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## **INTEGRATION OF THEISM INTO HOBBS'S STATE OF NATURE**

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### **Abstract**

Political philosophers often draw their conclusions on how political systems ought to be by first investigating human nature and then proposing recommendations extrapolating from those investigations. They attempt to do this by creating a hypothetical 'state of nature' where human beings would be unaffected by social, political, and cultural paradigms and can act freely in pursuit of their instincts, thereby revealing their true nature. English philosopher Thomas Hobbes followed this method of investigation and found that human beings are naturally violent, individualistic, and warlike and therefore concluded that political theory ought to be as such to prevent human beings from acting out their baser impulses through draconian authoritative measures when necessary. In this paper, I challenge Hobbes's claim on human nature by citing contemporary research on cognitive sciences which demonstrates that human beings have

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a natural predisposition to believe in supernatural agency (God/s) and therefore in the state of nature must behave in such a way as contemporary psychologists discovered investigating the effect of religiosity on human beings such as increased cooperation, selfless behavior towards genetically unrelated strangers, reduced crime rate deterred by supernatural punishment, etcetera. I argue that if we take into account the human propensity to believe in the supernatural agency then the state of nature hypnotized by Hobbes would need to be modified and therefore so would his political theory. Given the integration of cognitive science of religion into the state of nature, I conclude that the ideal political system must be centered around religion.

### **Introduction:**

Every political theorist over the years has envisioned his/her ideas about a comprehensive political system by starting from its most basic constituent: individual human beings. They tend to start their discussion on how a political system should be by hypothesizing on human nature at its most primitive state. This they do in an attempt to expose human nature in their bare nudity, not altered by systematic socio-political conformity. Political Theorists call this “the state of nature.”

It is important to note that for the purpose of my paper I will not be exploring the historical or anthropological ideas of the state of nature. That is to say that I will not try to use the available empirical evidence to attempt and uncover what the earliest human beings were like, but rather treat the state of nature as hypothetical: what would happen if a group of people who were raised in an environment with no external socio-political influence on them suddenly came in contact with each other. For doing this political theorists attempt to uncover the true ‘essence’ of human nature and therefore examine the limits, justifications, legitimacy of human societies, and their political authorities (Munro, 2020).

Recent studies into the cognitive science of religion show that children have a natural propensity to believe in some kind of god

or gods (Barrett, 2011, p. 161). Much like Noam Chomsky's idea of universal grammar where he postulates that human beings have an innate predisposition to grammatical language which helps them absorb the language spoken around them without having to explicitly learn grammar (Chomsky, 2001a, p. 7), Berrett (2011) postulates that a similar system for religion exists in human beings which he calls the *natural religion* (p. 136). Children use this innate predisposition to believe in supernatural agents such as god or gods, to then absorb the existing ideas of religion present in their societies. This study is an attempt to show the changes that will occur in the existing ideas of the state of nature, namely the Hobbesian state of nature if we integrate this idea of *natural religion* into the hypothetical.

In this paper, I make the claim that if we accept children are naturally predisposed to believing in some form of supernatural agents then the state of nature as predicted by Hobbes will not be as violent and chaotic as he predicts. This is because the children in the state of nature with no external influence will be naturally religious and therefore will have the same effects on them which is observed by the study of the psychology of religion: increased cooperation among unrelated strangers, increased generosity, reduced crime etc.

To do this, first I am going to give an account of Hobbes's state of nature. Then I am going to present my hypothetical conditions of a state of nature to then integrate the idea of the *natural religion* into the state of nature. In the next section, I am going to use the findings of the psychology of religion to show how human beings would behave if they were in the state of nature and were religious. Finally, I am going to show that the integration of the *natural religion* into the state of nature will lead to a different outcome than predicted by Hobbes. Religion is the catalyst that help form government from the state of nature.

It is important to note that my thesis is not meant to make a moral argument. It will take a neutral stance when it comes to morality. Certainly, god or gods demanded things from their worshippers that in contemporary times would not be considered

immoral. However, it is not the moral outcomes in the presence of supernatural agents that I am interested in but rather the changes in the state of nature that will take place if we accept Barrett's claim that children are naturally predisposed to believing in some form of supernatural agents.

Let me use an example to illustrate my point. Prior to the Muslim invasion of Egypt in 641 AD, the local Coptic population in the region had a practice where they used to cloth a virgin girl in gold and drown her in the Nile to appease the supernatural agents (god) so that they would be satisfied and cause flooding, which would then make the land fertile (Akhrum, 1977, p. 103). This practice in the contemporary time would be considered immoral (for context, the practice was also considered immoral by the Muslim invaders at the time and was forcibly stopped by them), and deeply problematic but was certainly a product of the Coptic religion. My thesis is not to establish whether god or gods of religion produced the best moral outcomes, but rather if having a religion had the effects as observed by the psychology of religion and what that would mean politically in the state of nature. So, I would consider not the moral ramification of the practice but whether the practices have the effects like an increased cooperation among unrelated strangers in the community as this is quintessential for the formation of a government.

The objection that can potentially arise from this would be whether we are condoning potentially dubious behaviour by supposed supernatural agents. It is therefore important to clarify that my attempt in this paper is to separate moral claims from psychological human behaviour. It is certainly not a defence of any moral framework produced by any theology, but rather an attempt to show that we have a naturalistic inclination in believing in supernatural agents and it is fundamentally a part of our human experience. Given that to be the case, the behaviour in the state of nature would not be as predicted by the different philosophers who did not take this factor into account while formulating their idea of the state of nature based on their understanding of human nature.

With regard to the issues with moral philosophy, the ideas of what is morally acceptable changed within the frameworks of theology for different reasons and needs of the time. The Hindu idea of a caste system was religiously observed by the adherents of the Hindu faith. This meant that people from one caste could not marry people from a different caste. It had a utility in the past: the knowledge of the scholar class (Brahma) was raised among scholars and thus could readily pass their knowledge to their children who were all trained from childhood to be scholars. The warrior class (Kshatriya) had parents and neighbors and friends who were only warriors, so the children were raised from childhood in a martial environment making them extremely efficient warriors. This practice is now obsolete given the advancement of technology where anyone can be a scholar and information can easily be passed to anyone. Modern weapons make lifelong training into the craft obsolete. This resulted in the change within the Hindu religion where it is no longer required for Hindus to marry within their same caste.

The same thing is observed for adherents of other faith traditions. Christian moral philosophers such as Immanuel Kant produced his moral philosophy within the Christian faith tradition. Slavery, which was considered morally acceptable within the Christian faith tradition is now near non-existent. Within the Islamic faith tradition, legal theorist Imam Shafi, Hambali, Maliki, and Ahmedis argued morals and differed with each other.

My refutation of the possible moral objection is therefore this: ideas of morality within faith tradition are subject to change depending on the needs, circumstances, ideas, technology, and a myriad of other factors. Moral debates have always existed independent of religion or lack thereof. My case is not to explore ideas of morality but rather acknowledge that religiosity is a natural human experience that will take place regardless of external human intervention and when that happens, humans will behave in a way predicted by the psychology of religion. If these behaviours are then to be integrated into Hobbes's ideas of the state of nature, we will

see the people start to form government from the state of nature by the virtue of religion and not fear of each other as Hobbes originally predicted.

## 1. Existing ideas of the State of Nature

The state of nature according to Munro is “the real or hypothetical condition of human beings before or without political association” (2020). While anthropologists try to uncover the real state of nature in the sense of trying to figure out empirically how human beings were prior to civilization, political theorist uses this hypothetically in attempt to uncover the true nature of human beings when they are not influenced by external factors such as government or other external forces. Thus, by understanding how humans are in the absence of a government, political theorists attempt to justify how governments ought to be based on the true nature of human beings. For the purpose of this study, we will only be treating the state of nature as a hypothetical and not the anthropological real conditions of primitive human beings.

**1.1. Hobbes:** Hobbes’s state of nature comes from three fundamental postulations:

- a. All Agents are nearly equal
- b. All Agents have ends desires that they want to be fulfilled.
- c. Because they are equal, if two or more individuals want the same limited resource which they both cannot have they become enemies.

Hobbes further places three reasons why enemy agents would engage in conflict with one another:

- a. *Competition:* The desire to attain resources for themselves leads to conflict. According to Hobbes (1965), in this instance agents use “violence, to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives, children, and cattle” (p. 96). Thus, I would argue that Hobbes’s idea here somewhat stems from

the idea of egoism. He tells us that in the state of nature human beings will behave egotistically. To him, this is a fundamental constituent of human nature.

- b. *Safety*: Hobbes thinks that people use violence to defend the property they have or gathered. This defence is not necessarily to repel an attack but can also expand to acts of violence to humble potential attackers.
- c. *Glory*: This is the intangible justification for the violence that agents engage in. According to Hobbes (1965) agents engage in violence for “trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervaluing, either directly in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name” (p. 96-97). Hobbes acknowledges that human experience is not limited only by the material but also by intangible things such as respect, honour love, etc. And that human beings engage in conflict for these intangible things. If an agent insults another, it can result in conflict. To expand upon this even further, if an agent insults another kin or group affiliation, that too can result in violence and conflict.

In Hobbes’s hypothetical, therefore, Hobbes postulates that the state of nature would be in a state of war. Everyman would be at war against everyone else because they are equal (Hobbes, 1651, p. 96). He then concludes that life in the state of nature would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes, 1651, p. 97). It is important to note that Hobbes does not necessarily believe that everyone will be fighting each other all the time in the state of nature because to him war does not always necessarily consist of actual fighting but in “known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary” (Hobbes, 1651, p. 96). Thus, people with either be at war with each other or be in a disposition to be at war with each other all the time. They will want to invade others for resources or would make pre-emptive strikes as a deterrent (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2018).

Merriam (1906) writes about Hobbes's state of nature, "In this condition, furthermore, there is no right and no wrong; no justice and no injustice, since these qualities relate to men in society, and not in solitude. In the state of nature, force and fraud are the cardinal virtues. Every man has a right to what he can get, and for just so long as he can keep it" (p. 151).

Based on Hobbes's ideas of the human nature it seems a fair extrapolation to suggest that Hobbes's idea of human morals in the state of nature stems from egoism, and therefore in the state of nature human beings will act egotistically. Plato would agree with Hobbes's with this idea. Plato (1955) in his book *The Republic* argued that it is more reasonable to be unjust if one can get away with it than be just (p. 41-43). He believed that human beings as rational animals will always understand the merits of destroying the other party completely in order to acquire maximum resources for themselves by taking minimal losses. Thus, in Hobbes's state of nature where resources are limited, the people will attempt to destroy each other or will always be vigilant in their attempt to do so in order to increase their own personal survival potential.

Even if one had enough resources for themselves, it would still be better to take the resources of someone else because of future uncertainty: What if they can not get those resources at a future time, it is therefore better to hoard as much resource as possible for oneself than share with anyone else.

Hobbes's remedy for this chaos is what he calls *the leviathan*. He believes that only by having an agent with near unlimited power, can this chaos or war against every man against every other man be averted. In Hobbes's own words a 'mortal god' (Hobbes, 1652, p. 32). He acknowledges that having such a man could have negative consequences such as oppression from him to his subjects. But he counters this by saying that an oppressive monarch is still better than the alternative where everyone will be in a state of war against everyone else. He believes the leviathan is the lesser of the two evils. He also taunts his critique by saying if human beings were so good



to begin with, there would not have been any need for an absolute monarch or government, people would have been able to conduct their affairs without. But given that we do need such a power to enforce them, it is better to have a leviathan than not (Hobbes, 1652, p. 32).

The function of the Leviathan is therefore “by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all (Hobbes, 1651, p. 132). Because only with “a master are servants equal” (Ibid, p. 141). Hobbes here shows the necessity of a hierarchy to prevent a violent and chaotic anarchy. He further states that only by having the hands tied of the subjects by a coercive master can raping and revenge be stopped. The master less man or those who are masters of themselves will lead to miserable calamity and chaos (Ibid).

Thus, Hobbes’s idea of a government stems from his idea of a state of nature. For him a government is a force that prevents agents into descending down in the state of nature, which for Hobbes is a negative and should be prevented. He then uses his hypothetical to justify monarchs having absolute power and why subjects should be obedient to the monarchs even when they might sometimes be unjust and oppressive.

## **1.2. Criticism of Hobbes’s State of Nature**

Some critiques of Hobbes like Lucy (1663) argues that the common place observation contradicts Hobbes’s views. People do not really behave violently or egotistically in absence of an authority. Lucy gives the example of sailors stranded in an island. Clearly there is an absence of authority there, but it is not seen that agents begin to act as individualistically and violently as Hobbes claims would be the case. He also claims that in absence of physical authority, human beings would be motivated morally inspired by God (Thomas, 1929, p. 186).

## **1.3. Response**

I agree with his criticism that God does play a role in human morality or as a unifying factor, but I do not agree that his attack on Hobbes with this line of reasoning affects Hobbes’s state of nature

to a great degree. Firstly, Hobbes's state of nature is a hypothetical and not anthropological. Any observation from an anthropological sense, more so, by people who spent most of their life under civilized society is not reflective of Hobbes's state of nature. This is because these agents are already heavily influenced by the collective society as opposed to Hobbes's state of nature where agents will find themselves in the state of nature, an environment prior to any form of government.

Furthermore, stranded agents at sea have been observed to act individualistically, selfishly and violently as predicted by Hobbes when faced with extreme deprivation of resources. The case of Dudley and Stephen may serve as one of many examples to illustrate this point. While being stranded at sea for 18 days and with no food for 7 and water for 5 day, they resorted to the murder and cannibalization of the cabin boy Richard Parker (Simpson, Dershowitz, & Wolfe, 1990).

Whether this act was morally justified is not the key concern here but rather whether people *can* act individually and egotistically when pushed down to their extremity. Hobbes's hypothetical is to illustrate that when it comes down to it, human beings will be inclined to act motivated by individual self-interest and Lucy's criticism using the stranded sailor example does not defeat Hobbes's hypothetical in that regard.

As far as common place observation is concerned, we have seen agents engage in violence and killing for the most trifling of matters as predicted by Hobbes when a coercive authority is absent in the society. Hobbes argued that the society would fall into chaos because human nature is inherently egoistic who would wage war for trifling reasons.

Let us take the example of pre-Islamic Arabia which before the advent of Islam was a fragmented society with kinship being the only ties valued upon. What we see there is a situation similar to what Hobbes predicted. Wars were rampant and people killed each other for the most trivial of reasons.

Let me use two historic examples for conflict in pre-Islamic arabia:

1. Once a camel belonging to a man called Jarmee ventured out and mixed with another man named Kaleeb's flocks. Kaleeb then decided to kill the camel. When Jarmee found out about this he told his neighbour Basoos whose nephew Jassaas went to Kaleeb and killed him. Because of this the Kaleeb's tribe Taghlib attacked Bakr tribe which resulted in a bitter war lasting for 40 years (Şallābī, 2005, pp. 52-54).

2. In another instance two men were horse racing. One of them cheated by secretly having someone injure the opponent's horse. When this was realized they began fighting and killing each other till a full-scale tribal war erupted (Ibid).

These examples serve to undermine Lucy's claim that it is not commonplace to see societies and humans behave as predicted by Hobbes and therefore, even in a hypothetical it could not be the case for human beings to behave in line with Hobbes's ideas of human nature. But I have used these two examples to show that even in the real world, given similar circumstances that may somewhat mirror the state of nature, humans do in fact somewhat mirror behaviour predicted by Hobbes.

I do not agree with Lucy's criticism of Hobbes, I however do agree with Lucy's claim that God will play a role in human behaviour, just not to the extent that Lucy seems to suggest. Lucy attempts to counter Hobbes by suggesting that human beings are inherently benevolent inspired by God, where Hobbes suggest that human beings are egoistic and individualistic. My thesis is that human beings are in fact as egotistical and individualistic as Hobbes suggests, but it is also the case that human beings are presented with an evolutionary gift of the belief in supernatural agents which decrease short term individualistic gain and help collective cooperation and unity which then serves as the catalyst for the formation of a government.

## **2. Children are Naturally predisposed to Believing in supernatural agents (God/gods).**

My thesis is based on the claim that human beings are naturally predisposed to believing in supernatural agent/s. In essence, believing in God/s and being religious are a fundamental and natural part of the human experience and therefore, even in the hypothetical state of nature, in so far as we are placing human beings in the equation, we will observe them to be religious and have the same effects that religion has on human beings. In this section I will make the case that human beings are naturally predisposed to believing in supernatural agents.

### **2.1. The natural religion**

Recent studies into cognitive sciences seem to suggest that human beings have a natural propensity towards believing in a religion (Atran, 2002); (Barrett, 2012); (Boyer, 2001). Barrett (2012) in his book *Born believers: The science of children's religious belief* explains that if a child was left without any external influence and to their own machinations, they would naturally start believing in some form of supernatural agents as a part of their ordinary cognitive development process. This process takes place between the age of 1 to 4 (pp. 3-4).

The mind of a child naturally tries to make sense of the world as they fill the gaps in explanation by using supernatural agents (Ibid, p. 20). They are known to seek purpose in order to make sense of the world. Experiments conducted by Kelemen & DiYanni (2005) published in *Journal of Cognition and Development* shows that children often assert design argument to natural objects. They questioned British children from the age group of six-, seven-, nine-, and ten. When asked about why birds exist, or mountains exist they would assign a purpose to them. Birds exist to make nice music because it makes the world look nice. Mountains exist as paper weights to stop earthquakes.

When the children were further presented with a close ended question as to whether they think someone or something made natural objects, it is observed that children has a preference for *someone* made it as opposed to something, supporting a natural belief in agency with regard to creation (Ibid).

The obvious question that follows was weather this someone that the children naturally seem to believe in has to be a supernatural agent or could it be as some suggested, human beings. Petrovich (1999) conducted an experiment to examine this question. She asked British preschoolers questions regarding the origin of natural objects such as animals and rocks. The children were then asked if they thought these objects were made by people, God or no one. Children were seven times more likely to answer God than people (pp. 3-27).

The next question that follows is how much of does parental influence effect this natural belief in God. Unlike in the state of nature, human beings in the actual world will always have parents whose beliefs would fundamentally influence the beliefs of the child. This was put to the test by American psychologist Evans (2001) who compared the belief of children from fundamentalist family (who believed in the literal interpretation of the bible) as opposed to geographically and educationally similar non-fundamentalist families. What she found was the children under the fundamentalist families have a preference for divine explanation but so did the children from non-fundamentalist families (pp. 217–266).

The same research also found that children are naturally more inclined to believing in a creationist explanation of natural things then evolutionist. In the experiment the children of the fundamentalist's parents were found to give a creationist explanation of natural things, which was to be expected. However, what was fascinating was that children from non-fundamentalist parents were also found to prefer creationist explanation for natural things over evolution even when they their parents gave them evolutionist explanations (Ibid).

Children therefore find creationist explanations more plausible than evolutionist. They have a intuitive tendency to view the world as purposefully designed, and therefore linking it to purposeful creative agency which they understand to be supernatural: God/s.

Just like in the case of language where linguistics argue we have what is called a *language acquisition device* (LAD) which is our innate predisposition for language acquisition, so too is the case for religion. Dr. Justin Barrett in his book *Born believers: The science of childrens religious beliefs* argues that children have a *natural religion*, a set of beliefs that they are naturally inclined to have without having any external influence which then serves as the foundation and the skeletal system for the adoption of the religion present in their environment (Barrett, 2012, pp. 135-137).

This natural religion has the following properties according to Barrett (2012):

- i. Superhuman agent/s created natural world intentionally and purposefully.
- ii. Superhuman agent/s possesses agency.
- iii. Superhuman agent/s possess superhuman powers.
- iv. Superhuman agent/s can reward and punish behavior.
- v. Superhuman agent/s can be super knowing.
- vi. Human can exist without physical body after their demise.

Using this as a frame, children adopts the religion prevalent in their environments (ibid). A Child raised in a Christian environment will more likely adopt Christianity, a raised in a Muslim environment will likely adopt Islam.

My approach here is not to establish the metaphysical case for God but rather whether children are naturally predisposed to believing in God/s. Increasing research into the cognitive science of religion tend to suggest that children does have a natural propensity towards

supernatural agents. And thus, serves to support my claim that human beings in the state of nature will also have this natural predisposition.s

## 2.2. Atheism

An obvious question that arises with the idea that children have a natural propensity to believe in supernatural agents is that if that were the case, then why does atheism exist? Barrett (2012) in his book *Born Believers* dedicates a chapter titled *Is Atheism Unnatural* to address this issue. Barrett defines ‘unnatural’ not with a negative connotation like ‘sick’ or ‘mentally ill’ but rather as action that goes against what is natural. Procreation could be a natural thing to do, and therefore to not procreate would be unnatural for Barrett even though it is something many might choose to do. He believes that a combination of social, environmental and psychological factors contributes to having a segment of human population disbelieving in the existence of God. But this number has always been in the minority (pp. 198-220).

For the purpose of my thesis I will not thoroughly explore those factors but rather focus on the fact that in high risk and low resource environment, which would likely be the case in the state of nature, atheism is less likely to arise. I make this claim on the basis of the fact that atheism seems to only persist in societies where there is a significant amount of stability and little to no risk of existential threat (Lanman, 2010). In hunter gatherer, sea fearing and farming societies atheism is uncommon to absent. It is more common, albeit still in the minority, in affluent societies where there is no predatorial, environmental or physical threat (Barrett, 2016, p. 209).

Still, as it stands even in contemporary times where the environment is relatively safe, as of 2010, 84% of the global population are adherents of one religious faith or another (Hackett & Grim, 2012). This number does not take into account those who are theists but do not adhere to any organized religion. But in so far as we are talking about the state of nature which would be extremely hostile, not only because of hostility from human beings

to each other as Hobbes argues, but also from limited resources, and constant predatorial threat, atheism would not likely develop, instead vast majority if not all of those in the state of nature would be theists.

### **3. Psychological Effects of religion**

I have thus far used studies in cognitive sciences to support my claim that children are naturally predisposed to believing in supernatural Agent/s. My attempt was to establish that agents in the state of nature will have a natural propensity to believing in supernatural agent/s. This would in turn be foundation for the formation of a religion. In this section of my paper I will use psychological studies to demonstrate the effects of religiosity on agents.

#### **3.1. Religion and cooperation among unrelated strangers**

Considerable research has been done within the domain of psychology to find the effects of religiosity on people. Thus far the vast majority of these psychological research found is that the concept of supernatural agents such as God does increase cooperation among genetically unrelated strangers (e.g., Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Irons, 1991; Sosis & Ruffle, 2004).

Sosis and Ruffle (2003) for instance found out in a study that religious kibbutz members were far more cooperative compared to their secular counterparts, even when taking into account other variables (pp. 713-722). Religion also has the effect of curbing down individualistic selfish behaviour even when behaving in such way is beneficial for the individual (Rossano, 2007). Furthermore, religion increases positive normative behaviour such as charity and volunteerism (Monsma, 2007). This finding helps demonstrates that if religion were to exist in the state of nature, people would not be behaving egotistically and destructively as Hobbes claimed.

Let us take the experiment conducted by Shariff and Norenzayan where they conducted the dictator game experiment.



Unrelated individuals were placed where one was given 10 dollars which they were given the choice of sharing with the other person, any amount of their choosing. For the control of the experiment the identity of the giver and taker was hidden from each other. The study was conducted with 50 participants where 19 identified themselves as from an organized religion (Christians, 4 as Buddhists, 2 as Jews, and 1 as a Muslim), 5 as theist but with no religious affiliation, and 24 who identified themselves to be atheists. They were then separated into two groups where one was religiously primed prior to the experiment (They were required to unscramble sentences dropping an extra word to form correct grammatical sentences. These sentences had words that invoke religious sentiments such as *divine*, *God*, *prophet* in order to prime the subjects), while the other was neutrally primed (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007).

What was observed was that primed 38% of the participants who were neutrally kept all the money for themselves compared to 14% of the religiously primed group. 20% of the neutrally primed group gave \$5 (half the amount), whereas, 48% of those who were religiously primed did the same. Religious priming however was shown to have no effect on the atheist group. Subsequent studies attempting to explain this phenomenon by taking into account the mood of the participants but it was seen to have no effect on the outcome. Thus this phenomenon cannot be explained on the basis of mood or emotion of the participants (Schaller, Norenzayan, Heine, Yamagishi, & Kameda, 2016).

### **3.2. Effects of having the perception of being watched**

Considerable psychological research show that agents are more likely to align themselves with the social norms if they know that they are being watched as opposed to when they know they are not. When perceived to being watched they would then act considerably more honorably, generously, bravely, and honestly (Burnham & Hare (in press); Buss, 1980; Diener & Srull, 1979; Duval, 1976; Kleck et al., 1976). Studies have shown that this observer need not even be human. A robot, a doll or even a picture

is observed to influence human behaviour. Burnham & Hare (in press) found that generosity increased by 30% (gave more in the communal pot) when subjects were under the gaze of a robot face compared to when they were alone (Norenzayan, et al., 2016).

In one study conducted in the division of psychology at the University of New Castle tested the effects of posters with images of eye on participants. A room was designed to make it seem that it was not observed, and a coffee machine was placed with an 'honesty box' which they could use to pay for the coffee purchased. All other factors were kept the same with the exception of the changing of the posters. The result of the experiment showed that when posters of eyes were placed, participants were more likely to pay for the coffee as opposed to when there were posters of flowers (Bateson, et al., 2006).

The very perception of being watched therefore motivates behaviour to follow social norms as opposed to when not being watched. I could then extrapolate this data to reframe the claim: The perception of not being observed makes agents more likely to violate social norms. This is important for the purpose of my thesis because:

- a. It supports the Hobbesian idea that human beings will act in favour of their individual self-interest and maximize benefits for the self sometimes even at the expense of others. And that a leviathan is needed to ensure order so that human beings do not fall into total chaos and anarchy.
- b. Physical observation is not necessary to motivate human behaviour to act in cooperation for the benefit of the collective at the expense of individual. The very belief of being perceived motivates agents to align themselves with the collective and not behave egotistically. The belief in supernatural agent/s who are omniscient and omnipresent is therefore a potent observer which can motivate human behaviour even when they are not being observed (Schaller, et al., 2016, p. 124).

### 3.3. Fear of Supernatural Punishment as a Deterrent

Most of the mammals in the animal kingdom have been observed to be influenced by the conception of reward and punishment. If one punishes a behaviour, mammals tend to be less likely to repeat that behavior, and if a behaviour is rewarded, they are more likely to repeat that behaviour. This phenomenon was termed as *operant conditioning* by behavioural psychologist B. F. Skinner (Skinner, 1938). Human beings too are influenced by this concept. Humans learn to repeat behaviours which are rewarded and avoid behaviours that are punished. It is however important to note that human beings are far more complex and have the agency to do the reverse of this at their will. But in a general sense, they are motivated by reward and punishment.

Research has shown that small-scale societies use punishment to enforce cooperation among its members with a religious group (Henrich, et al., 2010). What is unique in the case of human beings is that the fear of punishment doesn't need to be physical or tangible. Let me use an example to demonstrate my point:

Fear of lions in a certain part of the jungle is a legitimate threat which may persuade us to avoid that part of the jungle. This psychological phenomenon is known as *passive avoidance*. The behaviour that exhibits avoidance of something that is harmful or potentially can be harmful (Kryptos, Effting, Kindt, & Beckers, 2015). The fear of lions is of something tangible and physical. Perhaps certain members of the community found themselves in that part of the jungle where they were wounded or killed leading the other members to avoid that part. But what is unique about human beings is that our belief in something supernatural can lead to passive avoidance. The fear of a haunted house may prevent us from spending a night at that house even though the house does not possess any tangible threat. Ideas of supernatural punishments as a *belief*, therefore, translates as a *deterrent* in reality. (Johnson & Krüger, 2004, p. 163).

Studies have shown that societies often break down if it lacks a punishment mechanism for the defectors, even when cooperation would otherwise yield high reward (Ostrom, Walker & Gardner, 1992; Axelrod, 2008). Punishment is therefore integral to ensure cooperation among the group and reduce individualistic actions that benefits the self only. Punishment mechanism however requires costly monitoring, if there was no self-monitoring mechanism at play. And no matter how efficient the monitoring and punishment mechanism might be present; it will still be limited in scope as human beings cannot always monitor all the defectors (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011, p. 93).

The *belief* in Supernatural agents therefore provides a policing mechanism that acts as a deterrent in *reality*. Supernatural agents such as god/s are omniscient are knowing of transgressors even when they transgress privately. Thus, agents who believe in the supernatural agent/s, self-police themselves to conform to group values which such values comes in the form of religious sources (Schaller, et al., 2016, p. 124).

### 3.4. Effects of Supernatural Punishment

Atran (2002) writes in his book *In God We Trust*, “In any human society, there is always a risk of cheating in joint endeavours and lying in communication. The same metarepresentational cognitive capacities that allow humans to conceive of no existing states of affairs and to conceptually modify present ones also allow for deception. Social competition virtually guarantees the exercise of deception. (p. 127)”. Evolutionary Biologists argue that it is more beneficial to act selfishly towards other genetically unrelated members than to act selflessly and links this behaviour to what is called the *selfish gene* (Dawkins, 2016).

Human beings, however, are far more complex than any other mammals in the animal kingdom. For one thing our language is far more sophisticated which enables us to convey much more information than any other species. We also benefit from large scale

cooperation among our species which is not seen any other species in the animal kingdom (Rossano, 2007, p. 9). Thus, our primal nature to act selfishly might be present in us, but we also have a need to act selflessly in order to facilitate large scale cooperation among genetically unrelated strangers. Religion plays a crucial role to enforce conformity with the fear of punishing those who transgresses from the group norm (Nowak & Coakley, 2013, pp. 170-175).

Psychological research shows that belief in supernatural agents is correlated with reducing cheating (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011, p. 93). Although most religions have a punishing mechanism, both presently and historically (Johnson & Krüger, 2004, p. 163), studies show that a belief in a more punishing God/s is more effective at curbing cheating compared to their less retributive counterparts (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011, p. 93). But for the purpose of my thesis I will focus on the claim that almost all religions have a retributive aspect or supernatural punishment which affects human behaviour and promotes cooperation.

The belief in supernatural punishment by supernatural agent/s at macro societal level is that nations that the belief in divine punishment have a reduced crime rate (Shariff & Rhemtulla, 2012). It is important to note that this 'crime' is within the context of religion. If an action is considered criminal by the society which is outside the framework of religion, it is less likely that agents believing in that religion would not have as strong a reservation of breaking that law compared to if it came from a supernatural source from that faith tradition.

#### **4. Integration of theism into Hobbes's State of Nature**

So far, I have supported my two claims with research findings:

- a. Children are naturally predisposed to believing in a supernatural Agent/s such a God/s as a part of their natural cognitive development process.
- b. If children do believe in God/s as a part of their natural cognitive

development then and that natural predisposition is augmented by religion then they will have the same effects that religiosity has on agents as found in various psychological research.

In this section of the paper. I will attempt to integrate these ideas into Hobbes's state of nature. If my first claim is correct, then what entrails is that people in a state of nature will be theists based on claim (a) and therefore when they will have a religion in that environment will behave significantly more cooperatively based on claim (b) this increased cooperation will then be the bedrock which will allow agents in the state of nature to form political association, and civilization will follow. In this section, I will be formulating a hypothetical state of nature and placing agents there and then use that hypothetical to show how this will take place.

But before I explore into that avenue, I am going to state that my claim is not an argument against Hobbes but rather to augment his idea with recent findings. That is to say I do not disagree that human beings have the capacity to be violent and egotistical and have the potential to wage war against every man against every other as Hobbes predicted. We like other mammals possess the *selfish gene* as biologist call it, which makes us understand the merits of gain by behaving egotistically at the expense of the collective.

It is not my argument that human beings will be in a state of peace with the presence of the idea of God as Lucy seem to have suggested (Thomas, 1929, p. 186). By no means has the idea of God established absolute peace. Evidence of that is history itself. There has never been an instance in human history where man was able to establish absolutely peace. Mesolithic cemetery in Jebel Sahaba in Sudan has 14,000-year-old remains from the prehistoric era, which evidence showed have died through violence against one another (Keeley, 2007, p. 37). This shows the violence and conflict persisted in the earliest of times to the present world. Conflict is an indivisible part of human nature. Thus, even in the hypothetical it is essential to integrate this factor.

The human condition is best described by Nietzsche (2004) when he quotes this phenomenon in his book *Ecce Homo* and writes, “I am a man, and by nature warlike.” There has never been an instance in human history without conflict of one form or another. My emphasis, however, is not on the idea of peace, but on human capacity for collective enterprise on the basis of supernatural agency. Religion is therefore the catalyst that will help agents in the state of nature to form government.

#### **4.1. Hobbesian Conception of Human Nature in Relation with the Selfish Gene**

In this section I am going to attempt and integrate the findings of the cognitive sciences and psychology into Hobbes state of nature. I believe doing so challenges Hobbes’s conception of human nature but does not significantly change his recommendation.

Hobbes thinks human beings are fundamentally violent and egotistic. I agree on Hobbes with this claim by the virtue of the fact that conflict is the one constant that persists in human nature. And by the virtue of what the biologists call the *selfish gene*, which would make human beings in the state of nature *understand* the merits of selfishness and violent competition against each other as a means of survival. Dawkins (2016) suggests that with some exceptions, selfish genes will give rise to “selfish behaviour in individual behaviour” (p. 2). He further writes, “My own feeling is that a human society based simply on the gene’s law of universal ruthless selfishness would be a very nasty society in which to live (p. 3)”. Generally, natural selection does show that in a group where superior organisms arrive, it takes over, and the overall population does suffer because of it. Dawkins’s finding into the study of biology seem to support Hobbesian claim that human beings in the state of nature would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes, 1651, p. 97). Although, Dawkins does point out that there are instances where organisms form symbiotic relationship for survival and other times act seemingly altruistically, but this is mostly towards organism with similar genes as its own. This is

because survival of similar gene pool would mean its own survival. But in case of human beings, we are capable of mass cooperation among genetic heterogeneous groups that is not seen among any other mammals (Rossano, 2007, p. 9).

My attempt in this paper is to suggest that there is a natural mechanism to curve out this selfish behaviour in order facilitate cooperation among genetically unrelated individuals: Belief in supernatural agent/s, which would then affect human beings in the state of nature accordingly. I stress that this is not to say that our *selfish gene* and its machinations will be absent or negated due to a natural propensity to believe in supernatural agency but rather as it seems, it will merely supersede it.

If we see human nature as purely biological as seen among other organism, then in the state of nature they would act in accordance with their selfish genes alone and thus be in perpetual war with each other out of competition and survival of the fittest. In such view we would likely see a state of nature as Hobbes envisioned. But Hobbes did not believe that human beings have a natural predisposition in believing in God or supernatural agency (McClure, 2011, p. 12), and thus formulated his ideas of the state of nature without taking this factor into account. Hobbes, however, does agrees that the fear of hell is a potent force greater than death itself to motivate behaviour (McClure, 2011, p. 2), but he thinks that in the state of nature this will not naturally manifest.

It is on this point I think Hobbes's formulation needs to be modified. There has been a considerable hamber of studies to show that human beings do have a natura predisposition in believing in supernatural agency which exists parallel to the selfish gene. If this claim is accepted, then it is fair to say that human beings in the state of nature will be theists. And as I have previously addressed, in situations where resources are limited and there is a high threat level in the environment then it is extremely unlikely for atheism to naturally develop (Lanman, 2010, pp. 157-173). For the purpose of the state of nature, it would be a high threat, low resource environment and therefore, atheism would



not blossom there. It is however, still conceivable that some atheist might come about. In those cases, it is likely that the collective in the state of nature who would be theists would make minority conform to their will or those who would be minority atheists would simply opt to conform for resource and security.

#### **4.2. Hypothetical State of Nature**

In this section I am going to formulate a state of nature to place Hobbes's formulation and attempt to integrate current findings on human nature from the cognitive sciences and the psychology to analyse how human beings would behave in the state of nature.

Let us imagine that a catastrophic nuclear war that took place in the world which wiped out all of human race. 30 pregnant mothers survived in nuclear proof bunkers by the virtue of a paranoid ruler who made a contingency end of the world plan if something like this were to happen. These mothers lived in these bunkers that were miles apart from each other, with each having a map to a valley unaffected by the nuclear holocaust. This area is green with plants and animal life perfect for sustaining human life. The mountains surrounding the valley protect it from nuclear fog. When these children were of 5 years old, the mothers decided to migrate to this valley with their children. However, because they only had one hazmat suit, which all mothers voluntarily gave to their children, all the mothers had to travel through the nuclear waste lands without any protective gear. All the mothers upon reaching the valley died shortly after and the children found themselves in the state of nature with a few apple trees that produces all year long. The apples trees have enough produce to feed all the children but doing so will result in all of them hungry and malnourished. The valley, however, is fertile and has the merit of further production and produce.

Using this example of a state of nature I will attempt to analyse how human beings will behave if we integrate theism into Hobbes's state of nature. Firstly, because there is only a few apple trees it will become a precious resource for the children. This they will quite

easily understand and would want it for themselves which will lead to competition and conflict just as Hobbes predicted.

One of Hobbes postulations is that agents would both want a thing that which they both cannot have. In my hypothetical state of nature, that thing is ‘apple trees’ which all 30 children would want but all cannot have. This would lead to either

- a. cooperation, in which case they would be required to share and distribute the resources with each other in an equitable way but doing so will make all of them perpetually hungry as there are just not enough apples or
- b. fight each other in an attempt to destroy each other entirely where upon the winner would have maximum resource for himself without having to worry about being hungry ever again.

Hobbes would argue that Human beings in a state of nature would always choose b) and attempt to destroy each other out of competition of resources and would have their own desires filled over others. His state of nature as Merriam (1906) points out will have no conception of justice and “force and fraud” would be considered virtuous. In essence Hobbes state of nature would show human beings as egotistical following Plato’s thought that it is better to be unjust if one can get away with it. Hobbes thinks that given all the agents in the state of nature are equal, and this would in turn propagate perpetual conflict.

I agree with Hobbes that people have the propensity to be violent and egotistic with each other by the virtue of our *selfish gene*. But as humans we have a counter mechanism in place to balance that, albeit not cancel it out entirely: the belief in supernatural agent/s. But this natural belief would be inefficient without having a religion in the environment to absorb religious ideas from. Because of this, although, this the *natural religion* will decrease conflict in relation to Hobbes formulation, the state of nature would still be a chaotic and violent place if no accepted religion is present to act as

codified set of demands that the supernatural agent/s requires human agents to follow.

I agree with Hobbes that the state of nature would be chaotic and warlike. I disagree with Hobbes with the scope of the violence. It would not be a war against every man with each other. I think Hobbes's account of war against each other in a state of nature is vastly exaggerated. If we integrate the idea of *natural religion*, we see that even though human beings would want to behave in a Hobbesian way by the virtue of their *selfish genes*, that behaviour will not be as deplorable as Hobbes predicts due to our natural predisposition to supernatural agency.

### 4.3. Augmenting Hobbes's State of Nature

I do not think that human beings in the state of nature will be cooperative and enjoy the psychological effects that religiosity brings. This is because even though the agents will have a conception of supernatural agency, they will not have a through framework as to what exactly this supernatural agent/s wants from them. In other words, the concept of religion would be absent in the state of nature.

What it would mean is that even though some level of cooperation will be present by the virtue of the natural religion, it would be extremely fragile and would often disintegrate into violence and war. The fear of a supernatural agency will only limit human capacity to act selfishly so far if human agents are not convinced of what the supernatural agent/s want from them. Because of this limitation, the state of nature with no political authority would be anarchic, violent and chaotic, much like Hobbes described, but not to the extent he thought would be the case.

Just like how human beings have a natural predisposition to absorb language from the environment (Chomsky, 2001a), so too is the case for religion (Barrett, 2012). But in the state of nature there will be no religion to utilize their innate disposition to believe in supernatural agency and therefore, the psychological effects of

religion will be severely undermined. Because of this cooperation in the state of nature would be very limited and conflict widespread.

Just like Hobbes suggested people would engage in conflict for the most trivial things such as an insult or mistrust of the 'other' which would lead to pre-emptive strikes. They will also be competitive towards resources which they both cannot have. Natural predisposition to supernatural agency will lessen this tension as people will naturally have a conception of afterlife and supernatural reward and punishment (Barett, 2012, pp. 135-137). They would therefore have a crude conception of fair play. But without a codified religion to absorb from the environment and therefore cooperation among unrelated strangers will be significantly low and conflict rampant.

I would like to bring the example of pre-Islamic Arabia to make my case. Religion was present prior to the advent of Islam but there was no codified religious idea that was accepted by all. There were no documented set of requirements in that environment which stated what the supernatural agent/s wanted and therefore there was hardly any cooperation among genetically unrelated strangers. This led to frequent wars and conflicts. But after the advent of Islam which provided a codified set of conditions as to what the supernatural agent/s wanted. Arabia enjoyed greater cooperation among unrelated strangers, limits of violence was set as the agents in Arabia were now aware which actions the supernatural agent will reward and which He will punish.

I would like to stress again that my point here is not to suggest that in the presence of a religion in the environment causes human conflict to cease. But rather, as the studies suggest, improves cooperation and stability. Agents will less likely do a thing that the religion prohibits even if they could do it and get away with it by the virtue of the fact that supernatural Agent/s are capable of knowing everything and guaranteeing punishment for transgressing. Thus, what we see historically in Arabia after the advent of Islam is that there was improved cooperation among unrelated strangers, greater

stability and lesser conflict with each other as was the case in pre-Islamic Arabia.

However, what we see instead is large scale wars and conflict which requires high level of cooperation and coordination among unrelated strangers. This high-level cooperation and coordination is what soon afterwards caused the Arabs from being one of the most primitive and fragmented societies in the world at the time to being on of the most unified and stable empires. Having a codified religion is what increased trust, cooperation and coordination which are the keys to a civilization.

Agents cannot think about science, philosophy, engineering or any other higher order cognitive experiences if they have to prioritize their survival almost all the time. If there is always a risk of parties cheating or potentially causing harm, agents are unable to fully utilize their cognitive capacity. Religion provides that conception of supernatural reward and punishment for everyone who cheats and therefore is a potent force to not only regiment behaviour but also provide certainty for the agents as what to likely expect from other agents.

#### **4.4. From the State of Nature to Government**

Agents in the state of nature will soon realize the necessity for an interpreter of what the supernatural agent/s want from them. This necessity will then produce from among them prophet/shaman/priest who then act as a conduit of the supernatural agency and others in the state of nature will either acknowledge or reject them. Even if one is rejected, there will be another for the role. This conduit of the supernatural agent/s will then provide the basis of religion. They will provide information as to what the supernatural agent/s rewards and punishes.

Agents in the state of nature will readily accept these information as they already have a natural predisposition to do so. And thus, by doing so they will enjoin the increased cooperation, trust among unrelated strangers, decreased cheating and other

benefits that religion brings.

Thus by integrating Hobbes's state of nature with Barrett's idea of *natural religion* and then placing a religion into the hypothetical, we will see that the children in the state of nature will start to cooperate with each other for the collective utility even at the expense of individual benefit as psychological studies point out. They would not break social norms even if they could do so and get away with it as it is a characteristic of the *natural religion* to have supernatural agent/s capable of observing and punishing the transgressors even if done privately and without any physical observer. Any religion that the prophet/shaman/priest of the state of nature will produce will have this phenomenon in it.

In my formulation of the state of nature, the children will have a shared idea of some form of Supernatural Agent/s by the virtue of their natural predisposition and once it is augmented by a religion, this Supernatural Agent/s will offer supernatural incentives for certain actions and punishment for others. This reward and punishment mechanism will be in relation to the environment that they will find themselves in. A study done by Snarey (1996) shows that cultures with water scarcity has conceptions of supernatural Agent/s that promotes prosocial water usage (pp. 85-96). Thus, in my conception of the state of nature where the precious resource that is essential for survival are *apples*, the supernatural agency in this particular state of nature would promote prosocial use of apples and given the extremity of the environment, will have harsh supernatural punishment for agents who would cheat. Religion which will eventually naturally develop in the state of nature will therefore help minimize the effects of the *selfish gene* to promote collective cooperation at the expense of the individual.

Another question that arises in the state of nature is that concerning social contract. English Philosopher John Locke offered an account of how agents in the state of nature people would behave with regard to forming social contracts. Locke agreed that human beings in a state of nature will have absolute freedom where they

can potentially do anything they please (Locke, 1690, p. 8). Where he disagreed with Hobbes is in regard to what they would do with this freedom. While Hobbes argued that human beings with absolute freedom will attempt to destroy one another, Locke believed that most men would not attempt such a thing, instead, they would willingly come together and form social contracts.

Asirvatham & Misra (1995) argue that if a contract is not binding by an authority, then the contract was not valid to begin with as any party can dissolve the contract at will with no consequences. This makes the contract redundant by default. Under these circumstances, a contract without a binding force cannot necessarily be defined as a contract (pp. 63-67).

But this would not be a problem for the children in my state of nature. They will have supernatural agent/s who would act as the leviathan making the contracts binding. Such a leviathan can observe and punishing transgressors even when they transgress or breach their covenant in private. Therefore, one cannot break contract and face no consequences, rather breaching the contract will guarantee consequence as supernatural agents have the capacity to observe everything in nature even when no one else is looking.

Thus in my conception of the state of nature, I disagree with Hobbes where he thinks that there is only going to be war with each other, and also with Locke (1980) in that he believes agents will voluntarily form social contract on the basis of reason that as servants of God all agents “are all equal and independent, no-one ought to harm anyone else in his life, health, liberty, or possessions” (p. 5). Rather I think agents in the state of nature would reason egotistically in line with Plato’s egotism. They will reason that if they destroy the other, they can attain more resource for themselves and therefore improve their own survival potential. However, they will also reason that a supernatural agent/s is watching and therefore they ought not to cheat lest they will face retribution from this supernatural agency. In essence I believe it is through the *fear* of supernatural agency will agents, even in the state of nature, will be able to form social contract.

With the natural propensity in believing in supernatural agents these children will be theist in one form or another. The next thing I will do is integrate is the psychological effects of theism into Hobbes is among state of nature. Being theist has the effect of increased cooperation unrelated strangers. We would therefore see the children capable of cooperating with each other. Having the belief of being observed by supernatural agents will result in the children behaving in conformity to the rules which they perceived were made by the supernatural agent/s. They would also adhere to these rules in fear of supernatural retribution.

These children will therefore live in the valley in cooperation with each other by the virtue of their shared ideas of supernatural agent/s. That is not to say that they will not fight or be violent towards each other. By integrating the notion of religion into the function we will see that people in the state of nature will be able to somewhat suppress their egoistic desires and manage a high level at cooperation centered around their shared ideas of supernatural rewards and punishment from supernatural agent/s.

Having a codified religion will then necessitate a coercive force to bring in those among the collective who would break the covenants of the supernatural agent/s. This coercive force will merely be the executor of laws of the supernatural agency. He will therefore have legitimacy in the eyes of agents in the state of nature because this sovereign ruler is not exacting his will on the people, but the will of the supernatural agent/s who the majority will believes in.

This makes a difference because of one of Hobbes is postulations, which Locke too seems to agree: all agents are equal. And without a hierarchy in power, people in the state of nature will not be able to accept the coercive will of another who is the same as them. They will, however, acknowledge the one from them who is equal but is not exacting his own will on to the others but the will of the supernatural agency which the collective believes in.



The process of the selection of this sovereign ruler may vary and for the purpose of my thesis is unimportant. What is important is that the sovereign ruler will have legitimacy in the state of nature by the virtue of the fact that it is not his will that he will exact upon others who are equal to him but the will of the supernatural agency which everyone believes in. And by doing so, he will nourish a religion in the state of nature which will limit the effects of the *selfish gene* and promote religiosity which have the effects of social unity. Thus, by the use of religion, agents will be able to exist the conditions of the state of nature and form the basis of government and civilization.

Thus, for the purpose of my hypothetical state of nature, one of the children will act as a prophet/priest/shaman who will dictate what the supernatural agency requires them to do thereby forming a religion. Religious ideas as seen to be the case are often customs that are necessarily in the environment (Snarey, 1996, pp. 85-96). So, in my hypothetical it would be the prosocial use of apple trees. However, if the number of apples is extremely low, this supernatural agent/s might ask one or more of them to sacrifice themselves in order to please this supernatural agent/s thereby ensuring the prosperity of the collective. And by reducing the population through sacrifice there would be more apples for the surviving children. It will be the sovereign ruler from among them who will enforce this will of the supernatural agency. And those being sacrificed will do so voluntarily even if unwittingly. This is because as I have discussed in the earlier section, human belief motivates behaviour. Even though their *selfish gene* would not want to sacrifice themselves, but with the idea of supernatural rewards, they will feel motivated to try to attain rewards greater than the collective. This selfish desire will motivate the agents to act in ways to benefit the collective, i.e. sacrifice themselves to appease a supernatural agent.

I used a crude example to illustrate the following points:

- a. Religious ideas extreme or timid are product of the environmental necessity.

- b. Human beings are in essence egotistical, but supernatural rewards and punishments which all religion provides in one form or another acts are motivation to enact their selfishness in a way that benefits the collective.

#### **4.5. The Role and Scope of the Leviathan**

I do not think Hobbes was wrong in his conception of the leviathan, where I think he was wrong was who the leviathan will be. Although Hobbes does have conception of religion, he did not take into account the natural predisposition for agents to believe in supernatural agency. This means that this natural predisposition will exist even in the state of nature. If we take this into account, we will see that the supernatural agent/s acts as a better and more potent leviathan than the human leviathan.

Psychological studies show that human beings behave more in line with the social norms and laws when being observed by agents. But they also behave in this way when they believe they are being observed when they are physically not being observed. Supernatural agent/s can observe human agents at all times (Barrett, 2012, pp. 82-95), the fear of whom will cause human beings to self-police themselves, act altruistically, and cooperatively. This would change the task of Hobbes's human leviathan. It is not his terror that should be used to bring agents at awe, but the terror of the supernatural agent/s.

I am also not arguing against the conception of a human leviathan who would exist to promote fear to conform the members of the society to a single ideal, but rather expanding upon the conception and the scope of the human leviathan. My claim is that the human leviathan needs to enforce the ideas of religion that persist within his domain which would make his task as a leviathan considerably easier because people would be self-policing in fear of a greater leviathan than him: Supernatural Agent/s: God/s.

Hobbes is Leviathan lacks the power to observe everyone and therefore cannot bring everyone at the conformity to his will. Leviathan is necessary for those, who transgress transgresses against

the collective. Because even though the conception of supernatural agent/s helps facilitate cooperation, it does not guarantee cooperation. A human leviathan is needed to facilitate cooperation and augment the natural predisposition to believe in supernatural agent/s for the purpose of collective cooperation and help suppress the selfish gene. By doing so the human Leviathan would promote collective prosperity.

Contemporary economists have been equally interested in studying the effects of religiosity on economy. The findings tend to suggest that believing in supernatural such as heaven and hell has a positive correlation with economic growth when other factors are accounted for (Barro & McCleary, 2003). It is however difficult to isolate historical and other factors that contribute to a nation's economic growth and Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales (2002) in the article *People's opium? Religion and economic attitudes* published in the "Journal of Monetary Economics argue that it is essential to do these studies from within a country context than a cross-country analysis. Doing so does seem to yield a positive correlation between economic growth and belief in supernatural agent/s when other factors are taken into account. Attitudes of trust and honesty among unrelated strangers is essential for economic development. Religion tend to facilitate that (pp. 226-227). Barro & McCleary (2003) write in their article *Religion and Economic Growth Across Countries*, "Our conjecture is that stronger religious beliefs stimulate growth because they help sustain specific individual behaviours that enhance productivity (p. 779)."

What this means for the purpose of my thesis is that cooperation, trust, and altruism is necessary for collective prosperity in the long term. These kinds of collective prosperity maybe at odds with individual prosperity. It is better to cheat and get short term monetary reward than wait for long term collective prosperity which may or may not benefit the individual agent.

We are therefore at odds with our selfish gene and human capacity for large scale cooperation for collective prosperity. Religion

tend to facilitate this. But people may always fall into the desire to act egotistically even at the expense of others. When this happens, a leviathan is necessary to bring collective at conformity. I agree with Hobbes when he writes, “For the use of laws is not to bind the people from all voluntary actions, but to direct and keep them in such a motion as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness, or indiscretion (p. 268)”, but he believes this is necessary because human beings are fundamentally destructive to one another and incapable of large-scale cooperation without the help of leviathan. I disagree with this claim and propose that human being has a natural propensity for altruistic, selfless and collective enterprise out of the reward and punishment mechanism of the supernatural leviathan. The human leviathan will therefore only act as proxy to the supernatural leviathan who will use fear to enforce coordination and cooperation. But the true fear that is necessary for conformity and cooperation, the true leviathan, is supernatural agent/s.

Hobbes writes, “by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all” (Hobbes, 1651, p. 132). But as I have mentioned earlier, the human leviathan will fundamentally lack the power to observe all of the agents all the time. To punish deviants of the norm even when deviation is done in private. This limitation is not present if the leviathan is supernatural. Schaller et al. (2016) write, “The belief in a supernatural watcher can extend the otherwise limited scope of human cooperation, effectively infinitely, provided that the fear of these supernatural beings reaches a near-ubiquitous distribution in the group.” It is this ubiquitous distribution I believe should be the role of the human leviathan.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, data supports Adeimantu’s claim pertaining to human nature being egotistical and motivated to legal conformity out of the fear of supernatural punishment and the desire for a metaphysical reward (Plato, 1955, p. 42). Integrating the effects of theism into the state of nature will result in the state of nature being more stable and communal. Conflict is an inevitable condition of human nature,

theism in the state of nature will not negate that. It will, however, act as a potent force that will help create intragroup stability and propagate institutions for progress that has no immediate value to the individual self. Communalism and cooperation necessitate a level of selflessness. The value of the supernatural reward will help motivate this selflessness. It will also act as a deterrent for private judiciary non-conformity (crime). The idea of God will be the supernatural totalitarian ‘leviathan’ that will create stability, group building, and cooperation. He will also act as a legal binding force that will encourage honouring the social contract. This will automatically start the process of stable and equitable group building who will then go to war with other groups with different notions of God.

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