

Epistemic Security Regimes

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This paper assesses the extent to which security regimes are the products of authorization in the thought of Thomas Hobbes and Carl Schmitt. The Hobbesian security regime offers a contingent construction of security in terms of processes of authorization and brings into view questions about the epistemic construction of security within security discourse today. The Schmittian concept of security involves the naturalization of security through the state, meaning that security is understood as *condition* rather than *regime*. Rather than look to Carl Schmitt's concept of security as the paradigm of international security there are clear benefits in returning to the contractual account of security evident in the Hobbesian account of authorization. Thus, security is not the primary value of political community but the means by which political communities realise their internal goods. Schmitt's security regime is fictive, driven by colourful metaphor and political theology. By returning to classic questions of authorization – how a security regime authorizes itself – international relations theory can examine the legitimation of security beyond an exclusively state-centric model.

KEY WORDS ♦ authorization ♦ Carl Schmitt ♦ contract ♦ international security ♦ security regime ♦ Thomas Hobbes

Introduction

Does security lie at the heart of our individual and communal existence? Recent debates about operationalizing human security and the construction of international security have overwhelmingly focussed on how the content of security needs to be widened to account for the location of security in non-militaristic settings (Paris, 2001; Dunne and Wheeler, 2004). For many, human security involves a shift in the 'referent object' of security away from the state to individuals and, in so doing, challenges the centrality of political violence to security discourse itself (Dunne and

Wheeler, 2004: 10). Whilst an awareness of the content of security – militaristic and non-militaristic – is fundamental in assessing the nature of a security regime what is equally important is a concern for how security knowledges are epistemically conditioned. Mapping security onto realist debates (Mearsheimer, 1994; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1995) and then rearticulating these from human security perspectives (Græger, 1996; Krause and Williams, 1996; Tweeten, 1999) does not satisfactorily deal with the epistemic basis of security within international relations.

Whilst danger is a central component of security this discussion calls for an examination of security regimes in terms of authorization. A concern with authorization is less concerned with the inscription of danger within a security regime (Campbell, 1998) and more concerned with the ways in which a security regime establishes itself as the corporate entity which establishes relations of protection and obedience (Young, 2003). A comparison of the security regimes found in Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Carl Schmitt's political theory brings into focus important questions about the horizon of security today. Hobbes provides a nuanced account of security in which a security regime is legitimate by virtue of a complex process of authorization. Schmitt's security regime is too embedded in discourses of danger (Odysseos, 2002) that it fails to take seriously the contractual dimension of security in Hobbesian thought. Paying attention to the contractual foundations of security allows for a discussion on the role and limits of authorization within a security regime

Rather than look to Carl Schmitt's political theory as a paradigm of the contemporary security dilemma (Turner, 2002) this paper argues that we resist the tendency to treat security as a natural condition of political community. This naturalization of security

in international relations theory involves a neglect of the way in which security operates as a regime. For the present discussion, security regimes are understood as knowledges in which authoritative claims about security and danger are constructed and distributed authoritatively within broader discourse. Rather than treat security as an epistemic community, made of policy experts (Haas, 1992), this paper argues that security not only depends on a dialectic of protection and obedience but also includes considerations of the way in which security is authorized within a political community. In this regard, the Schmittian security regime provides international relations scholars with a theory of security stripped bare of the social contract. Schmitt's understanding of security is too concerned with the authoritative allocation of decisions within a political community that it demonstrates scant regard for the way in which a security regime establishes its legitimacy through complex processes of authorization.

Carl Schmitt's naturalization of security

Carl Schmitt's account of the security regime is deeply embedded in the account of the state and the sovereign in Thomas Hobbes. 'Thomas Hobbes, now you do not teach in vain!' Schmitt declares in the closing paragraph of *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 86). Schmitt argued that the Hobbesian theory of the state, with its image of the leviathan at the fore, has become 'more like a mythical symbol fraught with inscrutable meaning' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 5). In light of this inscrutability – meaning that there is no single, authoritative reading of Hobbes – it is necessary to evaluate how Schmitt constructs the Hobbesian account of international order.

Readings (and re-readings) of Thomas Hobbes constitute an entire sub-field in international relations theory. 'We do well to be afraid of Hobbes,' C. B. Macpherson famously pronounces, 'he knows too much about us' (Macpherson, 1965: 171). Despite Macpherson's critique of the Hobbesian story of possessive individualism there is the implicit assumption that Hobbes possessed privileged access to the ontology of human nature. The following discussion of Hobbes and Schmitt rejects this ontological approach. It develops an understanding of Hobbes which is more concerned with the rhetorics of political communication (Shapiro, 1980) than the scientific or objective foundations of Hobbesian thought. Talking in terms of the rhetorics of political communication allows for a security regime to be understood as an epistemic claim about security rather than an objective claim about security writ large. It supports A. E. Taylor's reading of *Leviathan* as a rhetorical text aimed at the 'average, well-educated Englishman' (Gray, 1978: 201). Schmitt's reading of *Leviathan* overlooks the rhetorics of communication within Hobbes' classic text, preferring to focus instead on the anthropological pessimism associated with *statis naturalis*.

Schmitt pays little heed to the rhetorical contexts of *Leviathan*, endorsing the Straussian view that humanism is at the centre of Hobbes (Gray, 1978: 208). Schmitt is more concerned with the ontological project of *Leviathan*. Casting *Leviathan* in terms of metaphysics Schmitt becomes fixated with the vitalistic element of Hobbesian cosmology (Dallmayr, 1969). 'In the long history of political theories,' Schmitt notes, 'a history exceedingly rich in colourful images and symbols, icons and idols, paradigms and phantasms, emblems and allegories, this leviathan is the strongest and most powerful image' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 5). Schmitt is more

interested in the capacity of political myth to generate an authoritative structure for decision-making than in the Hobbesian taxonomy of the appetites and passions, involving the epistemic construction of security through a complex process of authorization.

Schmitt's opening analysis of *Leviathan* concerns the different understandings of leviathan in Christian and Judaic thought; preferring to emphasise differences in the image across theological traditions than in the scientific grounds of the Hobbesian theory of political motion. In focussing on symbolization, to the detriment of epistemological foundations, Schmitt brings a romantic sensibility to Hobbes's classic text. This romantic sensibility, despite his rejection of the poeticization of political life in *Political Romanticism* (Schmitt, [1925] 2001), wants to stress the ways in which symbols create political order: *the more powerful the symbol, the more terrifying its landscape of violence, the more mysterious its form, then the greater role that this symbol will play in establishing a system of political order.*

This symbol of the leviathan, Schmitt remarks, 'shatters the framework of every conceivable theory or construct' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 5). *Leviathan* depicts the spirit of Schmittian political ethics, embedded in the friend-enemy distinction. 'The political battle,' he notes, 'with its inevitable and incessant friend-enemy disputes that embrace every sphere of human activity, brings to the fore on both sides specific weapons' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 18). Schmitt's security regime is at home in the Hobbesian state of nature, owing to the fact that life in the state of nature echoes the existential grouping of friend-enemy that he confers on the political.

Leviathan and the security regime

So what does Schmitt mean by leviathan? And, more decisively, why does Schmitt read *Leviathan* in terms of the symbolic structuring of state form rather than the epistemological grounds of state form itself? That is to say, the focal point of Schmitt's discussion of *Leviathan* is the strategic role that political myth plays in establishing the conditions of political right. Ideas and distinctions are, in Schmitt's worldview, 'political weapons' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 18). Words assume a decisive role in the making of the Schmittian security regime. They become part of the systematic construction of the leviathan rather than a descriptor of truths, eternal or contingent, concerning the foundations of political order. In linking *image* to *form* the leviathan becomes representative of political order but, owing to Schmitt's emphasis on political myth-making, this *image* does not necessarily mimic reality.

Schmitt associates leviathan with the creation of an order – *civitas* and *res publica* – that enables the production of security via the state. The leviathan is a political imaginary; it exists for the generalisation of political right, but does not constitute political right in itself. Schmitt expresses this imaginary as 'a huge man, a huge leviathan, an artificial being, an *animal artificiale*, an *automaton*, or a *machina*' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 19). These images derive their forcefulness from an indirect power and, by owing to this fact, cannot be measured, contained, or quantified. Their indirectness establishes their very authoritativeness.

A recurrent theme in Schmitt's state theory concerns the demise of 'the miracle' from the public sphere as a consequence of the secularism associated with liberalism (Schmitt, [1922] 1985). The metaphor of leviathan sits comfortably with Schmitt's

yearning for political order that does not depend exclusively on constitutional codification but, in fact, pays homage to the miracle in political thought. Security regimes do not depend on constitutional legitimation but are deeply embedded in rhetorics of political communication. The leviathan may be instituted according to the logic of the contract but, ultimately, in Schmittian ethics this contract dissolves under the force of real life. The ‘full force’ of a security regime emerges when norms are cast aside for the sake of a higher legal order. A security regime is a contingent expression of this higher legal entity. A security regime involves a higher legality that acts according to a political premium. ‘The political premium,’ Schmitt notes in discussing the exceptional conditions of law, ‘is relatively calculable in peaceful and normal times; in abnormal times, it is entirely incalculable and unpredictable’ (Schmitt, [1932] 2004: 32).

Schmitt’s emphasis on the exceptional basis of legality emphasises the inherent plasticity of security regime. In looking to Hobbes, Schmitt’s primary focus concerns the transition of the leviathan away from a medieval image symbolising the ‘demonic’ to its emergence as the pre-eminent metaphor of state form and state authority under modernity (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 24). Schmitt’s rendering of the leviathan as a metaphor means that the leviathan is a constructed (and thereby artificial) form. Schmitt affirms that the person of the state imagined by Hobbes is the outcome of a contingent lifeworld; in taking a stately form through the power of metaphor the leviathan is, to its very core, *homo artificialis* (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 34).

Talking of the leviathan in terms of *homo artificialis* means that although this entity is entirely artificial it nonetheless has effects which are real. Schmitt’s security regime

depends on this artificiality (since the exception is beyond the norm) at the same time as involving the establishment of an authoritative entity which establishes a regime for security. Quentin Skinner is insightful on the question of how the state assumes the status of 'person' in Hobbesian thought. But rather than avoid questions of authorization, as Schmitt does, Skinner engages with the epistemic construction of sovereignty. The leviathan is an *artificial person* and, by virtue of this, Skinner raises foundational questions concerning the origin of sovereignty. As Skinner asks, '[h]ow can such a seemingly insubstantial person be the holder of sovereignty and the seat of power?' (Skinner, 1999: 18). Schmitt's answer to this question is to suggest that the leviathan exists in terms of an image of an artificially constituted, 'huge man.' This 'huge man' is a representative device. It does not exist, or need to exist, at the level of an 'objective reality.' This is related to the Hobbesian conception of a person, defined by Hobbes in the *Leviathan* in the following way:

A PERSON, is he, whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of an other, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction (Hobbes, [1651] 1996: 111).

The Hobbesian account of the person raises important questions about the representation of the person within a state or within a security regime. It results in the following two conditions: (a) a person can be constituted simultaneously through regimes of truth and/or regimes of fiction; and (b) the ontological status of a person depends less on objective conditions of truth but is formed pragmatically in the process of representing words and actions.

When the Hobbesian account of the person is extended to the personality of the state, as Hobbes does in Chapter XVI of *Leviathan*, then the state publicly represents the multitude of persons. ‘The public acts of sovereigns,’ Skinner notes, ‘will count as valid acts of the state if and only if the sovereign has been authorised to perform them by each and every member of the multitude’ (Skinner, 1999: 22-3). Hobbes consequently endorses the covenant as the preferred method of securing ‘Peace and Common Defence’ in the state of nature. Authorization, the process of endowing covenant with the status of political right, is therefore essential for Hobbes. Hobbesian authorization involves the transformation of a discourse of political right away from a heavenly to an earthly foundation (Orwin, 1975: 39).

Within international relations theory Hobbes is conventionally associated with realist and/or neo-realist accounts of international security. Nonetheless, a detailed inspection of the Hobbesian account of authorization results in a more nuanced understanding of the basis of sovereign authority. Skinner asks the following question: ‘Who then is capable of authorising the actions the state?’ (Skinner, 1999: 22). He answers this by establishing two requirements that Hobbes gives in relation to the sovereign:

One is that the natural person or persons authorising the representation must themselves possess the right to undertake whatever actions they intend to authorise. The other is that this right must in turn be owed to the fact that they stand in some appropriate relationship of dominion over the purely artificial person concerned (Skinner, 1999: 22).

Skinner also notes that for Hobbes the formation of the state is a *procreative* act: ‘Just as the mother brings her child into the world, thereby acquiring dominion over it, so the union of the multitude serves to procreate the state’ (Skinner, 1999: 23). Skinner’s reading of Hobbes differs radically from Schmitt, especially in terms of the contractual foundations of the state. Skinner emphasises, quite rightly, the problematic relationship between the multitude and the creation of a discourse of dominion. Schmitt regards the multitude as secondary to the sovereign. Inspired by the vitality of the exception, Schmitt overlooks the problem of forming the covenant and focuses on the political effects of the covenant: namely, the creation of an authority that, once established artificially, need not revisit the initial question of origins.

Contrary to Skinner, Schmitt is more interested in the effects of sovereign power rather than the production of the sovereign power itself. This can be demonstrated in the miraculous account of Hobbesian reason (*ratio*) put forward by Schmitt. His language reinforces the role of the miracle in building a security regime via the state. ‘The terror of the state of nature,’ Schmitt describes, ‘drives anguished individuals to come together; their fear rises to an extreme; a spark of reason (*ratio*) flashes, and suddenly there stands in front of them a new god’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 31). Schmitt’s emphasis on Hobbesian reason as a ‘spark’ emphasises the miraculous foundations of a security regime. There is little consideration of the contractual foundations of security within *Leviathan*. Reason thus becomes a freak event of worldly experience, a shock therapy for the pre-political subject. Consequently, Schmitt is more interested in the appearance of the new god – *deus mortalis* – than its

epistemic grounding in the passions linked to a system of contract. This focus neglects the taxonomy of the passions in *Leviathan*, especially in relation to Hobbes's desire to come to terms with the constitutional physics of humankind (Hirschman, 1977: 12-3).

Schmitt's 'miraculous' security regime

Schmitt's security regime thereby derives its authority from the irrationalism of the miracle. The transition from a *stateless condition* to the *statelike condition* depends on the impulsive surrendering of interests by individual subjects. Schmitt's focus is on how 'reason' is attained against all odds. It is important to note that Schmitt accords priority to the 'spark of reason' before that of consensus. 'A spark of reason flashes,' Schmitt declares, 'and a consensus emerges about the necessity to submit to the strongest power' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 33).

Reason, in being attributed to an unnamed, anonymous energy, is not formed through consensus. Consensus is derivative of reason it does not constitute reason itself. Schmittian reason is subjugated reason; that is to say, since reason must answer to the call of the miracle, which lies outside the realms of humanly experience, then its status as 'rational' is, on the whole, questionable. 'Who is this new god,' Schmitt asks in relation to the leviathan, 'who brings peace and security to people tormented by anguish, who transforms wolves into citizens and through this miracle proves himself to be a god?' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 31-2).

Schmittian reason can thus be described as subjugated reason because of the value it places on the miracle. A security regime brings 'peace and security' because it depends on a higher order which depends neither on constitution and/or the multitude.

Schmitt's endorsement of this higher order is irrespective of its internal and external cost. In the Schmittian political universe, order is simultaneously virtue and *virtú*. This means that order is not just a question of the right conduct that political subjects must manifest in order to act according to publicly agreed norms; but, looking to Machiavelli, order is a strategic tool for the attainment of political power. She who commands the language of virtue – saying what conduct is needed by the state – is one who has dominion over the multitude and thereby constitutes the security regime itself.

Schmitt acknowledges that Hobbes distances himself from the miracle in *Leviathan*, suggesting that Hobbes was essentially agnostical in his approach to the miracle. Contrastingly, Schmitt wants to exploit the political potential of the miracle. The political potential of the miracle rests in its capacity to inspire awe into political subjects. The concern with miracles stems less from a concern with the objective status of the miracle than its pragmatic dimension. 'Did the miracle take place?' is of little interest to Schmitt. What matters more is the pragmatic-strategic dimension of miracle: *how are miracles deployed in the service of a regime of truth?* Schmitt's pragmatic approach to truth underscores the centrality of *command power* above *truth power* within a security regime:

In judging Hobbes' theory of miracles, one should not forget that at that time that question had a concrete, direct political meaning. The miraculous healing of illnesses through hand touching belonged to the province of the king. Healings were considered to be emanations and signs of the sacred character of the person of the king, who, as Hobbes

stated 'is more than a mere layman.' In the struggle against the Roman pope, this institutional component of kingship had to be defended. For the English people miraculous healings remained for a long time an important contrivance of the monarchy (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 54).

Since the miracle cannot be reduced to an epistemic question (*who, after all, can authenticate the miracle?*) the security regime operates more in terms of command than truth. For Schmitt, Hobbes occupies a radically anti-superstitious standpoint in trying to falsify the conditions of political order:

Critical readers of Chapter 37 of his *Leviathan* must conclude that a belief in miracles is invariably a superstition, at best a remnant of radical agnosticism which, in this respect, holds certain thing possible but none as true. Yet Hobbes, the great decisionist, here too accomplished his typically decisive turn: *Auctoritas, non Veritas*. Nothing here is true: everything here is command (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 54).

In reading Hobbes in terms of the artificial fabrication of political order – *homo artificialis* – the basis of a security regime is, in essence, command rather than truth. In directing political order towards an anti-naturalistic standpoint, the epistemic foundation of a security regime is contingency.

Why submit to a security regime which, when taking into account the *homo artificialis* of the state, is by its very nature contingent? Schmitt does not anticipate

this question. To contemplate the notion that people are, on the basis of contingency, free to review their standpoint in relation to the sovereign would undermine Schmitt's very ethic of state (Schmitt, [1933] 1999). Schmitt regards unity, especially the type of order that emerges from unity, as the *sine qua non* of the state. There is, nonetheless, a contradiction in Schmitt's thought between the ontological claim that 'nothing here is true: everything here is command' and the imploration that subjects must consent to the sovereign in the name of peace, security and order.

Sovereignty is thereby commanded into being, rather than being the consequence of a process of authorization. A security regime is instituted not through *reason* but *command* itself. Schmitt accepts that the miracle is a fabrication *in the service of a regime of truth*. Yet he is incapable of seeing how political subjects, cognisant of this political ontology, could use this knowledge to overthrow the sovereign as equally as supporting it. Schmitt cannot see how claiming that 'nothing here is true: everything here is command' undermines the capacity of a security regime to operate without hindrance. If Schmitt were to provide an interpretation of *Leviathan* that spoke in terms of a pure discourse of political right (rather than a constructed discourse of political right) then this would provide him with a foundation to quell dissent within a security regime. In this respect Schmitt provides an inconsistent reading of Hobbes's classic text. Thus, Schmitt endorses the artificiality of political power whilst seeking to sustain the effects of this power itself.

Schmitt hankers after a security regime that although constructed through fiction is actual in its effects. Hobbesian power expresses itself in terms of an authority in which power is always exercised over things. Sovereignty matters for Schmitt for the

sole reason that it enables a security regime to function authoritatively. Nonetheless, since the sovereign proves itself through the exception, it is characterised by a provisional and contingent ontology. This functional ontology – where ontology is contingent on the effective representation of reality – means that sovereignty is experienced as a real, direct political force. If sovereignty is not backed up by disciplinary means, whether punitive and/or self-regulatory, then a security regime cannot provide a structure for political order. This means that *facticity* (the condition of being a fact) matters less than *credulity* (the willingness to believe). As Schmitt argues:

In the state of nature everyone can slay everyone else; everyone knows that everyone can slay everyone else; everyone is a foe and a competitor of everyone else—this is the well-known *bellum omnium contra omnes* [war of all against all]. In the civil, stately condition, all citizens are secure in their physical existence; there reign peace, security, and order. This is a familiar definition of police. Modern state and modern police came into being simultaneously, and the most vital institution of this security state is the police (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 91-2).

In characterising Schmitt's discourse in terms of the fictive basis of the security regime the intention is to demand a reassessment of the process of authorization at work in both Hobbes and Schmitt. Schmitt treats *Leviathan* as the paradigm upon which all subsequent theories of the state must draw upon. The leviathan is the corporate entity which allows for the distinction between friend and enemy to be

overpowered. The leviathan is not embroiled in the ceaseless battle between friend and enemy. To do so would undermine the very authoritativeness of this state form. The leviathan, as Schmitt details, 'shows a god that assures peace and security' ([1938] 1996: 94). Schmitt seeks to compel heterogeneous subjects to accept a blueprint for order that takes homogeneity as a leading value of a security regime. In so doing, a security regime becomes an unthinking process, strategically positioned to facilitate the continued dominance of the state form under modernity.

The contingency of security regimes

Schmitt's theory of the state serves to validate the state as the normative provider of security. To compare the state to a 'new god' or 'mortal god' is to turn *constructed reason* into *transcendental reason*. Schmitt is insistent that the state is artificially constituted: 'Its material and maker, *material et artifex*, machine and engineer, are one and the same, namely, men' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 34). The chief error of Schmitt's account of the state is that in depicting the state as a 'manmade product' he wants to ensure that its sovereign authority withstands both internal and external challenge. This leads to the following dilemma: the origins of the state are earthly, the effects of the state are heavenly. This dilemma reveals a fundamental inconsistency in Schmitt's theory of the state and ultimately undermines the basis of the security regime. This paradox is not resolvable within the Schmittian horizon. Schmitt is more concerned with absolute reason (how reason can exercise dominion over all other forms) than constructed reason (how reason constructs itself as reason).

Schmitt praises Hobbes for introducing into political thought 'the idea of a commonwealth brought about by human reason' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 37). But

Schmitt, wedded to the absolute, is unwilling to consider the limits of human reason as a foundation for political order. Schmitt thinks that human reason can be dispensed with once the state is legitimated. ‘The leviathan,’ Schmitt notes, ‘thus becomes none other than a huge machine, a gigantic mechanism in the service of ensuring the physical protection of those governed’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 35). Schmitt overlooks the fact that in claiming that the commonwealth is the product of human reason also means accepting that it can also be potentially dissolved through human reason. If human reason is to be accorded a decisive role in the formation of the state then, by implication, human reason has the potential to undo this same order. This has important consequences for the stability and viability of a given security regime.

Schmitt’s understanding of human reason is thereby more concerned with the functional contribution of reason to order. Reason has no role to play once a security regime is established. This is owing to the fact that the product of reason – the sovereign-representative person of the state – becomes ‘much more than the sum total of all the participating particular wills (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 34). Schmitt converts each strand of human reason, sprouting forth from individual wills, into a homogenous entity: ‘[T]he accumulated anguish of individuals who fear for their lives brings a new power into the picture: the leviathan’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 34). What is significant about this new form is not that it obliterates the individual strands of human reason, as noted above, but that it authors a transcendental ethic in relation to state form. The leviathan, Schmitt notes, brings about a ‘new god’ which ‘is transcendent vis-à-vis all contractual partners of the covenant and vis-à-vis the sum total’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 34). Human reason is superseded by this new

transcendental ethic which, ironically, could not exist had reason not willed it into being.

This anomalous account of the transcendental state, conceived as the state which stands above and beyond human reason, profoundly weakens Schmitt's security regime. Schmitt wants to tell a story about the earthly origins of the state (as his reading of *Leviathan* attests) whilst at the same time representing the state as a transcendental ethic. This is because the transformation of human reason into stately reason is accompanied by a change in the way in which reason is understood. This can be discerned in the new metaphorical landscape used to describe reason. Human reason involves an examination into the human soul and, as Schmitt notes, is represented in the notion of the leviathan as 'the soul of the huge man' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 37). When the leviathan becomes an entrenched practice, when human reason gives way to procedurally bound reason, then the state can be expressed in terms of a machine. 'The mechanization of the concept of the state,' Schmitt remarks, 'thus completed the mechanization of the anthropological image of man' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 37). Stately reason is accorded a higher, abstract status compared to human reason. The mechanization of the state thereby serves to take reason out of its earthly domain. Schmitt must demonstrate why stately reason is to be accorded a higher status than human reason. The answer, in a nutshell, is security.

Security as dominion

Schmitt looks to Hobbes for a moral defence of the security regime but, ultimately, this defence overlooks the constructivist and contractual foundation of security in Hobbes. Leo Strauss is correct in pointing out that the meaning of the state of nature

differs radically for Hobbes than Schmitt: 'For Hobbes, it is the state of war of individuals; for Schmitt, it is the state of war of groups (especially of nations)' (Strauss, [1932] 1995: 99). Strauss is observant in drawing attention to the different trajectories of both Hobbes and Schmitt. Where Hobbes desires restraint between subjects, Schmitt allows his subjects absolute expression of their political desires via the state. What results is the corporatisation of enmity rather than its containment. The state assumes responsibility for the naming of friend and enemy and, in so doing, turns the political energy of individual subjects in the state of nature into the political energy of the state. The security regime instituted through Schmitt results in the state dominion over all other entities within a political community.

Schmitt differs from Hobbes in the amount of cultural production allowed for in the state of nature. Schmitt works from the Hobbesian premise that the 'Passions of men, are commonly more potent than their Reason' (Hobbes, [1651] 1996: 131). Hobbes is nonetheless adamant that in the state of nature subjects should not be accorded the status of political subjects. This type of subject should be understood as a *pre-political* subject. The state of nature offers nothing in terms of cultural, political, and moral production (Hobbes, [1651] 1996: 89).

Contrary to Hobbes, Schmitt does not use contract as a means to negate the state of nature but simply transforms political desire from the individual to the state level. Hobbes does not talk of political desire or political passion in the state of nature, since this would invalidate the anthropological claim that there can be no culture within the state of nature. Yet Schmitt takes the polemical motivation of the state of nature, in which every subject becomes the potential enemy of every other subject, housing it

securely within the state. Hobbes regards *bellum omnium contra omnes* as a consequence of the libidinal domination of reason by the passions. Schmitt, as *The Concept of the Political* attests, embraces *bellum omnium contra omnes* as the site of world politics.

Schmitt's endorsement of a combative ethic of the state, compelling political subjects to die for the nation in times of emergency, reinforces the Hobbesian political compromise: no protection without obedience. Iris Marion Young highlighted this aspect of Hobbesian statecraft in her discussion of developments in the security regime following on from the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001: 'We have accepted a deal: you subordinate your actions to our judgment of what is necessary, and we promise to keep you safe' (Young, 2003: 226). Yet where Hobbes regards the fear of violent death as the primary motivation for driving subjects into political community, Schmitt treats the political community as the primary value of the political itself. Pragmatism ('the state helps me avoid the fear of violent death') gives way to absolutism ('the state is the expression of democratic homogeneity, which keeps me safe because there is no Other within its borders'). The Schmittian security regime is blind to the contingency of security discourses. Both 'obedience' and 'protection' are inherently slippery concepts. With no formula to determine the perfect equilibrium between protection and obedience it is impossible to answer the following question: 'how much protection do I purchase through my obedience?'

Schmitt's security regime is a value unto itself. Rather than stately authority being conceived pragmatically (where the state acts in the name of contingent objectives) the state becomes its own normative project. A security regime is no longer the

rational extension of the values of political community, reflecting a communitarian approach to security. A security regime is essentially about command. ‘The state,’ Schmitt declares, ‘derives its esteem and dignity from its organized inclusiveness and the calculability with which it functions rationally as a mechanism of command’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 47). By linking the norm of ‘organized inclusiveness’ to political rationality based on the ethic of command, Schmitt links security to the eradication of the Other from the political community. A security regime languishes when the state fails to provide the conditions for ‘organized inclusiveness.’

Iris Marion Young’s observation that a ‘security regime has an *external* and an *internal* aspect’ is challenged through Schmitt’s theory of the state (Young, 2003: 225). Young claimed that *internally* security regimes endeavour to ‘root out the enemy within’ (Young, 2003: 225). Schmitt would not disagree with Young’s assessment of this internal dimension to security. A security regime demonstrates its power by keeping at bay ‘something foreign and unequal that threatens its homogeneity’ (Schmitt, [1926] 1986: 9). Schmitt is adamant that there is no order beyond the state: ‘The state has its order in, not outside, itself’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 47). With a rigid binary between internal order and external disorder Schmitt’s security regime functions primarily at the domestic level. This is because organized inclusiveness and the mechanism of command can only be achieved at the domestic level. Thus, a security regime should also be evaluated in terms of its integrative capacity.

Schmitt’s emphasis on the state as the entity for ‘organized inclusiveness’ involves the production of the international as a site of anarchy. ‘*Ordo hoc non includit*’

declares Schmitt when discussing the absurdity of thinking morally about relations between states, especially when states combat each other in times of war (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 47). This means that there can be no such thing as a 'just war' because this would imply that order exists outside and beyond the state (Slomp, 2006). Hobbesian legal positivism – *auctoritas, non veritas* – creates the conditions for thinking about the conditions of justice and injustice. Consequently, a security regime provides the framework in which normative concepts of political community can subsequently be constructed. As Hobbes notes in *Leviathan*, '[w]here there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice' (Hobbes, [1651] 1996: 90).

For Schmitt, a security regime is instituted at the domestic level with little hope of bridging the divisions that exist between states. Hobbes distinguishes between *auctoritas* and *potestas* in *Leviathan*. Schmitt, on the other hand, thinks that 'it is no longer valid to distinguish between *auctoritas* and *potestas*, making the *summa potestas* into *summa auctoritas*' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 45). Merging *auctoritas* and *summa potestas* together endows the security regime with unlimited powers. By failing to separate *auctoritas* from *summa potestas* the state, as the provider of security, is a discourse without limits. This is because *auctoritas* belongs to the temporal world (and symbolises the technical rationality of the emergent state form under modernity). *Summa potestas*, on the other hand, signals a power above and beyond the everyday. Order is thus a spiritual principle, accessible only to those who possess the inner truth. With authority deemed to be authoritative on the basis of a higher, spiritual order (*summa potestas*) there can be no questioning of the security regime itself.

The consequence of this security regime is that the Schmittian subject is, to the core, a docile body. The docile body involves the individual ‘subjected, used, transformed, and improved’ for the sake of a perceived public good (Foucault, [1975] 1977). Iris Marion Young expressed concern about this aspect of modern state theory when she identified the impact that this ‘logic of protection’ has for citizenship. ‘Good citizenship in a security regime,’ Young noted, ‘consists in cooperative obedience for the sake of the safety of all’ (Young, 2003: 227). Security establishes relations of dependency within a state. Nonetheless, at the international level the notion of collective security is fundamentally misconceived. Schmitt captures this in his claim that ‘[w]hoever searches for his security with another becomes subject to that other one’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 49).

Schmitt thinks it futile to search for an order that is outside or beyond the state. He presumes that there is ‘no state between states’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 49). Domestic order is the concrete expression of political order; international order, on the other hand, is but a myth. Since there is no state between states there can be no political commonality at the international level. In times of the supreme emergency this means that ‘there can be no legal war and no legal peace but only the pre- and extralegal state of nature in which tensions among leviathans are governed by insecure covenants’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 49).

Schmitt defines the space between states in terms of what it is not. Theorising the international in terms of what it is not means that Schmitt does not sufficiently come to terms with the significant ontological questions concerning the relationship

between the political and the international. Since there is no order between states – owing to the fact that mutual security leads to mutual dependency – life beyond the state is ‘continuously in danger’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 49). If this ontology is lost sight of, Schmitt suggests, then a state loses its ability to determine *who* and *what* constitutes friend and enemy. It makes no sense therefore to imagine the formulation of an international ethic to fill the space between states. The only ethic worth pursuing in terms of international politics is one which affirms the functionality (and vitality) of the friend and enemy distinction in international life.

Thus, a security regime must not lose sight of the fact that political reason necessitates the division of the world into *friend* and *enemy*. It makes little sense to construct a security regime in terms of a comprehensive system of ethics or morality. As Schmitt relates, ‘considering the leviathan as a great command mechanism of just or unjust states would ultimately be the same as ‘discriminating’ between just or unjust machines’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 50).

Conclusion: fictional security, concrete effects

Schmitt is more interested in the metaphorical or fictive landscape of the leviathan than in examining the epistemic foundations of a security regime through complex processes of authorization. Where Hobbes constructs a nuanced understanding of the way in which security is authorized within the state, Schmitt presumes that *auctoritas* and *summa potestas* do not require such authorization.

In keeping the substantive questions of authorization off the political agenda (especially those dealing with contract) the state is able to enforce the security regime,

turning citizens into docile subjects: ‘If protection ceases, the state ceases, and every obligation to obey ceases’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 50). Risk builds the Schmittian security regime. But whereas Schmitt thinks that Hobbes has solved the problem of political order (by instituting a legal order which guarantees security) we should keep in mind the way in which risk is contingently constructed. In this regard, we are well served by Ulrich Beck’s account of ‘world risk society’ in which the management of risk becomes the core mission of the state. Schmitt’s need to justify the existence of absolute command within the state, an apologia for both *summa auctoritas* and *summa potestas*, is not sufficiently critical to question the difference between security as a *condition* and security as a *regime*. World risk society thus becomes, as Beck details, ‘*how to feign control over the uncontrollable*’ (Beck, 2002: 41). Schmitt treats security as a condition, something to be attained rather than, as the word ‘regime’ suggests, a network of power relations which determines the conditions under which a system occurs or is maintained. In this respect, we should reject Schmitt’s naturalisation of Hobbesian political epistemology, because it neglects the strategic location of ‘security’ in justifying the state.

A state which seeks to build friendship across and between other states (as distinct from the state which builds alliances) is met with condemnation by Schmitt. For Schmitt, ‘it would be a mistake to believe that a nation could eliminate the distinction of friend and enemy by declaring its friendship for the entire world or by voluntarily disarming itself’ (Schmitt, [1932] 1996: 52). The failure of the state to define the enemy concretely endangers the Hobbesian reason of state; namely, the mutual relation between protection and obedience. This leads Schmitt to claim that ‘*protego ergo obligo* is the *cogito ergo sum* of the state’ (Schmitt, [1932] 1996: 52).

Taking *protego ego oblige* as the reason of state involves the marginalisation of the contractual foundations of the security regime. Christopher Hill's call for academic international relations to open itself up to the *vox populi* can only succeed if the contractual basis of the security regime is scrutinized (Hill, 1999: 122). Schmitt's unidirectional understanding of security looks in admiration at the armature of the modern state – the army, the police, the legal system – but fails to appreciate the epistemic foundations of security. Foucault's observation that political theory has 'never ceased to be obsessed with the person of the sovereign' provides an illuminating critique of Schmittian state theory (Foucault, 1980: 121).

Schmitt cannot imagine security without the logic of the friend and enemy grouping. Forged through the binary of antagonism, his security regime pays little heed to the Arendtian concept of excellence – *aretē* and *virtus* – in the public sphere. Whilst Arendt's account of excellence unduly reinforces the division of space into *public* and *private* there is utility in considering how Schmitt's public political space (the state) narrows the opportunity for innovation, excellence, and creativity. Arendt intimates that the 'public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents us falling over each other, so to speak' (Arendt, 1958: 52). Schmitt's security regime, carried metaphorically through the leviathan, is less benign than the account of the public realm offered by Arendt. Were Schmitt to talk of the state in terms of 'gather us together' it would be to signal the need for democratic homogeneity across a political community. The technology of this political community is the state, supported by the leviathan which Schmitt describes as potentially 'the most total of all totalities' (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 82).

Schmitt is troubled by the fact that the leviathan, the most total of all totalities, no longer commands the respect it enjoyed in the early modern period. This is because the modern state has become a site in which the expression of the political is characterised by heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Multiple expressions of the political undermine the binding force of the leviathan. This means that the security regime is unable to function in terms of *summa auctoritas* and *summa potestas*. The leviathan is now a ‘museum curiosity’ which can ‘no longer make a sinister impression’ (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 82). The decline of the leviathan image is due to the fact that in becoming the dominant technology of the state the ‘huge whale’ was eventually caught (Schmitt, [1938] 1996: 82). The capacity of the leviathan image to regulate conduct now comes to an end as democratic pluralism unleashes itself on the popular imagination. If democratic homogeneity aimed at the unitary expression of the political, defining the friend and enemy grouping without ambiguity, then democratic pluralism withdraws itself from the security regime.

The leviathan lost signals the colonisation of the Hobbesian reason of state by ‘political’ liberalism. Measured against the Schmittian concept of the political the liberal reason of state is weak. Its right to be called ‘political’ reason is doubtful, owing to the fact that in expanding the points at which decisions are to be made it delegitimises the *summa auctoritas* and *summa potestas* of the leviathan. Schmitt admires the technology of power instituted through Hobbesian legal positivism. Yet Schmitt simplifies the Hobbesian theory of state, transposing the image of leviathan directly onto the contours of the modern state. The dilemmas of authorization, are left off the agenda.

The generic rendering of security in realist international relations presumes that there is only ‘one way to skin a cat’. Joseph S. Nye, for example, once commented that it is not ‘very helpful when some realists urge NATO expansion while others deplore it’ (Nye, 1998: 167). When traditions are so concerned with defending themselves against their critics that they neglect the different ways in which political claims are justified then extensive excavation of traditions is, in fact, required. Looking back to Thomas Hobbes and Carl Schmitt should not be regarded as a form of ‘heritage’ international relations (Booth, 1995: 108). The increasing literature on Carl Schmitt demonstrates that international relations has not lost its capacity to generate dangerous, risky questions. Jeffrey C Isaacs famously remarked that ‘political theory fiddles while the fire of freedom spreads, and perhaps the world burns’ (Isaac, 1995: 649). According to Isaacs the professionalisation of academia has meant that theorists have ‘become ensnared in their various disciplinary matrices. Preoccupied with situating ourselves vis-à-vis the writing of Strauss and Arendt, Adorno and Lyotard, we have become puzzle solvers of the problems of others, focusing on approved topics, following academic conventions’ (Isaac, 1995: 642).

Taking Carl Schmitt as a foundation for investigating the epistemic status of security regimes is not an inward looking act. Schmitt has never been an *approved topic* in international relations. Nor does Schmitt present the international system as a puzzle ready to be solved. Positioning Schmitt vis-à-vis Hobbes tests the limits of authorization within a security regime. If a security regime is treated exclusively in terms of danger—involving the perpetual working out of pre-agreed understandings of the form and content of danger, risk and security—then international relations itself

is destined to overlook the way in which security constitutes itself authoritatively through fiction.

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