

# More than Recognition:

## Why Stakeholding Matters for Reconciliation in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

Thom Brooks

*Abstract.* Hegel's project of reconciliation is central to his *Philosophy of Right*. This article argues scholars have understood this project in one of two ways, as a form of rational reconciliation or a kind of endorsement. Each is incomplete and their inability to capture the kind of reconciliation Hegel has in mind is made apparent when we consider the kind of problem that the rabble creates for modern society which reconciliation is meant to address. The article concludes that more than mutual recognition is required and we should recognise the crucial role played by stakeholding, whereby citizens share a principled conviction about oneself and other.

### Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the reconciliation of citizens with their social world is important for interpreting Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.<sup>1</sup> We should aspire to enjoy our individuality in community with others. This project of reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) requires effort to ensure that citizens can see their society as a world worth being reconciled to, which makes it necessary that there be social and legal reforms to enable this possibility. Poverty, whereby individuals fail to be reconciled and instead become a "rabble" (*Pöbel*), is a central threat to this project. Hegel says that remedying poverty is an "important question . . . which

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970). All English translations follow G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) unless stated otherwise (hereafter, *Philosophy of Right*). References will refer to sections (§), remarks (R) and additions (A). Only references to the Preface are to page numbers in the English translation. As a naturalized British citizen, I note UK spelling used throughout.

agitates and torments modern societies especially.”<sup>2</sup> This raises the question how a rabble might be avoided and reconciliation secured.

This article makes three sets of claims that aim to provide a new perspective on Hegel’s project of political reconciliation and how to overcome its central threat. First, it challenges the view made by most interpreters that Hegel’s view of poverty is primarily economic and materialistic. I will argue that poverty, for Hegel, is best understood as a kind of disposition. Economic deprivation might create conditions for making this disposition more likely, but it is primarily psychological centred on social and political ‘alienation’ (*Entfremdung*). Secondly, this article will argue that Hegel scholars draw different conclusions about Hegel’s understanding of reconciliation by defending two different views: *rational reconciliation* and *reconciliation as a kind of endorsement*.

I argue that they all provide an incomplete account insofar as each fails to recognise the crucial role played by *stakeholding*, whereby citizens share a principled conviction about oneself and each other mutually identifying themselves as stakeholders.<sup>3</sup> While Hegel does not specifically use the term “stakeholding,” I will argue that this term captures the kind of reconciliation project he has in mind. This argument builds off of the important work of British Hegelians, like T. H. Green, and their insights into the kind of problem that a rabble creates for modern society as well as how reconciliation might address it.

Hegel is praised for developing a theory of recognition that continues to play a major role in contemporary debates.<sup>4</sup> However, it becomes clear in examining his project of political reconciliation that we require something more than recognition alone—and, it will

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<sup>2</sup> See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A.

<sup>3</sup> See Thom Brooks, “Justice as Stakeholding” in Krushil Watene and Jay Drydyk (eds), *Theorizing Justice: Critical Insights and Future Directions* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016): 115—32.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995) and Alan Patten, *Equal Recognition: The Moral Foundation of Minority Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

be argued, this gap is filled by acknowledging the place and importance of stakeholding in securing reconciliation.

My argument will proceed as follows. The first section considers the problem of poverty as being about alienation. The second section examines the different ways in which reconciliation has been understood. The third and fourth sections defend the idea of stakeholding as a better way to understand reconciliation and overcoming poverty, including some possible objections.

### **The Problem of Poverty as a Problem of Alienation**

Hegel sees poverty as a significant problem for society whereby affected individuals are “more or less deprived of all the advantages of society, such as the ability to acquire skills and education in general, as well as the administration of justice, health care, and often even the consolation of religion.”<sup>5</sup> This section challenges a widely held view that poverty is fundamentally an economic problem requiring an economic solution. Instead, I claim that the problem of poverty is primarily psychological and rooted in alienation – and so agree with Robert Pippin that the *Philosophy of Right* offers a theory of “non-alienation.”<sup>6</sup>

Hegel’s comments about poverty and how it can foster a “rabble” (*Pöbel*) are often misinterpreted. Hegel says:

When a large mass of people sinks below the level of a certain standard of living . . . that feeling of right, integrity [*Rechtlichkeit*], and honour which comes from

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<sup>5</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §241.

<sup>6</sup> Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 37.

supporting oneself by one's own activity and work is lost. This leads to the creation of a *rabble*.<sup>7</sup>

These comments have created a controversy about his understanding of this problem and its proposed solution. Commentators, such as Shlomo Avineri, claim that Hegel views poverty as an unfortunate, but integral part of any well-functioning market economy. Poverty exists not because it is desirable, but because capitalism renders it inevitable.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Raymond Plant argues that poverty represents an ever-present threat to the potential achievements that a thriving market economy can secure.<sup>9</sup> According to Plant, the solution to the problem of poverty is finding more employment opportunities for the jobless, among other recommendations.<sup>10</sup> Both Avineri and Plant view Hegel's problem of poverty as essentially an economic problem about material deprivation — and requiring an economic solution.<sup>11</sup>

Hegel's concern is about more than the mere satisfaction of material needs. The link between poverty and the rabble is not based on the achievement of a standard of living, but in possessing a kind of livelihood. For example, he rejects hand-outs from “the wealthier class” because it might undermine the “honour” an individual receives through “the feeling of self-sufficiency.”<sup>12</sup> The importance of this feeling is crucial as further passages make clear.

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<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244.

<sup>8</sup> Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972): 148—54. See Sholomo Avineri, “The Discovery of Hegel's Early Lectures on the *Philosophy of Right*,” *The Owl of Minerva* 16 (1985): 199—208.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Plant, *Hegel: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983): 214—17.

<sup>10</sup> Plant, *Hegel*, 224—30. See Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory*, 172—73.

<sup>11</sup> See Frank Ruda, “That Which Makes Itself: Hegel, Rabble and Consequences” in David James (ed.), *Hegel's Elements of the Philosophy of Right: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 160-176, at 163 (“Poverty, as a necessary product of the economic dynamic of civil society, provides therefore the constantly given condition of the possibility of the rabble's emergence, of a social existence without honour”).

<sup>12</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §245.

Hegel defends the individual's "right to live" in his earlier work on the *Philosophy of Right*.<sup>13</sup> Here Hegel argues that "the aim of civil society is the actualization of freedom" and hence our civil society should be a place where we *can* actualize our freedom, which creates the problem of citizens unable to provide for themselves because civil society fails to make freedom possible for them.<sup>14</sup> Hegel claims that "this contingency must be overcome by the whole community . . . Civil society must keep the poor working" to ensure "that individual citizens can satisfy their needs."<sup>15</sup> These comments might suggest that, for Hegel, whether or not an individual is in poverty is a matter of lacking sufficient resources. Economic need might then play the fundamental role in determining who is (and who is not) in poverty.

However, the rabble status includes not only individuals suffering with economic poverty, but also persons enjoying tremendous financial privileges and advantages.<sup>16</sup> Hegel says:

Poverty in itself does not reduce people to a rabble; a rabble is created only by the disposition associated with poverty, by inward rebellion against the rich, against society, the government, etc.<sup>17</sup>

The kind of "poverty" that defines a rabble is *not* economic by nature, but rather is rooted in an individual's beliefs about the relational identities of the self and others. Thus, a fundamental key to unlocking the problem of poverty is recognising that it is primarily

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<sup>13</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science: The First Philosophy of Right*, trans. J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): §118R (hereafter, *Lectures on Natural Right*).

<sup>14</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on Natural Right*, §118R.

<sup>15</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on Natural Right*, §118R, 120R.

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A. See Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005): 202 ("Hegel points out . . . that the rich can also manifest a 'rabble' mentality, in so far as they come to regard everything as 'able to be purchased' [*käuflich für sich*], and pursue profit and personal gain with a callous indifference to the dignity and welfare of others").

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A. Michael Inwood claims that, for Hegel, alienation involves a loss of "individual integrity and independence." This is incorrect. Alienated individuals are characterised by their separation from others: they can live independently with integrity in the conviction they are alienated from others. (See Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 37.

psychological and not materialistic. My sense of alienation matters more than my relative wealth.

For Hegel, all the members of a rabble share a mentality, or more specifically *a conviction*, about their identity in relation to others. This is most likely found, but not exclusively, in people at the extremes of wealth and poverty. Allen Wood says, “The poor turn into a rabble not through want alone, but through a certain corrupted attitude of mind that want tends inevitably to bring with it.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Dudley Knowles refers to the rabble as “an underclass with attitude.”<sup>19</sup> The rabble often suffers from a lack of satisfactory sustenance in addition to damaged self-respect, but it is their psychological state of mind that is held in common — and not their economic status.

Hegel’s discussion of how an individual might find “his honour in his estate” is instructive.<sup>20</sup> For Hegel, individuals come together to form a corporation.<sup>21</sup> These collectives are organized around a trade like a guild and offer individuals a kind of occupational “second family.”<sup>22</sup> Through working together, a corporation’s members secure their livelihoods. If each worked alone, then Hegel says: “He is without the *honour of belonging to an estate*, his isolation reduces him to the selfish aspect of his trade, and his livelihood and satisfaction lack *stability*.”<sup>23</sup> The problem is that a lone individual is more exposed to the contingencies of the market without a safety net. In working as part of a corporation, such risks are shared and my individual flourishing is better “guaranteed.”<sup>24</sup> When I have a clear sense of myself as identified with an association that provides a particular kind of work answering to a particular

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<sup>18</sup> Allen W. Wood, “Hegel and Marxism” in Frederick Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 425.

<sup>19</sup> Dudley Knowles, *Hegel and the Philosophy of Right* (London: Routledge, 2002): 289.

<sup>20</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §253.

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§250, 252.

<sup>22</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §252.

<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §253R.

<sup>24</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§192A, 253R, 254.

set of essential needs, especially if this association has the status of being legally acknowledged—as Hegel says it must—then the self-consciousness I develop as a member of the association gives me a clear sense of having a stake in my society and as playing an essential role in the universal life of my society.<sup>25</sup> My work is acknowledged by law as an essential part of the nation’s well-being.<sup>26</sup> Thus, while our materialistic needs can be a factor, it is not determinative of being part of a rabble – *only possessing an alienated disposition is held in common by all participants in a rabble.*

This reading clarifies a widespread misunderstanding about two issues. The first is that a rabble does *not* live in bare poverty alone. Instead, it is clear that the rabble can include the poorest as well as the very wealthy. A second, related misinterpretation is that economic conditions can spark the creation of a rabble by themselves. On the contrary, we see that Hegel does not support this determinist view of poverty whereby economic conditions alone are to blame whenever a rabble might emerge.

The relative lack of wealth and resources do not define a rabble — while they may often be associated with it, they are not held in common by all who are part of a rabble. Instead, we can see that their poverty is found in the shared conviction that they are alienated from a society cut-off from them and controlled by others. The presence or absence of a conviction about one’s relational identity with others is central to determining whether or not someone identifies as an alienated member of a rabble.

This conviction can be forged through labour. Hegel is clear that the rabble lack “that feeling of right, integrity and honour which comes from supporting oneself by one’s own activity.”<sup>27</sup> The absence of this feeling “leads to the creation of a *rabble*.”<sup>28</sup> The individual

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<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §253R.

<sup>26</sup> My thanks to Ardis Collins for suggesting this argument.

<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244.

achieves self-sufficiency through labour not for its own sake, but in pursuit of “the principle of civil society” and the development of right.<sup>29</sup> In this way, the individuality and particularity of a person’s work can be transformed into something universal and belonging to principles that connect people to each other in a shared system.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the “poverty” that a rabble possesses is primarily not a lack of resources, but a lack of connectedness with others – it is an absence of being reconciled and at home in the state. In short, Hegel understands poverty primarily as a psychological state of mind (a poverty of recognition) and not a material condition (economic poverty). Everyone in a rabble might not be poor, but they all share a sense of separation and alienation from their society. Hegel says that the rabble might not only lack work, but fail “to *feel* and *enjoy* the wider freedoms, and particularly the spiritual advantages, of civil society.”<sup>31</sup> This lack of feeling and the “inward rebellion” it provokes is what transforms individuals into a rabble.<sup>32</sup>

Those suffering in economic poverty are likely to not be reconciled where the social rules and norms in the state appear distant and alien to them. It is easy to imagine the difficulty someone homeless might have in seeing himself or herself reflected in institutions governing the possession of property – and the rights enjoyed by those employed in their workplace – when that individual lacks ownership or meaningful employment. A poverty arising from economic need does not determine whether someone will feel alienated when looking at their relation to society as disconnected, but it can, understandably, make such a conviction more likely. Therefore, not everyone who is economically poor shares the psychological poverty of recognition – and so we should distinguish between the rabble and

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<sup>28</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244.

<sup>29</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §245.

<sup>30</sup> My thanks to Ardis Collins for suggesting this point.

<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §243.

<sup>32</sup> See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§243, 244, 244A.



those who are poor even if there may be substantial overlap between these two separate groups.<sup>33</sup>

Next we should consider the very wealthy as members of a rabble, or what we might call the “rich rabble.” Their extreme wealth can risk influencing their sense of being reconciled to a political community with others much less affluent than themselves. The rich rabble can view society as an other with rules and norms applicable only to those of lesser material means. The rich rabble may perceive their social and political exceptionality because of their vast wealth relative to others — which, in turn, fuels their psychological sense of disconnection from others in their community. Such individuals will not be reconciled to their community and see themselves at home in its institutions. Their affluence does not determine whether they lack such a conviction, but it can – as with economic poverty – render it more likely. In either case, the fundamental poverty in question concerns a conviction about being reconciled and not their relative economic wealth.

We should likewise distinguish between those who are very wealthy from the rabble even if there may be substantial overlap here too. Being poor or very wealthy is no guarantee of rabble membership, but having a conviction of myself being alienated from the rest of my community is such a guarantee – *whatever that individual’s relative wealth*. The rabble’s membership is open to all even if its members are derived primarily from those at the extreme ends of wealth and its lack.

So, the rabble is not a single, social group. Neither exclusively very poor nor rich, the individuals who form a rabble are not a unified membership. They are united only in a belief

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<sup>33</sup> Hegel says: “In England, even the poorest man believes he has his rights, this differs from what the poor are content with in other countries. Poverty in itself does not reduce people to a rabble” (*Philosophy of Right*, §244A). This passage makes clear that it is not poverty, but a disposition of mind that may be often associated with, but not reducible to, poverty that makes the difference between non-rabble and rabble. Hegel does not believe everyone in poverty is part of a rabble or *vice versa*.

of disconnection between the self and the wider social and political society. How rabble members either very poor or rich might react in such circumstances could be very different from one another. While neither is reconciled, the very poor might be much less content bordering on revolutionary about their perceived position given their desperate material needs than others like the very rich who be more content with their understood position.

Clarifying the misunderstandings about why the rabble is a problem for reconciliation sheds light on the possibility of its being overcome. The members of a rabble lack a conviction of connectedness with others and perceive themselves to be isolated from other members of the community. They might feel separated from their community despite living in relative close physical proximity. At issue is not the material space that might bring them together with others in a rabble, but the psychological space where any barriers can be overcome through reconciliation.<sup>34</sup>

The consequence is that the common interpretation of poverty in the *Philosophy of Right* as an economic problem of materialistic needs requiring an economic solution is incorrect. Material factors might make it more likely that someone may share the disposition of alienated disconnection from others that is fundamental to the rabble, but *economic circumstances does not determine the rabble's membership*. Likewise, meaningful employment may help those rabble in economic poverty become reconnected with others, but what matters most is whether their disposition changes and not exactly how much they might earn relative to others. The problem of poverty is – at its heart – a problem of alienation requiring a solution related to one's psychological convictions about how he or she is engaged in relations to others within the community.

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<sup>34</sup> To emphasise: material, as well as economic considerations are contributing factors for poverty. The essential point is that, for Hegel, they do not operate as the primary factor that determines whether or not someone is in a state of poverty.

For Hegel, the opposite of being alienated socially and politically is being reconciled to one's social and political world. If individuals are to free themselves from rabble membership, then they must become reconciled – and the requisite understanding of reconciliation involves a transformation of conscience.<sup>35</sup> We do not only understand the world in a particular way, but do so with a conviction that helps us avoid “the disposition associated with poverty” that afflicts the alienated.<sup>36</sup>

### **Hegel on reconciliation: two approaches**

Hegel's problem of poverty is a problem of alienation – and, for Hegel, the opposite of alienation is reconciliation. So a key to unlocking the problem of poverty is to provide a solution in the form of reconciliation. However, while Hegel scholars generally accept that recognition is important for Hegel's political philosophy, they disagree about how recognition is related to reconciliation within the state.

In this section, I identify two different interpretations of reconciliation found in the literature. I call these *rational reconciliation* and *reconciliation as an endorsement*.<sup>37</sup> These interpretations are not just different perspectives; they also lead to different conclusions about what it means to be reconciled. This section surveys these competing approaches to understanding reconciliation in order to map this theoretical terrain and expose the inadequacy of each for overcoming the problem of alienation.

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<sup>35</sup> For an outstanding examination of Hegel on matters of conscience that I endorse, see Dean Moyar, *Hegel's Conscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A.

<sup>37</sup> To be clear, this distinction – *rational reconciliation* versus *reconciliation as an endorsement* – is bespoke and not how Hegel commentators have distinguished their own interpretations before. One aim of this section is to indicate that there are broadly two different interpretations of reconciliation in the literature. A second aim is to indicate their inadequacy for overcoming alienation.

### ***Rational reconciliation***

Reconciliation is most often interpreted as a form of *rational reconciliation*. This perspective is expressed by a diverse group of commentators, including Robert Pippin, John Rawls and Allen Wood. For example, Wood argues:

Hegel seeks to overcome alienation by rationally reconciling us to the world, comprehending a divine reason, akin to our own, immanent in it. Few of Hegel's readers today find it natural to adopt rational theodicy as their fundamental relation to their cultural predicament. Accordingly, they should be more willing than he was to consider Hegel's conception of the vocation of modern individuals and its fulfilment in the modern state in their practical meaning—as a project in rational ethics.<sup>38</sup>

Individuals become reconciled to their social world only after sufficiently comprehending its rational composition. Hegel claims that the mutual recognition between self and other is possible where each understands his or her self as a rational being, following Wood, that is “capable of acting on principles that are universally valid for all selves” that share the same rational nature.<sup>39</sup> Recognition in modernity is therefore “inherently reciprocal in character” because “it is simultaneously to claim the same status for all other persons.”<sup>40</sup>

Reason serves a twofold purpose. It can discern distinctions between subject and object as well as between oneself and another; but reason can also reveal their unity. Charles Taylor claims that reconciliation is where we rise above opposition “and see the greater rational necessity” that dispels divisions.<sup>41</sup> Reconciliation is achieved where we comprehend concepts in their difference and unity. This requires that the “individual must ultimately come

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<sup>38</sup> Allen W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 8 (cited in Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy*, 5).

<sup>39</sup> Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, 91.

<sup>40</sup> Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, 114.

<sup>41</sup> See Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 14, 42.

to see himself as the vehicle of universal reason” because reason is the instrument through which reconciliation is possible.<sup>42</sup>

Rawls shares this broadly rationalist view of Hegel’s project. For him, Hegel’s political philosophy aims “to grasp the social world in thought and to express it in a form in which it can be seen by us to be *rational*.”<sup>43</sup> We become reconciled through comprehending the rationality within our social world, “gaining insight into its true nature as *rational*.”<sup>44</sup> This should be undertaken “with care” to avoid the constant danger our judgement might be exercised “corruptly as a defence of an unjust and unworthy status quo.”<sup>45</sup>

The rational reconciliation approach interprets reconciliation as an achievement in which we comprehend the world’s intelligibility. We are to understand the rationality of the world, and it liberates us: literally, the truth about our social world can set us free. “The point of philosophy for Hegel,” says Robert Pippin, “is to comprehend the world, not to change it.”<sup>46</sup> This is not a change in attitude, but a kind of intellectual attainment.

For example, Pippin observes that Hegel to some extent “is rehearsing the oldest and original premise of ancient rationalism, that *to be is to be intelligible*.”<sup>47</sup> Pippin argues that we should not treat Hegel’s theories about recognition and reconciliation “as about a key element in the realization of human freedom” as if “being-loved, being-respected and being-esteemed were necessary constituents of a free life.”<sup>48</sup> This is because according to Pippin the issue for Hegel “is not in any conventional sense a psychological one, even primarily a matter

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<sup>42</sup> Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, 51.

<sup>43</sup> John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Barbara Herman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000): 331—32.

<sup>44</sup> Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, 334.

<sup>45</sup> John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 2001): 4.

<sup>46</sup> Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy*, 272.

<sup>47</sup> Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy*, 49.

<sup>48</sup> Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy*, 183.

of psychological harm.”<sup>49</sup> Reconciliation is not a psychological state, but an activity of practical reasoning.

### ***Reconciliation as an endorsement***

A second approach builds off the first. It claims reconciliation is not only rational, but a particular type of endorsement. This is exemplified in a work by Michael Hardimon. He argues that “Hegel sought to enable the people of the nineteenth century to overcome their alienation from the central social institutions—the family, civil society, and the state—and come to “be at home” with them” in a “project of reconciliation.”<sup>50</sup> Hardimon claims that Hegelian reconciliation is attained where individuals can support their social and political institutions: “Until and unless one endorses the social world in which one lives, one has not attained reconciliation. Reconciled individuals endorse their social world.”<sup>51</sup>

This does not require that we support the status quo. Hegel is clear that there is often a gap between the social world as it is found and how it should be to warrant our endorsement.<sup>52</sup> Hegel says: “The state is not a work of art; it exists in the world, and hence in the sphere of arbitrariness, contingency, and error, and bad behaviour may disfigure it in many respects.”<sup>53</sup> For Hardimon, Hegel understands the reconciliation of individuals with their social institutions as a result of their deserved endorsement and not a result of

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<sup>49</sup> Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*, 183.

<sup>50</sup> Michael O. Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 1.

<sup>51</sup> Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy*, 25.

<sup>52</sup> This is illustrated by Hegel's famous *Doppelsatz*—that “What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational” (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 20). This idea suggests controversially that things only exist insofar as their essences become manifest. It helps confirm Hegel's distinction between the social world as it is found and this world as it should be where the latter is more real, or “actual.” See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part 1 of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991): §6R.

<sup>53</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §258A.

resignation: “Philosophy is . . . not consolation; it is more; it reconciles.”<sup>54</sup> We can only be reconciled to suitably appropriate social institutions that gain our support.

Although this does not require us to think that “everything is wonderful,” it does require us to find our social world a place that we can endorse nonetheless.<sup>55</sup> Hegel says:

To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to delight in the present—this rational insight is the reconciliation with actuality which philosophy grants to those who have received the inner call to comprehend, to preserve their subjective freedom in the realm of the substantial, and at the same time to stand with their subjective freedom not in a particular and contingent situation, but in what has being in and for itself.<sup>56</sup>

According to Hardimon, reconciliation requires acceptance of ‘melancholy’, that our institutions can be endorsed despite their flaws.<sup>57</sup> Reconciliation is achieved when we are satisfied with, but not resigned to our social world.<sup>58</sup> This is possible when we realise that the pursuit of our individuality can be conducted satisfactorily through our being members of a community.<sup>59</sup>

So the differences between understanding Hegel’s project of reconciliation as a kind of rational reconciliation versus reconciliation as an endorsement is as follows. The former believes reconciliation is achieved through intelligibility: if I can discern the rationality of my social world, then I may be reconciled to it. The second view believes that reconciliation requires not only our comprehending this rationality, but also our relating to it with some

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<sup>54</sup> Hardimon, *Hegel’s Social Philosophy*, 87—89 (citing Hegel’s introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*).

<sup>55</sup> Hardimon, *Hegel’s Social Philosophy*, 89.

<sup>56</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Hardimon, *Hegel’s Social Philosophy*, 90.

<sup>58</sup> See Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, 331.

<sup>59</sup> See Hardimon, *Hegel’s Social Philosophy*, 145.

degree of acceptance, even if also with some sense of melancholy. We are reconciled when we endorse the intelligibility of our social world.

### *Preliminary conclusions*

This survey aims to reveal some of the different interpretations available for explaining Hegel's project of reconciliation. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but indicative of the diversity of leading views.<sup>60</sup> Nor do I argue that these contrasting approaches to understanding Hegel's comments about reconciliation lack overlap with each other. Instead, they develop dissimilar perspectives by providing a different emphasis in each case. Rational reconciliation might accept the view that reconciliation achieved through reason is a form of acceptance. While discussing Hegel's claim that "when we look at the world rationally, the world looks rationally back," Rawls claims that Hegel "seeks for us reconciliation . . . that is, we are to accept and affirm our social world positively, not merely to be resigned to it."<sup>61</sup> We may not want to choose sides given the scope for overlap.

If reconciliation is supposed to solve the problem of poverty as a problem of alienation, then rational reconciliation is inadequate. Recall this statement: "The point of philosophy for Hegel," says Robert Pippin, "is to comprehend the world, not to change it."<sup>62</sup> However, to leave the rabble it is important not only to see the world differently intellectually, but also to possess psychologically a different perspective about the self and others. In short, a kind of psychological disposition changes the world for us. A rational reconciliation is insufficiently transformative – our comprehending how society works is no

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<sup>60</sup> Additional approaches might emphasize the sociality central to reconciliation. (See Frederick Neuhauser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*, 272.



guarantee of our seeing ourselves as being an integrated part of the society.<sup>63</sup> The difference is not in intellectual comprehension, but in our internal convictions about our connectedness to others. Interpreting reconciliation as “rational reconciliation” is therefore inadequate.

Reconciliation as an endorsement might appear the better approach. The question is whether or not an individual overcomes alienation when he or she accepts or endorses the social world. It is clear that a failure to accept or endorse the social world may well be a part of having the disposition of alienation. But it is not clear that acceptance of the social world is sufficient. Since this form of reconciliation is grounded in an intellectual affirmation, it may lack psychological conviction.

In other words, overcoming alienation is a matter of winning over hearts and minds – and reconciliation as an endorsement seems connected more to a state of mind rather than a state of the heart. For example, many people might accept, even endorse, their political community and its democratic institutions. This is no guarantee that this will prevent the widespread feeling of being alienated from political decision-making so that a large number of citizens do not show up to vote or become politically inactive.<sup>64</sup> Alienation can arise even where we accept social and political institutions, if we feel disconnected, have a sense of being separated, from them.

Our endorsement must include a conviction about self and other indicative of possessing a certain psychological disposition. It is one thing to be mutually recognised as a fellow citizen and endorse this formal equality, but it is another thing to have the conviction that this recognition forms an important part of one’s identity. Not any kind of endorsement is sufficient – and Hardimon’s understanding of reconciliation as an endorsement is to some

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<sup>63</sup> See the “The idea of stakeholding” section below.

<sup>64</sup> I do not want to suggest that to not be alienated an individual must become politically active and vote. The example is only meant to illustrate one possible sense of alienation.

degree incomplete or unclear requiring our going further to incorporate some sense of conviction as a requirement for overcoming alienation. Otherwise, this view cannot offer us a way out of Hegel's problem of poverty.

While we might each be inclined to emphasise different features in Hegel's account as important, the broad contours of each of these interpretive approaches to his project of reconciliation – e.g., rational reconciliation and reconciliation as an endorsement – share a common core of understandings that is generally uncontroversial: the importance of reason in Hegel's analysis, and the idea that a rational world—while there will be disagreement about the specific features of such a community—is a place worthy of our acceptance.

Whether we defend this common core or the different forms of emphasis each provides, both views of reconciliation leave open an important gap rendering their account of Hegel's project of reconciliation incomplete. What is missing is the idea that to be reconciled is not only to comprehend a form of rationality or to accept the social world without resignation, but the claim that reconciliation requires an individual to possess a psychological conviction that one has *a stake* in that society.

In brief, to be reconciled is to conceive of myself *as a stakeholder* at home in my society, or so I will argue in the next section. I build the case for locating stakeholding in Hegel's account by revealing why alienation is understood as a problem. This discussion aims to highlight how alienation might be overcome and how the important role that stakeholding and personal identity play in this development becomes clearer within Hegel's project of reconciliation.

## **Reconciliation and stakeholding**

As we have seen, Hegel claims that alienation is not determined by our circumstances even if this may influence our sense of connectedness between oneself and others. Alienation is characterised not by our material well-being, but our disposition – and it is clear that the rabble’s “inward rebellion” against society can be based on a failure to comprehend the rationality of our institutions.<sup>65</sup> Our comprehension of the world is linked with our attitudinal disposition: to have the one is to have the other, and if we are alienated from our political world this is reflected into our understanding of our position. Yet it remains crucial that we recognise that Hegel’s project of reconciliation is not only about a state of mind, but a state of heart. Being reconciled means seeing the world and our place within it in a particular way.

It is insufficient that I merely *comprehend* a certain state of affairs, but that I adopt a psychological *attitude* about my understanding and self-identity being a unity with. Likewise, the reconciliation as an endorsement perspective requires our satisfaction in accepting rational social institutions, but neither our endorsement nor mere acceptance can guard sufficiently against the danger of alienation as pointed out in the previous section.

In this section, I argue that stakeholding can help us better understand why alienation is a problem and the kind of conviction that reconciliation should include. This contemporary terminology is not used by Hegel because it arose much later, in the 1980s, and associated with the literature focused on business ethics and corporate governance.<sup>66</sup> While it is important to set out how stakeholding has been understood in that literature, I argue that the concept has clear relevance for identifying a necessary feature of Hegelian reconciliation if it is to be the antidote to the problem of poverty.

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<sup>65</sup> See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A.

<sup>66</sup> For example, see R. Edward Freeman, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (Boston: Pitman, 1984) and Will Hutton, *The State We’re In* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995).

### *The idea of stakeholding*

In this corporate context, stakeholding concerns securing accountability through transparency.<sup>67</sup> This approach understood business to be more than a machine for profit creation and for seeking as much wealth as possible. The idea is that corporate members should be seen as *stakeholders* where each has a stake in collective decision-making, and act as partners engaged in a joint enterprise for mutual benefit. For many, stakeholding is more than a model for improving business management.<sup>68</sup> It illustrates how a new centre-left view of economic justice might be forged in the future.<sup>69</sup>

The concept of stakeholding can be removed from its original setting and application within corporate governance to provide a useful way of understanding ethics beyond the business framework. At its fundamental core, stakeholding is a principled conviction about partner relations and shared identity. This *ethical* sense of stakeholding is of importance for us and not the neoliberal models that are traditionally used in discussing stakeholding.<sup>70</sup> This concept develops from the principle that *those who have a stake in outcomes should have a say about them*.<sup>71</sup> Stakeholders in a business are in a kind of partnership where each person has a stake in how the business is sustained, and they shape its future together. This requires that each person not only *possess* a stake in outcomes and a say in their determination, but also the *conviction* that each member is recognized as participating in a shared identity as stakeholders.

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<sup>67</sup> See R. Edward Freeman, Jeffrey S. Harrison, Andrew C. Wicks, Bidhan L. Parmar and Simone de Colle, *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> See R. Edward Freeman, Jeffrey S. Harrison and Andrew C. Wicks, *Managing for Stakeholders: Survival, Reputation, and Success* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> See Stuart White, "New Labour and the Politics of Ownership" in Patrick Diamond and Michael Kenny (eds), *Reassessing New Labour: Market, State and Society under Blair and Brown* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011): 142—43.

<sup>70</sup> I want to suggest that there is more than one way to consider stakeholding and propose that Hegel offers one such alternative understanding. By "neoliberal," I refer to the common understandings of stakeholding found in footnote 45 above.

<sup>71</sup> See Brooks, "Justice as Stakeholding."

This approach improves on existing theories of justice, such as Philip Pettit’s work on republican freedom conceived as a form of discursive control.<sup>72</sup> Citizens exercise discursive control through shared, deliberative engagement where each has the ability and opportunity to participate.<sup>73</sup> This engagement takes the form of multiple political discourses where membership may vary in potentially overlapping debates.<sup>74</sup> For Pettit, it is key that each citizen “must be able to see their own signature” in their public attitudes and actions: public deliberation is not “the work of an alien mechanism,” but a shared activity of free and equal persons free from arbitrary domination.<sup>75</sup> Republican freedom includes an “authorial dimension” whereby citizens are authors of common interests articulated in their politics.<sup>76</sup>

Stakeholding improves on this view. Republicanism claims that non-domination is secured through discursive control: citizens enjoy republican freedom where they can exercise opportunities for public dialogue without arbitrary interference. Republicans mistake opportunities for exercising discursive control through non-domination *as freedom*. They argue that citizens should be held accountable and so have no right to complain if they fail to exercise opportunities available to them.

The problem is that merely having such opportunities is insufficient. Citizens require ability and opportunity, but also the conviction that they themselves are stakeholders. If they fail to see their having a stake in deliberative politics, then they may be insufficiently motivated to make their views known even where opportunities are widely available. This is apparent for many alienated adult citizens in refusing to vote. They may each possess the

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<sup>72</sup> See Philip Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychological to the Politics of Agency* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001): 65—103.

<sup>73</sup> Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom*, 70. I do not want to suggest that Pettit’s republicanism is the same as Hegel’s views on political reconciliation. Pettit’s deliberative democratic model is very different from Hegel’s Idea of the State. Yet each recognises the importance of each individual viewing his or her own “signature” in public policy. For Hegel, the law is not to be some abstract body of rules imposed from above, but a product of a community that each can identify with.

<sup>74</sup> Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom*, 72.

<sup>75</sup> Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom*, 79.

<sup>76</sup> Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom*, 160.

same vote and opportunities for voting as everyone else, but still fail to participate where they have a conviction they do not have a stake in election outcomes.

### *Hegelian stakeholding*

Now consider the relevance of stakeholding for Hegel's project of reconciliation. The existence of a rabble should be seen as a failure of stakeholding because the participants do not believe that they have a stake in the community and its activities. As a "disposition," breaking free of the rabble mentality should aspire to win over minds, but also hearts.<sup>77</sup> The rabble opposes their government and wider society because they perceive themselves as disconnected: the rabble understands the spheres of politics and their laws as institutions that are erected and maintained *by others* and *for others*. If I do not see myself as having a stake in society, then I will perceive myself as alienated from that society and so the bonds of social and political obligation can appear more fragile.<sup>78</sup> My social world goes on taking no notice of my place in it. The alienated individual may believe him or herself to be socially and politically impotent, or even dead to their social world.

Material conditions can affect, but not determine, the formation of such a conviction. The failure to satisfy my basic needs can contribute to my belief that I am alienated from others without there being any guarantee of this being the case. Social psychology and not economic circumstances alone may better explain why some and not all individuals facing financial hardships and related difficulties are more likely to engage in crime, for example.<sup>79</sup>

The concept of stakeholding helps clarify why the rabble mentality is a problem for

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<sup>77</sup> See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §244A.

<sup>78</sup> I note "appear" because my failing to have a sense of connectedness may be a correct statement of my psychological state, but incorrect about the reality whereby others do value my membership in fact despite my failure to be convinced of it.

<sup>79</sup> See Thom Brooks, *Punishment* (London: Routledge, 2012): 144—46, 186—87.

reconciliation and how it might be overcome – even though such terminology was not used by Hegel.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel distinguishes between objective law and “the law of the heart.”<sup>80</sup> He characterises any gap between them as a “cruel separation” involving “separation” because it “dispenses with the enjoyment of *itself* in obeying the law, and lacks the consciousness of its own excellence in *transgressing* it.”<sup>81</sup> Hegel argues that the law of the heart does not seek “bare conformity,” but a more substantial connection: “that in the law it has the consciousness of *itself*, that therein it has satisfied *itself*.”<sup>82</sup> If objective law and the law of our hearts identify with each other, there is no longer a separation between the two and objective law no longer appears to a citizen as “an alien affair” and “entanglement” with “a superior power which is only alien to him.”<sup>83</sup> Hegel says that such an individual is “freed from himself” through being at home in his or her political state.<sup>84</sup> This connects with stakeholding: it is not merely that the social world can be a place where I am “at home,” but I must possess a certain self-consciousness of myself as being “at home.” I am not reconciled until I gain the relevant sense of conviction, such as my having a stake in my society.

It is essential that we can identify likewise with our social world if we are to be “at home” in it. This is not a case of merely following laws laid down by others, but an acceptance in our hearts and not only our minds that ends the sense of unbridgeable separation between the individual and society. Hegel does not argue that the individual must agree with the state, but rather individuals should ideally come to agree with each other about living in community and forming a state that lives in the hearts of each person. What is to be avoided is our viewing ‘membership in the state as an optional matter’ since, for Hegel it is

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<sup>80</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): 222.

<sup>81</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 222.

<sup>82</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 223.

<sup>83</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 223.

<sup>84</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 223.

”only through being a member of the state that the individual [*Individuum*] himself has objectivity, truth and ethical life.”<sup>85</sup>

### ***Stakeholding matters***

Why does stakeholding matter for reconciliation? Consider the idea found in Hegel’s work that our conventions and social roles belong to us because “we have somehow *made them our own*.”<sup>86</sup> Hegel calls it “*the ethical world . . . the state, or reason, as it actualizes itself in the element of self-consciousness.*”<sup>87</sup> This statement is rich in meaning, but it acknowledges a truth that the reconciliation of ourselves and our social world becomes substantiated through a particular kind of psychological self-awareness. Convictions about “the concepts of truth and the laws of ethics” have significant importance for us, which is why we must endeavour to discern which should be endorsed and removed from being “mere opinions.”<sup>88</sup>

Hegel’s appeal to grasping that the rational is actual and *vice versa* in his *Doppelsatz* is characterized as a “conviction” that is “shared by every ingenuous consciousness as well as by philosophy.”<sup>89</sup> Getting our convictions correct matters – even where it is achieved by comprehending the rationality of our institutions.

Hegel regularly appeals to the need for us to not only grasp conceptual distinctions, but their merit in a unity of form and content. For example, he says that “the idea of right is freedom, and in order to be truly apprehended, it must be recognizable in its concept and in

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<sup>85</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §258R.

<sup>86</sup> Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy*, 68.

<sup>87</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 12–13,

<sup>88</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 19 (“the concepts of truth and the laws of ethics are reduced to mere opinions and subjective convictions, and the most criminal principles—since they, too, are *convictions*—are accorded the same status as those laws”). See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §19R (“man has by nature a drive towards right, and also a drive towards property and morality . . . This same content, which appears here in the shape of drives, will recur later in another form, namely that of *duties*”).

<sup>89</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 20.



the concept's existence."<sup>90</sup> Freedom requires intellectual acknowledgement coupled with a correct belief about its reality. We must not only understand freedom, but possess a conviction about ourselves as free.<sup>91</sup>

Hegel says: "The human being who is rational *in himself* must work through the process of self-production both by going out of himself and by educating himself inwardly, in order that he may also become rational *for himself*."<sup>92</sup> Our potential freedom becomes real for us when we take ownership of it: when we view it as "that which is mine."<sup>93</sup> Our conceptual understanding must correspond to our reality, as we conceive it.<sup>94</sup> In other words, we must achieve recognition of right for ourselves as our "substantial spirit."<sup>95</sup> This is more than a merely intellectual appreciation, but a specific kind of endorsement of our social world where we see ourselves as having a stake.

Mutual recognition is insufficient by itself to protect against alienation. Citizens can view each other as equal, yet separate: equal in the sense of acknowledging one another as citizens of a shared polity with equal rights and liberties, but separate in denying that all share similar life chances and worthwhile opportunities.<sup>96</sup> One example is where citizens occupy different socio-economic statuses or perceived class. Each may possess the same citizenship and carry the same passport, but yet each may hold different convictions about their potentially positive relation to the state. Elections are a useful illustration of where the *comprehension* of belonging in terms of having a shared knowledge that one possesses rights

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<sup>90</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §1A.

<sup>91</sup> Hegel's well-known critique of Kantian ethics is at least partly based on the view that Kant's moral philosophy is purely intellectual and divorced from lived experience. This illustrates further the importance in Hegel's approach that we must both comprehend freedom and possess a conviction about ourselves as free. See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §135, 135R and Brooks, *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, 'morality' chapter.

<sup>92</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §10A.

<sup>93</sup> See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §13R.

<sup>94</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §21A ("Truth in philosophy means that the concept corresponds to reality"). See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §156A ("The ethical is not abstract like the good, but is intensely actual").

<sup>95</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §260.

<sup>96</sup> To clarify, merely being separate is not necessarily a case of alienation. However, a conviction of separateness without means of coming together is such an instance.

and liberties equal to those of others can be very different from the *conviction* of belonging where we endorse and view ourselves as connected to others.<sup>97</sup> We can share the same comprehension, even accept our political institutions, and yet not all possess a conviction of shared belonging.

To be clear, Hegel does not see mutual recognition as a mere formal equality. He says that mutual recognition is "a reciprocal recognition which is absolute spirit" and a form of "pure knowledge of itself."<sup>98</sup> This can be understood as involving mutual relatedness, of seeing oneself in another and another in oneself: "I that is We, and We that is I."<sup>99</sup> But this view of mutual recognition refers to shapes of spirit reconciled to each other but not necessarily to a political reconciliation of individuals within a state. The concretization of identity in the political sphere is lacking and it is this which the concept of stakeholding captures. Reconciliation is more than recognition *per se*, but requires some form of stakeholding.

### ***Stakeholding beyond Hegel***

The idea of stakeholding as a principled conviction about the self and others can be supported further by the work of several British Idealists, such as T. H. Green.<sup>100</sup> This can be instructive for showing that earlier Hegelians — sharing a concern about poverty and alienation with the need for a compelling account of reconciliation to counter it — also came to recognise the

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<sup>97</sup> Michael Kenny claims the politics of recognition can foster a sense of belonging. Perhaps it can, but it cannot guarantee this sense becomes established as a conviction. If we do not insist on the need for such a conviction, then any sense of belonging may be only intellectual and not psychological. This could leave open the possible of future alienation if left unaddressed. See Michael Kenny, "Towards a Progressive Politics of 'Recognition'," *Public Policy Research* (2011): 175—82.

<sup>98</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 408.

<sup>99</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 110.

<sup>100</sup> The British Idealists are also regularly called the British Hegelians.

importance of what we might now call stakeholding, although they did not use this modern terminology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

For example, Green describes freedom as “the state in which [an individual] shall have realised his ideal of himself, shall be at one with the law which he recognises as that which he ought to obey.”<sup>101</sup> The free person is an individual reconciled to her political state because she understands herself as someone with a stake in society endorsed out of choice and not coercion. For Green, freedom is a kind of “consciousness” that is threatened where individuals fail to become reconciled and so come to possess a “consciousness of oneself as for ever thwarted.”<sup>102</sup> If we understand ourselves as stakeholders, then the law is transformed from a coercive institution imposed on us by others towards a deliberative institution responsive to our engagement.

Green claims that our understanding of our self in relation to others has an impact on our sense of self. He describes “the individual’s conception of the society on the well-being of which his own depends, and of the constituents of that well-being” which are linked with “the laws, institutions, and social expectation” in addition to “conventional morality.”<sup>103</sup> Green argues that the interplay between the self and others provides an important space for the exercise of our capacities for deliberative reasoning and the pursuit of individual conceptions about “self-perfection, by acting as a member of a social organisation in which each contributes to the better-being of all the rest.”<sup>104</sup> Our individual well-being is a product

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<sup>101</sup> T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (London: Longmans, 1941): 18 (sect. 18). See Thom Brooks, “Ethical Citizenship and the Stakeholder Society” in Thom Brooks (ed.), *Ethical Citizenship: British Idealism and the Politics of Recognition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 125—38.

<sup>102</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 18 (sect. 18).

<sup>103</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 32 (sect. 6).

<sup>104</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 33 (sect. 7).

created through the lens of self-beliefs concerning our relations to others in terms of our being mutual stakeholders.<sup>105</sup>

Green shares Hegel's concerns about the creation of a rabble. Green says these "dangerous classes" are individuals with "no reverence for the state . . . no sense of an interest shared with others in maintaining it."<sup>106</sup> Green is not arguing that all countries should be revered wherever they are found: he accepts that where a "state is not a true state" it does not warrant our allegiance.<sup>107</sup> Instead, his claim is that citizens should recognise their obligations to states that enjoy sufficient normative justification. Green acknowledges that coercion is unlikely to bring about a change in the rabble: this is because individuals cannot be forced to believe they are stakeholders sharing common bonds with others.<sup>108</sup>

Famously, Green claims that "will, not force, is the basis of the state."<sup>109</sup> Legal authority, in part, arises from our being party to its creation and reform.<sup>110</sup> For Green, each individual "must have a share . . . in making and maintaining the laws which he obeys."<sup>111</sup> Individuals are stakeholders where each can exercise a say about public matters where there is a stake in their outcome.

## ***Conclusions***

This discussion identifies the relevance of stakeholding to Hegel, and which can also be found in Green. Notwithstanding their other differences, both are concerned about the threat

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<sup>105</sup> See Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 124 (sect. 117) and T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to ethics*, ed. A. C. Bradley (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969): 212.

<sup>106</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 129 (sect. 121).

<sup>107</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 138 (sect. 132).

<sup>108</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 109 (sect. 98).

<sup>109</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 140—41 (sect. 136).

<sup>110</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 110, 122 (sects. 99, 113).

<sup>111</sup> Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, 130 (sect. 122).

posed by the rabble and its mind set.<sup>112</sup> Hegel and Green argue that the rabble mentality can be avoided or overcome when possessing a conviction of oneself as a kind of stakeholder. This demonstrates not only that the idea of stakeholding is important for an adequate understanding of reconciliation that can overcome poverty as a problem of alienation, but that this modern terminology, although it might not have been used by Hegel (or Green), nonetheless it does cohere with Hegel's comments about poverty and reconciliation. Furthermore, the discussion of Green further clarifies this article's argument that the problem of poverty is primarily a problem of alienation requiring a theory of reconciliation incorporating the idea of stakeholding.

### **Possible objections**

I want to address five possible objections to my central arguments. The first is that the idea of stakeholding is alien to Hegel's philosophy and read into his account rather than located within it. It is certainly true that Hegel does not use the words "stakeholder" or "stakeholding" or their equivalents in the *Philosophy of Right* nor elsewhere. However, the question is not whether Hegel used the precise term, but whether this contemporary term helps us understand ideas found in Hegel's work. I have made a case for the relevance and, indeed, importance of stakeholding for Hegel's philosophy. The fact that he did not explicitly use this term is not conclusive evidence that stakeholding plays no role in our understanding of why alienation is a problem for Hegel and how it might be overcome.

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<sup>112</sup> Green offers insights into how stakeholding and reconciliation come together that usefully illustrate the same in Hegel, whose philosophy was a major influence on Green. By noting "notwithstanding their other differences," I simply wish to recognise that Hegel's philosophy may bear much in common with Green's and especially on this point, but there are differences too.

A second possible objection to my arguments is that the rabble are *not* stakeholders. Perhaps persons identifying as a rabble lack a shared identity as stakeholders with other individuals within a political community: they might be correct to believe that they do not, in fact, have a stake in this community and its activities. One example is individuals in a state of poverty who may come to believe they lack a socio-economic stake.

My reply to this challenge is, for Hegel, individuals living in a community with shared economic, ethical, political and/or social institutions possess some stake in the governance of them. This does not mean that individuals believing themselves to be a rabble are to blame for their lack of a conviction about a shared identity. Nonetheless, it does entail that the individuals in a shared community work together to make that community a space where all can see themselves as stakeholders in it. Stakeholding is not purely subjective, to be determined by the judgements of particular individuals isolated from each other. It requires a more objective basis: for Hegel, our being at home in the social world requires that the world being a place worth reconciling ourselves to.

Furthermore, individuals who believe they lack a socio-economic stake because of their material poverty, which may contribute to the conviction that they are alienated, nevertheless do have a stake. The problem is that it is not fulfilled. For Hegel, “no interests of the one class may be exalted at the expense of those belonging to another class.”<sup>113</sup> If material poverty might contribute to the domination of one class by another, then this is not a social world that all can be reconciled to.

The crucial point here is that we become reconciled not because we can see what is in it for ourselves, but because we comprehend the rationality of our institutions – and it is only then that it enters our intellectual understanding and transforms it into something deeper, such

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<sup>113</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on Natural Right*, §120R.

as the conviction of ourselves as stakeholders. If the Idea of the State were a place that no one could be at home within, then it would not qualify as the Idea of a State. Individuals must see their society as a place of belonging with others who identify with the other members of their community. Stakeholding is important for understanding Hegel's project of reconciliation. However, stakeholding does not exist separately from our comprehension of right. What is right should be recognised as such – and should be given existence through our convictions about ourselves in relation to others in our community.

A third possible objection to my arguments is that the idea of stakeholding clashes with other parts of Hegel's philosophy. The concern here is that recognizing the importance of stakeholding in Hegel's philosophy may lead us to promote conclusions different from what Hegel actually defends. It might, for example, promote a more deliberatively democratic kind of politics. This buttresses his comments about the law as the possession of the people, but runs counter to his arguments against Athenian democracy and in favour of his distinctive brand of constitutional monarchy where popular political participation takes a specific shape.<sup>114</sup> A second example is that taking seriously the importance of stakeholding might lead us to see even more starkly problems with Hegel's claims that women should not become engaged outside the family home in civil society or the state

My response is to agree that recognising the importance of stakeholding in Hegel's account exposes more vividly certain tensions within his account. Taking stakeholding seriously can offer us insights into certain concerns with his arguments and why they may be more pressing than previously recognised, not least because of potential clashes with the importance Hegel gives to stakeholding.

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<sup>114</sup> See Thom Brooks, "Plato, Hegel and Democracy," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 53/54 (2006): 24—50; Thom Brooks, "No Rubber Stamp: Hegel's Constitutional Monarch," *History of Political Thought* 28 (2007): 91—119 and Thom Brooks, *Hegel's Political Philosophy: A Systematic Reading of the Philosophy of Right*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

A fourth possible objection is whether the problem of the rabble can be reduced only to a problem of rabble-mindedness.<sup>115</sup> Hegel claims that a market economy will create “the emergence of a mass of people who cannot gain satisfaction for their needs by their work.”<sup>116</sup> Some people will be unable to meet their basic needs – even as members of an ideal state. While their material deprivation may not determine whether they feel alienated, such a persistent state of want, including joblessness, is a problem whether or not it leads to creating a rabble.

My response is that endemic poverty where individuals lack a realistic prospect of meeting their basic needs will be a perfect breeding ground for alienation. If my voice or activity makes no difference to my life’s chances, this will foster a psychological sense of disconnectedness from others. So there is no denial that material want is a serious problem. Nor do I deny that living below any satisfactory minimum threshold bears no connection to whether any individual identifies as part of the rabble. Instead, my claim is merely that material need is not necessary and sufficient in being causally determinative of a rabble mentality. Our circumstances impact our convictions about ourselves in relation to others, but they do not compel individuals to only feel alienated or otherwise.

A final objection is that stakeholding is no different from understanding reconciliation as an endorsement. It might be said that endorsing the social world so that I am ‘at home’ is a confirmation of my identifying with it and its institutions. Endorsing this social world is to recognise my having a stake in it.

My response is to agree, in part. It is correct to say my having the conviction of possessing a stake in society and so self-identifying as a stakeholder is a kind of endorsement

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<sup>115</sup> I am enormously grateful to Ardis Collins for suggesting this objection.

<sup>116</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §248A.



for sure. But where I would disagree is to say that the view of reconciliation as an endorsement is either incomplete or vague about the critical importance of conviction. It is perhaps incomplete insofar as Hardimon does not discuss the relevance of having any particular psychological disposition. It is not enough that I endorse my social world, but that I identify myself with it in seeing myself as having a stake in society. I accept this clarification is consistent with the overall approach of reconciliation as an endorsement, while still going further than the way this approach has been presented to date in the literature.

## **Conclusion**

This article challenges existing interpretations of Hegel's problem of poverty and his project of reconciliation. It argues against common interpretations of poverty in the *Philosophy of Right* as an economic problem with an economic solution. Instead, it has been argued that the problem of poverty is primarily psychological where alienation rather than material subsistence is the real issue to be tackled. The article then examined the way commentators have understood Hegel's project of reconciliation. I argued that there are two different approaches we can identify – rational reconciliation and reconciliation as an endorsement – each inadequate as presented for overcoming the alienation at the heart of the problem of poverty. The article claims that stakeholding is centrally important for Hegel's understanding of reconciliation, even though such modern terminology was not available to him at the time – and is also found in the writings of other Hegelians like Green. Reconciliation is achieved where I see my having a stake in society.

Hegel is widely credited for developing a politics of recognition. We can now realise that his project of reconciliation requires something more than recognition alone. This is the interpretive space that stakeholding occupies as it helps supplement the reconciliation project.

Our accepting stakeholding in Hegel's account comes with costs we should choose to bear. While it clashes with certain features of his philosophy, we are left with a Hegelian philosophy that is much friendlier to contemporary debates and perhaps illuminates a more compelling view of Hegelian justice construed broadly.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> This paper has been presented in different versions at the annual Hegel Society of Great Britain conference in Cambridge and a Hegel and Theology conference in Manchester. I am enormously grateful to comments from these audiences and, specifically, Ardis Collins, Stephen Houlgate, Dean Moyar, Sebastian Stein, Robert Stern, Alison Stone and two anonymous referees for this Journal.