A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION INTO SEASTEADING AS A MEANS TO DISCOVER BETTER FORMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

BY

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Abstract

This dissertation aims at providing a philosophical investigation of the concept of seasteading from a libertarian anarchist perspective. My investigation revolves around the following research question: "given that governments are resistant to structural changes of governance, how can mankind discover better forms of social organization?"

I argue that seasteading can play an important role in creating an experimentation space where different social organizations can be tested so that mankind can discover governments that are best for human flourishing. In the first chapter, I maintain that one core focus of political philosophy is to deal with the realities of value pluralism and political disagreements. I also contend that the most common form of social organization, representative democracy, does not satisfactorily deal with these realities. Hence, we should look for political possibilities beyond representative democracies. In order to discover these possibilities, we should experiment with new forms of social organization. Chapter two discusses why there is currently little experimentation with social orders. I approach the issue from a meta-system level perspective and contend that all land on earth is more or less already claimed by states, which leaves little opportunity for people to start new societies on land. By applying the theory of monopoly economics, I maintain that the state's monopoly on jurisdiction and coercion does not encourage them to provide good rules of law. Rather, it makes states extremely resistant to large-scale social changes. The obvious solution for finding better forms of governance then would be the introduction of competition into the industry of governments. Chapter three deals with the epistemological attitude required for the experimentation space. I maintain that this attitude consists of having a sociological imagination, being epistemologically modest, realizing that social order can emerge spontaneously, and that the utopian dream of a single perfect society is impossible. Chapter four discusses seasteading as the means by which the experimentation space could be realized. By homesteading the seas, a community can build and test new forms of social organization outside the scope of current governments' control. It could generate new knowledge on social orders, thereby contributing to political philosophy and the social sciences. It could moreover also ease political tensions between citizens with different comprehensive doctrines. Finally, I raise two objections to seasteading and address them accordingly.

Introduction

According to a 2009 Gallup report, approximately 700 million people worldwide desire to migrate permanently in their search for better livelihoods (Esipova & Ray, 2009, p. 1). In total there are around 200 independent countries from which a migrant theoretically can choose. Practically however, due to strict migration laws people have very few options if they would like to migrate (Grant, 2005, p. 1). In addition, there are even fewer options in available governmental forms. The reason, as I will explain later, is that at the moment all land is more or less already claimed by states. States, being institutions with a territorial monopoly of jurisdiction and compulsion,[1] have a natural desire to maintain themselves. They are rigid in their structure and aversively reject major political changes. Because of the monopoly of land by states and their aversion to major changes in the structure of social organizations, very few potentially habitable lands are available on which new experiments with social organizations can be conducted. Changes in social organization can be made through revolutions, but revolutions are rare and often involve violence. Without any guarantee that revolutions will be successful, people regard revolutions as costly. Therefore people prefer the status quo or they attempt to change the state through political influence by means of, for example, voting and lobbying. However, in a democracy, the probability that your vote carries an issue and changes public policy is extremely small (Butler, 2012, p. 53). In addition, lobbying requires great sums of money, coordination of people who share similar interests, and high-level political connections. If states resist structural changes in their forms of social organization and if the people are unwilling to force or incapable of forcing major changes through revolution and the democratic process, then it is no surprise that there is little diversity in governmental forms.

The most common types of social organization are representative democracies, and to a lesser extent there are monarchies, theocracies, and communist states. There are nonetheless many people with different ideas of social organizations, but who never have had the chance to implement their ideas. To give some examples of social

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[1] This is Max Weber's definition of the state from 'Politics as a Vocation' (1919).

organizations very much different from what is currently common: a libertarian[2] anarchist society in which law and order is maintained by private protection agencies, an anarcho-syndicalist society where money and wage labour are abolished, a direct democracy in which every public decision is directly made through public votes, a Jacque Frescoan[3] technocratic resource-based society etc. It is sometimes said that "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other forms that have been tried from time to time" (Churchill, 1947, Nov. 11). However, it is very possible that the best form of social organization has not been tried yet. This raises the following research question: "given that governments are resistant to structural changes of governance, how can mankind discover better forms of social organization?" I will approach the question from a philosophical and practical libertarian anarchist perspective. The question is particularly relevant as it focuses on how political philosophies can move from the ideal to the real so that it encourages human flourishing. Karl Marx (1845) likewise stressed the importance of applying philosophy to change the human condition when he said that "[T]he philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, 1845, p. 3).[4]

My thesis starts with a discussion on value pluralism and political philosophy's focus on political disagreements. From there I will move my discussion to the most common form of social organization, representative democracy, which is considered by many to be a stabilizing factor in a pluralistic society. However, I will conclude that it inadequately deals with value pluralism and that we have to look for political possibilities beyond representative democracies. Therefore we should encourage an

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[2] There are many types of libertarians: libertarian minarchists, libertarian anarchists, left libertarians, classical liberals, paleolibertarians, objectivists etc. Walter Block (2011) describes libertarianism as "the philosophy that maintains it is illicit to threaten or initiate violence against a person or his legitimately owned property" (Block, 2011, p. 665). When I refer to libertarians, I thus refer to those who embrace such a philosophy.

[3] Jacque Fresco has a vision for society in which all of the world's resources are common property for all human beings. He believes that mankind is able to provide a high standard of living by overcoming scarcity through the utilization of technology. Technology would make resources available for everyone without the use of money or any other system of debt. In a resource-based economy, goods, services, and information are free and there is no need for any price system. See Jas Garcha's *The First Civilization* (2012).

[4] Marx believed that philosophers had traditionally maintained a separation of theory and practice. His point was that philosophy should be reconceived from the perspective that our thoughts are sociohistorical, and that our judgements, values and practices are essentially in relation to social practices and institutions. From this insight, Marx asserted that the separation of theory and practice was untenable. He therefore advocated a critical social theory that not only describes the social world, but that also orientates and emancipates us in the social world. (Owen, 2002, p. 1)

open experimentation space in which different social organizations can be tested. Experimentation and the free competition of thought, Karl Popper believes, will lead to greater knowledge generation and scientific progress (Popper, 1957, pp. 153-154). I will argue that experimentation as a source of practical and theoretical knowledge generation can contribute to political philosophy and the social sciences in general. A current problem in political philosophy is that there are many philosophers with interesting ideas about how society should function, but whose ideas cannot be tested due to governments' reluctance to change. I will focus on one particular free market[5] solution which is the creation of seasteads as a means to experiment with new forms of social organization, and to compete with already existing governments. Seasteads are permanent dwellings at sea that preferably lie outside the territory claimed by a government. Seasteading appeals to the entrepreneurial spirit of private individuals who see opportunities to homestead the seas and install a form of social organization that they prefer. Wayne Gramlich and Patri Friedman[6] founded the Seasteading Institute in 2008 in order to promote the seasteading movement, which has intellectually attracted mostly libertarian-minded individuals. The institute has attracted funding from Paypal cofounder and early facebook investor Peter Thiel.[7] The possibility of having a large variety of seasteads with different social organizations existing next to each other, and the possibility of providing the people with the opportunities to migrate to the territory with their preferred social organization will, I believe, contribute to greater social stability. It is therefore more important to celebrate the disagreements among people on how the structure of society should be than to look for large-scale social agreement on a particular 'social contract' that is applicable to nation-wide territories. The promise of seasteading is that it will unleash new and innovative forms of social organization when anyone is free to build a seastead. Mao Zedong (1956) is famous for having said, "Let a

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[5] I define the free market as a process in which individuals are free to have their own preferences and choose their own ends.

[6] It may be interesting to know that Patri Friedman is the grandson of Milton Friedman and the son of libertarian anarchist David Friedman.

[7] Peter Thiel, previously a student of Political Philosophy at Stanford University, is also founder of the libertarian-minded newspaper The Stanford Review. He is a venture capitalist who is very much influenced by the Austrian School of Economics. With this in mind, it may not be surprising that the early mission of PayPal was to give its users more control over their money by enabling them to switch currencies. The goal of PayPal was to make it, in Thiel's words (1999), "nearly impossible for corrupt governments to steal wealth from their people through their old means [inflation and wholesale currency devaluations] because if they try the people will switch to dollars or Pounds or Yen, in effect dumping the worthless local currency for something more secure" (Jackson, 2004).

hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools contend" when he invited open criticism of his regime (Teiwes, 1997, p. 68).[8] The slogan is a metaphor for innovation through the free competition of thought. Like flowers, ideas and innovations can blossom and spread wild their essence beyond a single person's imaginations, encouraging even more ideas and innovations. (Kanter, 1988, p. 170)

This thesis inquires the possibility of finding practical solutions to political problems through the engagement of millions of people on the free market of ideas. The seasteading movement is relatively new, and the philosophical literature with respect to seasteading is therefore limited. I hope that this work will be an interesting philosophical contribution to the seasteading literature. It will be argued that governments are poor at finding solutions to human problems and that what is best for humanity can best be discovered by letting millions engage in trial and error; thus, let a hundred seasteads bloom and let a hundred social organizations contend.

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[8] The Hundred Flowers movement in 1956-1957 was initially meant to promote intellectual criticism. Mao believed that the freedom of thought and freedom of criticism was essential for a true Marxist-Leninist society. He considered academic stagnation and dogmatic restrictions on intellectual life as hostile to the communist ideology. (Teiwes, 1997, p. 68) However, Mao has unfortunately made use of this situation to find the critical voices of his public policies so that he could execute his dissenters (Short, 2001, p. 470).

1.   The reality of value pluralism

Imagine the following three persons: the environmentalist Jane, the libertarian Carl, and the socialist Andy. Environmentalist Jane is frustrated with the lack of environmental regulations in her city. Her proposals to levy a fine on plastic bags and to separate trash for recycling purposes have once again been voted down by her city council. As she walks out the council meeting she thinks to herself: "Why can they not see the importance of taking good care of the environment? Would it not be an inspiring experience to live in a place where man lives a truly harmonious and integrated life with nature? Do we not all have the moral responsibility to leave a place behind for our children where they can still enjoy nature uninterrupted by human pollution?" Libertarian Carl walks around the city centre. As he looks around he sees the beautiful architecture and the wide diversity of shops. To him, the architecture embodies the potential of human creativity, and the wide variety of shops represents the many personal preferences that human individuals can hold. As he wanders around, he thinks to himself: "How would it be if human beings were freer from government regulations, and if they were allowed to live entirely according to their own preferences as long as they do not initiate or threaten violence against a person or his property? Would it not lead to the flourishing of human creativity and would people not feel more dignified as they are allowed to pursue their dreams and feel more responsible for their own lives again?" Socialist Andy, like Carl, sees the potential of human creativity in his city. However, he also recognizes the many poor people on the streets and he regards the inequality of wealth as an injustice perpetuated by the rich. He thinks to himself: "Why should the rich not contribute more to help the poor? No one should live beneath a reasonable standard of living. The government should therefore implement incremental taxes on capital and policies that ensure equal access to education and health care for anyone."

Of course this is a simplistic reflection of the attitudes generally held by environmentalists, libertarians and socialists. The point of the matter is that each of the three persons has different views on how society should function and therefore they disagree among each other on what the most appropriate form of social organization is. Each of them (1) is discontent with the current state of affairs in society, (2) has a specific vision of how society should be, and (3) would possibly

like to build their lives in accordance with that vision (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 15). Bernard Williams has written in *In The Beginning Was The Deed* (2005) that political philosophy "is to an important degree focused in the idea of political disagreement" (Williams, 2005, p. 77) and that "political disagreements include disagreements about the interpretation of political values, such as freedom, equality, or justice" (Williams, 2005, p. 77). One substantial focus of political philosophy is hence on value pluralism and the conflicts that emerge from differing political ideas (Galston, 2010, p. 13).

1.1 Roles of political philosophy with respect to value pluralism

John Rawls (2001) has given an interesting account of the roles of political philosophy with regards to value pluralism. I would like to address shortly three roles that have been identified by Rawls:

(a) Political philosophy should be practical. It must therefore be able to identify an "underlying basis of philosophical and moral agreement" (Rawls, 2001, p. 2) for the purpose of maintaining social order in a divided and pluralistic society;

(b) Political philosophy should help us think about the aims, purposes and roles of people in society. "[I]t belongs to reason and reflection (both theoretical and practical) to orient us in the (conceptual) space, say, of all possible ends, individual and associational, political and social" (Rawls, 2001, p. 3) It has therefore the role of orientation;

(c) Political philosophy should be "realistically utopian" (Rawls, 2001, p. 4). While it prescribes a utopian society, the society should also be realizable and realistic. It must therefore have ideal and realist elements.

Rawls calls a person's set of values and concerns the person's comprehensive doctrine. He accepts that it is an inevitable reality that people hold different comprehensive doctrines, and upon this notion of reality he builds his political philosophy. In order to deal with the reality of value pluralism, he looks for sufficient commonalities that will serve as the basis for an overlapping consensus on a particular structure of society. (Kelly, 2001, p. xi) According to Rawls, a consensus on the basic institutional framework of society could be reached from behind 'the veil of ignorance'. The veil of ignorance is a concept through which people reach an agreement on a particular social contract. According to Rawls, political philosophy should uncover political agreements among different-minded individuals in order to bring forth a well-ordered society. "[W]hat better alternative is there than an

agreement between citizens themselves reached under conditions that are fair for all"
(Rawls, 2001, p. 15)? People from behind the veil of ignorance are stripped of their
personal comprehensive doctrines, and they are to regard themselves as ignorant of
their status, wealth and power. Rawls puts it as follows, "[N]o one knows his place in
society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the
distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like"
(Rawls, 1999, p. 11). In addition, they are to regard themselves as free and equal
individuals who are all concerned with social justice. Rawls calls the position from
behind the veil of ignorance 'the original position'.[9] (Fabre, 2007, p. 5) Rawls
acknowledges that his original position argument can only lead to stability if the
people accept the principles and the required institutions that maintain the principles.

Social agreement plays a pivotal role not only in Rawls' theory, but in many political
philosophies in general. The idea that citizens have engaged in some sort of social
contract or social agreement presupposes the legitimation of the social and political
structure of society for many political philosophies. Maybe the clearest and most
common form of social organization that is assumed to deal best with a pluralistic
society is a representative democracy, a system in which majority agreement is
considered to decide or influence public policies consensually through a voting
process. It is generally believed by proponents of a representative democracy that the
voter elects political agents who will decide policies that represent the will of their
principals. As these principals all have different comprehensive doctrines and values,
the political agent is therefore seen as the unifying force of the pluralistic society. In
the next section however, I will argue that the political agent cannot represent the

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[9] Rawls asserts that people from the original position will agree on the following principles: (1) The
'equal liberty principle', which maintains that every person has the right to equal basic liberties such
as the right to vote, the right to hold public office, freedom of speech, freedom from psychological and
physical oppression etc; and (2) the social economic inequalities must satisfy the 'fair equality of
opportunity principle' and the 'difference principle' (Arneson, 2009, p. 112). Fair equality of
opportunity ensures that "any individuals with the same native talent and the same ambition have the
same chances for competitive success" (Arneson, 2009, p. 113). The difference principle holds that
social and economic inequalities must lead to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged. Even though
Rawls claims that his political philosophy is realistic, one could object to his approach by stating that
the original position is obviously idealistic. Raymond Geuss (2005) has for example questioned what
relevance an agreement reached in the original position would have to us, "who do have concrete
'identities', parts of which sometimes can be of importance to us, and who live in a concrete situation
in a complex real world, *not* in the idealized world of the original position" (Geuss, 2005, pp. 32-33).
Or one could also argue that it is impossible and unrealistic to imagine ourselves without our social or
historical experience. The people from behind the veil of ignorance may therefore have reasoned from
the perspective of American liberals, which has eventuated in the structural arrangements that are
similar to what currently exists in the United States (Geuss, 2005, p. 22).

constituency, and that he is not a unifying force. I will contend that a representative democracy does not deal well with value pluralism at all, and that we should look for political alternatives beyond democracy that may deal better with the reality of value pluralism.

1.2 Poverty of democracy with respect to value pluralism

What most people find attractive about democracy is its underlying idea that the electorate is an embodiment of the general will of the public as if the public has reached some kind of general agreement on public policies and legislation. It is believed that with regular elections, the rulers are in power for a limited time and they "will be compelled by the threat of dismissal to do what public opinion wants them to do" (Popper, 1963, p. 345). Gerard Casey writes in *Libertarian Anarchy* (2012) that "[T]he central characteristic of representation by agency is that the agent is responsible to his principal and is bound to act in the principal's interest" (Casey, 2012, p. 125). It is however questionable to what extent the electorate can truly represent the constituency and to what extent the public voice can be considered univocal. We must also beware of attributing "to the voice of the people a kind of final authority and unlimited wisdom" (Popper, 1963, p. 347). When society holds a *vox populi vox dei* attitude, it can easily slip into a tyranny of the majority. A society ruled by public opinion by no means guarantees social justice. Socrates was for example unfairly sentenced to death by the dikasts who 'represented' the Athenian public. It is important to realize that the notion of representation is highly questionable. According to public choice theory, political agents cannot possibly truly represent their constituencies when members of a society have different comprehensive doctrines, hold different values, and have different interests. Public choice theory applies economic methods in the field of political theory and provides some interesting insights that are relevant for political philosophy (Butler, 2012, p. 21). Public choice theory maintains that politics is ruled by clashing opinions among policy makers and clashing opinions among members of the constituency. One may for example desire to build new roads with public funds, another may want to use public funds for the modernization of the military and defense, a third may desire to spend more on social welfare, a fourth on education etc. Or to refer again to Jane, Carl and Andy, one may hold different ideologies of social organization. Given that

we live in a world of value pluralism, it is difficult for policy makers to pursue and represent the 'public interest' (Butler, 2012, p. 26). Furthermore, special minority interest groups may have incentives to organize themselves in order to influence public policies through lobbying. When the expected gain of lobbying of such minority interest groups is greater than the cost of lobbying efforts, they have greater incentive to influence legislators. Large interest groups, such as taxpayers in general, have many fewer incentives to campaign for particular legislations, because the benefits of their actions, if they are successful, are spread much more widely among each individual taxpayer. (Butler, 2012, pp. 58-59) When the principal believes that the cost of being politically active – keeping oneself up-to-date with political actualities and being involved with political campaigns – is not worth the benefits, the principal may become 'rationally ignorant' of politics (Butler, 2012, p. 33). This gives representatives more incentives not to pay attention to the public interests. Bryan Caplan (2007) writes that rationally ignorant principals do not know who their representatives are or what they do. This consequently discourages the politicians' feeling of accountability for their actions and it encourages the politicians to sell themselves to donors and to pursue personal agendas (Caplan, 2007, p. 2). According to Hans-Hermann Hoppe (2001), political agents in a democracy have greater incentives to waste public funds in the period they are in power, because they do not own the government resources. They only own the current use of the public resources for a limited time to their personal advantages. The agent will therefore exploit the resource without the long-term perspective consideration to put the resources to good use for the benefits of future generations (Hoppe, 2001, p. 46).[10] Different interests, incentives, and ideologies among principals and political agents therefore result in unequal representation.

I believe that Casey is right when he asserts that there is "no interest common to the constituency as a whole, or, if there is, it is so rare as to be practically non-existent. That being the case, there is nothing that can be represented" (Casey, 2012, p. 125).

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[10] Hans-Hermann Hoppe (2001) asserts that a democratically chosen governmental body has a higher time preference from the perspective of economic theory, because the government and its resources are publicly owned (Hoppe, 2001, p. 42). Time preference assumes that "man prefers his end to be achieved in the shortest possible time" (Rothbard, 1962, p. 15). The higher the time preference, the less considerate the actor is of the future. In order to take advantage of his political power, the political agent will therefore use public funds for his own benefits during the short period of his rule. Privately owned governments on the other hand, have a lower time preference as they are more concerned with the future value of their properties.

Imagine that there is a piece of legislation that our representatives can either pass or not with 35 per cent of the public in favour of the legislation and 65 per cent who oppose it. If our representatives pass the legislation, they will represent the 35 per cent and ignore the interests of the 65 per cent. If they do not pass the legislation, they will represent the 65 per cent and cease to represent the interests of the 35 per cent. "In this very normal political scenario, it is not that it is *difficult* to represent a constituency – it is rather that it is *impossible*" (Casey, 2012, p. 125). A representative democracy is therefore actually quite inadequate in dealing with a pluralistic society as it cannot fulfill its promise: representing the will of the peoples. Democracy is moreover a system that is inherently violent, because it divides people along the lines of their comprehensive doctrines. People with similar political thoughts organize themselves into groups to campaign against people who hold conflicting ideas. In a democracy, these people then vote for their preferred ruler to rule over people who may have contrasting views or who may be indifferent to political issues at all. It has never happened that the turnout at elections is 100 per cent. The average turnout rate in Europe is around 43 per cent (Eurostat.com). Nonetheless, the 43 per cent are choosing political agents who are expected to represent the 57 per cent of the non-voting constituency. The violent nature of democracy is that with every vote the voter attempts to enforce their preferred rulers or legislation unto others. This basically makes it a system in which people lose their political autonomy to other voters.[11] I believe that in order to deal more adequately with value pluralism we have to look for political possibilities that lie beyond a representative democracy. A democracy should not be considered as the end of all forms of social organization. However, in what ways can we discover better forms of social organization?

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[11] Robert Nozick (1974) has similarly implied in his 'tale of the slave' that in a democracy everyone is everyone else's slave. Instead of having a one-headed master, the master is a 10,000-headed monster (Nozick, 1974, pp. 290-292).

1.3 Experimentation with social organizations to deal with value pluralism

One strength of democracies, according to many of its proponents, is the creation of 'the public sphere' in which people are allowed to discuss their political views openly. Habermas (1964) calls the public sphere "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1964, p. 49). All citizens are guaranteed the freedom to access the public sphere, the freedom of assembly and association and the freedom of expression. The goal of the public sphere is to foster peaceful discussion between all people including those who hold conflicting political ideas so that people with conflicting ideas can reach mutual understanding. It is assumed that through reason and argumentation, even the opposing minority has the chance to convince the general public for a change in political course. According to Popper, the public sphere therefore provides the opportunity for regime change without violence (Popper, 1963, p. 345). The most important characteristic of a public sphere in my opinion is that it safeguards freedom of thought and that it encourages rational discussions. These are important liberal values that play a quintessential role in the quest for truth. Popper writes that our search for truth is based on the following three principles: (a) the principle of fallibility; (b) the principle of rational discussion; and (c) the principle of approximation to the truth. He asserts that we should be epistemologically modest and that we, like Socrates, should know that we know very little (Popper, 1957, p. 67). The principle of fallibility stresses the importance of being epistemologically modest, because it maintains that there is a possibility that our intellectual convictions are wrong. For this reason, every theory should be subject to rational criticism: instead of desiring to prove our theories, we should therefore train ourselves to criticize them. (Popper, 1963, p. 26) Even if we do not reach an agreement in a discussion, there is still much we can learn from the discussion. It may for example have shed some light on our intellectual errors or it may provoke a deeper understanding on some parts which hence brings us closer to the truth. I believe however, that mere theoretical discussions in political philosophy are not always sufficient in our search for truth. Many times we are only able to convince people to a limited degree when we discuss the appropriateness of our ideas. This is certainly also true for discussions on what social organizations are the most proper for human flourishing.

Imagine the different-minded Jane, Carl and Andy being involved in a discussion on how society should be organized. If each of the three holds different values and theoretical premises, it is not unlikely that the three will soon leave the discussion thinking that the other two are stubborn or maybe even stupid. Therefore it can be helpful if truth is empirically demonstrated. I do not argue that we can only say anything meaningful about the real world through empiricism,[12] but I think that C. Wright Mills (1959) is right when he posits that "[T]he purpose of empirical inquiry is to settle disagreements and doubts about facts" (Mills, 1959, p. 205), although I fully realize that people can have different interpretations of empirical manifestations. Discussions in the public sphere are important as they can generate new insights and theories in political philosophy, but theories are most convincing when its truths are validated through real-life experiments. The public sphere can be considered as a public space where theoretical knowledge is generated through discussion, but knowledge can also be generated through real-life experiments. Would it not be interesting if we could create an open space in which people like Jane, Carl and Andy can all test their personal political philosophies? The creation of an open space for large-scale experiments on social organizations would have to rely on the epistemological modesty that humans cannot predict what is best for humanity, but that what is best for humanity should be discovered by letting millions engage in trial and error. The idea of this experimentation space is grounded on the Rawlsian-like belief that we live in a reality where people in society hold different comprehensive doctrines that are not always easily reconcilable. However, whereas Rawls seeks an "underlying basis of philosophical and moral agreement" (Rawls, 2001, p. 2) on the basic structure of society, the open experimental space goes beyond large-scale social agreements. It focuses more on social disagreements as it celebrates the diversity of human imaginations in creating possible solutions for human problems. It is believed that the stability of social organizations does not lie in social agreement, but in the extent that we can tolerate people with different comprehensive doctrines and values that are not necessarily reconcilable with ours. Different-minded people are therefore encouraged to make use of the experimental space to prove that their preferred social organization works. It would fulfill the three demands that, according to Popper, are

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[12] Immanuel Kant asserts in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) that synthetic a priori judgements can, independent of experience, contain meaningful information about the real word. Mathematical judgements, which have greatly contributed to our understanding of the world, are essentially synthetic a priori judgements (Kant, 1781, p. 55).

needed for our search for truth: "(a) imagination, (b) trial and error, and (c) the gradual discovery of our prejudices by way of (a), of (b) and of critical discussion" (Popper, 1963, p. 352). It would create a dualism of the experimental and the theoretical in political philosophy that is comparable with for example the split in physics between experimental and theoretical physics. I would like to stress that such experiments should happen on a large-scale real world setting,[13] which is in contrast to the controlled experiments in the natural sciences where one attempts to change one variable and assumes *ceteris paribus* in order to find the effect of this particular variable. In the natural sciences it is easier to observe elements of change in isolation than in the social sciences, because the same empirical experiment in the natural sciences leads to the same effect as the properties of natural elements are constant. It is for example in the property of water to boil at 100 $^{\circ}$C. The consequence is that every experiment in which one tries to find the boiling point of water always leads to the same result: 100 $^{\circ}$C. Experiments in the social world on the other hand, deal with a variety of complex social phenomena (Mises, 1942, pp. 4-5). Human beings are unpredictable and behave differently in similar circumstances as their "social experience is historical experience" (Mises, 1942, p. 4). Unlike natural elements, man can learn from his past experiences and act differently under equal circumstances. Ludwig von Mises (1942) writes that "[T]he social sciences never enjoy the advantage of observing the consequences of a change in one element only, other conditions being equal" (Mises, 1942, p. 5). Social experiments, I believe, should therefore involve the human experience on a larger scale. Instead of looking for cause and effect relationships by changing single variables, we can look for new human experiences with different social organizations so that we can discover new political possibilities. Later, I will introduce seasteading as the means to conduct large-scale social experiments involving a deep and complex human experience.

Philosophy is sometimes accused of being too abstract and too obsessed with theory – "that it does not represent an ideal of political life achievable under even the most favorable circumstances" (Galston, 2010, p. 387). Experimentation with political philosophies however, can give political philosophy insights on what is politically possible "as probing the limits of practicable political possibility" (Rawls, 2001, p. 4),

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[13] Later, I will advocate the use of large-scale experimentations with social organizations in micro-communities like seasteads.

next to generating new theoretical and practical knowledge on social organizations. By testing and evaluating a philosopher's ideas on their practicality we can find whether they are "realistically utopian" (Rawls, 2001, p. 4). When the experimental sphere is integrated as a source of knowledge generation in political philosophy, it can also stimulate the political philosophy's role of orientation that Rawls has in mind (Rawls, 2001, p. 3). It can "contribute to how a people think of their political and social institutions as a whole" (Rawls, 2001, p. 2). It orients us as to how we approach our political conditions and how we think of ourselves in relation to our social institutions. Unfortunately however, political philosophy currently lacks the space to test new ideas on social organizations on a large scale. In the next chapter I will discuss why there is currently little experimentation with new forms of social organization.

2.   Why there is currently little experimentation

Friedman & Gramlich (2009) recognize the following levels on which philosophical discussions on politics can take place: (1) policy, (2) system, and (3) meta-system. On the 'policy' level, one deals with questions related to the effects of specific policies. For example: if we want to reduce harmful drug use, should we criminalize drugs? The 'system' level is at a higher level of generality and deals with what policies a specific form of social organization is inclined to generate. For example: citizens tend to become rationally ignorant in democracies as the benefits of policies in the interest of the public are spread widely among a large group of citizens (Butler, 2012, p. 53). Small interest groups on the other hand have more incentives to organize themselves and influence public policies as the benefits are spread over a smaller number of people. As small interest groups have more incentives to influence public policy, a democracy tends to create more protective policies for small interest groups. Such policies are for example import restrictions on solar panels,[14] farm subsidies, bank bailouts etc. At the 'meta-system' level, one deals with questions concerning the entire industry of governments or states. For example: what influences governments of the world to protect their citizens better? The meta-system level is the most abstract and complex level at which one can discuss politics.[15] (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 23) The meta-system level at which philosophers discuss the environments in which governments emerge and the rules of law are made has received little attention from philosophers (Friedman & Taylor, 2012, p. 3). It is at this level that our discussion on why there is little experimentation with new forms of social organization takes place.

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[14] Lobby groups of European solar panel producers have for example successfully persuaded legislators in the European Union to enact import restrictions on Chinese solar panels (Brunsden & Stearns, 2013, July 28).

[15] "To use the metaphor of a business, these levels [policy, system, and meta-system] are products, firms, and industries" (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 23).

2.1 The state has a monopoly on jurisdiction

Almost all land currently fall under the jurisdiction of one or another state. The state, as described by Murray Rothbard in 'The Anatomy of the State' (1974), "is that organization in society which attempts to maintain a monopoly on the use of force and violence in a given territorial area" (Rothbard, 1974, p. 57). The state moreover, enforces a particular jurisdiction with the monopolistic use of force and violence which essentially also gives the state a monopoly on jurisdiction. In economic theory there is a distinction between a natural monopoly[16] and unnatural monopoly – the first emerges from a firm's superior production capacity which enables it to outcompete other firms so that, once all competition is eliminated it can increase its prices, but not legally prevent competitors from entering the field, and the second arises from the elimination of competition through government intervention, such as, for example, government licenses and patents. It is believed that monopolies, because they do not have competitors and hence also no incentives to innovate their products and production processes, are harmful for innovations in the market. Although there are disputes in economics about whether natural monopolies can occur, there is no doubt among economists that unnatural monopolies are widespread. Some examples of unnatural monopolies are: the European Central Bank which holds a monopoly of issuing in the Eurozone, the public police to protect citizens and maintain law and order, and the United States Postal Service which holds a monopoly over letter delivery in the USA. Such monopolies are maintained by the state through exclusionary licensing and sometimes with public funds. The theory of monopoly is built on the following three assumptions: (1) there is one service provider or seller, (2) there are no close substitutes for the service or product, and (3) entry to the market for competitors is restricted (Arnold, 2008, p. 244). Customers have no choice but buy the service or product of the monopolist when new firms are unable to enter the market. The monopolist, due to lack of competition, is hence not encouraged to innovate or improve the quality of its products and services in order to attract customers. Instead, it has extra incentives to exploit existing customers – meaning that they can get away with providing poor products and services. (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 21) Applying these insights from the theory of monopoly to

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[16] Some economists and historians contest whether natural monopolies have ever existed. See for example Thomas Dilorenzo's 'The Myth of Natural Monopoly' (1996) in which he claims that the theory of natural monopoly is an economic fiction (Dilorenzo, 1996, pp. 43-58). However, I will not digress into the question whether natural monopolies can exist as it is not relevant for my thesis.

political philosophy we can maintain that the state likewise, due to its monopoly of jurisdiction, is "an industry with little market feedback, little competition, little reason to perform well, and little opportunity for incremental improvement" (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 21). That a monopolistic social institution has little incentive to improve its products and services is a structural problem of every monopolistic institution including governments. In the cases of central banks, government police forces, and the United States Postal Service, we are left with unstable currencies that continuously lose their purchasing power,[17] inadequate protection of citizens, and a poor letter delivery system. In case of the monopolistic government, it badly fulfills its core functions of preserving law and order and protecting life and property. This is exemplified by the following: "The number of people killed in the twentieth century in state-sponsored conflicts or state-related victimization is, at a conservative estimate, between 175,000,000 and 180,000,000" (Casey, 2012, p. 32). These numbers stand in stark contrast with the "roughly 8,000,000 non-state murders worldwide in the twentieth century which is less than 5 per cent of the state-related figure" (Casey, 2012, p. 32). The cost of government in terms of human lives is enormous. In the past decade alone, mankind has witnessed wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Darfur, Pakistan, Chechen, Somalia, Libya, Syria and many more. These wars, sadly enough, oftentimes involve western democracies which many would consider to be good or peaceful forms of governance.[18]

If states were to operate on free market conditions – meaning that there are more choices for consumers to switch governments, and the costs of exiting and entering territories with a social organization of their preference would be lower –it would put greater pressure on governments to implement attractive policies that attract and retain productive citizens. Franz Oppenheimer (1908) argues that the state cannot finance its operations without its productive citizens. He writes that one can sustain oneself either through the 'economic means' – the use of one's own labour and the exchange for it – or the 'political means' – the appropriation of the labour's production of others. (Oppenheimer, 1908, p. 25) The economic means require peaceful production and exchange, whereas the political means require the use of

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[17] See for example Murray Rothbard's *What Has Government Done to Our Money* (1963) and Jörg Guido Hülsmann's *The Ethics of Money Production* (2008).
[18] See for example Chalmers Johnson's *Dismantling the Empire* (2011) to see how many worldwide conflicts are perpetuated or ignited by western democracies.

force and violence in order to steal from the productive citizenry. The state, of course, has a monopoly on the political means and operates accordingly. Under the assumption of self-interest and monopoly position, the state "will use this monopoly of expropriation to its own advantage – in order to maximize its wealth and income" (Hoppe, 2001, p. 15). We can therefore expect that every government has an inherent tendency to maintain itself and to grow. It will therefore prevent "free entry into the business of expropriations; otherwise, soon nothing would be left that could be expropriated, and any form of institutionalized expropriation would thus become impossible" (Hoppe, 2001, p. 15). Thus, the state will implement policies to keep the costs of exit for its productive citizens high through restrictions of free movement and settlement, and it will aversively reject major political changes that can threaten the state's monopolistic position.

2.2 The high costs of major political changes

Eventually, every state depends on public support. The support "need not be active enthusiasm; it may well be passive resignation" (Rothbard, 1974, p. 61). The state will therefore mould public opinion by for example creating vested economic interests, using propaganda, and implementing social programmes to keep its citizens content. However, social programmes can only exist as long as the state can take away from one group and distribute it to another. Essentially, the state is dependent on the majority's conviction that their "government is good, wise and, at least, inevitable, and certainly better than other conceivable alternatives" (Rothbard, 1974, p. 62). Nonetheless, there are always people who are discontent with the state. What could a person do when he dislikes the state? The person could (a) continue living in the same state, (b) emigrate to another state, (c) change the state through the democratic process, or (d) change the state through violent revolution. All four options come with considerable personal costs. By doing (a), the person will continue living in perpetual discontent and the state will stay unchanged. By choosing (b), the person will have to go through some tiresome bureaucracies to receive the adequate papers that allow him to leave the country and settle in another. The costs of finding information on the emigration procedure, finding a new place to settle, finding a new workplace, leaving friends and family, learning a new language etc. can be so significantly high that it is unfeasible to emigrate. In addition, what choices between

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different forms of social organization does he have? There are mainly representative democracies in place around the world and, to a lesser extent, there are also some monarchies, theocracies, and communistic states. The person does not have much choice among forms of social organization. The person could also decide to do (c) and attempt to change the state through the democratic process. This again requires tremendous costs. The person will have to stay up-to-date with politics, operate within an already existing social organization (democracy), campaign against his political opponents, and organize a great following who would want to vote for his preferred social changes. The probability that the person will heavily influence public policy through the democratic process is extremely small, let alone to implement a revolutionary form of social organization (Butler, 2012, p. 33). The person could also choose option (d) and change the state through violent revolution. This however, may involve war and widespread destruction of private property. There is also no guarantee that a revolt against the state will be successful. It may rather lead to social chaos instead of social harmony.

How then, can we improve the incentives of governments to serve us better? The most obvious answer is to eliminate monopoly in the industry of governments and eliminate the barriers of entry and exit; hence we should allow different types of governments to emerge so that competition is encouraged and experimentations with new forms of social organization can be fostered. According to the Tiebout Model, diversity in personal preferences and diversity in offers of goods and services between different communities cause people to naturally 'vote with their feet' and move into a community where they can enjoy optimal bundles of taxes and public goods (Banzhaf & Walsh, 2008, p. 843).[19] If people have the option to choose between multiple territories, each with different types of social organization, then they will choose the territory and social organization that will provide them the most benefits. Governments would have more competition to attract or retain productive citizens which will give them more incentives to learn from their mistakes and to produce legislation that enables human flourishing. This is, I believe, a free market solution at the meta-system level which alters the industry of governments and

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[19] Charles Tiebout has put forward the Tiebout Model in his influential paper 'A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures' (1956). It relies on assumptions that people are fully mobile, that there are no costs associated with moving, that they have full knowledge of the differences between different communities, that they can choose from a large number of communities etc. (Tiebout, 1956, p. 419).

eliminates poor states. The solution to poor governments is thus the creation of "a diverse ecosystem of governments of different sizes, values, and cultures, trying different methods of social organization" (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 23). In the next chapter I will identify the epistemological attitude on which the experimentation with new forms of social organization is founded.

3. The required epistemological attitude

So far I have argued that governments, due to their monopoly of jurisdiction, have little incentive to provide good services for their citizens. The solution to poor governments is to allow a free market experimentation space in which different forms of social organizations can be tested so that we may discover better forms of governance. This will create a competitive industry of governments in which those with successful social organizations can outcompete and weed out the poor ones. The experimentation with new forms of social organization however, requires a particular epistemological attitude. This attitude, I believe, consists of the following four aspects:

(1) Sociological imagination;
(2) Epistemological modesty;
(3) Realization that order can emerge spontaneously;
(4) Realization that the utopian dream of a single perfect society is impossible.

3.1 Sociological imagination

Gerard Casey (2012) asserts that we are limited by the "imaginative tyranny of the present" (Casey, 2012, p. 82) and he invites us to look beyond the status quo. In other words: we should cultivate our sociological imagination to look for new possibilities. The term, 'sociological imagination', is primarily used by the sociologist C. Wright Mills. He has defined the sociological imagination as a certain "quality of mind" (Mills, 1959, p. 4) that enables a person to see social problems from different perspectives. Mills has envisioned sociology as a practice in which the mind becomes "a moving prism catching light from as many angles as possible" (Mills, 1959, p. 214). By taking multiple perspectives the social philosopher can probe beneath the surface of social problems and gain new insights or even discover solutions. The sociological imagination is a great intellectual tool against dogmatism as it empowers us to see new political possibilities through which mankind can flourish. Churchill has famously said in one of his speeches that "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other forms that have been tried from time to time" (Churchill, 1947, Nov. 11). In practicing the sociological imagination, we should realize that societies continually evolve and that our knowledge and technologies have enormously improved. In addition, many ideas of how societies should function

have emerged in history. While many have fallen out of fashion, some very innovative ideas have also emerged that have never been tried before. What was a generally accepted custom or value in the past may well be looked upon with scorn in the future. For example, four hundred years ago very few people could have imagined that slavery would be abolished in the civilized world as it was regarded as the natural order of things. It has also often been assumed that direct democracy is unfeasible, because it is too time-consuming and costly to meet and act jointly (Ekins, 2009, p. 1). However, the Internet may have already broken down these obstacles. When everyone has easy access to the Internet, why could we not utilize the Internet to make direct voting and direct democracy possible?[20]

Technology can enable us to seek new frontiers in social organizations. It is very well possible that the best form of social organization has never been tried or discovered yet. To assume that democracy, which has become the most common form of social organization since the end of the Great War,[21] is the end of all forms of social organization is to give into our lack of sociological imagination. We find that people who would like to change their country fight for the control of the state so that once they become rulers, they can apply single solutions to human problems in a nation-wide territory. Instead, we should recognize that there may be multiple solutions that are not always obvious. Thus we should follow Mills in stressing the importance of applying a critical sensibility and addressing problems in imaginative and inventive ways (Back & Gane, 2013, p. 411). The sociological imagination is a critical tool that engages history to expose the present as unnatural or unnecessary. The present is the result of innumerable actions of human beings in the past. If the present state of affairs is the result of past human actions, then by changing our actions we may change the present state of affairs. The sociological imagination can provide us with a vision of change and human flourishing, and it can guide us towards progress.

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[20] Personally, I do not advocate direct democracy. I am merely stating that technology can open up new ways to approach political problems.
[21] When Woodrow Wilson was seeking a Declaration of War against Germany in 1917, he announced that "[T]he world must be made safe for democracy" (Wilson, 1917, April 2). This makes the Great War also an ideological war.

3.2 Epistemological modesty

As mentioned in section 1.3, we should realize that our intellect is fallible, and we should know how little we know so that we can prevent ourselves from falling into dogmatism. This epistemological modesty is also required for the experimentation with new forms of social organization. Karl Popper insists that intellectual errors are useful as long as we document and learn from them (Sassower, 2006, p. 40). According to Popper, every theory should always be open for experimentation in the real world so that we can make empirical judgements. Popper argues that the theory should therefore be subjected to "falsifiability, or refutability, or testability" (Popper, 1963, p. 37). Experimentation in the real world is the means to justify or falsify an abstract philosophical theory. Like Mills, Popper thus seems to warn us against focusing too much on abstract theory and too little on real life observations (Mills, 1959, p. 259). When the intellectual focuses too much on abstract theory, he may lose touch with the real world while holding "pretensions of expertise" (Mills, 1959, p. 259). The view of the epistemologically modest intellectual fits very well with Friedrich Hayek's view of man "not as a highly rational and intelligent but as a very irrational and fallible being" (Hayek, 1948, p. 8). In 'The Pretense of Knowledge' (1974),[22] Hayek writes that when policy makers are epistemologically immodest – meaning that they unjustly believe that they truly understand the social world to the extent that they can plan it – they will do more harm than good in their efforts to improve the social order (Hayek, 1974, p. 55). For Hayek, knowing what we can know is as important as discovering what is knowable (Miller, 2010, p. 54). According to Hayek, there are limitations to a man's knowledge of social processes due to the fact that information is dispersed. In other words, as much as there is a division of labour in society, there is also division of knowledge in society (Hayek, 1945, p. 528).[23] This makes it impossible for any person to comprehend the full processes of society entirely. Hayek writes that each individual knows just a fraction of what is collectively known. Since knowledge is decentralized and each individual has unique information with regards to his or her particular circumstances, it is best to leave those with local knowledge to take decisions on how to plan their lives. It

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[22] 'The Pretense of Knowledge' is a lecture that Friedrich Hayek delivered when he was awarded the 1974 Nobel Prize in economics. The lecture warned of the danger of scientism – the belief that every social phenomenon can be measured and quantified – in the social sciences.
[23] See Leonard Read's 'I, Pencil' (1958) in which Read claims that not a single person on earth knows how he can produce a pencil. The story is an analogy of the division of knowledge.

must be noted that these decisions are never made with perfect knowledge. Much of our knowledge becomes available only by discovery through experimentation or trial and error (Taylor, 1980, pp. 20-21). In addition, for human beings to flourish it is essential that an individual can "make use of more knowledge than he has himself acquired" (Hayek, 1960, p. 73).[24] A practical application of Hayek's dispersed knowledge theory is the Wikipedia project. The founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales, has stated that Hayek's 'The Use of Knowledge in Society' (1945) has inspired him to create a virtual space in which people can "share and synchronize local and personal knowledge, allowing society's members to achieve diverse, complicated ends through a principle of spontaneous self-organization" (Ward, 2007, May). What makes Wikipedia uniquely different from traditional encyclopedias is that every person is able to add particular localized or personal knowledge to Wikipedia. Hence it brings together dispersed knowledge into a central place. As mentioned by Wales, the process of knowledge sharing happens spontaneously without any authority that attempts to manage the process.[25] The Wikipedia community is self-policing in the sense that its users are able to correct mistakes and expand information without any authority that oversees each entry.

3.3 Realization that order can emerge spontaneously

It is important to be epistemologically modest so that we can consider it possible that a social order, which may be radically different from anything we currently know, can emerge spontaneously. According to Hayek (1960), order can emerge spontaneously through voluntary exchange, cooperation, and trial and error which above all reflect the decisions of individuals who are all pursuing their own interests. Because it is the by-product of individuals' decisions, there is no end or collective

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[24] Hayek (1960) distinguishes two mechanisms through which others' knowledge becomes available to us: "the transmission in time of our accumulated stock of knowledge and the communication among contemporaries of information on which they base their action" (Hayek, 1960, p. 78). He writes that a large stock of our knowledge is acquired through customs, traditions, and habits that are transmitted through time. The other way by which knowledge becomes available for us through the communication among contemporaries, is through (a) the imitation of those who are successful, (b) being guided by the price system, and (c) observations of standards and conduct. (Miller, 2010, pp. 55-58) See chapter 2, 'The Creative Powers of a Free Civilization' (pp. 73-90), in Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960).

[25] Rothbard recognizes that the concept of spontaneous order has been firstly developed by Chuang-tzu, who in the Taoist tradition of Lao-tzu maintains that "[T]here has been such a thing as letting mankind alone; there has never been such a thing as governing mankind [with success]" (Rothbard, 1995, p. 24).

goal to the order (Boykin, 2010, p. 20).[26] The process of 'spontaneous order'
however, is not only limited to knowledge sharing, but it also happens in the creation
of social institutions. Popper attributes the epistemologically modest attitude to the
piecemeal engineer,[27] who according to Popper acknowledges that he knows that the
vast majority of social institutions are the result of a spontaneous process of human
actions (Popper, 1957, p. 65). Carl Menger (1883) has likewise asserted that:

> Language, religion, law, even the state itself, and, to mention a few
> economic social phenomena, the phenomena of markets, of
> competition, of money, and numerous other social structures are
> already met with in epochs of history where we cannot properly speak
> of a purposeful activity of the community as such directed at
> establishing them (Menger, 1883, p. 146).

In addition, Popper writes that the epistemologically modest piecemeal engineer
recognizes that changing the social order could lead to unintended consequences due
to our ignorance of the intricate interrelated factors in the social world. Hence, as the
piecemeal engineer does not truly understand the vast complexity of the social world,
he will attempt to improve society with caution through "small adjustments and re-
adjustments" (Popper, 1957, p. 66). The piecemeal engineer understands that large
adjustments could lead to unforeseen and disastrous results that are not easily
reversible. In other words, the piecemeal engineer has a modest approach in
improving society, because he recognizes that his knowledge of social processes is
limited. According to Popper, the piecemeal engineer thus does not hold the pretense
to know how to plan and manage society. However, the piecemeal engineer still
represents the notion that a minimum government has to be engineered that is
"limited to what is really necessary for the protection of freedom" (Popper, 1945, p.
122). Is there nevertheless, not a notion of utopian design in the engineering of a
minimum government? It seems that Popper has not considered that the piecemeal
engineer's belief in a minimum government may be a dogmatic idea. Popper seems
to have disregarded the idea that societies could emerge entirely independent from
any kind of social engineers and that private agencies can fulfill this core function of

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[26] Hayek writes that institutions may grow without any authoritative ends or design in mind. They
"were not invented but arose from the separate actions of many men who did not know what they were
doing" (Hayek, 1960, p. 115).
[27] Popper contrasts the piecemeal engineer with the utopian engineer. The piecemeal engineer "knows,
like Socrates, how little he knows" (Popper, 1957, p. 67) whereas the utopian engineer is much less
modest. The utopian engineer believes that he can manage and design the whole of society according
to a definite plan (Popper, 1957, p. 67). Popper favours the piecemeal engineer.

protecting freedom. I believe that Popper has pointed us towards the right direction by proposing piecemeal engineering which is to a great extent able to deal with the decentralization of knowledge. However, even the piecemeal engineer still holds too much of a pretense of knowledge if it pretends to know that a minimum number of social institutions have to be designed by the social engineer. The 'utopian piecemeal engineer' may moreover not have a definite plan for designing society, but he can still attempt to reach a utopian aim for society through small improvements of the social order (Avery, 2000, pp. 31-33). To illustrate that the social order can emerge spontaneously without any social engineering at all, I will refer to a social experiment in libertarian anarchism in the 'wild, wild West'.

Libertarian anarchists believe that all functions of the government – including the maintenance of law and order – can be fulfilled by the free market in which private rights are exchangeable. The major consequentialist[28] propositions of libertarian anarchist philosophy can be summarized into the following:

(1) Libertarian anarchy is not chaos;
(2) Private agencies will provide the core functions of the state which is the preservation of a harmonious social order;
(3) Private protection agencies will most likely not 'wage war' with one another, since war is costly for resolving disputes.[29] Therefore, low-cost methods of settling conflicts like arbitration and courts will emerge;
(4) Under libertarian anarchism, different societies with different rules of law can exist;
(5) Competition between private protection agencies will make it possible for consumers to switch agencies and to have better information in judging these agencies. (Anderson & Hill, 1979, p. 13)

The Wild West is a period in the second half of the nineteenth century in which Americans expanded westward. The period is often wrongly portrayed as lawless and violent with little respect for property rights (Anderson & Hill, 1979, p. 10). The reason for it being violent is that the American people moved westward faster than

[28] One can distinguish two different types of libertarian anarchists. The first one appeals to natural law and natural rights, and the other appeals to the consequences of libertarian anarchism. The consequentialist adheres to the libertarian doctrine, because he believes that it leads to the greatest welfare or wellbeing of human beings. An example of a natural rights or deontological libertarian anarchist is Rothbard, and an example of a consequentalist libertarian anarchist is David Friedman. Although both are committed to different philosophical justifications for libertarianism, both generally agree on the same consequentialist propositions.
[29] Private protection agencies that will wage war with each other, destroying each other's assets, run the risk of incurring great losses. Since combat is very expensive, these agencies will have far greater incentives to resolve disputes peacefully (Murphy, 2002, p. 22).

the government. Without the government, which is perceived as the preserver of law and order, the early settlers of the west must therefore have lived under violent circumstances. However, according to a growing number of literatures there is no real evidence of the relative violence in the West (Benson, 1998, p. 99). The historian W. Eugene Hollon writes in *Frontier Violence: Another Look* (1974) that the western frontier "was a far more civilized, more peaceful and safer place than American society today" (Hollon, 1974, p. x). Robert Dykstra (1968) has for example found that in five of the major cattle towns, only 45 homicides were reported for the years from 1870 to 1885 (Anderson & Hill, 1979, p. 14). According to Bruce Benson (1998), "the American West of the nineteenth century was not lawless; it was just stateless" (Benson, 1998, p. 101). The spontaneous demand for law and order encouraged a market for private protection agencies and private arbitration agencies. Anderson & Hill (1979) write that such private agencies, consistent with the five consequentialist propositions mentioned earlier, "functioned very effectively, either as a complete replacement for formal government or as a supplement to that government" (Anderson & Hill, 1979, p. 27).[30]

Although libertarian anarchists believe that a society without the state would function better, they also know that they cannot presume how such a society would look like.[31] The libertarian anarchist is in this sense much more truly epistemologically modest than the Popperian piecemeal engineer. The truly epistemologically modest intellectual acknowledges that he cannot predict what social orders or minimum social institutions will emerge when spontaneous experimentations with social organizations are allowed.

3.4 Realization that a single perfect society is impossible

The epistemologically modest intellectual furthermore knows that he does not know what the best form of social organization is for everyone as every person holds different values of life. He admits that there is not one single social organization that adheres to everyone's comprehensive doctrines. Therefore there is not one single utopia that is objectively the best for everyone. Robert Nozick (1974) writes that the

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[30] See Bruce Benson's *To Serve And Protect* (1998) for more on the privatization of security and criminal justice.

[31] Hoppe (2012) for example, acknowledges that he cannot presume how a libertarian anarchist society would look like (Zulliger, 2012, November 26).

political philosopher should take the fact that people have different values in life seriously (Nozick, 1974, p. 311). Discussing political philosophy at a meta-system level, Nozick argues that utopia is meta-utopia which is an environment in which societies with different ways of lives or utopias can co-exist. He writes:

> Utopia will consist of utopias, of many different and divergent communities in which people lead different kinds of lives under different institutions. Some kinds of communities will be more attractive to most than others; communities will wax and wane. People will leave some for others or spend their whole lives in one. Utopia is a framework for utopias, a place where people are at liberty to join together voluntarily to pursue and attempt to realize their own vision of the good life in the ideal community but where no one can *impose* his own utopian vision upon others… utopia is meta-utopia: the environment in which utopian experiments may be tried out; the environment in which people are free to do their own thing; the environment which must, to a great extent, be realized first if more particular utopian visions are to be realized stably. (Nozick, 1974, p. 312)

If we could have this meta-utopian environment, a wide variety of different social organizations can emerge. In *Liberal Archipelago* (2003), Chandran Kukathas presents a view of diversity and freedom that is similar to Nozick's idea of meta-utopia even though he does not mention Nozick's work. He maintains that "[T]he principles of a free society describe … an archipelago of competing and overlapping jurisdictions" (Kukathas, 2003, p. 75). In his model of the 'liberal archipelago', sovereign communal entities are like islands in an archipelago with their own ways of life. Individuals are then free to move between and associate themselves with communal entities and to live a life that they prefer. Kukathas writes that the principle of freedom of association is the fundamental principle of a free society, and that the principle of mutual toleration of associations is a second corollary. (Kukathas, 2003, p. 75) He furthermore asserts that society should be structured "according to norms of mutual tolerance or civility, under which people accept that different groups or communities live by different moral beliefs, but also recognize that no group has the right to compel anyone to become, or to remain, a member" (Kukathas, 2003, p. 75). If people like our imaginary Jane, Carl, and Andy could choose between a large variety of communities to live in, they could through their freedom of association move into a society that works in accordance with their vision. Once we realize that it is impossible to create a single perfect society that is in line with everyone's utopian

vision, we will be more receptive of the experimentation space as the means to experiment with diverse social organizations.

In the next chapter I will discuss the concept of seasteading, and how it could be a practical means through which we can experiment with and discover newer and better forms of social organization. I will argue that it can serve as a free market solution to government monopoly of land and that it can introduce more competition into the industry of governments at a meta-system level. I will also explain how it may contribute to knowledge generation that is useful for political philosophy and the social sciences, as well as how it can ease political disagreements or conflicts among people with different comprehensive doctrines.

4.   Seasteading as a means to discover better social organizations

The concept of starting new societies or utopias has sparked the imagination of several story tellers. One example is the Objectivist philosopher Ayn Rand who, in her novel *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), tells the story of a secretly organized strike by the world's creative leaders. John Galt, the man that has organized this strike, takes them into a secluded town where they form a small community that lives by libertarian principles. Another example is the famous videogame BioShock. It tells the story of a philosopher and entrepreneur Andrew Ryan, who due to growing discontent with the government decides to build an underwater city in the oceans. The city has been built to set the industrious and inventive "free from the clutching hands of parasites" (Shirley, 2011, p. 89). Andrew Ryan, who is as resentful of government interventions as John Galt, describes a parasite as someone who "hates three things: free markets, free will, and free men" (Shirley, 2011, p. 17). He continues to say that "[O]n the surface … the farmer tills the soil, trading the strength of his arm for a land of his own. But the parasites say, 'No! What is yours is ours! We are the state; we are God; we demand our share!' (Shirley, 2011, pp. 154-155)" One could easily draw parallels between a seasteader and the fictional characters, John Galt and Andrew Ryan. All are dissatisfied with the legal structures of society and all have a vision of creating a space where they can build up a particular social structure in the absence of government meddling. However, whereas John Galt has moved into a secluded town, Andrew Ryan actually is a seasteader for he has homesteaded part of the seas.[32]

4.1 What seasteading is

Seasteading is a portmanteau of 'sea' and 'homesteading'. The concept of homesteading is one of the foundations of libertarian philosophy. According to Rothbard, every person has the absolute right to own his own body. The homestead principle then follows from this right of self-ownership. Rothbard's defense of self-ownership ultimately relies on a theory of natural rights. In *For a New Liberty* (1973), he writes that "[T]he species man… has a specifiable nature" (Rothbard, 1973, p. 32) and that this nature is such that he utilizes his mind in order to "learn about himself

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[32] Whereas Andrew Ryan is strictly libertarian and has the vision of creating a society with little or no government, a seasteader may adhere to any political philosophy.

and the world" (Rothbard, 1973, p. 33) so that he can select values, ends and the means to attain these ends. This is essential for man so that he can "act purposively to maintain himself and advance his life" (Rothbard, 1973, p. 33). Rothbard calls an interference with this nature "antihuman" as it "violates the natural law of man's needs" (Rothbard, 1973, p. 33). In order for man to perform the vital activities that are needed for survival, man has the right to own his own body and to use it without coercive interference (Rothbard, 1973, p. 34). Through this right of self-ownership[33] one can then gain ownership of unowned resources by the act of original appropriation and exchange their justly acquired properties voluntarily. John Locke has explained the homestead principle as follows:

> … every man has a *property* in his own *person*. … The *labour* of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state of nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined it to something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.
> (Rothbard, 1973, pp. 37-38)

Applying the homestead principle to the oceans, one can then homestead a part of the sea which is not originally appropriated yet. This process is conveniently called 'seasteading'. As homesteading allows land settlers to bring unowned land into ownership, seasteading allows sea settlers to do that for the open seas. A seastead is a permanent habitable dwelling on the ocean that preferably lies outside governmental waters. The Seasteading Institute believes that the creation of permanent societies at the seas can provide an experimentation space where innovative forms of social

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[33] The alternatives to self-ownership are (1) nobody owns his own body and self-ownership does not exist, or (2) an external group or someone else owns your body, and (3) everyone owns a part of everyone's body. One could counter (1) through Hans-Hermann Hoppe's communication ethics. Hoppe argues along the lines of a Habermasian-like communication ethics that when two persons are engaged in a discussion on the validity of self-ownership, the opponent of self-ownership cannot justify the claim that it does not exist. In arguing, this person will resort to such claims as "I think" or "I believe". This illustrates that there is an "I" that postulates a separate entity in the person that can control his or her mind and body. (Hoppe, 1989, p. 158) Although the concept of self-ownership is accepted in libertarian circles, there is still some debate whether Hoppe's argumentation ethics is plausible. See for example Murphy and Callahan's 'Hans-Hermann Hoppe's Argumentation Ethic: A Critique' (2006). If we would claim (2), that an external group or someone else owns your body, then we would justify slavery or the distinction between humans and subhumans. "[W]e *cannot* here have a universal or natural-law ethic for the human race" (Rothbard, 1982, pp. 45), whereas every human for the fact of being human has the same nature to use his mind and body to select values and to employ means to attain ends (Rothbard, 1982, pp. 45-46). Claim (3), that everyone owns a part of everyone's body, is implausible as well. It requires the approval of everyone else in order for you to take any action. This would freeze all human action and man would become extinct, whereas just law concerns itself with the flourishing of human beings. (Rothbard, 1982, p. 46) Nonetheless, the principle of self-ownership still seems to be intuitively self-evident, because if you did not own your own eyes then would that not give other people the right to pluck out your eyes?

organization can emerge. (Mutabzija & Borders, n.d., p. 3) The ultimate aim of seasteading is that newly emerging societies will inspire social changes around the world and contribute to human flourishing. The process through which seasteading takes shape is a process of incrementalism. This means that ambitious visions of seasteading should be broken down and realized by taking small steps. As Cicero once has noted that "[E]verything has small beginnings" (Cicero, 45, p. 137), first seasteads will be small-scale projects and they may even be constructed within existing governmental territories. (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 29) However, seasteads can expand organically as technologies improve and innovative ideas of the functions of seasteads will emerge. One of the core ideas of seasteading is that an open experimentation space for social organizations will lead to progress in social rules and legislations, just as an experimentation space for new technologies leads to technological progress. Technological progress is possible when technological pioneers challenge the status quo and look for new technological possibilities. Likewise, sociological progress is possible when social pioneers challenge the current political, economic and social order and experiment with new forms of social organization. According to Holcombe (2009), entrepreneurs are "always looking for ways to differentiate their products to make them more desirable to their customers" (Holcombe, 2009, p. 28). The product differentiation is the driver for innovation in the market, which disrupts the market structure. It is due to product differentiation that the phenomenon of 'creative destruction' as described by Joseph Schumpeter (1942) happens. Schumpeter writes that the market is an organic process and that "industrial mutation … incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one" (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 83). Differentiation in the market of social organizations could hence possibly disrupt the industry of governments.

It seems moreover that social rules and legislations heavily influence all aspects of life, including technological progress and social well-being. One could for example compare North and South Korea, two countries that separated from one another in 1945. Both countries have had more or less the same culture and similar natural resources. However, what differs is their form of social organization; the North came under communist rule, whereas the South embraced western-style capitalism and democracy. Almost 70 years later the differences in wealth, technological

advancement, and social well-being are striking. South-Korea's GDP per capita is for example 18 times larger, its internet penetration is more than an 815 times greater, its life expectancy rate is 10 years longer, and the heights of South Korean pre-school boys are on average 4 centimeters longer (Taylor, 2013, April 8).[34] The Seasteading Institute believes that, given that social progress and well-being heavily depend on how society is structured, mankind could make a huge step forward by letting social entrepreneurs start up seasteads to compete with governments in the industry of rules and regulations and by letting millions engage in the experimentation with new forms of social organization. Zachary Caceres (2014), Executive Director of the Startup Cities Institute, asserts that "[M]arkets are problem-solving machines. Millions of people all search through trial-and-error for some kind of solution. We accept this as natural in most areas of our lives. But not the most important one: the way we structure communities themselves" (Preston, 2014, July 28).

Currently, there are already proto-seasteads such as the floating fishermen's village in Ningde city where the fishermen had settled on sea vessels in 700AD in order to avoid the wartime chaos on the mainland (Dailymail, 2013, October 9), cruise condos that are designed for full-time residency on a ship (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 39), and floating home communities on the Richardson Bay's (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 36). New developments include The Floating City Project which has raised over $27,000 in crowd funding so that preliminary research and design of the city can be done. According to the preliminary concept, the city will be composed of modular platforms that can be rearranged and reconnected to each other according to the community's needs. Buildings can be constructed for around $5,400/square meter, which is around the same price as London or New York. The city will furthermore be built just offshore within the protected waters of a host-nation so that it can benefit from the nation's protection. It will reach a deal with the host nation to bring economic, social, and environmental benefits in exchange of political autonomy.[35]

Assuming that there is enough market demand for seasteads and that seasteading could become a reality, why should one be enthusiastic about its prospects?

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[34] For more statistics on the differences between North and South-Korea, see the CIA World Factbook (2013).
[35] For more information on the Floating City Project, see the Floating City Project Report (2014).

4.2 The benefits of seasteading

I have identified four benefits of seasteading that I will discuss in greater detail. These benefits are:

(1) It can lower the cost of switching social organizations;
(2) It is a voluntary free market solution at the meta-system level that can realize social contracts and social change;
(3) It can help generate knowledge in areas of political philosophy and the social sciences through experimentation;
(4) It can help human beings deal with political disagreements and the reality of value pluralism.

4.2.1 Seasteading can lower the cost of switching social organizations

As mentioned before in section 2.2, a person who dislikes the state could (a) continue living in the same state, (b) emigrate to another state, (c) change the state through the democratic process, or (d) change the state through violent revolution. All these four options come with considerable costs which makes them unattractive. Seasteading however, may be an attractive alternative as it provides people with a way out of the current state in which they reside, and it does not have to appeal to the masses in order to organize a successful revolt against the state or to change the state through the democratic process. Many libertarians, and especially libertarian anarchists, are drawn to the idea that social change could happen without having to resort to the state and the masses. Libertarian anarchists who believe that democracy is an immoral political system do not believe, like Thiel, that freedom and democracy are compatible (Thiel, 2009). In an essay called 'The Education of a Libertarian' (2009), Thiel writes that many libertarians after college become disillusioned with politics and folk activism as "capitalism simply is not that popular with the crowd" (Thiel, 2009). Nick Cross (2012) describes Thiel's political message as follows: "the masses have given up on unregulated capitalism, so those who support unregulated capitalism should give up on the masses" (Cross, 2012, May 21). Having to appeal to the masses requires the unification of a crowd, which is described by Gustave le Bon (1895) as a united group of people that have a superficial understanding of the primary ideas that they utilize for revolutionary action (le Bon, 1895, pp. 1-2). Le Bon writes that ideas, especially somewhat lofty philosophic or scientific, can oftentimes only be popularized and accessible to crowds once they have undergone thorough transformations. Ideas have to be modified "to the level of the intelligence

of crowds" (le Bon, 1895, p. 31) so that they are understandable, but in the process of modification they lose their substantiation. He furthermore writes that the crowd is hardly rational and that it is "at the mercy of all external exciting causes… It is the slave of the impulses which it receives" (le Bon, 1895, p. 11). The prospects of a libertarian society hardly appeals to the emotions of the crowd as there are no promises of free hand-outs or grand public projects for the 'common good'. It is for this reason that libertarians may seek to change society by setting an example of how a libertarian society could look like. A libertarian seastead could serve this purpose. While I am discussing seasteading from a libertarian perspective, I would like stress that "seasteading is politically agnostic" (Friedman & Gramlich, 2009, p. 7).

An important attribute of seasteads is that while they compete with governments, they can lower the barriers of entry and exit so that the costs of switching social organizations are low, and so that people are able to move more freely from one social organization to another. As some seasteads like those of The Floating City Project will be mobile, communities can break up and smaller residential areas can join other communities with which they feel more associated. It can therefore increase the freedom of political and social association tremendously.

4.2.2 Seasteading is a voluntary free market solution at the meta-system level that can realize social contracts and social change

When a social entrepreneur voluntarily builds his own politically autonomous floating city and installs a particular social organization according to his personal preferences, he enters the industry of governments. The social entrepreneur widens the choice of social organizations a person could choose from, which essentially makes it as voluntary as the person's engagement in any other free market exchange. As with all exchanges on the free market there should be agreement between parties A and B that A is only allowed to move into party B's seastead with his consent. This voluntary exchange means that people are not coerced to move into the seastead. The success of the seastead will be entirely determined by the market demand. Under this view, which is the libertarian view, person B also holds the right to exclude people from entering his seastead. The libertarian justification for exclusion is based on the theory of justly acquired property rights.[36] Despite the libertarians' belief that open

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[36] Since we are living in a world of scarce resources, it is necessary to establish clear property rights which state what particular resources are assigned to which particular owners. Without clear property

borders would increase the productivity of human labour, individuals have the right to use or give access to their property in any way they want as long as they do not violate the non-aggression principle (Mises, 1962, p. 139).[37] Part of the individuals' right to enter into voluntary exchanges with other individuals is the right of person B to hold person A, the immigrant, responsible for following up on a particular contract upon his settlement much like a tenant can be held responsible for fulfilling the landlord's contract. This gives a new dimension to the notion of social contracts.

Social contract

The early modern political philosophers like Hobbes and Locke have attempted to explain why individuals in the state of nature[38] would find it necessary to invent the state as an authority that settles disputes. They believe that the people, for intentions of social harmony, entered into a social contract to let the state rule over them on similar terms.[39] (Bird, 2006, p. 70) The social contract argument is often used to support the notion that citizens have either explicitly or, by remaining in a country, tacitly consented to a form of voluntary contract with the government. However, if we assume that the constitution is a social contract we could easily rule out the view that we have explicitly consented to the contract as it, in many cases, has been written more than a century ago. Most, if not all people currently alive have not explicitly been involved in the signing of the constitution or in giving explicit approval to it. One could still argue that our consent to the constitution is tacit, simply by remaining in the state. However, this does still not prove the legitimation of political obligation.

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rights we would not be able to live in social harmony as we would fight each other over resources. (Kinsella, 2009, p. 193) As explained in section 4.1, justly acquired property rights are derived from our natural right of self-ownership. When an external object is unowned, we can own it through the Lockean homestead principle by 'mixing our labour' with it. We can also trade the justly acquired properties voluntarily.

[37] Rothbard describes the non-aggression principle as follows in 'War, Peace, and the State' (1974): "The fundamental axiom of libertarian theory is that no one may threaten or commit violence ('aggress') against another man's person or property. Violence may be employed only against the man who commits such violence; that is, only defensively against the aggressive violence of another" (Rothbard, 1974, p. 116).

[38] Hobbes describes the state of nature as a primitive individualist condition in which individuals hold aggressive intentions to one another. Hobbes asserts that this state is "*nothing else but a meere warre of all against all; and in that warre all men have equal right unto all things*" (Hobbes, 1651, p. 34). However, as Hayek has stated in *The Fatal Conceit* (1988), the instinct of the individual has had always been collectivist. A human being that lives in solitude would hardly be able to survive in nature. The collective coordination of human beings has always "depended decisively on instincts of solidarity and altruism" (Hayek, 1988, p. 12). The Hobbesian 'warre of all against all' condition in the state of nature is therefore a myth.

[39] Hobbes asserts that as soon as all men understand this condition [warre of all against all], they consensually "desire … to be freed from this misery" (Hobbes, 1651, p. 34).

A person who orders food in a restaurant pretty much knows what the contract is (Long, 2004, p. 4). Being born into a system however, we do not have any preconceptions of the social contract we are entering. Therefore it is difficult to assert that we are consenting to the system simply by being born or residing in the state. On the contrary, the cost of fighting the system is so high that people simply submit to the state's rule if disobeying the state will result in fierce punishment. In other words; it is not so much tacit consent we should be speaking of, but 'tacit submission'. (Rozeff, 2005, September 20) In asking where the legitimacy of the modern state resides, Casey (2012) writes that a constitution is neither an explicit or implicit contract. He asserts that it is no contract at all. (Casey, 2012, p. 145) Entrance of party A into a seastead of party B however, could actually be accompanied with a social contract if party B only admits A access to the seastead on the condition that he will respect the social rules and regulations. This social contract can be constructed on a variety of political principles; democratic, libertarian, communist etc.

Meta-utopia

By offering the immigrant a variety of choices between different forms of social organization, the social entrepreneurs immediately enter the industry of governments at the meta-system level (Friedman & Taylor, 2012, p. 3). The seas offer an open space in which different forms of social organization can be experimented with on seasteads. This open space, brought about by seasteads, could be considered as the practical embodiment of what Nozick has called the 'meta-utopia', an environment in which particular utopia's can be tried (Nozick, 1974, p. 312). Social entrepreneurs can install and experiment with social organizations that correspond with their personal visions of how society should be. The free market is an excellent system in which such social organizations can emerge as it encourages the individuals' freedom of thought and ideas. The social entrepreneur has the freedom not only to cultivate his sociological imagination, but also to put his imagination of a particular utopian concept into practice. The social entrepreneur can hence make utopian political philosophies become practical through seasteading, thereby fulfilling the first and possibly also the third role that Rawls has assigned to political philosophy. The first role is that political philosophies should be practical, and the third role is that it should be "realistically utopian". (Rawls, 2001, pp. 2-4) Time will still have to tell us whether seasteads can realize utopian societies.

Different utopian seasteads can emerge spontaneously on the free market and compete with one another. It is impossible to know beforehand what seasteads and which social organizations will be the most successful. This is only possible once we are able to experiment with different forms of social organization.

4.2.3 Seasteading can help generate knowledge in areas of political philosophy and the social sciences through experimentation

Like with every new product, the social entrepreneur puts forward a seastead without having certainties that it will actually correspond with consumer demand. It is under such conditions of uncertainty that an entrepreneur operates. According to von Mises (1949), there is always an element of uncertainty in every human action that takes place in real time as we cannot fully predict the future. Von Mises writes that "the real entrepreneur is a *speculator*, a man eager to utilize his opinion about the future structure of the market for business operations promising profits" (Mises, 1949, pp. 584-585).[40] If entrepreneurs err, "they pay heavily for their errors" (Mises, 1949, p. 584) which gives them incentives to learn about actual consumer demand. The entrepreneur therefore wants to test his products on the market in order to discover the actual consumer demand so that he can change and adapt his products accordingly. Market experimentations are the means through which the social entrepreneur receives important information that he can use for installing and adapting his social organization. Such market information can help the social entrepreneur to find out how his political and social visions fare in the real world.

The open experimentation space with social organizations can moreover generate knowledge that is also useful for political philosophers and social scientists. It can encourage or facilitate the following three aspects that, according to Popper, are needed for our quest for truth: (a) imagination, (b) trial and error, and (c) the discovery of our prejudices (Popper, 1963, p. 352). If we believe that our philosophical intuitions are testable to some extent, we may acknowledge that seasteading could be the means through which political and social theories can be tested; thereby encouraging the dualism between the theoretical and experimental in political philosophy. The information, that through the social entrepreneur's market

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[40] Please note that von Mises is talking here about entrepreneurs in general who act on profit motives. Not all entrepreneurs pursue profits. They may have altruistic motives and release products on the market for free.

experimentations becomes available, will be interpreted differently from person to person as everyone has a different understanding or knowledge "of the particular circumstances of time and place" (Hayek, 1945, p. 521). Those social entrepreneurs with differing interpretations will implement different forms of social organization on their seasteads. The result is the spontaneous emergence of a wide variety of seasteads and social organizations that we currently cannot conceive of. The philosopher who believes that seasteading is a realistic possibility must hold a certain epistemological modesty and acknowledge that he cannot predict what possible social orders can emerge once seasteading is widespread. Seasteading can hence help us find new possibilities that lie beyond current political and social orders including a representative democracy. Thereby it fulfills the second role that Rawls has in mind for political philosophy, "to orient us into the (conceptual) space, say, of all possible ends, individual and associational, political and social" (Rawls, 2001, p. 3).

However, to what extent can the social experiments on seasteads differ from experiments that are currently common in the social sciences? As explained in section 1.3, the social sciences deal with human beings who can learn from social and historical experience. Whereas the natural sciences can investigate elements of change in isolation and find that the same change always leads to the same result, the social sciences deal with human beings who, due to their social and historical experience, can act differently in similar conditions. Unlike natural elements, human beings are therefore unpredictable. (Mises, 1942, pp. 4-5) Despite this difference in objects of experimentation, the social sciences tend to treat human beings as if they are natural elements. By applying the methodology of the natural sciences in the fields of social science the social scientist tends to reduce human knowledge to quantitative measurements, thereby proceeding "on the fiction that the factors which they can measure are the only ones that are relevant" (Hayek, 1974, p. 33). The result is the disregard of human beings' social and historical experience. The social sciences, I believe, are in need of an experimentation space that can involve and investigate such deep and complex human experiences. A seastead may provide such an experimentation space. Larry Page (2013), co-founder and CEO of Google, has said in a key-note presentation that our current laws about technology are outdated and that it restricts technological advancement. He has spoken out for creating "[A]n environment where people can try new things [technologies]... and figure out the

effect on society" (Kumparak, 2013, May 15). A seastead may serve the purpose of investigating the effects of new technologies on all social aspects of human life.

According to Rawls, political philosophy should also take into account the reality of value pluralism and that people have different comprehensive doctrines (Rawls, 2001, p. 3). Could seasteading contribute to solving political disagreements about such values as freedom, equality and justice, which according to Williams is one of the core focuses of political philosophy (Williams, 2005, p. 77)?

4.2.4 Seasteading can help human beings deal with political disagreements and value pluralism

Rawls attempts to deal with political disagreements and value pluralism by looking for the people's consensus on a particular basic structure of society through a concept of the original position (Rawls, 2001, p. 10). The social contract that he has put forward is an attempt to bind all citizens of a state, who may all have different comprehensive doctrines, under one general view of basic justice. The open experimentation space that would be brought about by seasteading deals with political disagreements and value pluralism differently. Instead of looking for large-scale consensus, it celebrates the disagreements among people on the structure of society. Every person is free or even encouraged to start or join a seastead with that particular form of social organization that they prefer to live in. A lot of social tensions could be dampened when people, with different comprehensive doctrines, are enabled to migrate to a place where they could live according to their governmental preferences. Our imaginary friends, Jane, Carl and Andy, may not have to fight anymore over governmental solutions for social problems that they would like to impose on everyone else. Part of the seasteading philosophy is that there may not be one single governmental solution to social problems, and that solutions are best discovered by letting millions engage in trial and error. Furthermore, social experimentations on seasteads can test philosophical intuitions so that disagreements and doubts about facts can be settled. This can also help ease political disagreements.

Now that I have discussed the benefits that seasteading could offer us, I will look into two possible objections to seasteading in the next chapter.

5.   Objections to seasteading

I will discuss two objections, even though I realize that there may be many more. The first one regards my earlier claim that the social entrepreneurs or seastead communities hold the right to exclude people. The objection is that we should not have the right to exclude people from seasteads as that would be unfair. The second objection concerns the growing inequality between the rich and the poor due to seasteading. This objection maintains that seasteads will only be beneficial to rich people as poor people will not have the financial means to buy a residence at a seastead. Poor people will thereby miss out on opportunities that seasteading may bring, which will only exacerbate inequalities between the rich and the poor.

5.1 Objection one: We should not have the right to exclude people from seasteads as that would be unfair.

This objection is not an objection to seasteading per se. It is rather an objection to my argument that the owner of the seastead, through his property rights, is allowed to exclude people from entering. This objection can be considered (a) a normative claim against property rights in general or (b) a claim that property rights should not be extended to seasteads. I have already put forward a natural rights defense of property rights[41] in section 4.1 which should be a sufficient argument against (a). Hence, I will only address (b) for now. I will do so by providing a consequentialist libertarian argument for the right of exclusion.

What incentives for building a seastead would a social entrepreneur have if he could not decide which people could enter and under which conditions? He would have very little incentive if he is forced to maintain open borders to his seastead. It would surely be a restriction to the social organization that he has envisioned. In addition, it may even lower the value of his seastead if random people could come and exploit the available resources or take up the available space. Hoppe (2002) has also asserted that the value of a "property to its owner depends essentially on its almost total exclusivity" (Hoppe, 2002, p. 79). Given that we live in a world of scarcity, it is

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[41] For the sake of conversational simplicity, I call my defence a defense of property rights. I am aware that libertarians make a clear distinction between mere 'property rights' and 'justly acquired property rights', which fundamentally comes from our rights of self-ownership, homesteading or original appropriation and voluntary exchange.

important that there are strict rules of who has access to what property. Otherwise, people would be fighting over the limited resources, and the possible consequence could be a total elimination of social harmony.

Compare a seastead with a home you have built for yourself or a plot of land that you have acquired. Would you not want to have the right to stop strangers from entering your home? Or if you have bought your own land, would you not want random people to come and live there? As James Penner has argued, "the right to property is a right to exclude others from things which is grounded in the interest we have in the use of things" (Kelly, 2014, p. 864). Without the right of exclusion we would have very little interest of acquiring a good or building a seastead for our use.

5.2 Objection two: Seasteads will only be beneficial to rich people and exacerbate inequalities between the rich and the poor as only the rich will have the financial means to buy a residence at a seastead.

This claim that the poor will lose out on the fruitful opportunities that seasteads will provide is ungrounded. I believe that we can compare a seastead with a luxury good that over time, as the production of the good becomes cheaper due to improvements in technology and our knowledge of how to produce on a large scale, will become available for the poor as well. According to Hayek (1960), progress can only spread gradually, because it has to "pass through a long course of adaptation, selection, combination, and improvement before full use can be made of it" (Hayek, 1960, p. 96). First, there are always a few who see the new possibilities in an idea, who are willing to run the risks of trying something new and improving on it. This gradual accessibility derives from the division of knowledge – the fact that knowledge and its benefits are localized, but that it can also expand and reach momentum over time. Everett Rogers asserts in *Diffusion of Innovation* (1983) that there are five categories of adopters: the innovators who are the first people willing to invest their financial resources to reap the benefits of an innovation with the risk that the innovation will fail, the early adopters, the early majority, the late majority, and the laggards who are the last in adopting an innovation (Rogers, 1983, pp. 247-250). When an innovation is firstly adopted by innovators, the product is still unknown and relatively expensive to produce. However, as time passes by and more and more people adopt the product, the cost of production is significantly reduced that it becomes available for the

majority. A residence at a seastead that at first may be too expensive for the poor will likewise become more affordable and therefore accessible over time. Almost all goods that we now regard as essential parts of normal life were initially luxury goods and unavailable for the masses. Cars, fridges, vacuum cleaners, computers etc. were once even inconceivable by the greatest kings on earth, but they are now almost as easily accessible to the rich as to the poor. If seasteading, which is highly dependent on technological progress will become successful, then I see no reason why it will not become accessible for the masses over time.

6.   Conclusion

The philosophical investigation in this dissertation has revolved around the question how mankind can discover better social organizations if governments, due to their monopoly of land and jurisdiction, are resistant to structural changes of governance.

I have firstly maintained that one of the core focuses of political philosophy is to deal with the realities of value pluralism and political disagreements. Since a representative democracy cannot satisfactorily deal with these realities, we should look for new political possibilities. I have maintained that seasteading could be an interesting free market solution to the monopolistic industry of governments, and that it could help us discover such political possibilities. Whereas governments have very little incentive to provide good rules of law due to their monopoly of jurisdiction, seasteads may disrupt the industry of governments and offer many political solutions to social problems through the experimentation with a diverse variety of social organizations. I have also asserted that the creation of the experimentation space requires a particular epistemological attitude. We should cultivate our sociological imagination and utilize it to approach social problems in imaginative and inventive ways. We should moreover be epistemologically modest and acknowledge that we do not know which forms of social organization will emerge, which will be most successful, and how they will look like. We should realize that order can emerge spontaneously, and that the utopian dream of a single perfect society is impossible. I have moreover discussed four benefits of seasteading: (1) it can lower the cost of switching social organizations; (2) it is a voluntary free market solution at the meta-system level that can realize social contracts and social change; (3) it can help generate new knowledge in areas of political philosophy and the social sciences; and (4) it can help human beings deal with political disagreements and the reality of value pluralism. Seasteading could thereby fulfill the following three roles of political philosophy that Rawls has identified: (a) being practical; (b) fulfilling the role of orientation; and (c) being realistically utopian. Furthermore, in responding to two possible objections, I have asserted that the social entrepreneur or community that owns the seastead should hold the right to exclude people from entering, and that also the poor will benefit from seasteading. Finally, I would like to conclude that seasteading provides so many opportunities that at least it should be tried.

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