages of publicly displaying his claim for superiority and his will to battle. Or, vice versa, we could regard that ambiguity as providing incentives for the power seeker to use the conditions of the commonwealth for maximizing his power and thus to take what he deserves owing to his natural worthiness.[56]

Christopher Scott McClure has argued conclusively that "an intentional incoherence between the priorities of the citizen and those of the soldier" is an important ingredient of the Hobbesian commonwealth: "What might seem like insane and dangerous behavior in political society is, in war, necessary and praiseworthy."[57] What he (and others) did not consider thoroughly was, how that double morality might affect the condition and quality of Hobbesian peace:[58] even if power seekers might be tamed in the sense that they resist killing other people in the service of honor,[59] they might nevertheless be encouraged by Hobbes's ideas of natural worthiness and intellectual superiority to make use of their natural power by exploiting their fellow citizens. It is important to note that Hobbes formally distances himself from betrayals and unjust actions, for example, when he describes "false principles" as a reason for the violation of laws. Two of those false principles are the claims that "in all ages, unjust Actions have been authorized, by the force, and victories of those who have committed them; and that potent

[56]We can find a similar ambiguity that might encourage power seekers in Hobbes's description of reasonable distrust of one's intellectual capacities. On the one hand, Hobbes clearly warns that ambitious people overestimate their intellectual abilities and recommends thinking twice before making the first strike (L 11, 154, 23–25). On the other hand, Hobbes dismisses reluctance, caution, or too much reflection as dishonorable and as a sign of pusillanimity (L 10, 140, 11–17). Compare also L 11, 156, 12–17.

[57]McClure, "War, Madness, and Death," 123. The concentration of more recent Hobbes research on the sovereignty-by-institution narrative and the disregard of the sovereignty-by-acquisition narrative might be a part of the reason why this ambiguity is still underexplored.

[58]That Hobbes himself is fully aware of that double morality and some resulting problems for law-obedience can be seen in *Leviathan* 27, 474, 27–476, 10: "For example, the Law condemneth Duells; the punishment is made capitall: On the contrary part, he that refuseth Duell, is subject to contempt and scorne, without remedy; and sometimes by the Soveraign himselfe thought unworthy to have any charge, or preferment in Warre: If thereupon he accept Duell, considering all men lawfully endeavor to obtain the good opinion of them that have the Sovereign Power, he ought not in reason to be rigorously punished."

[59]McClure, "War, Madness, and Death," 123: "Through education, then, the individual can come to see violence in the service of honor within the commonwealth as irrational, and potentially insane, but risking his life in war as a potential source of everlasting fame for which it is worth dying."

men, breaking through the Cob-web Lawes of their Country, the weaker sort, and those that have failed in their Enterprises, have been esteemed the onely Criminals" (L 27, 458, 10–14.) Also, Hobbes defines "vain-glory" as a foolish overrating of one's own worth, and tells the reader that this folly is often based on the wrong assumption that difference of worth rests on some "natural quality" and not "on the Will of those that have the Soveraign Authority" (L 27, 460, 18–21).

On the other hand, however, it is important to consider that Hobbes did in fact employ these very same false principles in his description of great and unjust actions in chapter 10 and in his explanation of the laws of honor in chapter 17 and nourish that very same vain-glory with his definition of a natural "worthinesse" and his claims that power seekers are more intelligent than the dull people and can influence and stretch language and laws.[60] Hobbes employs the metaphor of spiderwebs both for laws and language and claims that strong, powerful wits might easily (and without consequences) break through both kinds of spiderwebs, thereby stating and repeating exactly one of those principles that, according to him, are responsible for "defect in Reasoning" and violation of laws.[61] Likewise, Hobbes's often-ignored "sovereignty by acquisition" argument defends the natural right of the strong and intelligent power seeker and allows him to make use of weaker animals (or humans!) that can be tamed.[62]

Also, while he formally distances himself from corruption and declares that one of the most important qualities of judges is "*Contempt of unnecessary Riches*, and Preferments,"[63] he concedes that—in reality—wealth or influential friends often do corrupt judges, claims that covetousness of great riches is honorable, and discusses power and concealment as possible means to avoid punishment. In the Latin *Leviathan*, Hobbes points to a natural tendency

[60]"Nor does it alter the case of Honour, whether an action (so it be great and difficult, and consequently a signe of much power,) be just or unjust … . Also amongst men, till there were constituted great Common-wealths, it was thought no dishonor to be a Pyrate, or a High-way Theefe; but rather a lawfull Trade, not onely amongst the Greeks, but also **amongst all other Nations**; as is manifest by the Histories of antient time" (L 10, 142, 7–20, emphasis mine). Compare L 17, 254: "And in all Places, where men have lived by small Families, to robbe and spoyle one another, has been a Trade, and so farre from being reputed against the Law of Nature, **that the greater spoyles they gained, the greater was their honour**; and men observed no other Lawes therein, but the Lawes of Honour" (emphasis mine).

[61]Compare DCor 3, 8, 36: "For speech has something in it like to a spider's web, (as it was said of old of *Solon's* laws) for by contexture of words tender and delicate wits are ensnared and stopped; but strong wits break easily through them."

[62]Compare DCv 8, 10, 105: "Right over non-rational animals is acquired in the same way as over the *persons* of men, that is, by natural strength and powers."

[63]L 26, 438, 36–37.

of (most) men that power seekers can use lucratively and states laconically: "Judges and witnesses are corrupted by wealth."[64]

Although Hobbes warns his readers that concealment might be unsuccessful,[65] he states that concealment can be a reason for impunity,[66] repeats throughout his works that intentions might be faked, men are hard to read,[67] and discretion can be a way to power,[68] and thus allows the conclusion that faking honesty, moderation, and peace could be a lucrative means for intelligent power seekers. Accordingly, while some power seekers might be motivated by the civic honor bestowed by the sovereign, and some by the prospect of generating wealth by their own industry, some power seekers might in addition be encouraged by Hobbes's concept of natural worthiness and his praise of great, unjust actions to use one form or another of force and fraud, for instance, making contracts with dull people, corrupting judges, and stretching the laws.

## 4. Summary and Conclusion

Frost and Hoekstra have argued convincingly that a feigned self-presentation disposed to equality and peace helps to secure peace. In expanding this argument by using Hobbes's own premises (including his definition of worthiness and his perspective of effectiveness and great, power-maximizing, honorable actions), we can reconstruct an argument for the incurable, unsociable power seeker: a contrived or feigned self-presentation can not only secure peace, but also secure and increase one's own power. The "servitude" of the power seekers can thus be presented as honorable, because, in their view, they can use (and possibly even stretch) the peaceful framework of the laws as an effective means to secure and increase their power.[69] It is, thus, not servitude out of fear or need, but a self-chosen condition that provides a perfect environment for acting out one's quest for power and for acquiring and securing things deserved owing to one's natural worthiness.[70] Even if Hobbes does not positively spell out an argument that encourages the power seekers to take

[64]LL 27, 461, 18: "Iudices & Testes corrumpuntur à Divitiis."

[65]Compare L 27, 462, 13–16.

[66]Compare LL 27, 463, n.34, trans. Malcolm: "But those who are without wealth, or authority, or public favour, have no hope of impunity, except in concealment, or in opportunities of flight."

[67]Compare L, Introduction, 18, 23–28 and L 6, 94, 19–21.

[68]Compare again L 10, 140, 18–20.

[69]Compare Hoekstra, "Hobbesian Equality," 110: "Moreover, he depicts the state of nature to convince them that such superiority as they may have will be better recognized and rewarded within commonwealth: natural superiority can hardly reach full flower in the natural condition."

[70]See Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 100: "They can, therefore, support those rules, and the power necessary to enforce them, without stultifying themselves."

what they deserve and to make use of the dull part of the population, we should at least reevaluate Hobbes's definition of peace in light of the above-mentioned premises and possible conclusions:

i) Hobbes's definition of peace allows the persistence of the will to contend by battle and the promptness to fight (L 13).
ii) According to Hobbes, the promptness to fight is the greatest virtue in the natural condition and is stronger than laws (L 10).
iii) Hobbes's focus on outward behavior in his explanation of the natural laws allows a discrepancy between outward gestures and inner conviction (peaceful behavior vs. bellicose attitude, equity vs. the sense of superiority) (L 15).
iv) Hobbes acknowledges that he regards warlike attitudes, courage, and the desire for power as honorable and as elements of worthiness by nature (L 10).
v) He separates the dull part of the population, which strives for bodily pleasures and possesses only lower intellectual capacities, from the power seekers, whose passion induces and enables them to act with an eye to the future and provides them with a distinguished intellectual capacity (L 8; EL I, 10).
vi) Concerning deception, betrayal, and the necessary amount of reflection that should precede action, there is a certain ambiguity in Hobbes's theory that reflects the double morality of equity, moderation, and peace (laws of nature), on the one hand, and effectiveness, greatness, and power (natural laws of honor), on the other hand.
vii) Hobbes's proposed taxation policy (L 30) would be advantageous for power seekers who accumulate wealth and exploit their fellow citizens in the economic realm.
viii) Hobbes describes the excessive accumulation of wealth as honorable: covetousnesse of great riches is honorable, as a sign of power to obtain it (L 10).
ix) Hobbes's realistic description of corruption (L 27) might work as a further incentive since it points to a possibility for the power seekers to influence and stretch the rule of law.

A reconstruction of these moral and systemic incentives for power seekers within the Hobbesian commonwealth reveals principles that can shed light on the quality of Hobbesian peace. Important Hobbes scholars maintain that we can learn about peace from Hobbes and even use his works for peace education. Frost maintains that Hobbes is a peacenik; the insight into our mutual dependency that Hobbes provides would enable us to think ecologically.[71] Lloyd, too, claims that Hobbes might be a promising source for

[71]Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker*, 171–72.

civic education.[72] Similarly, Hoekstra considers that a politics based on (faked) acknowledgment of others as equals, even if people think themselves to be superior, "would not be merely gestural" and could perhaps produce "equal benefits."[73]

I am not totally convinced that Hobbes deserves the title of "prince of peace." If he does, we should at least spell out that Hobbes allows the persistence of warlike attitudes in his definition of peace, that he describes discretion as a way to power, that he not only supports a morality of moderation, peace, and equality, but also allows for moral principles that defend the natural worthiness of the power seeker and the cardinal virtues of war, that he distinguishes sharply between the dull common people and the intelligent power seekers, and that he recommends the sovereign create conditions that are advantageous for people who believe themselves to be intelligent power seekers. In short, Hobbes's political theory contains moral and systemic incentives for power seekers to use the public mask of civility.

For Hobbes studies, it is important to see that Hobbes's supposed "solution" to the problem of war is both complex and costly. The complexity of Hobbes's theory consists in the fact that he provides a diversity of "treatments" and incentives for very different characters, including stripping off the power seeker's followers by highlighting the dangers of rebellion and by altering the payoff scale, but including also the channelling of warlike passions into economics. The finding that Hobbes transports principles of a natural worthiness of the power seekers as a subtext of the equity-oriented morality of the laws of nature (even in a late work like *Leviathan*) calls into question the renowned developmental hypothesis, according to which there is a substantial change and decline with respect to the concept of honor between Hobbes's early and late political works.[74] Given that double morality and the persistence of bellicose attitudes within society, we could ask whether Hobbes's complex solution to the problem of war is complete in any meaningful sense: If power seekers do find moral and systemic incentives within the Hobbesian system to turn to the economic realm and use the public mask of civility as a means for making covenants with dull and weak

[72]Compare Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, 2, and *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, 408–9.

[73]Hoekstra, "Hobbesian Equality," 77, 110–11.

[74]Bagby, *Thomas Hobbes*, 7, claims that in Hobbes's mature political philosophy, "honor is exposed as entirely unnatural and thus irrational." This claim obviously abstracts from Hobbes's definition of a natural "worthinesse" in chapter 10 and his description of great (but potentially unjust) actions that are honorable by nature. While Bagby concedes that the concept of honor persists even in Hobbes's later works, she reassures herself that for quantitative reasons, one might conclude that the deconstruction of honor is Hobbes's real position (ibid., 5). For a similar developmental hypothesis, compare also Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, 74, and Tricaud, "Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature," 120–22.

people (instead of conquering innocents by brute physical force), is that really a complete (or satisfying) "solution" to the problem of war? If power seekers use the safe conditions created by the sovereign's laws as a rich hunting ground for acting out their (supposed) natural superiority, and do use (almost all) "advantages" and "virtues" of war,[75] critics might object that this looks like "a continuation of war by other means," or, at least, that this strongly affects the quality and stability of civic peace.[76]

The decline-hypothesis claims that the decline of the concept of honor in modern societies began with Hobbes's political philosophy.[77] If the result of my analysis—a doubled morality that silently transports the natural laws of honor of the intelligent power seeker—is correct, this hypothesis might be fitting neither as an adequate description of a development in Hobbes's works, nor as an adequate description of modern societies.[78] Reading Hobbes, one might ask if our societies, like Hobbes's political theory, contain systemic and moral incentives for unsociable power seekers and, if so, what these incentives mean for the quality of democratic culture and peace among citizens.[79] Also, reading Hobbes might provide reasons to analyze the relation between the rise of populism and the widespread feeling of being treated as if one is powerless and undervalued. While, according to Hobbes, the aggressive power seeker who risks his death is not "the

[75]L 14, 200, 1–3; L 13, 196, 13–14.

[76]Consider again Macpherson's claim that Hobbesian individuals "go on invading each other" in economics (*Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 100). Hobbes shows awareness of the problem of stability but not of the problem of quality: he discusses the problem that extreme differences in wealth, extreme poverty, and different treatment of citizens might provoke war, and thus could affect the *stability* of civic peace e.g. when he recommends that the sovereign treat not only "the great citizens" but also "the ordinary people" with respect, because otherwise, the ordinary people might rebel: "The sedition of the so-called 'Beggars' in Holland should be a warning of how dangerous to the commonwealth it is to despise the ordinary people" (L 30, 536, n. 76). Critics doubt that this is the right reason to promote equality: "Arguably, therefore, he promotes equality and social welfare for the 'wrong' reasons, seeing them only as instrumentally valuable for the maintenance of peace and stability, and not at all as intrinsically valuable" (Sreedhar, "Duties of Subjects and Sovereigns," 169).

[77]Compare the title of Bagby's book *Thomas Hobbes: Turning Point for Honor*. See also Mansfield, *Manliness*, 166, 173.

[78]Compare Krause's claim that liberalism and democracy are in need of a special, modified kind of honor that is available (Sharon R. Krause, *Liberalism with Honor* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002], xii).

[79]In the late eighties, Jean Hampton chose an interesting example of television culture as a starting point for her analysis of the Hobbesian concept of honor, which could be seen as another indication for our hypothesis that the concept of honor did not decline, but persists in distinctive ways that should be the focus of future research ("Hobbesian Reflections," 81).

common man" but an important exception,[80] Hobbes states with utmost clarity that most people seek glory and power of one kind or another and that the feeling of powerlessness and vulnerability to insults is a mass phenomenon of the highest political relevance.[81]

[80]I agree on this point with Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War," 305–6.
[81]See L 13, 190, 26. See also Krause, *Liberalism with Honor*, x.