

Friendship and the State: Friendship as an analogy for Political Obligation

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the possibility of understanding the citizen-State relationship through an analogy with friendship. It seeks to achieve this by putting the notion of friendship into conversation with debates pertaining to Political Obligation. Although a link between Political Obligation and friendship has been teased historically, most notably by Nineteenth Century British Idealist T.H. Green, there has yet to be a thorough consideration of the possibility of an analogous link between the two concepts and the potential interpretative promise such an inquiry could yield. This article seeks to address this lack of consideration by offering plausible means of interpreting Political Obligation through a model of friendship. The article first considers the debate surrounding Political Obligation. Section two then addresses the analogy frequently deployed in interpreting citizen-State relations, the 'family'. Highlighting the limitations of this familial analogy, the article will then proceed to introduce the more fruitful interpretative analogy of friendship. The possibility of friendship between citizen and State is conceptualized in section three before section four considers how such an analogy may be utilized to interpret Political Obligation. Finally, the article will conclude by discussing the benefits of such an analogy for understanding citizen-State relations.

Keywords

Friendship; the state; political obligation; family.

Introduction

To the citizen, the State ought to be 'simply a powerful friend' (Green, 1986b: 203). It was in such terms that the British Idealist T.H. Green, credited as the first philosopher to coin the phrase 'Political Obligation' (Green, 1986a; Horton, 2010: 1), described a healthy relationship between citizen and State. Nonetheless, despite Green's early linkage, the analogy between friendship and Political Obligation has attracted little attention from scholars of either concept. Theorists of Political Obligation have almost unilaterally used the analogy of the 'family' to conceptualise the relationship between citizen and State (Horton, 2010; Knowles, 2010; Martin, 2003; Renzo, 2012), subsequently giving little to no consideration of the interpretative potential of friendship. Meanwhile, whilst recent years have seen a resurgence in scholarship on political friendship, there has been no discussion

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of friendship in relation to Political Obligation.¹ There has been much discussion about how political friendship may be conceptualised (Digeser, 2013; Hayden, 2015; King, 2007; Smith, 2011); the benefits of friendship for understanding relationships between citizens (Wellman, 2001; Schwarzenbach, 2015); discussion of the importance of friendship in the thought of key philosophers (Lippitt, 2007; Slomp, 2007; 2018); arguments for how friendship can help work towards strengthening democracy (Schwarzenbach, 2005) and fostering equality (Schwartz, 2007); the understanding of friendship between States at the international level (Oelsner, 2007; Koschut and Oelsner, 2014; Roshchin, 2017); and even discussion of potential friendships between humans and animals (Wissenburg, 2014), but there has been no discussion of friendship regarding the citizen-State relationship encapsulated by the notion of Political Obligation.²

This article will subsequently seek to give a plausible means of understanding Political Obligation through an analogy with friendship. The article will further argue that the analogy of friendship is a more suitable and beneficial analogy for interpreting Political Obligation than the commonplace analogy of the family. In doing so this article will also seek to make significant contribution to how we interpret and think about our relationship with the State by providing a more useful means of analogous interpretation.

This article is split into four parts. Section one considers the debate surrounding Political Obligation. Section two then addresses the analogy frequently deployed in interpreting citizen-State relations, the 'family'. Highlighting the limitations of this familial analogy, the article will then proceed to introduce the more fruitful interpretative analogy of friendship. The possibility of friendship between citizen and State is conceptualized in section three. Section four considers the link between friendship and obligation as to explore how the analogy can be used to interpret Political Obligations. Finally, the article will conclude by discussing the benefits of the friendship analogy for understanding Political Obligation.

Political Obligation – Justification and interpretation

Political Obligation denotes the sense of moral obligation citizens may have towards the State (Green, 1986a: 13). That Political Obligation is a *moral* obligation is furthermore an important distinction that is frequently stressed (Brown, 2019; Egoumenides, 2014; Green, 1986; Horton, 2010; Mokrosinska, 2012; Knowles, 2010). Such distinction distinguishes Political Obligation from legal obligation, that is, an obligation that is enforced by law. Scholars of Political Obligation are rather concerned with actions citizens feel they are morally obliged to undertake for the State, including actions not strictly enforced by the law such as voluntarily enlisting in the military or participating in elections and referendums (Knowles, 2010:5-6). Inquiry into Political Obligation is thus an endeavour to interpret why citizens feel morally obliged to the State and, if possible, justify such a sense of obligation. As Green articulated in his original treatise, inquiry is not strictly concerned with actions the citizen must legally undertake but with understanding the citizen disposition in which obligation to political authority is regarded as legitimate and justified

(Green, 1986a: 19). Inquiry into the concept is subsequently an inquiry into the moral justification of State legitimacy and the underlying ethos that holds a political community together.

Political Obligation is further frequently regarded as 'problematic' (Egoumenides, 2014; Horton, 2010; Knowles, 2010). The problem is how can this sense of moral obligation to the State be justified when citizens did not enter into this relationship by choice but rather accident of birth? The lack of evident consent to political authority on the part of the citizen has indeed led philosophical anarchists to claim Political Obligation cannot be justified, and any disposition of obligation citizens feel towards the State is a false consciousness (Simmons, 1996: 264). The predominant approach to justifying a sense of obligation towards the State has been to demonstrate it is in accordance to reason. Such justification is most famously articulated in the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes (2008) and John Locke (1998), in which citizen-State relations are framed and explained through the choices of a 'rational individual'. In such a thought experiment, obligation is justified by the argument that one would consent to political authority if one had been given a choice. Nonetheless, the providing of rational justification is not limited to social contract theories but can be found in a wide range of political philosophies such as utilitarianism (Bentham, 2005; Mill, 2008a), deontology (Kant, 2010; Rawls, 1999) and teleological idealism (Bosanquet, 2012; Collingwood, 2005; Green, 1986a; Hegel, 2008; Knowles, 2010).

In the past decade there has been a shift away from predominantly normative endeavours aimed at justifying Political Obligation towards efforts to interpret and give plausible understanding of how a disposition of obligation towards political authority is formed. John Horton notably criticises rationalistic attempts to justify Political Obligation for being too abstract and removed from real life experience. The consequence of such abstraction is failure to give satisfactory account of the relationships within particular political communities. Such theories may give plausible account of the value of political order but cannot explain why particular citizens feel a sense of affiliation to the particular States whose particular territory they happen to inhabit (Horton, 2007; 2010). Horton thus seeks to use a more hermeneutical interpretative approach to citizen-State relations as to give plausible account, not of how Political Obligation *ought to* be justified, but how obligation *is* perceived and understood within particular political communities. In previous work I have similarly argued for a hermeneutical approach to the issue, arguing that we ought to understand Political Obligation less as a 'problem' in need of 'solving' and more of a 'situation' we need to better understand. In *Political Encounters: A Hermeneutic Inquiry into the Situation of Political Obligation*, I sought to provide an interpretative account of how a sense of obligation is cultivated in citizens through their encounters with State power. In this work I maintained that only once an understanding of this disposition of obligation as exists in particular communities is established can we seek to assess or justify them (Brown, 2019).

This interpretative shift in the literature is not without criticism. The most notable criticism of the interpretative approach is that the abandonment of universal criteria of assessment, such as rationalism, in favour of interpreting particular polities on a case-by-case basis could result in moral relativism. Without a universal standard of normative judgement, arguments of State legitimacy could appear as of equal worth regardless if they respect values like human rights or if they maintain citizen obligation through deception and force. This criticism comes from both rational universalists (Knowles, 2010; Vernon, 2007) and philosophical anarchists (Simmons, 1996; Egoumenides, 2014) who insist Political Obligation cannot be justified or discussed ethically without establishing some form of universal moral criterion from which normative assessment of political communities can be derived. The differentiation between the two criticisms being that rational universalists typically claim Enlightenment standards of reason should provide this criterion, whilst philosophical anarchists typically believe that an acceptable criterion is yet to be found, and thus Political Obligation cannot be justified.

Whilst acknowledging the dangers of relativism with such a hermeneutic shift, the stance of this article is sympathetic to the arguments of Horton (2010) and consistent with my position in *Political Encounters* (Brown, 2019). In particular it is sympathetic to the argument that rigid abstract frameworks for understanding Political Obligation are frequently too far removed from the reality of political life. If we only consider political communities that meet such idealised criteria then we would exclude from our understanding the great majority of less-perfect ways in which citizens actually do experience and interact with State power and the sense of obligation which is cultivated from such encounters. This is not to say that objective moral criteria do not have a role to play, namely in allowing normative assessment of ideas of Political Obligation and identifying issues such as human rights abuses and political deception. Nonetheless, as I have argued previously, before we can assess and cast judgement on political communities, we must understand them first: we must interpret and understand the situation of Political Obligation citizens are situated in before we cast judgement on it (Brown, 2019: 195). If we attempt such an interpretation with a pre-existing objective moral framework - if we already have decided what is and what is not just before we begin our efforts of interpretation - we will not be able to fully appreciate the ideas of Political Obligation as they actually exist in the communities investigated as we will not, in good faith, give proper consideration to any idea or narrative uncovered which does not meet our rigid moral standards.

This article subsequently aims to contribute to the interpretative trend in the literature surrounding Political Obligation. It seeks to contribute through analytical inquiry into the most suitable analogy to aid in our elucidation of this obligatory disposition towards political authority, considering the 'family' and 'friendship' analogies in regard to their interpretative potential and implications.³

The analogy of family

The first analogy this article will consider is that of the family, the analogy which is typically used in discussions of Political Obligation (Horton, 2010; Martin, 2003; Renzo, 2012). The analogy's immediate appeal is evident from the seeming ontological similarity between the situation of the 'family' and that of 'Political Obligation'. In both instances one is born into a social group one did not choose, yet, despite this lack of choice, one still feels a sense of obligation to the other members of this group (Horton, 2010: 148-50). This section will focus particularly on the parent-child relationship. This is not to say that other familial relationships are not used as political analogies, indeed the language of 'brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' are common in political discourse. Nonetheless, these analogies are often more focused on ideas of solidarity, equality, and emancipatory struggle, and thus concerned with relations between human subjects (often, but not always, between citizens)⁴ rather than between citizen and State (Puyol, 2019; Morgan, 1970; Rawls, 1999; Schwarzenbach, 2015). Classical examples would include 'fraternity' evoking solidarity and equality of citizens against the oppressive feudal system during the French Revolution (Puyol, 2019:5) and the *Sisterhood is Powerful* anthology which sought to galvanise feminist resistance around common experiences of patriarchal oppression (Morgan, 1970). Equally I will not focus on familial relationships produced through marriage, such as 'wife' or 'in-laws', as we are not typically 'born into' such relationships but form them in life. The parental analogy is subsequently given focus as it encapsulates a relationship with an authority that one is 'born under', a quality it shares with the situation of Political Obligation.

I would nonetheless argue the benefits in terms of comparative ease are outbalanced by problematic ethical connotations an analogous link between family and Political Obligation might evoke. The first and most immediately troublesome connotation of 'family' is that of a biological link between members. Sybil Schwarzenbach highlights this concern in relation to recent feminist use of the analogy between 'State' and 'mother'. Considering the State as 'mother' evokes the idea of citizens being 'offspring' and subsequently of shared biological heritage and 'physical likeness'. Such a notion is more resemblant of 'blood and soil' nationalism than it is of modern citizenship based around shared civic ideas and values (Schwarzenbach, 2007: 242). This evocation of 'blood ties' between citizens can further make the State appear as an organic body essentially linked to the citizen rather than a human artefact. Seeing the State in such a way could evoke the notion that citizens owe the State for their birth similar to how they owe a parent. This could bestow a false sense of gratitude towards the State and create a moral impression that resistance to its power is a betrayal of some form of 'biological debt'.⁵

A false sense of authority and obligation is furthered through this familial analogy when we consider the parental model in particular. It is largely commonplace to believe that the parent should be obeyed by the child because of their superior knowledge and

because they have the best interests of the child at heart. This analogy carried over to the State can subsequently conjure the perception that the 'parent State' should not be challenged by the 'children citizens' who should simply trust and follow its dictates. This misleading sense of authority is a concern oft stressed by feminist political theorists (Pateman, 2018; Tickner, 2001). Ann Tickner highlights how the use of the gendered notion of the male 'father protector' is frequently evoked to give weight and justification to State authority. When personified, the State frequently manifests in the form of a male dressed in armour prepared to defend his subjects. The prime example of this is the striking visual of a masculine protector with sword and sceptre which adorns the cover of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. The evocation of a 'male protector' here is particularly powerful as it implies the State is charged with protecting its citizens just as the 'man' is charged with protecting his 'family'; what the State subsequently carries out is legitimate and should be respected as it is done for the good of *his* citizens, just as the will and actions of the 'father' should be respected and obeyed as they are for the good of *his* family (Tickner, 2001: 52-4).

Such an analogy is well illustrated by a comparison to HBO series *Breaking Bad* where the drug dealing father figure, Walter White, justifies his actions because he claims they are necessary to 'provide for his family'. In his self-justification, White claims his immoral actions are defensible, even if his family resent him for them, because he is fulfilling the 'fatherly roles' of 'protector and provider'. Translated to the State, this would suggest State actions are justified if they fulfil the role of 'protector and provider' and citizens are expected to accept and obey this. Just as White's actions - drug manufacturing and murder - are justified on the grounds of 'providing for the family', so actions like waging foreign wars and curtailing individual rights may be justified by claims the State is 'providing for' and 'protecting' its citizens. Equally, despite the immorality of his actions, White insists his family should feel obliged to him as he protects and provides for them. Extending the patriarchal analogy, it could be argued that citizens should be obliged to the State, despite the level of immorality of its actions, so long as it protects and provides for them; the most brutal dictatorship is justified so long as it provides security and prosperity for *its* citizens.

Whilst feminists have been critical of the 'father' analogy, many have not called for the complete abandonment of the parental analogy. Virginia Held (1993) and Eva Kittay (1999) have argued that our understanding of citizen-State relations would benefit from an analogy between 'State' and 'mother'. Such analogy is prominent in the feminist ethics of care, developing the idea of 'mother' and 'dependent child' to evoke the notion that the State's primary function is to provide welfare for its citizens (Held, 2006; Kittay, 2002; 2015).⁶ Such analogical thinking of the State as mother does have certain benefits, such as expanding our thought on the State beyond security and martial force towards more positive activities such as the provision of welfare (Held, 2006; Kittay, 2002; 2015). Nonetheless, such an analogy is problematic as it relies on the image of a parent with an epistemic advantage over its child which should not be questioned. Linked analogically to citizen-State relations, this again evokes the sense that State authority should not be

challenged. This is particularly problematic due to the degree of dependency which is implied within this mother-child relationship. It is presented that the child is completely dependent on the mother and cannot survive without her, to the extent that the mother becomes 'indispensable' (Held, 1993; Kittay, 1999). This notion transferred to the citizen-State relationship would imply the indispensability of the State to citizens, thus preventing any consideration of alternative political authorities and discouraging any notion of legitimate resistance and rebellion. Magda Egoumenides has stressed this point in regard to welfare issues such as healthcare, arguing that presenting citizen life as dependent on the State gives the latter a sense of indispensability, subsequently conjuring the notion that its power should not be questioned or resisted, indeed, that resistance is morally wrong. In this way welfare policies can be transformed into an 'instrument of dependence and maltreatment' (Egoumenides, 2014:244-5).

Such analogy is also troublesome when articulated in terms of an elderly parent dependent on familial care from an adult child. This evokes the sense that the citizen owes the State its care and support as one would be expected to care for an elderly parent. Such thinking has indeed frequently been deployed by conservatives to portray political resistance as immoral. Consider, for example, Edmund Burke's remarks that the French Revolution was a form of 'patricide': 'those children of their country... are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces' (Burke, 1999: 192). Such emotional language plays on the sentimentality attached to an elderly parent to present revolution as an immoral act. Such misleading language distracts from central important issues of the citizen-State relationship, a distraction facilitated by an unhelpful analogy made between the political community and the family.

This emotional language attached to the parental analogy is particularly powerful due to our association of the parent-child relationship as a 'loving relationship'. John Rawls argues that the reason that the child accepts her parents' epistemic superiority and subsequent authority is due to the fact she loves and trusts them (Rawls, 1999:406). Key in developing this sense of 'love and trust' is that the children experience parental love unconditionally: the child comes to love and trust her parents as she learns their care for her and pleasure in her presence is valued for itself, thus allowing her to explore her abilities with the surety she will be unconditionally supported (Rawls, 1999:406). 'Unconditional love' is indeed a key characteristic that we frequently associate with parent-child relationships. Indeed, Harry Frankfurt goes so far as to claim that the absence of this strong sense of love in a parental relationship is 'so discordant with our fundamental expectations concerning human nature' that we regard it 'pathological' (Frankfurt, 2004:84). Love between parent and child is thus considered a distinctly strong and powerful bond which is independent of the behaviour and nature of its members. Attesting to the unconditional nature of the relationship, Frankfurt remarks that even if his children were 'ferociously wicked' he 'would continue to love them anyhow' (Frankfurt, 2004:39-40).

Whilst such unconditional love may be regarded as admirable in parent-child relationships, it can be problematic if carried over to the State through an analogy to Political Obligation. It reinforces the idea that the State should be trusted as it always does what is best for its citizens, and further adds to this an unconditional permanence to the relationship. This can be particularly troublesome when one regards the child's response to experiencing this unconditional love. Given that the parents' love is considered unconditional, that they will care for their child regardless of the child's behaviour, a child who does not appreciate his parents, or acts against them, is commonly regarded as ungrateful. Such an understanding cultivates a sense of guilt in the child whenever her behaviour deviates from her parents' wishes (Rawls, 1999: 407). Such emotions carried over to the citizen-State relationship would subsequently imply that questioning or challenging State authority is an unappreciative and ungrateful act. The emotion of guilt can further be utilised to dissuade citizens from questioning or challenging political authority, as if citizens should feel guilt for disobeying the State's commands which are carried out unconditionally for the good of its citizens. This is indeed evident in the above example from Burke, as his description of the French revolutionaries 'hacking' their 'aged parent' can be interpreted as an attempt to attach shame to revolutionary activity; the revolutionary attack on the 'parent State' is an activity for which they should feel guilt. Again, such misleading emotive language distracts from central important issues of the citizen-State relationship.

Such connotations of the parental analogy invite the impression that Political Obligation is a content independent relationship. A content independent relationship is one in which obligation is due to another by virtue of the relationship, regardless of the content of particular demands. A content dependent relationship, by contrast, is one in which the relationship alone does not justify obligation to all commands, but rather the obligation to obey is dependent on circumstance (Klosko, 2011). The parent-child relationship is commonly considered content independent, and subsequently evoked when analogically linked with politics. Consider for instance the statement we will all have likely heard a fatigued parent utter to a naughty child: 'do it because I am your mother and I told you so'; or consider the commonplace saying that you should obey one's mother because she '*is your mother*, and therefore knows what is best for you' and 'has your best interest at heart'. Such statements are morally unobjectionable largely because we do believe that parents have their children's best interests at heart (because we commonly believe they love them) and have an epistemic advantage over them: being an adult, parents frequently are in a more enlightened position to know what is best for their children *when they are indeed children*. The extension of this content independent authority to the State is however much more unsettling. It in particular gives the impression that the State simply should be obeyed, *because it is the State* and *subsequently* is in the best position to judge what is best for the security and welfare of the political community, regardless of how morally repugnant its policies may appear from the citizen perspective.⁷

The family analogy can indeed be seen to further imply this content independency in citizen-State relations in the literature on Political Obligation. In his first edition of *Political Obligation*, Horton elaborated on the analogy of the family through the imagined example of a teenage child who has the choice of either attending a party or his parents' silver wedding anniversary. The teenager chooses the later because he is morally obliged to attend. Why the child is obliged to attend the anniversary is, for Horton, 'obvious'. Indeed, to ask why would be 'odd and inappropriate' (Horton, 1992: 147-8). This is a clear example of the notion that the child is obligated to his parents *because they are his parents*. No further elaboration seems necessary beyond reiteration of this relationship. This analogy carried over to the citizen-State relationship thus implies that the citizen is obliged to obey the State by simple virtue that she is a citizen of that State, regardless of the content of the State's particular commands. This is problematic as it creates a content independent relationship in which whatever the State commands ought to be obeyed because it is the State that commands them. This also feeds the criticism of the interpretative approach as it invites a sense of relativism through suggesting whatever command the State makes is justified in that particular community. Hence Knowles' rebuttal to Horton that such a relational understanding of citizen-State relations (and indeed of the family) requires an external criterion, such as abstract reason, if it is to be ethically justifiable (Knowles, 2010: 182-4).⁸

In order to avoid these pitfalls of moral relativism we need to establish Political Obligation as content dependent: a citizen's sense of obligation is dependent on an assessment of particular State actions and commands in particular circumstances. This is a belief which is indeed frequently reiterated in political thought. Klosko (2011) observes this is vitally important as laws, the value of which are unclear to citizens, will likely be ignored. Commands will not be obeyed simply by the virtue that it was the State which commanded them but rather according to how the citizen perceives the value of particular laws. Such an observation is however far from new. Plato maintained that the law as a whole, as well as 'each individual statute', must be prefaced with an explanation of its requirement so that the citizens may accept its prescription (Plato, 1961: 317). Indeed even Hobbes, commonly regarded (although arguably wrongly) as a philosopher with more authoritarian leanings, stressed that, due to the citizen's ability to judge morality for herself – her 'private conscience' – the citizen's obligation to the State is not guaranteed but rather reassessed in each encounter with political authority. The State remains perpetually on trial in the minds of its citizens as they constantly reflect upon and judge it, asking themselves 'should I obey?' (Slomp, 2009:42). Indeed, the very nature of Political Obligation as *moral* obligation implies that it is content dependent, as it is not concerned with the actions the citizen is obliged to undertake due to legal prescription but rather if and how the citizen comes to believe obligation to the State is the correct course of action to follow. Such an articulation suggests a process of reflection and choice on the part of citizens when considering their relationship with the State.

These last points regarding freedom of conscience are important as it indicates a level of citizen agency. Notably it implies that, whilst the citizen may have no choice over the territory she is born into, she does have a degree of choice over whether she will see the State which claims authority over this territory as a legitimate and moral object of her obligations. Indeed, depending on the situation one is born into, there may be more than one State one could possibly feel a sense of obligation towards. Consider, for example, the situation in Northern Ireland, where by virtue of the particular conditions established by the Good Friday Agreement, citizens have the ability to identify with either the British State or the Irish State signified by the ability to apply for either (or both) British or Irish passports.⁹ Now of course, when in Northern Ireland, one must obey by British law. This is however a legal, rather than moral, obligation. It is nonetheless the moral obligation we are here concerned with, and in this there would seem to be a greater deal of citizen agency. This I would argue makes Political Obligation begin to resemble more the relationship of friendship given that who we will be friends with is consequent of a favourable disposition cultivated through shared interactions, interactions restricted and facilitated by the environment we find ourselves in. Similarly, our moral disposition toward the State is not given but a consequence of our interactions with this institution as is facilitated and restricted by the environment we are born into. This relationship, understood as a product of the circumstances of different interactions rather than of given fixity, makes it a content dependent relationship (the relationship is shaped by the particular content of encounters between friends rather than fixed by the nature of the relationship) thus avoiding the troublesome content independent connotations of the family. In light of this promise, I will proceed now to the consideration of friendship as an analogy for Political Obligation.

Friendship and the State

In order to articulate the possibility of friendship between citizen and State, it will be prudent to begin by outlining what is understood here as 'the State'. One of the most popular and widely cited understandings is provided by Max Weber. Weber describes the State as a 'compulsory organisation with a territorial basis' (Weber, 1978: 56). By 'compulsory' he denotes it is not 'optional' to live under the State's rule, but rather obedience is expected from all those who are born into and dwell within its territory. This expected obedience is ensured by the State's successful exercise of a 'monopoly of violence' within the bounds of its territory. As to its particular nature, Weber describes it as an 'administrative and legal order' (Weber, 1978: 56). Quentin Skinner however warns that, whilst accepting a Weberian definition can be useful in circumnavigating the great plethora of competing interpretations, one should be cautious about unquestionably accepting the Weberian definition of State (Skinner, 2009: 326). Nonetheless, Skinner's concern is less that the Weberian definition is inaccurate, and more that uncritical appropriation may limit one's ability to consider different forms political authority could take (Skinner, 2009: 326). Indeed, in his seminal work *The Foundation of Modern Political*

Thought, Skinner agrees that the Weberian definition does reflect the reality of the State which emerges at the beginning of the modern period (Skinner, 2004: 349). As this article is concerned with the relationship between the citizen and State as the latter does exist, and not how it may alternatively be constructed, the Weberian definition shall be regarded as satisfactory.

How then do we conceptualise a relationship with such an institution in terms of 'friendship'? How could it be possible to conceive of a friendship between the citizen, a human being, and the State, a compulsory legal and bureaucratic order? One could of course similarly argue that it is difficult to equate the human person of the 'parent' with the State. Nonetheless, the parent does share key qualities with the State which have made it a common analogy for Political Obligation, namely the ontological similarity of being 'born into' the relationship and the position of the parent/State having authority over the child/citizen. These ontological and authoritative qualities are by contrast not typically characteristic of friendships. Given what appears to be additional distance in nature between the citizen-State relationship and the friendship relationship, it subsequently seems prudent to provide further argument for an analogous link to be considered possible.

Friendship is typically regarded as a reciprocal relationship between two similar human beings of near equality in power and stature (Grayling, 2013; King, 2007). In the classical literature friends are indeed considered so close as to be considered a 'second self' (Aristotle, 2004: 1166a30; Cicero, 1887: 19). A.W. Price indeed suggests Aristotle's ideal model of friendship is the relationship between identical male twins (Price, 1989). The attributes of equality are similarly stressed in the early modern period, Descartes for instance asserting friendship is a relation only possible with an equal (Descartes, 2017: 23). Contemporary scholarship on political friendship has also put emphasis on the importance of equality. Whilst equality in origin – that friends must be equal at the beginning of the relationship – has been seen as less essential, it has been stressed that the possibility of equality needs to be at least conceivable in the future and should be a goal to which the relationship strives (Schwartz, 2007; Schwarzenbach, 2015). The citizen-State relationship is however one of qualitatively different beings – one a human person and the other a political institution – whose power and stature are radically unequal. Indeed, the idea of friendship with the State would fail to resonate with both the classical and more contemporary articulations of friendship outlined above. It is unfeasible to consider the citizen-State relationship according to the classical notion, as clearly the citizen and State are not similar and equal in stature but rather qualitatively different and radically unequal. Neither can the relationship be conceived in the more contemporary sense for, whilst the State may wish to improve the lives of its citizens, it is inconceivable that it would wish to raise the citizen to a level of equal stature.

In order to conceive of the citizen-State relationship in terms of 'friendship' an alternative model of this relationship must be found to the self-other dyad. To achieve

this, I turn to consider the recent scholarship which challenges the simple dyadic model. Patrick Hayden argues that focus on the self-other dyad has caused theorists to overlook an important third component in the bond between friends (Hayden, 2015: 751). In the thought of Aristotle, Hayden argues there are actually two facets to his concept of friendship. The first between fellow citizens of the *polis*, the facet which is commonly discussed and leads to a simple dyadic conceptualisation. There is however also a second facet, a facet which is not solely focused on the two citizens but rather on their relationship to the political community they are situated in. This second facet emphasises their shared responsibility to this public space, the *polis*, which situates the relationship and made possible the two friends coming together (Aristotle, 2004: 1159b-1160b). Similarly, in *De Amicitia*, Cicero discusses the friendship between Laelius and Scipio in constant reference to a third party, namely the Roman Republic which situates and informs their relationship. Again, as well as having a responsibility to each other, friends are also considered to have a shared responsibility towards the polity. Cicero indeed makes evident the importance of this third component by his repeated insistence that a friendship is terminated the moment it endangers the Republic (Cicero, 1887: 34). Focusing on friendship as purely a dyadic relation between self-and-other overlooks the vital importance of the common 'world' which situates and facilitates our friendship. Thinking on friendship must thus cease to consider the relationship between friends as a dyadic bond operating in a vacuum, but rather recognise the importance of the 'world' the relationship is situated in and the common responsibility friends share, not just to each other, but to this shared 'world'. It is thus to recapture the importance of this crucial third component of 'world' that Hayden advocates a shift in our thinking away from a self-other dyadic model of friendship to a self-'world'-other triad (Hayden, 2015: 752).

Of central importance to the triadic model is the concept of 'world'. It is subsequently a concept which requires further elaboration before proceeding further. Hayden defines 'world' as a substantial noun inspired by existential-phenomenology (Hayden, 2015: 753). Key in developing this concept he identifies as Edmund Husserl (1970), Martin Heidegger (2008) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964) who each articulated the notion of 'world' as an intersubjective ontological foundation of human consciousness and experience. Nonetheless, most attention is given to the thought of Hannah Arendt who articulates a more explicitly social and political conceptualisation of 'world'. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt develops an understanding of 'world' as an environment constructed by human beings in which they can meet, recognise and relate with one another; a space in-between human subjects which both separates them but also brings them together. As Arendt articulates in her famous example of a table, the table is a human artefact which exists in-between human subjects but at the same time brings them together (Arendt, 1958: 177). The implication of this notion of 'world' is to shift our thinking away from individual citizens towards a recognition of the durable human 'world' which exists between them and in which they are embedded in (Arendt, 2005: 175). This highlights the importance and concern we must have for this shared human environment which makes our relationships possible.

Subsequently, to return to our classical examples for illustration, one must recognise the importance in relations between ancient Romans, not just of the individual human subjects who form relationships, but of the human artefact of the Republic which brought these individuals together and allowed them to relate to each other *as Romans*. Similarly, for ancient Athenians, we must recognise the importance of the Athenian *polis* which situated the relationship of individual citizens and thus allowed them to come together and form relationships *as Athenians*. In our contemporary situation, Hayden similarly argues that we must recognise and give attention to the 'worlds' which allow us to come together, recognise each other, and form meaningful bonds. It is, for example, the existence of a shared neighbourhood which brings neighbours together and allows them to recognise each other as 'neighbours', thus laying the foundation for any future friendly relationship (Hayden, 2015: 759-760). It is the shared 'world' of the university which brings students together and frames their subsequent interactions and relationships. Without the 'worlds' of the neighbourhood or university such human individuals would not be brought together and would be unable to relate in such meaningful ways. In order to understand human relations, especially the relationship of friendship, it is thus of vital importance we recognise the 'world' which lays the foundation for such attachments.

This insertion of 'world' into the concept of friendship thus shifts understanding away from a dyadic concern between two persons to a common concern for the community they share. Neighbours, for instance, do not just share concern for each other's welfare but also a concern for the neighbourhood they live in; university friends do not just care for each other but also have a shared commitment to the institution of the university. Significantly, this relationship does not need to be an exclusive dyadic bond but can extend across a group. At university one is likely not to have just one friend but a group of friends who are all united by their shared situation; concern for the neighbourhood is unlikely to be found exclusively in two neighbours but across the whole neighbourhood, thus forming the basis of a group friendship between all those who live in the district. Equally, such a relationship does not need be an intimate bond between similar equals but can be a looser bond between less deeply linked persons. Indeed, Hayden remarks the triadic model of friendship can exist between not just close friends but also groups of people including those who are 'less than friends' or even those engaged in 'friendly rivalries' (Hayden, 2015: 759). I might not be entirely fond of my neighbour, or indeed may be in a rivalry with her over who has the best maintained hedges, but we may have a friendly cooperative relationship when concerned with the maintenance and enhancement of our neighbourhood community; I may be in a close rivalry with another student for scholarships or postgraduate positions, but we will be able to form a unity of purpose when acting together to promote the university. What unites us in this cooperative and friendly relationship is thus, not intimate dyadic ties, but a joint concern and endeavour to protect and enhance the 'world' in-between us which

we share, a practice which Hayden advocates as 'befriending the world' (Hayden, 2015: 760). Interestingly, such a notion of friendly cooperation has been considered, not just in small immediate 'worlds' such as a neighbourhood or a university, but across larger and less tangible 'worlds' such as the polity. Schwarzenbach has for instance advocated the activity of 'ethical reproductive praxis' as a basis for 'civic friendship'. Schwarzenbach understands such 'praxis' as the practical activities which are aimed at producing and maintaining situations in which human relations can flourish. She argues that a joint commitment to such practices could generate a sense of solidarity between citizens, even if said citizens have never interacted or met one another (Schwarzenbach, 2015:12).¹⁰ Although Schwarzenbach does not evoke the phenomenological concept of 'world', the similarity of her ideas with Hayden's will be evident: a friendly cooperative bond between many different people, people who may not be intimate or perhaps have never even met, but nonetheless are unified in the common project of enhancing and protecting the human environment their lives are situated in. Thus, despite a lack of intimacy and familiarity, they can regard each other in a friendly manner and feel a joint sense of solidarity as a consequence of this shared concern and endeavour.

Whilst one may not be able to conceive of the relationship between citizen and State as an intimate dyadic bond, it is perfectly feasible to conceive of the State as a participant in the maintenance and enhancement of the 'world' its citizens share. Indeed, we would imagine that the State is a vitally important if not a necessary participant in 'world building'. Consider, for instance, the practical activities which are characterised as part of maintaining and enhancing a shared 'world': the creating of public spaces such as museums, parks, schools and sporting venues (Hayden, 2015: 760); public holidays (Hayden, 2015: 760); not begrudging taxes (Schwarzenbach, 2015: 12); fulfilment of civic duties (Schwarzenbach, 2015: 12); the creation of a fair legislative process (Hayden, 2015: 760; Schwarzenbach, 2015: 12). Many, if not all, of these activities would benefit from the State's support and contribution if they did not explicitly require it. Indeed, Schwarzenbach concludes that the State must have an active participatory role in any environment that supports human flourishing. She in particular highlights the role it must take in educating the citizen body as to aid in the cultivation of civic solidarity, a sentiment necessary if citizens are to care sufficiently for their fellows to actively engage in maintaining and improving their shared human environment (Schwarzenbach, 2015: 12). It is thus possible to conceive of the relationship between citizen and State in terms of a friendship if we consider this relationship as a joint cooperative relationship aimed at protecting and enhancing the shared human 'world'. The State is thus a 'friend', or at least a 'friendly power', to the citizen in as much as it actively participates and contributes to such 'world building' activities. The more the State appears as a 'friendly power' to its citizens, and the more its actions appear to cooperate with citizens in an effort to protect and enhance their shared 'world', the more likely citizens are to feel obliged towards this institution and listen to and follow its commands.

I might conclude this section by reinterpreting Green's first articulation of the State as the citizen's 'powerful friend' in light of the triadic model of friendship this section has

established. In the full passage, Green argues that the State that is perceived as a 'friend' is one that provides safe and adequate housing and education for children. The citizen in turn is one who values such provisions and is particularly grateful to the State as it can provide such services through more efficient and effective means than if citizens were expected to source them alone (Green, 1986b: 203). We might therefore understand that the citizen and State regard each other in friendly terms as they are both striving for the same goal of providing a better environment – a better 'world' – for citizens to live in. Laws that aim at maintaining and enhancing this 'world' are perceived as friendly assistance, and not interfering commands obeyed only out of fear of legal prosecution. Thus, we may conceive of the State as a 'friendly power' to the citizen when it is perceived to be actively involved in the cooperative project of protecting and enhancing the 'world' it shares with its citizens.

Friendship and Political Obligation

Having outlined the citizen-State relationship as conceptualised in terms of 'friendship', the next step is to consider how one might utilise this understanding as an analogy for interpreting Political Obligation. This section will subsequently consider the relationship between 'friendship' and 'obligation'. A link between the two concepts is arguably present in the classical literature. Cicero, for instance, by virtue of stressing the limits of what one is obliged to do for a friend subsequently implies that an obligatory bond does exist (Cicero, 1887: 34). Yet, despite this, certain contemporary scholars deny the existence of an obligatory bond between friends. Christopher Wellman (2001) has insisted that the relationship of friendship does not create obligation towards a friend, insisting that, whilst we may deem it moral or virtuous to aid a friend, it cannot be said that we have a duty to do so. Wellman derives his understanding of duty from the definition provided in Mill's 'Utilitarianism': '[d]uty is a thing which may be exacted from a person, as one exacts a debt' (Mill, 2008b: 184; Wellman, 2001: 227).¹¹ Our relationship to a friend cannot be understood in such terms. Firstly, a friend cannot be considered to have a specific claim right over me, as the creditor has a specific claim right over the debtor regarding the specific money borrowed and interest charged. Secondly, a third party cannot enforce the relationship of friendship: if the debtor refused to pay back the borrowed money, he may face legal proceedings; one cannot however be punished for being a 'bad friend' (Wellman, 2001: 227). Subsequently Wellman maintains that friendship ought to be considered in terms of virtue ethics rather than strict obligation: it should be considered virtuous to assist a friend, but it cannot be considered an imperative duty to do so (Wellman, 2001: 225).

It should however be noted here that the intention of this article is not to justify a particular set of obligations between two parties (as is described by Mill) but rather with interpreting how a sense of obligation may be formed and cultivated in one party towards

another, namely in the citizen towards the State. This article is in a sense concerned with interpreting a subjective sense of obligation, as opposed to objectively justifying an obligatory relationship. Now, whilst I concur with Wellman that the analogy of friendship may not help us interpret an objective contractual obligation that may be enforced, such as a 'legal obligation', it can help us understand a subjective sense of obligation, the sense that to do something is 'morally right' regardless of external punishment or reward. We frequently feel obliged to aid our friends because we regard helping friends to be the correct thing to do, as indeed we may feel obliged to aid the State (by say volunteering to serve in the armed forces during military crisis) because we likewise believe this is the 'right thing to do'. It is this subjective moral sense of obligation – the disposition which informs the citizen that certain actions towards the State 'are the right thing to do' - that this article is concerned with giving plausible interpretation.

This is illustrated by Wellman's example of the friend 'Smith'.¹² Smith visits me in hospital, not due to concern for my welfare, but rather because he has a general interest to discharge his duties. In this sense Smith conceives of friendship in terms of 'claim rights': his friend is in hospital and acts out of a sense of expectation that he ought to visit me. Wellman argues this thinking is incorrect, as friendship does not generate claim rights, and further 'morally discomfoting' as Smith carries out this action begrudgingly out of an abstract sense of duty rather than genuine moral concern. He subsequently rebukes the 'Smithian' viewpoint:

'[b]eing a good friend is not about dutifully performing a checklist of actions, it is about having certain feelings, values, concerns, and inclinations' (Wellman, 2001: 230).

In short, Wellman is arguing friendship is not about performing certain actions a friend has a right to expect from us, but rather an ethical disposition that causes us to feel that we morally ought to help and assist this other person. This is crucially the same approach this article is taking to the interpretation of Political Obligation: I am not attempting to objectively justify obligations in the form of claim rights but seeking means of interpreting how citizens come to believe they have an obligation to political authority. To paraphrase Wellman, this article is not concerned with justifying a checklist of actions the citizen must fulfil but analogous means of interpreting how the citizen may have feelings, values, concerns, and inclinations towards the State that result in them feeling morally obliged towards it. In this sense, I would maintain moral obligations between friends and the citizen and State can be considered analogous. Thus, for instance, one may feel it is the right moral action to enlist in the army to defend the State similar to how one may feel it morally right to defend a friend who is under attack. Both instances can be interpreted, not as legal obligatory requirements which one must fulfil, but rather actions driven by a positive disposition cultivated towards the other party.

It is worth making clear here that I am not arguing that a friend feels obliged to another friend because they believe such obligation to be in accordance with universal moral criteria. Indeed at times we may feel morally obliged to help a friend in ways that

conflict with objective moral standards, creating conflicts in our ethical thinking as we are caught between what we believe we are morally obliged to do as a 'good friend' and what we are morally obliged to do according to objective ethical principles (Cocking and Kennett, 2000: 289). This is an important point that is raised by Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett. Cocking and Kennett maintain that, to become someone's close friend, we must sincerely care for them to the extent their 'good' becomes a criterion for assessing our actions, prioritising this even when it contradicts objective moral standards. To illustrate this position, Cocking and Kennett discuss assisting a friend in moving a dead body so as to help them avoid jail. Although moving the body may violate universal moral standards, Cocking and Kennett maintain a close friend would be obliged to assist as it is giving the 'good of the friend' (avoiding jail) priority. To support this claim, they maintain that a person who is not prepared to stray from rigid moral principles is one who can never form close friendships; a person not prepared to help a friend in such times of need is not really a 'close' but only a 'fair-weather' friend. Equally if we were to rule out of possible friendships anyone who might get into trouble, and thus potentially require forms of assistance which violate objective ethical principles, we would likely have nobody left to be friends with (Cocking and Kennett, 2000: 289). The indicator of a true and close friend is one who will prioritise your welfare over objective moral frameworks, one who will suspend objective ethical standards to help you in times of desperate need. Thus, although helping move a dead body is an extreme example, Cocking and Kennett maintain such a hypothesis is clear indication of a 'true friend': the scenario reveals if our friend truly is prepared to put 'our good' as their priority (Cocking and Kennett, 2000: 295).

Cocking and Kennett's argument is aimed at disputing the classical argument that close friendships must be grounded in universal moral goodness (Cocking and Kennett, 2000: 296). This is not an argument I here wish to dispute, and indeed would concur that it is a very idealised notion of friendship which would suppose our commitments to a friend would never conflict with objective moral standards. That we feel obliged to help a friend even when this conflicts with objective ethical standards also supports the notion that we feel obligations towards our friends. Nonetheless, this example does raise a problem. The argument that we may feel obliged to help our friends even when fulfilling such obligations violate objective ethical principles implies that our friendships are content independent relationships: we are obliged to help our friends *because they are our friends*, just as we are obliged to our family *because they are our family*, and such obligations are not dependent on any further justification. To propose that this sense of obligation we feel towards our friends is content dependent, as this article maintains, subsequently requires further argument.¹³

I would maintain that just because our obligations are not dependent on objective criteria argument, it does not mean they are content independent. On the contrary, I claim that the relationship is dependent on the nature and strength of the friendship. To illustrate this position, we may consider the arguments of Frankfurt regarding human

relationships in *Reasons of Love* (2004). Frankfurt provides an argument sympathetic to the central claims of Cocking and Kennett: our relationship with those we care deeply about is independent of objective moral criteria. Frankfurt discusses Bernard Williams' (1981) thought experiment in which Williams discusses why one would prefer to save one's wife from drowning rather than a stranger. Williams maintains that no moral principle is required to justify this preference, the fact that one person is one's wife is enough. Indeed, Williams admonishes the person who would seek moral justification as 'having one thought too many'. This would appear to present marriage as a content independent relationship: one is obliged towards one's wife *because she is one's wife*. However, whilst Frankfurt sympathises with William's line of argument, he takes the argument further by claiming that even the reflection 'she is my wife' is to 'invite too many thoughts' in this scenario. Frankfurt maintains that the correct number of thoughts is actually zero: a man who loves his wife would instantaneously seek to save her without any thoughts; if the distress of one he loves is not enough to cause him to prefer her over a stranger he does not genuinely love her, regardless of their marital status (Frankfurt, 2004: 36-7). This reduction in thoughts is important as it brings the marital relationship back to a content dependent relationship: the obligation the man feels to save his wife is dependent on whether he loves her or not. If he genuinely loves her, he will save her without reflection, if he does not, he may pause to think over the extent of his commitments. Indeed, Frankfurt proceeds to imagine scenarios in which the man may pause to consider if he really must save his wife, such as if she was an abuser who was planning to murder him (Frankfurt, 2004: 37). Clearly this portrays the marriage as a content dependent relationship as the fact of the marriage does not itself guarantee a feeling of obligation. On the contrary, the degree to which one feels obliged is dependent on the extent of one's love, a feeling which is cultivated through interactions and shared experiences. This is notably different from how Frankfurt conceives of the parent-child relationship discussed in section one. Frankfurt claimed he would still love his children even if they were 'ferociously wicked' (Frankfurt, 2004: 39-40). It is evident that he would not feel the same about a 'ferociously wicked' wife.

I would maintain that the marital relationship conveyed by Frankfurt is similar to that of friendship. The sense and strength of the feeling obligation we have to our friends is dependent on the nature and strength of our friendship bond: the closer I feel to my friend, the stronger the sense of obligation. Thus, a friend who has shared many positive experiences with me and has been supportive of me throughout my life I am more likely to feel a strong sense of obligation towards, even if fulfilling these obligations might possibly involve violating universal moral standards. A friend who I have drifted apart from, or has shown disinterest in my problems, I will likely feel far less of an obligation to help. This is indeed acknowledged by Cocking and Kennett who emphasise the willingness to suspend moral criteria for another's good exists between *close friends*, acknowledging one who would readily expose a friend to danger or only associates with them for personal gain is not such a *close friend* to whom the argument applies (Cocking and Kennett, 2000: 288-9). Thus, although the sense of obligation between friends is not

dependent on objective moral standards for justification, it is not content independent. On the contrary, it is dependent on the degree of closeness and affection between friends, dispositions which are cultivated through mutual interactions and experiences over time. Such relationships are subsequently not unconditional or constant, but liable to change as participants have repeated encounters and interactions through time. The sense of obligation we feel towards a friend is not 'given' – it cannot be assumed independent of circumstance - but dependent on the current situation of the friendship and the context we find ourselves in.

It is worth here pausing to reflect upon the interpretation of friendship and obligation that has here been outlined. It has been argued that, when we enter into friendships, we frequently feel obliged towards those we are friends with. This sense of obligation is not dependent on universal moral criteria; indeed, we may often feel obliged to aid friends in ways that conflict with objective ethical standards. This however does not make the relationship content independent; it is not unconditional and permanent like the parent-child relationship. On the contrary it is dependent on the nature and closeness of the friendship as has grown out of the shared mutual interactions between friends. In order to understand and appreciate the sense and strength of obligation felt between friends one needs to consider the encounters and interactions which have cultivated a positive disposition between them.

To carry this friendship analogy over to interpret Political Obligation we need to consider how a positive disposition towards the State is built. I have argued that citizens will likely regard the State as a 'friendly power' if it appears to protect and enhance the 'world' they are situated in. A sense of positive ethical disposition towards the State will likely be cultivated when the State discloses itself through 'world building' activities. It is here worth considering how Hayden accounts for the construction of friendships in his triadic model. Hayden regards as key in the cognitive movement by which we recognise and assess others as potential friends to be a 'consideration of the circumstances of their encounter' (Hayden, 2015: 748). He continues, 'plural persons are not simply thrown back upon themselves as either friend or enemy *simpliciter* but rather on the context of a mediating world' (Hayden, 2015: 759). We judge and assess friends against our understanding of the 'world' in which we have encountered them, and it is against this framework of meaning that we will subsequently understand our friend. In the same sense our relationship with the State is assessed against its attitudes and policies towards our world revealed through our encounters with its power. When we encounter State power utilised to provide healthcare for us; educate us; rescue us from burning houses or overturned cars; keep our roads ice free during the winter; provide provision for the elderly who can no longer work; and sponsor public works of art or museums, we will likely see the State as a friendly force in our 'world'. When the State reveals itself as such a friendly force, we will regard it as a friend and an ally in the maintaining and enhancing of our 'world' and likely feel a sense of obligation towards it. Such a State's commands

we may obey, not because of fear of punishment, but because we believe them morally just and we might even volunteer to aid it further where we can. However, if we encounter the State through the corruption of its officials; scandals of the Heads of State; failures to prevent crime; or sending people we know and care for to fight in questionable and unnecessary wars, we may believe the State to care little for, or even act to the detriment of, our 'world'. Citizens are unlikely to regard such a State as a friendly force and will doubt if its commands are morally just. In such cases there may be little or no sense of obligation towards political authority and citizens may only obey its laws out of fear of legal persecution, if they do not choose to defy such laws through civil disobedience or even rebellion.¹⁴

I may give a concluding account of Political Obligation interpreted through friendship by returning to Green's original articulation. In 'Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation' Green asserted:

'Let... the general will... come into conflict with the sovereign's commands, and the habitual obedience will cease also' (Green, 1986a: 68-69).

We may replace Green's notion of 'general will' here, which is a legacy from his rationalistic moral paradigm, and insert the milieu of 'world' which citizen-State relationships has been understood in relation to.¹⁵ We might understand that when the State is encountered by citizens in which it appears as a force which acts to protect and enhance the 'world' they are situated in it is looked upon as a friendly power. When the citizen is disposed to the State in such a friendly manner, she is likely to feel morally obliged to it. If however the State reveals apathy towards the 'world', or acts in a way that appears to diminish or even threaten it, then it will be regarded as an unfriendly force. If such a negative relationship develops then any sense of moral obligation the citizen feels towards it will wane, and she may even feel it morally justified to disobey its commands or even rebel against its authority.

Concluding remarks

The purpose of this article was to give plausible interpretation of Political Obligation through the analogy of friendship. This I believe has now been given. The article has highlighted a triadic notion of friendship where two or more individuals will form a friendly cooperative relationship grounded in a shared concern to protect and enhance the 'world' they are situated in. Others encountered are thus regarded as 'friendly' or 'potential friends' when they disclose a concern for the shared 'world'. Applying the analogy to citizen-State relations, the State will be regarded as a 'friendly power' or a 'powerful friend' when it contributes to activities and policies which protect and enhance its citizens' 'world'. Thus, encounters with the State that reveal active concern and involvement in 'world building' activities will foster in citizens a positive disposition towards the State perceiving it as a 'friendly' power. When this positive disposition is cultivated, a sense of affection and moral obligation towards the State will be nurtured in

the citizen. Encounters which reveal a State disinterested or antagonistic to this 'world' will however weaken this disposition and the image of the State as a 'friendly power', causing any sense of obligation to wane.

In this concluding section I will provide final argument for the fruitfulness of the friendship analogy through considering two potential objections. The first objection is that certain citizens may regard the State in a more content independent form, and thus the family model may more accurately represent citizen perception. The second objection is that, even if the friendship analogy is superior to the family analogy, this does not mean that the friendship analogy is necessarily beneficial. Indeed, the objection will be raised as to why we need analogies for understanding Political Obligation at all?

I have argued that the friendship analogy is superior to the family analogy as it imagines political communities to be built on a civic cooperative understanding and recognises the citizen's potential to question and even resist State authority, something the family analogy at best overlooks, and at worst implies to be immoral. The friendship analogy subsequently recaptures the citizen's agency regarding its relationship with the State in addition to complementing and adding to the notion of civic friendship as advocated by scholars such as Smith (2011) and Schwarzenbach (2015). Nonetheless, despite these benefits, it might be objected that the content independent analogy of family still better captures certain ways that citizens understand their relationship with political authority. Sometimes citizens do feel a sense of obligation towards a State which does not proceed in ways that inspire our affection or convey a friendly disposition. Indeed, as David Hume remarked, sometimes citizens *just do* obey the State and consider *why* no more than they consider the principles of gravity (Hume, 2008: 278). Arguably the content dependent model struggles to explain this unreflective sense of obligation, and a content independent model would be more suitable.

In response, I would argue that the content dependent model is still more beneficial in interpreting such an example as it does not just accept this disposition, but inquires into the mutual encounters and interactions which have cultivated this sense of obligation. Indeed, even Hume did not believe this sense of unreflective obligation was an essential condition of a citizen born under a political authority but regarded it as a disposition cultivated by political traditions and customs, noting traditions that nurture affection towards a hereditary monarchy as the practice most likely to foster a sense of Political Obligation (Hume, 1985:610). A content dependent relationship, which recognises the importance of mutual interactions in forming dispositions of obligation, offers inquiry into how a sense of obligation is formed. It can thus invite and provide the framework for an inquiry as to what experiences have constituted this disposition of obligation towards the State, even a State which is uninspiring or not particularly friendly. A content independent analogy by contrast would regard this disposition as simply a reflection of an assumed content independent nature of Political Obligation, thus offering no further insight into the particular situation within a particular polity and no grounds

for inquiry into the particular experiences and encounters citizens may have which contribute to this sense of obligation. The content dependent model thus does not struggle to comprehend such examples, on the contrary it opens the possibility for further inquiry into the nature of this situation.

In answer to the second objection, I would argue that the benefit of the friendship analogy is that it captures the potential to conceive of the State as a friendly and positive 'world building' actor within our communities. This is important as studies of the State frequently focus on it as a negative coercive force and overlook the positive impact it can make. As Knowles remarks, despite the many positive actions the State can undertake, focus on its attributed 'monopoly of violence' means it is almost always the 'nasty' actions – the ability to coerce, fine, publicly shame, exact compulsory service, even execute – to which attention is given (Knowles, 2010: 19). Yet, such a focus on the State's 'nastiness' risks overlooking the many ways the State adds to and enhances our 'world', the many ways it does indeed act as 'powerful friend' by sustaining our environment and aiding our journey through life. This is not to say we should completely ignore the State's more 'nasty' activities because of these 'friendly' activities that it also participates in, but rather to stress that there is this more 'friendly' 'world building' aspect to political authority that we must recognise. The analogy of friendship to Political Obligation promises to capture this. I would further add that this focus on 'world building activities' also helps add to the realism of our interpretation as it is such activities that ordinary citizens are more likely to encounter the State through; most citizens likely experience the State through its provision of healthcare and education rather than being presented before the criminal justice system.¹⁶

This article has presented a plausible interpretation of Political Obligation through the analogy of friendship. This analogy promises to recapture the idea of the citizen-State relationship as a civic enterprise and the State as a power with the potential to undertake positive 'world building' activities; activities through which it may be regarded as a 'powerful friend'.

About the author

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Endnotes

¹ In recent decades the only study that really begins to consider any link between Political Obligation and friendship is Christopher Wellman's article 'Friends, Compatriots, and Special Political Obligations' (2001). Nonetheless, despite Political Obligation being in the title, the article is almost exclusively

concerned with the relationship between citizens and does not consider the relationship between citizen and State.

- 2 A thorough overview of the literature on political friendship can be found in Graham M. Smith and Heather Devere 'Friendship and Politics' (2010).
- 3 It should be noted that, just as this approach does not deploy an abstract or idealised understanding of citizen-State relations, neither does it seek to use abstract models of friendship or family. The article will thus not seek to provide argument as to the extent of one's obligations towards a parent, for example. On the contrary, the article is more interested in the common connotations associated with these types of relationships. Such connotations are important as they will carry over into discussion of citizen-State relations through analogy and subsequently influence how we interpret Political Obligation.
- 4 Morgan R. (ed.) *Sisterhood is Global* (1996) for instance expresses a global sisterhood between women which is not limited to any particular political community.
- 5 Critics may argue that not all parental type relationships need be biological, such as is the case with guardians or in adoptions. I would however argue such cases do not create major issue for the argument against the parental analogy advocated in this section. Firstly, the fact that children frequently feel a sense of obligation to biological parents even after they have been removed from their care would suggest biological links do create an unconditional sense of obligation. Secondly, the further issues with the familial analogy which will be discussed in this section can apply to adoptive children as much as biological children.
- 6 The degree of centrality the 'mother' analogy has for 'care ethics' can be a contentious issue. Feminist critics have suggested the analogy can invite an idealised portrayal of the mother-child relationship (Simplican, 2015). Held nonetheless explicitly rejects the construction of care ethics around an idealized image of the family: 'the ethics of care does not presume the peace and harmony of idealized family life' (Held, 2006:22). In place of idealized family images, Held rather argues the ethics of care must be built on real experiences of mothers; the feminist ethics of care 'takes the experience of women in caring activities such as mothering as central' (Held, 2006:26). Thus, the analogy of 'mother' is key to the development of the feminist ethics of care, however Held insists this analogy must be informed by the real experiences of women and not idealized images of the family.
- 7 It is worth highlighting here that the authority of the parent over the child is typically portrayed as occurring when the child is a child and is different when they become an adult. As Rawls remarks this authority arises from the peculiar situation of the child and her limited understanding (Rawls, 1999:409). Thus, we can expect the epistemic authority of the parent over the child to cease when the child becomes of age and gains independence. This causes confusion in using this relationship as analogous with the State as, whereas we can agree that the child gains independence from the parent's authority, the citizen will be obliged to the State so long as she dwells in its territory. Consequently, if the analogy is implied it would invite that, in contrast to the child, the citizen always remains under the epistemic authority of the State. Also, whilst epistemic authority may cease upon adulthood, the bond of love does not. Thus, despite fully developing her faculties, the child will likely feel obliged to the parent due to this unconditional understanding of love. Carried over to the State through analogy, it would again imply this content independent unconditionality in Political Obligation. Both these reasons, considered in the light of the child growing up, further highlight the problematic ethical connotations of the analogy between family and Political Obligation.
- 8 One could of course consider here also the relevant importance of the occasions. If the teenager should stay with her parents or go to the party would change if, for example, it was only a regular parent's dinner party, rather than an anniversary, compared to a friend's 21st party. Horton does not however lay the emphasis on the relevance of the event but rather the obligations stemming from family

membership, arguing that attempts of justification are 'out of place' and 'questioning is inappropriate' (Horton, 1992:147-8). This resembles Rawls' characterisation of parental authority as that 'which is expected without questioning' (Rawls, 1999:408) and reveals the content independent nature of the familial relationship commonly evoked when linked analogically to Political Obligation. Notably this example is absent from Horton's revised second edition of *Political Obligation* (2010).

- 9 Horton would label this the 'subjective' aspect of an associative relationship between citizen and State (Horton, 2007:12). Massimo Renzo has identified this subjective aspect, given its quasi-voluntary nature, as one of the most important aspects to recognise and develop in producing an acceptable hermeneutic approach to Political Obligation (Renzo, 2012). I would concur but argue that friendship is a better analogous device for exploring this aspect than family.
- 10 The idea of civic friendship involving a cultivation of the public realm is evident in much of the literature on political friendship (see for example Pocock, 1975; Smith, 2011:226-7). Nonetheless, I find the trajectories of thought established by Hayden and Schwarzenbach most beneficial in introducing the State into this relationship.
- 11 It should be noted that there is debate regarding whether the terms 'obligations' and 'duties' may be used simultaneously. Margaret Gilbert (2018) and Knowles (2010) have noted that distinction between the two terms can be made on the basis that 'obligation' is more specific than 'duty' and is directed at a particular other. This is following the influential definition of H.L.A. Hart (1955). Nonetheless, both authors note that the terms have become interchangeable in contemporary usage and thus elect to treat the terms as synonymous as not to stray too far from common usage (Gilbert, 2018:66-7; Knowles, 2010:6-7). I have elected to follow their example and refer to the terms synonymously.
- 12 Wellman acknowledges this example was originally constructed by Michael Stocker (1976:453-66).
- 13 It should be observed that this article concurs with Cocking and Kennett that when one feels one is acting morally this does not always refer to acting according universal moral criteria. When I am helping a friend I believe this is the right thing to do even if it violates ethical standards: although acting against universal morality, in prioritising a friend's good, I am acting *for moral reasons*. This should not be regarded as a paradox, but rather a case in which multiple frameworks of morality make different demands upon us (Cocking and Kennett, 2000:283). Importantly for the article, when it stated one feels morally obliged it does not necessarily mean due to universal ethical standards but can also be in relation to the moral obligation one feels to a particular friend in a particular circumstance.
- 14 This also raises the issue of enmity, as it would suggest the State who is perceived as a threat to the world might be regarded as an 'enemy of the people'. Carl Schmitt indeed can be considered to talk about enmity vis-à-vis what we might understand as a sense of 'world'. Consider, 'each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence' (Schmitt, 2007:27). Schmitt of course conceptualises this in regards to an individual or group of people, not the State. Nonetheless, it opens the possibility to consider enmity as a means of understanding civil disobedience and rebellion. Such an interpretation is beyond this study but is discussed in Brown *Political Encounters* (2019).
- 15 Green's notion of 'general will' needs to be substituted as it is based on a teleological concept of rationality which, when inserted as a criterion of assessment, brings one away from hermeneutic interpretation back towards universal normative justifications of Political Obligation. For the problems of Green's teleological rationalism see Brown (2019), Horton (2010) and Nicholson (1990).
- 16 In understanding the State's legitimacy as based on an understanding of 'world', it may be argued that such an approach addresses the debate between universal rationalist and hermeneutic approaches to Political Obligation in that it provides a criterion for assessing State legitimacy, thus allowing for normative assessment without relying on abstract criteria such as universal reason. Objections would likely be raised that such an intersubjective notion of 'world' is unsuitable as it does not attain to

objective standards of morality and could still thus slide into relativism. Thus, a State that follows a racist policy could be seen to be protecting the 'world' according to the intersubjective perception of a racist population. Without objective standards of morality, it would be difficult to morally condemn such actions. It is beyond the remit of this article to give proper consideration of the 'world' as a normative moral criterion for Political Obligation. It is however I discuss this in my *Political Encounters*. Here I advocate that an essential quality of the 'world' is that it should provide as many future opportunities for its citizens as possible. Thus, racist positions would be seen as 'unworldly' as they shut down possibilities of certain members of the population (Brown, 2019). In terms of this article, I would simply state the intersubjective criterion of 'world' is a promising line of future inquiry in that it may provide a medium standard between abstract universalism and interpretative relativity.

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