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RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION AND IMMIGRATION IN SPINOZA'S POLITICAL TREATISE

Abstract

What does Spinoza tell us about immigration, and how does this connect to the fundamental tenets of his philosophy? In this article, I will argue that the striving for collective liberation that guides Spinoza's political philosophy is based on an inclusive impetus favourable to the welcoming and integration of migrants, and that the laws and institutions that facilitate this objective can gain the support of the people if their imagination is governed by the precepts of "true religion". Furthermore, I will argued that Christ-inspired religious imagination is most likely to promote the goal of peace, safety and harmony among the options considered by Spinoza. This will help us better understand the many continuities between the TTP and TP on the role of religion, as well as highlight the difference marked by Spinoza's focus on *charitas* as a universal value and abandonment of *justitia* as an integral part of the essence of true religion.

Keywords: Spinoza, Immigration, Religion, Affects, Justice, Charity

Spinoza is often seen as one of the champions of the process of secularization in 17th Century Europe. His sharp critique of religion and of the interference of theologians in political matters has been famous, or notorious - depending on the side one takes - , ever since the publication of the *Theological Political Treatise* (henceforth TTP) in 1670. While religion suffers a significant epistemic downgrade when Spinoza claims that it cannot offer adequate knowledge, it does play a part in the political project formulated in the TTP. Given the exclusively political focus of Spinoza's later, and unfinished, Political Treatise (henceforth TP), we may wonder whether there is any significant role left for religion in this work.

Does religion play little part in the constitution of an ideal commonwealth in the TP? Is this yet another difference from the early TTP that we should add to those already discussed in the literature? In this paper I will argue that, despite appearances, religious imagination

and its proper employment through political institutions play a vital part even in Spinoza's late political philosophy, and that this helps us better appreciate the nature of the connections between the TTP and the TP. I will argue for this thesis starting from Spinoza's (albeit brief) discussion of a major political question of his own time, viz. that concerning the integration of immigrants to the United Provinces. This not only helps better contextualise Spinoza's philosophy, but also indicates how he can still be relevant to us today given the many debates on immigration we hear on an almost daily basis (unfortunately, the limits of a single paper make it impossible to discuss this second theme here).

In order to substantiate this thesis, I will outline in the first section the major characteristics of Spinoza's political philosophy as well as the place religion finds in his thinking in the early TTP. In the second section, I will present some of the challenges that immigration had presented to the young Dutch republic of the 17th Century, and discuss what Spinoza tells us about this question in the TP. In the second and third sections, I will argue that the inclusive nature of the state that Spinoza advocates requires setting up laws and institutions that accommodate migrants as long as they submit to the civil order of the state, and that a Christ-inspired religious imagination is a privileged way to persuade the populace to endorse these laws and institutions. The arguments of the last section focus on the continuities and differences between Spinoza's treatment of religion in the TTP and the TP.

Rosenthal has argued that religious imagination, according to the TTP, can be useful when used to produce states of affairs, i.e. a civil order, in agreement with some of our true, rational ideas. Those who do not have adequate knowledge can be governed, to their own benefit, using the passions of fear and wonder that religious imagination fuels. Religion, once stripped of its metaphysical claims, can have an important political function (Rosenthal 2010, p. 233, 247). My thesis is that, if we consider later developments in Spinoza's political philosophy in the TP, especially when focusing on the question of how a state deals with foreigners, we can observe that a) religion does not have to fuel solely, or primarily, disempowering affects such as fear and wonder, based on "ideas that are literally false" (Rosenthal 2010, p. 247), in order to be beneficial to the political order; and b) this politically empowering function of religion is best served by a religious imagination inspired by Christ's teachings.[1]

There is something of an exegetical puzzle in trying to clarify the reasons for Spinoza's respectful approach to the Christian New Testament,

especially when compared to his sharp criticism of the Hebrew Scripture. While Spinoza is dismissive of much of the latter, he writes many positive things about Jesus, Paul and the New Testament as a whole. This difficulty is compounded by Spinoza's clear awareness that Christianity can be a grave threat to civil peace due to its influence on secular powers. Two often invoked reasons to explain this approach are Spinoza's self-confessed lack of competence in Greek (although this does not stop Spinoza from writing many things about the New Testament) and his awareness that he cannot alienate his powerful Christian readers if he is to avoid persecution (Nadler 2011, pp. 157, 170-2). While this latter motivation is no doubt formidable, I want to argue that there are also more philosophical reasons for Spinoza's positive take on Christ-inspired teachings. Their value stems from the kind of sensibility they engender within the community, i.e. an openness to universal doctrines that are in principle available to all humankind and that predispose us towards ethically beneficial behavior for all, regardless of specific circumstances. If employed judiciously, the kind of religious imagination formed by Christ's teachings can overcome some of the limitations inherent in the teachings of the prophets and be of great use to collective empowerment. We are in a good position to understand the potential of these teachings when we consider the question of how best to ground, in the collective imagination, the kind of inclusive policy on foreigners and immigrants that Spinoza puts forward.

I. Spinoza's Political Philosophy and the Place of Religion

The main problem of Spinoza's political philosophy is not the form that the civil state should take, but rather liberation (Negri 1991, p. 220). The aim of Spinoza's political philosophy is twofold: to explain the constitution[2] of the body politic in terms of power, rather than by appeal to transcendent norms and causes (Balibar 1998, p. 66);[3] and to discuss the best way to promote empowerment or liberation through politics.[4] In the sphere of the political, liberation must be understood, in the first instance, as emancipation from various forms of domination (Balibar 1998, pp. 1-2). Oppression is brought about by various cases of theological and secular authorities who act in the name of theological values.[5] The transcendent model of what the State ought to be,[6] together with moralizing interpretations of human behaviour[7] (TP I 1), are impediments to the empowerment of individuals, and, ultimately, of the state.

Adherence to supposedly universal and absolute values does not do justice to the individuality of human beings, i.e. the specific, unique structures and powers to act and be acted upon each body, as well as of each mind. Rather, the goal that transcendent values serve is the preservation of the power of theologians (Balibar, 1998, pp. 7-8). Their domination, manifested in the condemnation of vices, not the promotion of virtues, makes them hateful to other human beings (EIVp63s), and the detrimental effects of theologically-inspired oppression are amplified by the fanaticism[8] of theologians. We can therefore understand the importance of historical analysis[9] for Spinoza's politics: he is interested in exposing, in order to undermine, the various historical manifestations of metaphysical and theological illusions and their practical effects (Negri 1991, pp. 120-1).

The difficulties that an account of the constitution of the civil state must face revolve around the fact that the horizon of the state is the horizon of war (Negri 1991, p. 200). If humans were to live according to reason, then Spinoza claims they would live in agreement (*conveniunt)* (EIVp35). However, this is not the case because humans are guided by their passions (TP I 5), and humans necessarily differ with regard to their passions (EIVp32). The civil state must develop institutions that are capable of directing the ineradicable inter-human conflict towards empowerment in the best way possible (TP I 4, 6). Political institutions can and do facilitate individual empowerment, and they must be suitable for individuals who act from the first kind of knowledge, i.e. imagination,[10] knowledge that offers no guarantee of truth or adequacy. The constitution of the body politic cannot be predicated on the fictitious assumption that all humans possess adequate knowledge.[11]

The distinction between imagination and adequate knowledge is a locus classicus of Spinoza's philosophy, and we can only sketch the difference here. Adequate knowledge is always and necessarily true knowledge of causes and consists in either knowledge of common notions or in intellectual intuition, while imagination can at best offer what Spinoza calls moral certainty and always remains fallible. Imagination is based on our everyday, mutilated and confused experience of things in the world and consists in our ideas of these things, the signs by which we refer to, organize and communicate them, our passions and desires that shape our experiences and actions, as well as various informal modes of reasoning. Imagination is built on our experience of particulars and is determined by one's own history. It can lead to deleterious social practices, as seen in the Dutch Reformed Church that Spinoza criticizes, but can also

be productive by stimulating comparatively harmonious, if not ideal, behaviour within communities (EIIp40s2; cf. James 2010, p. 253; 255-6; 2012, pp. 30-1). The beneficial effects of imagination can be observed both on the individual and the communal levels. According to EIIIp6dem the conatus is always resisting external influences that are trying to supress it. The various strategies of resistance include the development of language which, even though based on signs stemming from imperfect knowledge, is nonetheless instrumental in directing potentially beneficial communal agency. Furthermore, memory and habit can, to a certain extent, prove trustworthy guides for action (see Bove 1996, p.15).

Spinoza's attempt in the TTP to elucidate the nature of the politico-theological complex is, largely, the study of the role imagination, especially in its religious incarnation, plays in the body politic. Religious imagination is at the core of the commonwealth Spinoza discusses first and foremost, namely the Hebrew state. In a famous argument, Spinoza claims that prophets are not characterised by an exceptional intellect or ability to reason, but that they possess very vivid imaginations that help them communicate their moral insights. This is particularly helpful given the nature of their audience, which is not composed of scholars, but of all members of society (TTP I 27-9; V 15-18 inter alia). The Hebrew people have been, according to Spinoza, led by their imagination in founding their state and, famously, in their belief that their state is a theocracy, i.e. God is their sovereign. Moses, who was considered to be God's interpreter among them, gave them the laws that defined the constitution of the Jewish state (TTP XVII 8,9).

Spinoza argues that we cannot expect that most people will have a philosophical understanding of God, such as he later puts forward in the Ethics. The large majority in any society will form their ideas using their imagination and so will be inclined to form various religious beliefs. While he argues that we can encounter throughout history many cases in which the theologians have abused their power over collective imaginations and have usurped political power, there is nevertheless a way to use religion for the good of the community. This depends on understanding the true nature of the religious message, as Spinoza believes to have found it in the Bible, as well as on its judicious use under civil authority. The divine law, which prescribes what one ought to do in order to obtain the "supreme good", commands that we know and love God and that we love our neighbour as ourselves. In order to clarify this imperative, Spinoza argues that we should model our moral practice on our knowledge of

God's divine justice and charity. The fact that this practice is not based on true or adequate understanding of God does not diminish its practical benefits: the accessible and colourful religious narratives that sustain it find a highly useful place in society (Nadler 2011, pp. 147, 154). The essence of 'true religion' consists in obedience to the authority and in practicing *justitia* and *charitas*. Taking an idea (produced by the imagination) of God as model, one who practices true religion will be just and will practice loving kindness towards others.

This detailed discussion of the interplay between imagination and religion, and of its historical incarnations, disappears from Spinoza's later TP. While the critique of the deleterious influence of theologians and of politicians who employ religious illusions for their personal advantage is still present, this is one change among the many that commentators have noted between the early and the late political works. Spinoza moves away from the language of the social contract (Balibar 1998, pp. 50-1) and gives us the opportunity to consider an analysis of the power and potential for liberation of the multitude under the attribute of extension. Spinoza's political philosophy in this late period can be aptly described with the phrases "political physics" (Negri 1991, p. 194) or "physics of social relations" (Negri 1991, p. 109), with a view to developing a strategy of collective liberation guided by the motto: "as many as possible, thinking as much as possible"[12] (Balibar 1998, p. 98). While in the TTP Spinoza discusses only democracy among various forms of government, considering it to be the best, the TP provides systematic discussions of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, the latter being unfortunately unfinished. Being guided by the celebrated methodological principle "non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere", Spinoza strives to study the constitution of states as one would study natural phenomena (TP I 4).

> The best way to organise a state is easily discovered by considering the purpose of order, which is nothing other than peace and security of life. Therefore, the best state is one where men live together in harmony and where the laws are preserved unbroken. (TP V 2)

Humans are naturally inclined to form societies because they are driven by passions and are guided to form a civil order either by a common hope, desire or by common fear[13] (TP VI 1). A disturbance in the commonwealth can lead to a change in its form, but never to the complete dissolution of political society (TP VI 2). The task of political theory is to find the best way to

organise the commonwealth. Peace and safety, the two-main characteristic of a well-functioning commonwealth, are indispensable conditions for human flourishing. They constitute the conditions of possibility for beneficial encounters that can increase one's power to act. Spinoza is careful to highlight, in a number of places, that peace should not be understood merely as the absence of war, but in a much stronger sense, as the "strength" (TP V 4) and "union or harmony of minds" (TP VI 4).

Humans are inconstant and are led more often by superstition and fear than by sound judgement. This means that the law-makers need to implement a rational strategy that empowers the body politic and, by consequence, its members. This is accomplished by formulating and enforcing good laws that ensure humans "either voluntarily or constrained by force or necessity, […] will all live as reason prescribes" (TP VI 3). Spinoza's argument is that human nature cannot be trusted to be virtuous, i.e. to be constant in the pursuit of common welfare and by consequence of its own good. To entrust the proper functioning of the state to "the good faith of any man" (TP VI 3) is naïve, because it does not take into account the inevitable lapses in good judgement or in virtuous action that the finite, imperfect nature of humans necessarily entails. The best strategy is to set up sound laws and institutions.[14] Sedition, wars, contempt or breach of laws must be imputed to the bad state of the body politic rather than to humans and, conversely, virtues should be ascribed in the main to the virtue of the state (TP V 3, 4).[15]

The individual pursuit of empowerment is always best pursued in society (EIVp73). Spinoza's ethics and politics are geared towards demonstrating that the greatest good of an individual can be realised only within the framework of the search for the common good. The greatest good (to know God) is common to all and can be possessed by all equally (EIVp36), and there is no opposition, only perfect agreement, between the rational pursuit of my good and helping others (EIVp37; cf. Jaquet 2005, pp. 297-8). Human beings do not exist and cannot be understood in isolation. The subject is constituted by its outside, and the subject's power will always be outmatched by external things. This is why it is important to ensure, as much as possible, that the interactions of the subject with its environment are not to its detriment (TP II 21). The body politic is in a privileged position to do so, since its power far outweighs that of single individuals (TP II 13). For human beings, the advantages of living in a society that encourages useful encounters[16] are twofold: it provides the body with the resources it needs in order to maintain itself, function

properly and so act and be acted on in a great number of ways; and humans can observe things and so both gain "experience and knowledge" of them and alter them to their advantage (EIVapp XXVII). The wise man will therefore be freer in society than in isolation (EIVp73) and will strive to promote the preservation and empowerment of the state. He will also strive to make others understand and act according to reason (EIVp37dem), because nothing is more useful to a human than another human, i.e. a rational person: "man is a God to man" (EIVp35cor1 and scholium).

II. A Case-Study in Dutch History: Immigration and Integration in the United Provinces

Following its successful rebellion in the 16th Century against the kingdom of Spain, the Seven United Provinces acted as a magnet for various waves of immigrants: Southern-Netherlanders who refused to be governed by Catholic Spain, Jews persecuted for their religion, the Huguenots who were driven from France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. One of the main reasons for the attraction that the United Provinces exercised on these various groups was the celebrated Dutch tolerance, sanctioned in the Union of Utrecht of 1579, which allowed people freedom of belief and, very often, freedom of expression. Even if the situation in the United Provinces was substantially better than in the rest of Western Europe, religious controversies were still a part of everyday reality and had the potential to destabilise society. Arguably the most famous and influential split was between the followers of Jacob Arminius (the Remonstrants), and the orthodox Calvinists or Counter-Remonstrants, led by figures such as Gomarius and Voetius (James 2012, pp. 141, 292). The religious divide had political consequences, with the Arminians close to the republican States General and their leaders, most notably Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, and the Counter-Remonstrants allied to the Prince of Orange, who served as Stadtholder and would often have monarchic ambitions.

One of the many distinctive features of the Untied Province in this period was the nature of their elaborate, orderly, well-equipped and secular charitable institutions. Whereas in the rest of Europe orphanages or asylums were often organised and financed by the Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the Netherlands it was the town councils that were in charge. This entailed a lessening of the power of the public Calvinist Church compared to other parts of Europe, and was a state

of affairs guarded jealously by city councils. While the public Church would often be co-opted in administering charity, other Churches would also be called upon. Because towns were responsible for the care of the various groups of poor within their respective territories, it was natural for them to give priority to those who had resided within the city for a long time or were born in it. Unfortunately for economically impoverished immigrants, this meant that they were excluded from the benefits that cities would grant their own poor. This entailed discrimination in favour of the pre-1585 native population over immigrants from Flanders, Brabant or Wallon who were adherents to the Reformed Church. Many of them had migrated to the United Provinces precisely because they were Calvinists and had been persecuted for their faith in the Spanish Netherlands. Not only did the system in place not sufficiently ease their economic burden, it generated dissatisfaction with civic regimes and strengthened adherence to the Reformed Church (Israel 1995, pp. 353-5, 359). In other words, the stage was set for the kind of civil unrest Spinoza warns against, and that makes itself manifest in Dutch history especially in the crisis years of 1618, 1648 and 1672.[17]

Throughout the TP, Spinoza provides us with a number of clues as to his views on immigration and its potential benefits and disadvantages. In Chapter VIII section 12, he discusses it in the context of his account of why societies transform from democracies to aristocracies and finally to monarchies. This matters because Spinoza prefers democracy (the most absolute form of government, cf. TTP XVI 10-11 and TP VIII 3 III/325/26-27), and finds aristocracy second best: these transformations, therefore, map a decay in the power of the state. Spinoza begins by stating that most aristocracies start by being democracies, when a multitude founds a commonwealth by finding a new place to live. People share equal rights, but do not think it fair that others, who have joined later, should enjoy them too, because the foreigners had not contributed with their labour and blood to the maintenance of the Commonwealth. Foreigners are happy with this circumstance as long as they enjoy security for their private affairs (perhaps an allusion to the Sephardic Jewish community in the Netherlands), and in the course of time become indistinguishable from the native inhabitants except for the rights they do not enjoy. While the number of immigrants rises, that of citizens may diminish due to various circumstances, and so the more powerful among the original inhabitants reduce the rule of the country to just a few, and finally to only one. Spinoza claims that there are more factors that enable this process of decay, but it is significant that

he chooses to mention only one. A remedy for this deleterious course of events is to grant citizenship to immigrants, and so keep the population at a sufficiently large number. This should be sufficient to stop the ambition of the few who find themselves unopposed and who share a great power only among themselves. This is indeed what we find Spinoza suggesting in another important passage, and one which shows not just the way in which welcoming immigrants might put off the decay of the state, but also the direct way in which it can benefit the commonwealth.

In paragraph 32 from Chapter VI (On Monarchy), Spinoza argues for an inclusive society in which the children of a citizen with a foreigner would be automatically counted as citizens and in which foreigners who are born and brought up in the state can buy their citizenship. To show his lenience, which he shares with Machiavelli (Discourses II 3), Spinoza argues that even if citizens pay less than the established price due to the corruption of the rulers "no harm can come to the state from that". Quite to the contrary, an increase in the number of the citizen body can be of great advantage to a commonwealth. While we need to acknowledge that this argument is put forward in a chapter written about a well-organised monarchy, a less perfect form of government than a well-run democracy, I submit that we still have good reasons to believe that there is nothing in the nature of a democracy that would alter this reasoning. Given "that nothing is more useful to man than man" and that the greater number of humans that act together, the greater the power of the state, it is in the logic of Spinoza's thinking to be well disposed toward migrants. This suggestion gains strength from Spinoza's claim in TP VII 23, where he claims that the line of reasoning about immigration presented in this section is so evident that it "can be known without argument". While the text refers to those who are born in the country, but do not have citizenship, we may ask whether the criterion of birth is indeed such that it a priori excludes all those who do not fulfil it from gaining the status of citizen. Given the overarching inclusive impetus behind Spinoza's thinking, it is hard to see why this would be the case as long as the immigrants live by the laws of the Commonwealth. A well organised commonwealth would then be tolerant of immigrants and strive to integrate them.

A critic may object, however, that there are instances in the TP when Spinoza does not seem to endorse the inclusive attitude described above. In chapter VIII, for instance, the Dutch thinker asks how an aristocratic commonwealth can be organised in order to last (TP VIII 1 III 323/20) and have the greatest power possible (TP VIII 4 III/326/1-5). By aristocratic rule

he understands a regime in which only "certain selected men rule" (TP VIII 1 III 323/24-5) and argues that the number of individuals selected needs to be sufficiently large in order for power not to end up concentrated in the hands of a very few: the ratio of Patricians to the general population should be about 1 to 50 (TP VIII 14 III/330/4). Spinoza argues that even if power is not hereditary it will inevitably be handed down to the sons and blood-relatives of the Patricians, but that it is impossible to prevent this by law, nor is it desirable (TP VIII 14 III/330/21-25). The aim of an aristocratic regime is not to promote equality among all inhabitants, but to preserve the form of the state. Therefore, not excluding inhabitants from acquiring power *de jure* is sufficient, even though *de facto* any empowerment of non-Patricians is unlikely. In the text just referenced (TP VIII 13 III/330/21-25), individuals not born in the state can be excluded a priori from access to offices (among other groups, such as those who do not use the native language, have a foreign wife, are disreputable or servile, and make their living in some servile occupation). Furthermore, in the case of military service, even the non-patrician native population "ought to be regarded as just like foreigners" when brought into the military (TP VIII 9 III/330/13). How can these texts be made to fit any supposedly favourable attitude towards migrants?

In order to address this challenge, we first need to discuss the premises of Spinoza's arguments: he wants to explain how the aristocratic system can last and be stable, but he also concedes that this is not the strongest, or "most absolute" form of government. In other words, the policies that work best in order to set up a solid aristocratic regime are not necessarily the best possible ones in order to empower a state. The only absolute rule is, after all, "the rule which occurs when the whole multitude rules", not just a large Council (TP VIII 3 III//325/26). This means that limiting the rights of foreigners is necessary in order for the Patricians to maintain control, not that it is in principle the best policy. The reasons for which migrants are debarred from serving as councillors, or from voting, hold in aristocracies, but not necessarily in the commonwealth that wishes to be empowered as much as possible (even though it will probably still be essential for migrants to have a reputable occupation or learn the local language). With regard to military service, Spinoza only writes that the subjects of aristocratic regimes, when joining the military "ought to be regarded as just like foreigners" i.e. be paid. In fact, in an aristocratic state, everyone except the Patricians "is a foreigner" in the sense that they cannot gain the honours that the elites have access to (TP VIII 10 III/328/20). This

lack of integration only shows the relative weakness of aristocracies when compared to democracies: the more soldiers who "fight for their altars and homes […] with singular courage" the better off a state would be.

Not only do Spinoza's arguments on aristocracy, and its exclusive nature, not undermine the need for an inclusive attitude towards migrants, they also help us connect him to a thinker whom he greatly admires and with whom he shares many similarities, namely Machiavelli. While a comprehensive comparison goes beyond the ambit of this paper, it is worthwhile signalling a few important points of contact. Machiavelli acknowledges that some predominantly aristocratic regimes, such as Sparta or Venice, have enjoyed extraordinary stability and durability, yet he does not select them as his ideal republic (Discourses I V). Instead, he turns to Rome, a republic with strong democratic elements and that, significantly for us, based its remarkable force and expansion precisely on the ability to not only welcome migrants, but incorporate them into the military (Discourses I VI 3, II 3). One of the foundations for Rome's success as a republic was precisely the way it integrated foreigners. We see Spinoza being influenced by this "very prudent man" (TP V 7 III/297/9) in this respect: aristocracies can be highly stable regimes, but only at the price of excluding foreigners and thus limiting their own potential for growth.

Does it make a difference to Spinoza's arguments whether immigrants are stateless or citizens of another commonwealth? He discusses inter-state relations in the TTP, but his analysis in chapter XVI is focused on relations of power between states: all states should be mindful of having others surpass them in power and should fear being deceived. All polities, even allies, present a potential threat since they are not subject to the authority of the state (TTP XVI 16-17). It is difficult, however, to see how this could influence the relation between a state and an individual, even if previously subject to a different commonwealth. The disparity in power is so great that a state cannot be under threat from a single person, or even from a relatively small number. This, of course, is not meant to make a commonwealth disinterested in having immigrants obey the laws and civil order of their new home. It also does not mean that foreigners should be allowed into a state in any number, lest they overwhelm the capacity of a state to deal with them (unfortunately, Spinoza does not give us any guidelines on this matter). We do not, therefore, have a clear and meaningful distinction on Spinoza's part between types of immigrants. Furthermore, he could have been influenced on this point by his reading of Machiavelli, who argues that key in empowering a state is to make it

full of inhabitants by any means necessary, whether by love i.e. attracting foreigners who willingly settle in a new polity, or by force (Discourses II 3).

Laws, no matter how just they are, must be supported in order to promote civil order both by reason and by common affects. Otherwise, even just and useful laws cannot be maintained (TP IX 9). Spinoza is willing to admit that laws may be implemented even by force, if necessary, but it would undoubtedly be better if humans would submit of their own accord. The wise will understand that such submission would not amount to a diminution of their liberty since they would act in accordance with reason, but the many need to be otherwise persuaded. It would therefore be most useful if humans were led so that they would think they live according to their own mentality and free decision. For most, this means that they must be allowed to exercise their love of freedom, desire to increase possessions and their hope for achieving honours. Given that most humans are governed by their imagination, it would be most useful to the state if laws and institutions were supported by the populace because they imagined the laws and institutions to be beneficial. What kind of imagination would serve this purpose and, more precisely, could any kind of imagination ever encourage the integration of foreigners within a community?

III. Religious Imagination and the Force of Laws and Institutions

Suppose a state is in the felicitous situation of having a form of government and laws that best suit the temperament of its citizens and are most conducive to collective as well as individual empowerment. Such a state would nonetheless run into great difficulties unless it were capable of persuading its citizens to obey the laws and contribute to the peace and security of the commonwealth. One reason for which Spinoza praises democracy is precisely its ability to mobilize all citizens to participate in law making and in running the state. He argues that in order to direct our natural selfishness toward the common good we need to direct our imagination in such a way that the vast majority of the populace is willing to work together. Imagination can be useful when the people think that the beliefs it produces are true, and when they are guided more by devotion, or love, than by fear. The meanings and narratives offered by imagination need to be adaptive, flexible if they are to contribute to the peace and security of the state, and so to be able to accommodate various interpretations. What matters most are the practical consequences of beliefs based on

imagination, not their theoretical presuppositions (although their veracity would no doubt help). Furthermore, imagination can support not only religious, but also civil laws (James 2010, p.258-261). In other words, a successful political arrangement or institution needs not only to be set up wisely, but also to be animated by the power of our imagination.

What forms can imagination take in the political sphere and to what extent can they be beneficial? Starting from the condition of the Dutch Provinces in Spinoza's own time, we can detect the presence of the attachment of the population to their own city or to their province. The citizens of the United Provinces would have a sense of belonging to the Dutch commonwealth, but their allegiance would primarily be local. This situation opens up an important problem: it can lead to the rejection of a great number of foreigners, many of whom would presumably be of great benefit to their communities and to the commonwealth. Impoverished economic conditions lead to the stunting of growth and development of many individuals whose flourishing would have much to bring to the harmonious agreement Spinoza sees as the foundation of a well organised state. This loss needs to be addressed, but cannot be done so either through an appeal to the power of adequate knowledge, which most do not possess, or by an appeal to imagination that is invested in local values and communities. If a state is to be truly welcoming to outsiders, if for nothing else than for the pragmatic considerations that Spinoza prioritizes, it needs to find new forms that imagination can take so as to infuse the populace with the desire to integrate these foreigners.

If Spinoza is to be faithful to the inclusive principle that drives his political thought, then how can he hope to mobilize the power of our imagination in the direction of overcoming local differences and divisions? At first, a possible solution appears to be a monarchic state, in which a citizen would identify not with the local community but rather with a (large) kingdom. Perhaps the same would be the case in a nationalist state, as it appears in history much later than the 17th Century. Unfortunately, this solution is not available to Spinoza. First, he is explicit about the grave dangers that attend any change in the form of government: if the United Provinces were to change from a republican constitution to a monarchy it would, besides annulling the famous Dutch liberties, bring with it internal perils and the possibility of strife and anarchy that the potential gains could not compensate. Second, this would not manage to solve the initial problem, since refugees may come to a community not only, or primarily, from a different part of the country, but from a different state.

In this case (historically that of the Southern Netherlanders, the Jews, or the Huguenots) wide ranging or even nationalistic sympathies would not suffice. I submit that Spinoza has a way to address this difficulty, and that it consists in the recourse to religious imagination.

Religious imagination, in the Christian guise dominant in Spinoza's time, was driven to a significant degree by an universalist tendency. Christianity, in its different forms, addressed itself to humankind as a whole, and strove for the salvation of all. Spinoza is very well aware of this tendency essential to Christianity, as we can see in his study of Christ and the New Testament. Even if Spinoza does not believe that Christ had a divine nature, he is willing to argue that he had a mind vastly superior to the human mind, and that the decrees of God that promote human salvation had been revealed to him directly (TTP I 18-19). Perhaps the best way to understand the unique case of Christ is to say that he possessed intuitive knowledge, i.e. the third type of knowledge described in EIIp40s2, to a greater degree than anyone else (James 2012, p. 109-110). This would explain why Christ means to address his teachings to all humans, not just the Jews: his doctrine consists in universal, true principles that are adapted to all mankind (TTP IV 10). Not only is Christian teaching more universal in scope than its predecessors, it also represents the law made by God as written on "tablets of the heart rather than on tablets of stone": true obedience lies in commands that one imposes on oneself due to good reasons to do so (James 2010, p.262). Christ taught only universal truths (TTP V 3) and his teaching consisted primarily of moral doctrines which could have been acquired also by natural light, i.e. reason (TTP XI 6). Nevertheless, most humans do not manage to reach these insights by philosophizing, so Christ is a necessary moral teacher if the good of mankind is to be promoted. Consequently, Christ sometimes adapted his teachings to his audience and, when dealing with the ignorant, appeared as a lawgiver (TTP II 19; IV 10). Promoting peace, especially in the Church, depends on undermining the schisms that disturb its peace and reverting to the very few and simple dogmas that Christ taught (TTP XI 9). These relatively simple and practice oriented dogmas amount to the love of God and make humans attempt to imitate him in his justice and loving-kindness towards others. This is the spirit of Christ that must be cultivated in each human and that, as Spinoza reminds us in the *Ethics*, consists in the idea of God on which alone depends that one is free and that one desires for others the good that she desires for herself (EIVp68s). The universal moral teaching proclaimed by Christ and grounded in his superior knowledge

constitutes the basis for a religious practice in agreement with Spinoza's own *Ethics*, but that are much easier to communicate to the multitude. Among their beneficial properties we count not only their intrinsic value and the ease they display in being communicated and understood, but also the strategic advantage of being considered authoritative throughout the Christian world. While the message has been corrupted throughout history due to the various interests of power-hungry politicians and theologians, it still carries the weight of authority that can make it easier to accept than new dogmas put forward even by someone like Spinoza himself. By an appeal to the teachings of Christ, the imagination of the multitude can be directed towards universal precepts that would otherwise require intense philosophical work.

In the end of this section, it is helpful to consider the affective dynamic that a citizen of a state may undergo when faced with the prospect of welcoming a migrant, especially one in precarious circumstances. To do so, we need to turn Spinoza's account of the imitation of affects in the *Ethics* (a text never published in Spinoza's lifetime, probably finished in 1675, but that is clearly later than the TTP and close, on many points, to the unfinished TP) and see whether it can support inclusiveness. I submit that a well-meaning concern for immigrants is, as Spinoza would put in, "in accordance with practice" for reasons we can deduce from EIIIp27:

> If we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have had no affect, to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect.

Images of things are affections of the body that express both the nature of our bodies and that of the external things that affect us. If the external thing happens to resemble our body then, Spinoza believes,[18] the idea that we imagine of that thing will involve an affection of our body that resembles the affection of that external body. From this it follows that if the affection of the external body is an affect, i.e. a transition to a lesser or greater power of acting, we will be affected by a similar affect. Consequently, if we imagine a human being suffering we will feel pity and try to alleviate its suffering (EIIIp27cor3), and we will strive to emulate others if we imagine that they desire something (EIIIp27s). It follows that most of us will desire to better the condition of human beings that we perceive to be similar to us, but that find themselves in unfortunate circumstances, as may be the case with migrants. Therefore, if the state and its institutions are not to be hateful to most of its citizens, they need

to accommodate this phenomenon of the imitation of the affects and aim to create the institutional framework in which those that are similar to us and that are affected by sadness have their suffering alleviated.

We can think of at least two exceptions to this affective dynamic: either when we are already affected by hatred toward beings that are like us, as Spinoza acknowledges (EIIIp27dem), or when we do not recognise that other human beings are similar to us. If we already hate someone, then when we notice that they suffer we are not affected with sadness, but with a contrary affect. As Spinoza cautions us, the kind of imagination that involves hatred is disempowering and can only be the effect of inadequate knowledge which is the result of moral and metaphysical illusions. It is therefore in the best interest of the community if we do our best to avoid such cases and if the laws and institutions of the state are set up so that hatred is not promoted. If, in the second case, we fail to recognize our resemblance with other human beings, we are again in a situation characterised by an epistemic inadequacy that has significant practical consequences, in that it stops us from acting according to the dictates of reason and seeing the value of the companionship of others.

While the imitation of affects can be the foundation of an empowering dynamic, a critic would be right to object that, in practice, it may more often lead to sad, therefore disempowering, affects. If we imagine that someone hates us, we will hate them in return (EIIIp40), a proposition in whose demonstration Spinoza starts precisely from EIIIp27. While it is true that most of the time, in the body politic, we are dealing with sad, disempowering affects, and we must acknowledge that most people, being unwise, fall prey to them, we must not let realism obscure the fact that Spinoza is interested in showing means of bettering the commonwealth. The imitation of affects often has deleterious effects, but the same dynamic can, when used adequately, be put in the service of the body politic. If Christ's teachings are used to shape religious imagination, then the imitation of affects can work in favour of this attempt to persuade the populace to endorse inclusiveness for its own benefit.

Not only is it in the best interest of the commonwealth to avoid hatred and epistemic inadequacy and to create laws that best serve our desire to help others, but those in power have a direct interest in being mindful of the phenomenon of the imitation of affects. In EIIIp27cor1 Spinoza argues that we feel love towards those that help beings that we regard to be similar to ourselves, and hatred towards those who affect others with sadness. Therefore, if politicians strive to better the situation of those in

need they will benefit from the affection of the populace, whereas harmful policies will hurt the politicians' own interests.

IV. Religion and the Civil Order in the Political Treatise

Following our discussion of immigration, of the importance of an inclusive attitude and of the role of religion in promoting this attitude among the multitude, it is time to return to the question of continuity between the TTP and the TP. The arguments presented so far in favor of welcoming foreigners use textual evidence from the TP and yet our discussion of religion in the first section of this paper refers to the TTP. While the extensive analysis of religion and its relation to politics in the TTP is essential for understanding Spinoza's thinking on the matter, we must turn to his views on religion in the TP for two reasons: first, to see to what extent our arguments about the role religious imagination plays in a tolerant attitude towards foreigners are still valid for the TP, and second to discuss the problem of continuity between the two treatises.

The textual evidence for Spinoza's opinion on religion in the TP is by no means as broad as in the earlier TTP, yet we are provided with a number of significant clues on the matter. I will begin by discussing Spinoza's general approach as well as the similarities with the TTP, and will then turn to the differences.

In TP VIII 46 (III/345/6) Spinoza writes:

> In the Theological-Political Treatise we showed fully enough what we think about Religion. But at that time we did omit some things which that wasn't the place to discuss: namely, that all the Patricians ought to be of the same Religion, a very simple and most Universal Religion, such as we described in that Treatise. For it's very necessary to make sure that the Patricians aren't divided into sects, some favoring one group others favoring other, and that they don't, in the grip of superstition, try to take away from their subjects the freedom to say what they think.

This strong wording entails that the differences between the TTP and the TP are, at most, a question of details that had not been previously made explicit. Since Spinoza did not discuss aristocracy in the TTP there was no reason for him to argue that all Patricians ought to be of the same religion. Familiar topics are brought to the fore: Spinoza reminds us of his

commitment to a simple and universal religion and of the importance of avoiding political conflict on the basis of religious differences. The debt to the TTP is also stressed in TP VII 26 (III/319/10), where Spinoza writes that the right of religion or worship cannot be transferred and simply refers the reader to the last two chapters of the TTP. Nevertheless, in order to discuss the relation between religion and obedience to the state in the TP, Spinoza does go into more detail:

> Someone may object: don't the civil order, and the obedience of subjects we've shown to be required in it, destroy the Religion by which we're bound to worship God? No. If we consider the matter properly, we won't find anything which could cause any uneasiness. For insofar as the Mind uses reason, it is its own master and is not subject to the control of the supreme power (by II, 11). Moreover, the true knowledge and love of God can't be subjected to anyone's command, any more than loving-kindness (*charitas*) toward one's neighbour can. Furthermore, if we consider that the supreme exercise of loving-kindness (*charitas*) is to protect the peace and bring about harmony, we won't doubt that a person has really done his duty if he has brought each person as much aid as the laws of the Commonwealth - i.e. harmony and tranquillity- permit. (TP III 10)

How does Spinoza explain the compatibility between the civil order he wants to promote and the existence of religion? On the one hand, he argues that there are some aspects of a human's being life, i.e. his thoughts and affects, that cannot be subject to the power of the sovereign authority. The freedom to think, to feel, or to express one's beliefs (to a certain extent) cannot be limited by the state without grievous civil disturbances. On the other hand, the goals of religion (peace and harmony), when properly understood, are wholly compatible with those of a good civil order, and are particularly well suited to reinforce the latter. This evaluation is in agreement both with the understanding of the "true knowledge and love of God" and of right practice (*charitas*) that Spinoza proposes in the Ethics, as well as with the epistemically more modest foundations of "true religion" put forward in the TTP. The love of God can refer not only to the third, or intuitive, kind of knowledge, but also to the imperative to love God and have God as a model for action, even if this involves an idea of God produced by the imagination. The right practice that follows from this is now described by Spinoza as *charitas*, dropping the notion of *justitia* that accompanied it in the earlier TTP, a change we need to consider more carefully later in this paper.

The list of points on which Spinoza's treatment of religion in the TP is indebted to his earlier treatise can be expanded even further. In the same paragraph referred to above (TP III 10), Spinoza addresses the question of external forms of worship, to which he grants no value in the pursuit of true knowledge and of love of God, and which he says should not be valued so highly as to make them a cause for disturbing public peace and tranquillity. In addition, the spread of religion should be left to God or to the supreme powers, since no man possesses the power to perform miracles "as the Disciples of Christ once did". In short, the worship of God is a concern for the private human being, with its public expressions possible only insofar as they are allowed by the laws of the Commonwealth.

In another important passage in the TP we learn that:

> As for Religion, it's also certain that a man is freer, and most obedient to himself, the more he loves God and the more he worships him wholeheartedly. Insofar as we attend, not to the order of nature, which we don't know, but only to the dictates of reason concerning Religion - and at the same time insofar as we consider them as revealed to us by God, as if he were speaking in us – or also as laws, revealed through the Prophets – to that extent, speaking in a human way we say that a man obeys God if he loves him wholeheartedly. On the other hand, if he's guided by blind desire, he sins. (TP II 22)

Here, Spinoza is busy delineating the characteristics that mark the essence of religion: it is a practical teaching that does not require fully adequate knowledge of nature, but that is consonant with the dictates of reason (to live according to virtue cf. EIVp37dem). These dictates are known by the mind either directly or through the Prophets. This statement appears unproblematic at first: we already know that dictates of reason can be known by natural light, as if they were revealed by God to us, and the prime example of this happening is the case of Christ. Furthermore, right ways of living had been revealed by the prophets, according to the TTP, due to their especially vivid imagination and their high moral standing. Nevertheless, have the Prophets revealed enough? Are their teachings sufficient to promote peace and harmony in a present-day state? No matter how important an example the Hebrew state may have been in political discussions of the 17th Century and how much we can learn from studying it,[19] Spinoza thinks we cannot imitate it, nor should we try to do so. He already warns us in the TTP that a state modelled

on the Hebrew commonwealth would most likely be pleasing only to those who wish to isolate themselves from the rest of the world, not to those who need to have commerce with others (TTP XVIII 1). One of the most important elements that the Hebrew prophets lacked, but that the teaching of Christ displays, is the universal nature of their respective moral teachings. Loving kindness should in principle be extended to as many as possible, especially those that live in the same Commonwealth. A welcoming, inclusive society, that manages to develop the powers to think and to act of each individual, promises the best hope for peace and tranquillity. To be sure, this does not entail indiscriminate toleration, but it does commit a Spinozist to a pragmatic desire to make all humans desire the highest good, namely the love of God. Even when this desire comes in a religious, imaginative form it is still well guided because there is nothing more useful to humans than other humans. While there is much work to be done in elucidating the details of the implementation of such an inclusive impetus, Spinoza's analysis has the benefit of pointing us in the right direction when we consider the nature and scope of various welfare institutions. It follows that, when confronted with the problem of immigration and integration through welfare institutions, Spinoza should, if he is to be consistent, appeal to Christ-inspired religious imagination if he is to keep to his desire to find the means best in accordance with practice to animate the desire of the multitude for an empowering civil order. While no doubt other possibilities for various kinds of (religious) imagination could be suggested, the thesis presented here has the advantage that it is in agreement with another of Spinoza's tenets. In TP I 3 Spinoza expresses his firm belief that experience or the writings of "very acute" authors have already shown us all the kinds of State which might be conducive to harmony among humans, and all the ways in which the multitude should be guided towards peace and security. This principle is meant to avoid the mistakes of previous political philosophers who had written Utopias or satires of human nature rather than viable political programs. Whether or not Spinoza is justified in his conviction, if he is to be faithful to it then he needs to find resources from previous human experience to answer the difficulties raised by the integration of immigrants. If the thesis presented here is correct, then the most viable resource is a Christ-inspired kind of religious imagination. Furthermore, even if we are not willing to go along with this assumption on Spinoza's part, we can still argue that although this type of religious imagination is not unique and does not offer the only

possibility we have at our disposal, it nevertheless remains a powerful tool for arranging our society wisely.

The presence of numerous continuities should not, however, obscure the differences. In light of the arguments presented so far, the focus will first be on the absence of any explicit reference to the New Testament and Christ's teaching in the TP. I will argue that this difference is not essential, but will then point to a fundamental shift in Spinoza's understanding of religion and its role in the State in the TP, namely the change from describing religious practice in terms of *justitia* and *charitas* to only *charitas*. In order to address these issues, I will use as my starting point Curley's discussion of the topic. Curley (2010, pp. 23-6) argues that we should understand Spinoza as a pluralist in matters of religion, because he holds that there is "not one true religion, acceptance of which is both necessary and sufficient for salvation". He bases his arguments on the claim that Spinoza advocates a "universal religion" that represents the common core of the monotheistic religions he knew of, and that this universal faith described in chapter XIV of the TTP has nothing specifically Christian about it. There is a reference to Christ in the passage Curley discusses, but it only serves to show that religious belief should consist in belief in God's mercy, which should in turn inspire one to love God. Having "the spirit of Christ in you" therefore does not commit us to any specific set of beliefs about the historical Jesus and his (supposedly) divine nature. We should distinguish between the practical aspect of religion and its theoretical dogmas which, even though they may be superstitious, could in some cases encourage the practice and spread of the virtues of justice and loving-kindness. This makes Spinoza a "pluralist with a difference", who believes that multiple religions lead to salvation even though some may be forms of superstition. This line of reasoning enables Curley to interpret Spinoza's claim in TP VIII 46 that in an aristocracy it is essential for the rulers to agree in endorsing and practicing one type of religion and that other religions are subject to certain restriction as simply making explicit the position of the earlier TTP. The national religion Spinoza has in mind is the universal religion he had described in TTP chapter XIV.

By my lights, this argument does not sufficiently take into account two important elements. First, as has been argued above, there is something specific to Christ's moral teachings as Spinoza understands them that renders them somewhat different from those of the prophets. Not only are they based on adequate understanding in a way that is not the case for Prophets of the Old Testament, they are also universal in character in a

way not previously encountered. This means that they are much likelier to appear persuasive to all and to encourage us to practice loving kindness towards all humans, indiscriminately of specific differences. In the context of the present argument, they are much likelier to make all citizens well disposed towards foreigners within the commonwealth. Contra Curley, there is something particularly persuasive about the New Testament that is reflected in the TP, albeit not explicitly as in the TTP. Second, we have already remarked on the absence from the TP of the term 'justitia' from Spinoza's description of universal or true religion. In EIVp37s2 we are told by Spinoza that just and unjust are "extrinsic notions, not attributes which explain the nature of the mind". In other words, we can speak of what is just or unjust (the "will to give to each his own, or to take away from someone what is his") only in a civil state in which laws decide that justice and injustice are. In the early TTP we sometimes find Spinoza employing the term "justus" in opposition to "impius", not "injustus" and to give it a meaning closer to the modern "righteous" (TTP XIX 8, cf. Curley's translation from 2016, Glossary, under the heading "Justice"). In the TP however, the uses of 'justitia' follow the account given in the *Ethics* and are in line with their present-day English cognates (see TP II 23 and VI 26). This later and clearer delineation of the scope of the term 'justice', which now avoids the moral implications of the word "righteous", makes it unnecessary for Spinoza to include it under the heading of the "universal religion". Justice is dispensed by civil authorities and is not the subject of religious practice as is the case in the earlier TTP. Religion, as the practice of loving kindness, is in a sense less than civil laws and institutions, justice included, because it is subordinated to civil authorities and does not regulate them, but is also in a sense more because it can shape the morals of the populace. The power that religion has to enhance the lives of individuals is freed from the constraints of having to be concerned with the domain of *justitia*. Religion can make people desire to follow the laws of the state, but it can also make them willing to go above and beyond what is strictly required in their attempt to help their fellow humans. This last argument not only signals an important development in Spinoza's views on the nature of religion and his interest in carefully delineating what falls within its domain and what must be left to the civil authorities, but it also shows how religion has the potential to contribute, by shaping the morals of the populace in a way inaccessible to secular authorities, to disposing the people towards welcoming and integrating migrants.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the striving for collective liberation that guides Spinoza's political philosophy is based on an inclusive impetus favourable to the welcoming and integration of migrants, and that the laws and institutions that facilitate this objective can gain the support of the people if their imagination is governed by the precepts of "true religion". Furthermore, I have argued that Christ-inspired religious imagination is most likely to promote the goal of peace, safety and harmony among the options considered by Spinoza. Considerations grounded in the study of the historical example of the Untied Provinces have shown how, according to Spinoza, religious imagination, while potentially dangerous, is particularly well suited to guide the multitude due to its easily accessible presentation of loving-kindness (*charitas*) as a universal practical virtue. Furthermore, we have seen how our investigation into the role that Christ's teachings can play in shaping the support of the populace for the integration of immigrants has also helped us reveal the many continuities between the TTP and TP on the role of religion, as well as highlight the difference marked by Spinoza's focus on *charitas* as a universal value and abandonment of *justitia* as an integral part of the essence of true religion.

Nevertheless, Spinoza's account leaves open a number of questions directly concerning the implementation of any inclusive policy regarding immigration. On the one hand, it is not clear what precisely the legislative and institutional framework must be that best promotes the integration of migrants and their development along the pragmatic lines advocated by Spinoza. On the other hand, it is not clear to what extent immigration should be allowed, in other words how porous state-borders should be, given that Spinoza explicitly discusses only cases of obtaining citizenship when the foreigners are either the offspring of a citizen or are born in the country. This does not sufficiently clarify the status of foreigners not born in the land, let alone the prospects of those who wish to enter the commonwealth. Nevertheless, his arguments in TP VIII 12 suggest that there are good reasons to extend the commonwealth's institutional welcome even to those wholly foreign to the state.

NOTES

1 I write 'Christ's teachings' or 'Christ-inspired' teachings in order to distinguish what Spinoza thinks is the authentic core of Christ's message from its various abusive interpretations, used for political gains, that he identifies throughout history.

2 The constitutive process is historical, naturalized and immanent (Balibar 1998, p. 36).

3 Spinoza constructs a world and "destroys the possibility of dominating it" (Negri 1991, p. 185). "It is … the responsibility of the (democratic) state to 'demythicise' dogma" (Balibar 1998, p. 115).

4 "It is one thing to have dominion and care of affairs of state by right, and another to exercise dominion and direct affairs in the best way" (TP V 1).

5 Spinoza argues that the history of the Hebrew state shows that it is pernicious for the priests to gain secular power (TTP XVIII 6 [1]) because they strive to regulate beliefs, which can only lead to sedition within the body politic (TTP XVIII 4 [1]).

6 Skinner traces the beginnings of the secularization of political theory to at least as early as the 13th Century. He contrasts Augustine's influence, for whom the Christian should not be concerned with temporal goods and be mindful only of eternal life, with the outlook developed following the recovery and translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (Skinner 1978a, p. 349). The modern idea of the State presupposes that political theory and a political society exist solely for political, not other-worldly, purposes (Skinner 1978a, p. 352).

7 Spinoza rejects the work of philosophers who have written satires, or utopias, instead of a theory of politics with useful application.

8 They are the first victims of their own illusory values (Balibar 1998, p. 15).

9 See the analysis of the nature of the Hebrew state (TTP XVIII 4), but also of Rome, Macedon (TTP XVII 5, 6) or of the power of the Pope (TTP XIX 17). This is all meant to substantiate Spinoza's commentary on the state of the Dutch Republic of his day.

10 "Politics is the metaphysics of imagination, of the real, human constitution of the world." (Negri 1991, p. 97)

11 The civil state proves nevertheless beneficial to the sage.

12 The analysis of the concept of "multitude" in Spinoza, especially in the TP, goes beyond the ambit of this paper.

13 Hope and fear are never good in themselves, but can be useful when they restrain a certain kind of excessive and deleterious joy (EIVp47; cf. Jaquet 2005, p. 285).

14 These arguments should be read against the background of a long-running debate on the best means to ensure the existence of a flourishing political association. The debate takes place between those who claim that the

effectiveness of government depends on laws and institutions (e.g. Hume), and those who argue that, given that individuals control government and institutions, the state depends on the virtue (or corruption) of those in charge (e.g. Machiavelli or Montesquieu; cf. Skinner 1978b: 45).

15 The preservation of the body politic is not a conservative notion. It must be understood under the principle of mobility and development of power (Balibar 1998, p. 96).

16 The power to act of a mode can be assisted by an external power: in this case, even if the body is acted on, the interaction can still prove empowering.

17 Spinoza himself had, of course, more than an academic interest in the problem of migration since his parents had been immigrants themselves. Furthermore, the Jewish community in Amsterdam had faced, in the 17th century, the problem of Sephardic, and especially a large number of Ashkenazic Jews, joining them. While the Sephardim were relatively well off, the Ashkenazim were much poorer, thus requiring help from the community. The latter came in large numbers to the United Provinces and, by the end of the 17th Century, outnumbered the Sephardim by almost two to one (Nadler 1999, 19-21). Spinoza does not explicitly discuss this situation, but would it be possible to surmise that he would have liked to see the whole of the United Provinces join in including these foreigners into their state to the benefit of all? This can only remain a conjecture, but one that the arguments in this paper support.

18 For an interesting way to make sense of this claim, see Steinberg (2013, p .393; 398-9), who distinguishes between two forms of imitation of affects or empathy: 1) straightforward empathy in which the communication of affective states is based on direct communication, between similar beings, of the motion that constitutes affective state, within a physico-mechanistic framework; 2) more complex forms of empathy that can include cases of misrepresentation of the other, her affective states, and her resemblance to me.

19 See Nelson, 2011.

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