

# LEVIATHAN: STATE-MAKING AS RACKETEERING

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**Abstract:** *The contention of this paper is to show that what modernity calls State is not the result of a historical necessity, the result of an unstoppable drive towards progress. The State should not be conflated with the idea of political and social orders. The Greek Polis or the Roman Empire are not states in the modern sense, that is a kind of entity that is existing somehow independently of the rulers and the ruled. The birth of the State was an unintentional product of the activity of centralization of feudal monarchies. This process is akin to that of a racketeering gang and entail also the elimination from the public sphere of every kind of other possible power that might deny the claims of the State of exclusive legitimacy.*

**Keywords:** modernity; state-building; religion; racketeering; war.

## 1. Introduction

The modern world assumes that the kind of political and social order known as the state is an ahistorical product of human action. It is supposed that its function is to protect and organize the life of human communities, making it possible for those to protect, control, and form their existence. But this is a false presupposition, argues the theologian William T. Cavanaugh, that has become so pervasive, that no one questions it. Even Christians believe, most of the time, that only the state/the State (as a kind of self-sustaining relatively independent entity which is the model for all particular extant states) has the responsibility to protect the public interest or the public good (Cavanaugh 2004: 243). Even Christian ethics accepts in a non-critical manner some idealized and ahistorical/transhistorical assumptions about the role, function, and the being of the state. The state is thought to exist since the beginning of time, and it is assumed that it takes different forms: the Greek Polis, the Roman republic, or the under the form of a kingdom/empire, etc. All forms of human community are conflated under the concept of state. It is also assumed that society precedes the state that it is larger than the state and that the state is at the top of a pyramid whose basis is the family. The state is supposed to be in the service of society, which is thought to be ontological basic (Cavanaugh 2004: 244). For Cavanaugh, history and reality deny these assumptions. The state is not an ahistorical reality, it is neither natural nor a primordial political order, but a recent and artificial invention. The state gives rise to society and it is not a limited part of society. The state has engulfed society, has fused with it. The political form of organization known as state or the State is a form developed in the Western world (Cavanaugh 2004: 244). It arose during the Renaissance and the Reform. It is a form of political organization intimately bound with the notion of sovereignty, as the only supreme authority within the boundaries of a territory. This form of political organization claims to exert legitimate authority on a given territory as opposed to other types of political structures based on coercive force. Other, ancient forms of government were not based on territoriality but on ties of personal loyalty, kinship,

religion, tribal affiliation, etc. The state started to demand from its citizens a hitherto unknown form of loyalty, an exclusive type of loyalty.

The roots of the State – in the sense of a self-contained unity, independent of the rulers and the ruled - were seeded in the Middle Ages by the gradual increase of royal power. The process was centered around the royal courts. The royal courts began to transform into bureaucracies, whereby their role shifted towards centralization, regularization, and keeping account of revenues. Their importance increased in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries due to the fact they were called to intervene in the disputes between knights and lesser landholders that demanded protection against powerful aristocrats. They also became a tool used in the struggle between the king and the aristocracy. This intervention contributed to the increase of royal power. The main weapon used against the claims of the feudal lords was not always the sword but the law. The law became the main instrument in the process of centralization and from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Along with the law, another instrument began being used more consistently: taxation. In the process of exerting its functions, the court began relying almost exclusively on taxation. This affected mostly the unrepresented, common people. The new bureaucracy took into account the common people only in their quality as a source for revenue extraction. During this process, the meaning of what was the common public good transformed. It became the property of the nascent state. Concomitantly, a transfer of rights from local legal bodies and lords took place. They went to the royal courts, to the king. The administration of justice, which was hitherto an attribute of local authorities/lords was usurped by the central authority, albeit the legal right and the administration of justice were not the work of the centralized power. This process was not intended to expand the existing public space or to create a truly public space as modern people know it. This happened, nevertheless. This result is due to the interests of special and dominant groups. Back then, contends Cavanaugh, there was no society in the modern sense of an overarching social unit defined by a common public interest. There were multiple societies. The royal administration was not able to reach and affect the life of the majority of the people. And important elements of the military were not under royal/centralized control. Society is brought about by the centralization of royal power but not because the central authority decided it would be good to impose a uniform system of common good and justice be it in the name of the people, or society, or public interest (this would be the point of view of a functionary of the state, whereby the world is something to be transformed by the means used by the government) (Cavanaugh 2004: 248). The State entered the stage of history due to its superior capacity of extracting revenue, as the sociologist Charles Tilly states, mentioned in Cavanaugh (2004: 248), due to the centralization and monopoly-building on the means to exert violence.

## **2. The myth of religious wars**

The state and its claims, its basis, and justifications must be examined from a point of view different from the main narrative about the apparition of the modern state. The prevailing view of political history and on the role of the state or the State (in the sense of an independent political entity separated from the governed and the rules, which obeys its logic and whose own purpose is its self-maintenance) is self-interested, secularist and justifies itself with the help of a narrative that makes the State the *telos* of history. The emergence of the State is presented as unavoidable. In this

narrative, the State is the hero that struggles with the irrational forces symbolized by the Church. At the end of this (dialectical) progressive and evolutionary process, the State is the victor. Moreover, the State is deified and the Church is vilified. The Church and the Christian religion (but not only those two) are the main negative characters of this drama. The story is framed in terms of a progress narrative. From a state of affairs plagued by religious violence, man ascends to a political order that ends it and creates the conditions for peace, prosperity, and so on. The more the state expands, the better. It is viewed as a tool that can bring perfect order to human life. It is obvious that this narrative entails some utopian undertones. Achieving the perfect form of society necessitates that religious faith, substantive moral convictions be abandoned and exiled in the new realm of subjective consciousness because they are deemed irrational and as potential causes for violence. This irrationality status is by no means reserved for Christianity. Other forms of spiritual and religious life can gain the same status. Substantive moral claims enjoy the same treatment since they can't be mathematically or rationally demonstrable. Since religion has been redefined and demonized, the present-day re-emergence of religion in the public sphere or in international relations is vilified by the people who adhere to the narrative of progress and the State. For others, this re-emergence might be a cause for celebration. The ones decrying this public resurgence of religion are the same that always evoke the specter of religious violence (Cavanaugh 2011: 226), people who entertain a cult dedicated to the State. The way this State-centered secular narrative is crafted performs an important function. It hides the violence engendered by the rise of the liberal/modern State and the present one that it perpetuates while attributing it to its past and present possible rivals. If the narrative acknowledges the violence done by the State, then only to legitimate it. Historical necessity, as the communist ideologists would have put it. Another purpose of this narrative is to make impossible finding an alternative to the present state of things.

The dichotomy between religious/secular is a modern invention, according to Cavanaugh, a Western invention tied to specific Western worldviews. It was an engineered invention whose purpose was to help to invert the relationship between the spiritual and civil power. Religion was redefined in Renaissance and modernity as a transcultural, transhistorical, and irrational phenomenon. The opposed reality was the domain of the civil power, now baptized the State. The non- or irrational religion and the Church should be therefore confined to the limits of the private sphere. Religion and the inner self-enclosed consciousness are now the places where the judgment of values, values, or views deem subjective and antithetical to the goals of the State are going to be dumped. These are the substantive goals, of course. The modern/liberal state is a formal and procedural democracy.

Cavanaugh's thesis is a strong one. The modern political order known as the state – the State – is not a transhistorical reality, transcultural reality, or the realization of man's rationality in the realm of political order let alone the manifestation of the Absolute Spirit on earth. Nevertheless, the narrative sustaining this sacralization of the State is so deeply ingrained in the modern psyche, so entrenched in the human mind, that the idea that one might kill in the name of the faith is considered abhorrent, but not if one is waging war in the name of the State (Cavanaugh, 1995: 397). Killing in the name of religion is considered wrong because the modern mindset assumes religion belongs to the private sphere of values. Everyone is free to adopt every value he or she

wants, provided it doesn't hurt others or doesn't encroach on his private negative freedom (of course, there are no criteria to ascertain this limit. Ascertaining this limit would imply a judgment of value, which is deemed to be subjective). Since the State entered the scene of history, it is supposed that the loyalty of the public belongs exclusively to the state. This is because it will provide peace, welfare, allow economic development, create harmony, abolish strife, etc. In short, the State presents itself as a universal remedy for all the ills that befall humanity. It professes a kind of messianism. Portraying religion as violent and criminal was the way to legitimize the transfer of loyalty and power to the state, which only wants the good for its citizens as already seen in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a classical approach that never gets old, the demonization of the opponent. For Cavanaugh, the so-called „Wars of Religion” in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were used as a pretext to transfer loyalty to the state and to delegitimize the authority of the Church. This is the moment when liberalism emerged as the paradigmatic solution to all problems caused by war, economy, etc.

According to the prevailing narrative, the modern state arose to pacify the conflicts engendered by the religious conflict. This process is presented as an unavoidable step in the development and betterment of humanity. The rise of the modern state is portrayed as the expression of the laws of history, a step or a leap forward, the unavoidable result thereof. Cavanaugh argues That the prevailing paradigm is wrong. The „Wars of Religion” (1557-1715) weren't wars caused by interconfessional strife. Those wars took place because of the emerging future secular State who imposed itself over the remnants of the medieval ecclesiastical order. During medieval times, the supreme public/common power was the Church, and the civil authorities were functioning as subordinate power. This political configuration changed during and after the age of the „Wars of Religion”. The modern State was engineered to invert the relationship between wars ecclesiastical power and civil secular authorities. And this was done by forces that were apparently on opposite sides (Martin Luther, Henry VIII, Philip II)'. Arguments against the ecclesiastical power were given from the 14th century onward, Marsilio Ficino arguing that only civil authority should have coercive power, not the Church. The same idea is expressed by Martin Luther who, despite recognizing that man is under two authorities -temporal and spiritual, attributed only to the temporal one the right to use coercive force. The Protestant Reformation contribute to the myth of the State and to the transformation thereof in a totalitarian authority (besides if faith alone save and there is a relationship between God and the believer is individual, the Church loses its role). Martin Luther denied any jurisdiction to the Church (Cavanaugh, 1995: 399). Faith and the Church are now reduced to a kind of inner government of the soul. Individual people are free and subject to no one in the matters that affect the soul. Man is sinful by nature and saints by faith (God didn't create nature sinful, though). Bodies belong to the secular authorities, because of the inherent sinfulness of man (Woods, 2019: 63). Christians own obedience to civil authorities. Only these authorities have the right to exercise violence or power upon the bodies of the believers. The new theology of Protestantism denied hence ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It laid the groundwork for the future development of society whereby the power of civil authority becomes exclusive and all-encompassing. Justification only by faith (which is a variant of the Monoenergism heresy, that is the idea that in Christ only the divine nature is active) opened the way toward the supremacy of the State, which in itself is or claims (even only implicitly) to

be a spiritual power of sorts. True liberty belongs to the soul of the Christian even if the body is under lock and key (Woods, 2019: 68); (this is a way to deny Incarnation and asserting a quasi-dualistic view of the world. Even if the rulers were depraved and unruly, Luther's theology didn't allow the believers to rebel against it, which is somewhat ironic because Luther did exactly what he forbids others to do. Even if he later accepted a right to resistance, this right didn't belong to the individuals. It belonged to local and so-called inferior authorities (local princes against pope and emperor, etc.).

This dismissive attitude toward the spiritual power was not exclusive to the reformed countries, but it could be found among the catholic ones, too. The Habsburg or the Valois families have exercised pressure and obtained concessions from the Pope. In 1552-3, Lutheran forces defeated the army of the Holy Roman Empire, whereby the forces of the German Catholic princes remained neutral. A new understanding regarding the way society should work became pervasive among the different states in Europe. The role of the spiritual power was now seen as secondary or as belonging to a non-public aspect of human existence. The very fact that both the Protestants and Catholics thought that the state should uphold the true religions expresses this new understanding. It implied a separation of the two kinds of powers or authorities that hitherto functioned as a unity. The medieval view was that religious and civil authorities were different parts of the same body (Cavanaugh, 1995: 400). The 16th century maintained the idea of one social/political/spiritual body, but the relationship between spiritual and civil power was inverted. The civil authority was now the one holding all the leverage. This new arrangement was a step towards the elimination of the Church from the public sphere. Henceforth, the princes are now the ones controlling the spiritual power in their own sovereign territory. *Cuius regio, eius religio* was the recognition of this inversion. Reformation attempts in the Catholic failed because the state had already limited the jurisdiction of the Church within their national boundaries. The Church as spiritual power was waning, and the civil power was climbing to the place of exclusive power. The Catholic League in France was formed in order to restore the ancient rights, privileges of the provinces and estates, which were lost and denied by an increasingly centralized monarchy (Cavanaugh, 1995: 401-402). It was formed to work against the monarchy, not to fight against Protestants. This struggle of the nascent State against the spiritual authority entailed more than just pragmatic and political actions. It included an intellectual side, maybe a war of *Weltanschauungen*. To displace the spiritual power from its place, a new concept was needed. This concept was meant to reduce Christianity to a subjective reality that had no bearing on social and political life. It also had to create the impression that the birth of the State was a necessity of history and that what was called religion has always existed as a subjective reality in the minds of believers. Religion as a transcultural and ahistorical essence was created. And, according to this narrative, religion had usurped the rightful place of political power, a.k.a. the State (the supposed lynchpin of rationality). This new concept was religion. And Platonism was the model that helped creating it.

### **3. The creation of the modern concept of religion**

As already said, the state or the State should be considered a modern invention accompanied by a new ideology that justifies its existence and that promotes its

exclusivity in the political, social, and spiritual realm. Hence, former political units such as the city-state, imperium or kingdom should not be seen as states, at least not in the modern understanding thereof. The term *status* was used to designate, in the Middle Ages, the condition or state of the ruler or the condition of the realm (*status regni*). The modern state, or the idea of the state as a form of an independent political entity (in Machiavelli's words), started to take form between the end of the XIII century and the XVI. The full expression of this notion can be found only in the work of French and English humanists from the afore-mentioned period began to emerge this idea of the State as a kind of public power that is separated from the ones that rule and the ones that are being ruled (Cavanaugh, 1995: 398). This form of organization presents some peculiar and salient features exclusive to it. The political organization becomes a kind of thing that exists in itself, has its own structure, and is independent of the ruler. It imposes its own way of seeing and doing things on the ruler. Just as learning to drive and driving a car does modify and transform the one doing it, so does the state. As Quentin Skinner puts it, a mutation in political thought led to the idea that the state has its own juridical and political order, constitutional order which is independent of the ruler whose duty consists in maintaining this order (Wood, 2019: 12).

This implies a strong central organization, which is unified, also a bureaucratic apparatus, and some clear delimited national borders. Seen in this larger context, the „Wars of Religion” were not caused by the conflicts between the two main confessions now competing with each other, but by the rise of a bureaucratized and centralized state – the State. This event can be seen in France, the place where the civil power asserted its dominance over the Church. This successful centralization of the civil power had set an example that other monarchs wanted to follow. The Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II took notice of this success and the result was the thirty years war 1618-1648. In 1630 Sweden entered in the war against him and the French state decided to finance thirty-six Swedish soldiers on the German territory, that is people of Protestant stock.

A product of this elevation of the civil power to then solely legitimate authority was the creation of what is called religion, that is of religion as a set of personal convictions and that can be entertained by the citizen apart from his or her loyalty to the state, a state that is supposed to be neutral. „The creation of religion, and thus the privatization of the Church, is correlative to the rise of the State” (Cavanaugh, 1995: 403). This sounds strange for the modern world. Religion or the attribute religious were not used frequently in the Middle Ages and when used, they meant usually something referring or belonging to the monastic life. The term religious was employed to name different monastic orders or someone who belonged to them. In *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas religion doesn't differ from sanctity. It is a name given to the virtue that directs someone towards God. It differs from sanctity insofar it refers to the liturgical practices in the Church. As a virtue, religion is not only something that pertains to the inner governance of the soul, but manifests itself in external actions, as a habit. It is a habit that is embodied in the disciplined actions of the Christian person (Cavanaugh, 1995: 403-404). The idea of religion as a kind of universal impulse or activity that is common to all mankind originates in the work *De Christiana Religione* of Marsilio Ficino, where it is understood as a sort of genuine perception and worship of God. It is the first definition of religion as a trans-cultural and ahistorical phenomenon. Later on, religion was identified with a set of true propositions about

God (Hugo Grotius). Henceforth, the plural of religion becomes possible, and also the idea of liberty of conscience.

The new meaning that religion acquires is by no means trivial. Ficino's work redefined religion as a universal and transhistorical phenomenon. Religion is supposed to be religion anytime and anywhere, something that manifests itself in many forms, but has the same essence. The notion that underlines the concept of religion is in favor of the state. Religion is no more a set of bodily practices, of taking part in the sacramental worship of God, but a set of domesticated beliefs that are subjective, that pertain only to the soul or individual conscience, beliefs that can be manipulated by the sovereign civil power under the pretense of the public interest. Religion, in our Western conception, ceases to be something that regarded and determined the life of the whole of society. It was now understood as different and separated from the new domain of politics. Defining religion is now opposed to defining politics. Since the essence of religion is to be found in the realm of subjective consciousness, it is obvious that the spiritual power has no business with the realm of politics.

Therefore, the attempt to find and define the essence of religion is a by-product of the process of elimination of religion/Christianity from the public sphere. It is supposed to be an essence different and separated from the political power. It is an essence that has or should not have any bearing upon the public and political realm. If it is to play any role in these domains, religion should be purged and transformed into some acceptable values, that are in harmony with the ideology of the State. Religion becomes a subjective and inner phenomenon, detached from its place and from the public discipline it entails. Religion as the bond of the State is precisely not the Church, not a common way of thinking and doing but an abstraction with no relevance for the public sphere. The discipline is no longer in the realm of the Church but is administered by the State. The loyalty to the State is paramount and nothing else be it a person or another form of common organization or political/spiritual order is allowed to claim it. Religion goes Cavanaugh's argumentation, in the sense of a transcultural, transhistorical phenomenon didn't exist. In pre-modern societies, West or non-Western, there was no equivalent thereof (Cavanaugh, 2011: 227).

The term *religio* as employed by the Romans meant a gamut of activities including civic duties. St. Augustin, quoted in Cavanaugh, describes *religio* as referring foremost to the relation of respect between neighbors (Cavanaugh, 2011: 227). This meaning was already very rare in the medieval period. As already explained, *religio* or the distinction between religious and secular was employed to refer to different monastic orders as opposed to diocesan clergy. During the Middle Ages, there was no distinction between *religio*, politics or economics. The modern conception of religion refers to a kind of genus to which all religions are species. Religion is thus a term void of content. The distinction religious/secular in the modern mold facilitated the migration of the holy towards the state (and in other respect to the individual, that now is supposedly sacred). The invention of the term was useful in the attack on ecclesiastical power, it proved to be useful and hence, it was put to further use. It has been used in a similarly by describing non-modern and non-Western culture as irrational or barbaric, as not progressive. In the non-Western countries the distinction was used to marginalize aspect of the indigenous cultures or to deny their value. The idea behind this devaluation brought about by the use of the concept of religion was to divide the life of the societies upon which it was applied, creating the division between

private/subjective inner space and public space. What belonged to religion, the peculiar features of the respective culture were banned in this realm, while politics, state, and market were seen as belonging to the public sphere. There they could function smoothly unencumbered by religious consideration, by morals, etc. Such a distinction and the emergence of the modern State requires the reeducation and reforging of the people. Respecting free thinking or free opinion is a moot point. The act of calling Hinduism a religion was tantamount to considering everything that is Indian to belong to the private sphere, while the British/English meant the public sphere. In the present-day world, calling something religion is a tactic used to invoke the specter of violence and to demand that some practices and discourses should be limited or banned. The invention of the concept of religion is akin to the invention of the concept of fanaticism, a concept meant to denounce and stigmatize some groups, discourses, and practices that were contrary to the emergence of the State. "Religion is a special *political* category that marginalizes and domesticates whatever forms of collective social action that happen to retain a positive or utopian orientation" (Cavanaugh, 2011: 227)

The new ideology of the State finds a very clear expression in the works of Thomas Hobbes. The paramount end of civil power is the unity of the state and peace (Thomas Hobbes). The establishment of the State and the banning of religion in the private sphere make irrelevant the presence of one or many religions in the State. This is possible because religion is defined from the outset as something subjective without pertinence to the public sphere, state affairs, etc. The liberal toleration of the religions/religions and the idea of diversity are possible because they are the work of the State, the product of state's activity upon human consciousness. Along the empty generic concept of religion, comes a corresponding notion of God. This „God“ that is the target of religious endeavor generally, as the philosopher D.C. Schindler observes, is not the God of any particular tradition but a generic empty God, very akin to the Neoplatonic One (Farrell, 2016). This substitution accompanies the birth of the modern concept of religion. The rise of the generic empty God or of the chameleonic Godhead can be traced to St. Augustine and his replacement of God with the Neoplatonic One; to this could be added the nominalist and voluntarist theology inaugurated by William Ockham and the elevation of the individual to the position of absolute basic unity of the world (since God creates only individuals, there is a direct contact between God and man, and the role of the Church is undermined). To this generic empty God corresponds idea of man as an empty nature, as a lacking particular determination, a being that exists in itself, characterized by the power to choose freely. This empty nature, contentless nature of man and creation lies at the ground of the fictitious state of nature in the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau. The Church (but also society and the political order) now is seen not as an organic body, but as a kind of club, an association of free and like-minded individuals (Cavanaugh, 1995: 407). Gradually man is being conceived as a radical individual being, and religion is considered as depending upon man's inner and solitary judgment. Therefore, neither the state nor a spiritual authority can't coerce the religious conscience. Society is an aggregation of individuals, defined by their closed individualities and private judgments. In this process, the idea of a paradigmatic religious substantial content that might be imposed from outside on the individual is denied. This is construed as freedom of consciousness. But this freedom must be accomplished, and the state must



fulfill this role. Since religion is an universal impulse in everyone and each individual can have access to the divine or build a relationship with it, freedom of consciousness must be promoted. Objective faith content comes to be seen as alienating the individual. To destroy this alienation, the objective basis of faith must be dispelled. It is something subjective or it must be made subjective because otherwise, the individual won't be free. Therefore, the religious opinions of the people have the same value and can be accepted by the state, since they don't impinge upon the public space. The state must maintain this freedom of private and inner judgement even in matters of religion. As such, the state must exert its action or power upon the individuals that do not fit the above-described paradigm. This action is deemed to produce tolerance.

Toleration is hence a political tool that is used by the modern/liberal state to divide and conquer. Dispelling the objective substantial content of faith, making the criteria of truth the private judgment of the individual produces division. The fact that Locke precluded the Catholic Church from the *Toleration Act* was precisely the public and common character thereof. The Church is an extension of the Incarnation. Christian belief is not compatible with reducing faith to a set of propositions held as a private opinion. Reducing it to private opinion is destroying it, emptying it of content. The State is now an independent entity, that tolerates pluralism only at the level of opinion. It has replaced God as the ultimate good and must be defended using coercive power (presumably against everyone and every current of ideas that doesn't share the modern commitment to the State) At the public level, it doesn't tolerate God; it accepts only empty invocation of him. The modern State requires within its borders unchallenged authority (Cavanaugh, 1995: 408), and God in his particularity and reality is a denial of this authority. Along this unchallenged totalitarian authority, the emergence and fortification of the State have brought with the increased use of war as a tool needed to expand and consolidate the borders, taxation, etc. It must be added, that the rise of the State was not the intention behind the efforts of the governing class that needed a centralized power and administration to extract resources and wage war. „The state was largely an unintended byproduct of these elite's pursuit of their own ends.“ (Cavanaugh, 2004: 249)

The State claims to be a necessity of human existence, the condition of possibility of a civilized existence. The real failures of the State do not count as a rebuttal of its claims. The State is surrounded with Utopian connotations. The state is considered by some as the condition of possibility of culture and civilization, of morality even (I. Kant), and a means to attain perpetual peace since it provides the means that help people to transcend their particularities (Cavanaugh, 1995: 408-409). Because of the State, people will respect each other on the ground of their rationality or their common nature, etc. According to Kant, the liberal or the republican State is the most appropriate configuration for the development of human qualities. Such a state should become a model for other states to follow the same path. Even war could be used to bring this liberal republicanism to other people, to emancipate them, to make them acquire humanity in the fullest sense. For the people who couldn't develop free their own culture and life due to the lack of a political organization or because foreign domination, the State or the national state seems the appropriate tool to promote, develop, and to spread their culture and specific form of life. Cavanaugh argues that this is an illusion. Political order, culture, morality, peace, etc. predate the existence of the State. The rise of the State didn't fulfill its advertised function.

Abolishing religion from the public space didn't lead to the disappearance of violence, civile strife, etc. The claims of the State that it produces peace or even perpetual peace have been empirically proven to be false. The promise of peace is a lie. History gives plenty of examples that show that transferring one's loyalty to the state or secular ideologies do not curb the violence previously attributed to „religion“. One of the main features of the state, the basis of its legitimacy is the function of protection. This is not enough for claiming legitimacy. Protection and making war, another function of the state, are features that belong to rackets, to gangs, to mafia-like organizations. The modern state, that national states that emerged in Europe are born out of violence and warfare (Tilly, 1985: 169-170). The state is a centralized and differentiated organization that claims to control mainly the means of violence within a certain territory and the population therein. Charles Tilly contends that the modern state, the State - is the product of the interdependency between state-making and war-making. Making war depended on the ability of the rulers to extract wealth from the population, to secure the needed resources. Even the extension of participation in political life, recognizing some rights to the underclass, served these efforts (Cavanaugh, 2004: 249). This whole process of centralization was accompanied by popular revolts, that were frequent, violent, etc. It took a long time for the rulers to impose their will on the population, but they have done it successfully. This process can be observed on a smaller scale. At least the way it begins.

#### **4. State-making, violence and ransom**

The process of state-making can be seen every day in society during police work. On a smaller scale, this process is present in the realm of organized crime. The protection, which is one of the main activities or functions the state claims to fulfill, is a double-edged sword akin to the so-called protection a gang offers. If you don't pay, then they destroy your business, etc. The protection that the state offers was possible only if the state had a monopoly on a certain territory, a monopoly that needed access to resources, capital, etc. This access was granted, so to speak, by employing a direct threat of violence or by promising protection against other sorts thereof. This is the same way a racketeer gang works (Tilly, 1985: 170). The building of modern/national states does produce pacification, cooptation, elimination of rival factions of the sovereign power. There was no more divided sovereignty. Internal strife was for the most part gone. The emergence of the state is reinterpreted retroactively as the result could of prescient and conscious action on the part of the sovereign, though they follow from the logic of an expanding power (Tilly, 1985: 171-172).

The competitors and rivals of the successful sovereign have to yield so that the whole protection scheme could bring gain to the one in power. Through the action of the sovereign, rents and monetary gain are created. For example, the guarantee of property rights makes it possible for people who own capital or innovate thereby generating grow to get o parts of the gains and therefore to pay taxes (for protection) to the state. The protected property rights referred to capital and made possible the accumulation of the financial or production means that guaranteed the security and growth of the state (Tilly, 1985: 170). The citizens are the customers of the service that the state offers. Another event that helped the birthing of the modern state and modern politics, was the emergence of artillery, the advent thereof permitting the building of large armies, of the dread standing armies and of central governments that were

advantageous to powerholders. Military development and innovation are another factor that fits in the equation of building large and well-armed national states.

Thus, the capacity to project force, to defend the territory of the state, and to exert pressure on the people to extract wealth from them increased. Nevertheless, capital accumulation remains one of the main factors of the building of a national state. Banking dynasties stood behind the princes and their endeavors, but financial resources weren't enough. The strengthening of this centralization and unifying process needed access to agriculture resources – food – and this entailed increased production and the setting up of an efficient administrative system that could make all of that possible. This process also demanded or implied the existence or concentration of population and services in cities, also the concentration of government expenditure. The urban concentrations provided opportunities for private entrepreneurship and economies of scale or to capture them. This served well for the development of trade and finance. And along came the public debt.

The protection that the State offers comes with strings attached. A high cost must be paid by the people. The main danger emanates from the state itself. The state produces the danger it claims to protect the people against. The external threats are secondary, and sometimes they are caused also by the state. In so far as the threats the state are supposed to defend against are imaginary or invented, or created by the state institutions (wittingly or unwittingly), the state is in reality just a racketeer.

This becomes more visible when the threat comes more or less explicitly from the repressive and extractive activities of the government itself. Self-defense or rebellion is risky since the state is the power with a monopoly on violence. This situation is strengthened by ideologies that affirm the exclusive right of the state to use violence. And the legitimacy of the state comes not from the assent of the government, but from possessing the monopoly on violence. Enjoying a monopoly on violence makes possible to claim legitimacy. But this monopoly on violence was not the result of public consent, or of a legal process of election, etc. Power produces legitimacy. In the context of the institution that gave birth to modernity, of the transition from the so-called Middle Ages to modernity, legitimacy meant that the local or inferior authorities will probably act to confirm the decision took by the authority that has the monopoly of power. The monopoly on violence and the threat of using it are the true basis of legitimacy. The modern state, born in Europe, is based or entails the following activities such as waging war and thus the extraction of resources from the people it is supposed to protect, capital accumulation, etc.

Thus, the State as a new political form is not born out of the intention of building a new political form, a new form of organization. It arises through the action of the powerful in their endeavor to wage warfare and extend their power, just like wealth arises through the enactment of egoist actions on the free market à la Adam Smith. National states arose from the activities of war-making, resource extraction from the population, capital accumulation and establishing an increasing centralized administration. War-making was a means of keeping other competitors in check and a pretext to accumulate more resources. This could be accomplished through conquest, by selling one's assets, by coercing or dispossessing people of their *Gut und Haben*, or by getting credit from the people who had the much-needed capital. Therefore, a constant relationship between the powerholders and capitalists came to be. The civil authorities become dependent on the capitalist and banking class, on their power of

arranging and giving credit and they also imposed some form of regular taxation on the people. This, of course, is in the name of the common good. During the process of forming the State, there was no incommensurable difference between what would become the state and other violent actors, such as bandits, pirates, other feudal lords, etc. Legitimate versus illegitimate uses of violence is an issue that becomes clearer with time. Legitimacy established itself only when the armed forces of the state become more unified and permanent and the competitors are eliminated. Legitimacy becomes an issue only after the setting up of the state. Only then can the state claim to have legitimacy. The process of building the state entailed the accumulation of power and the monopoly of violence.

True, undivided sovereignty couldn't tolerate other decisional and power centers. Without power, the future state couldn't fulfill its functions. Because in the pre-modern era the power of the rulers depended on other feudal lords who had their personal armies and fighters, the establishment of a unified centralized political order made it necessary that those who had armies and riches at their disposition to be controlled or eliminated. Their existence depended henceforward on giving up their traditional roles, their armies, and other powers they exerted. They were disarmed, their forces disbanded, their fortresses and castles destroyed, when necessary. The Tudors did this in England thereby changing politics and the quality of everyday life. A similar process was enacted in the nineteenth century through the invention of the police force, its growth and the introduction of extensive control of the cities and villages (Tilly, 1985: 173). The same process of centralizing and unifying was started by Richelieu in France in the 1620. The problem France was facing was the lack of complete articulation between the central power and the rest of the territory, which used to be done through the intermediary of the feudal lords. The modernization of France and the building of the State lead to the reduction of indirect rule by the rural nobility, thereby enabling the extension of the central administration into the local communities.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new picture of the way the human communities were organized emerged. The central power was becoming a reality, standing armies were now a reality, and the armed forces that the central authority controlled exceeded by large other forces that existed on the territory. To foster this process, another institution was needed: the police. The police force was developed, as a force different from the army that was meant to wage warfare against external threats. The police were directed inward. It was supposed to enforce order and to fight the enemy of the central authorities. The police forces were subordinated to the central authority, to law, and not to personal lords.

The sovereignty didn't belong to different and multiple individuals, but to the central authority, which made laws for all. The emergence of the State as a self-sustaining entity whose sole end is itself needed also the delegitimizing of a body such as the Church. It needed to conquer the minds and the hearts of its citizens. Another public authority couldn't have been tolerated. This was accomplished by inventing a narrative that is known today. That the emergence of the state was a historical necessity, and that the Church and spiritual and moral problems belonged to the realm of subjectivity. This realm was supposed to have no bearing on the public domain. The concept of religion as it is understood today was born. Religion was redefined as a transhistorical category. Another ideological category was invented in this process of

imposing the ideology of the State upon its citizens. The concept of fanaticism was forged.

## 5. Final remarks

The State is now the sole legitimate power in society, and it now claims to prescribe what people have to believe. The production of consensus in society is not so free and peaceful as one may think. The State is not an exterior part or a minimal part of society. Fighting so-called fake news or imposing gender theory as mandatory is a sign that the State is a spiritual power and wants to form the minds and hearts of the citizens much deeper than before. Even the private sphere of religion is now not more immune to state action and propaganda, whereby the State is often helped by so-called NGO-s that work as if they were a branch of the State. The same thing could be said of tech-giants like Google who are so entrenched with the military and security apparatus of the State that no one can tell where one ends and the other one begins. State and society now merge the different spheres of society being increasingly governed by the logic of capital and market. Even the critiques that are exercised against capitalism and market society are coopted and integrated into this corporate complex. Everything is now under the command of the logic of accumulation, of maximizing self-interest, of hedonist self-assertion, and denial of objective limits and values. But something has not changed. The way the State behaves. It is still operating like a mafia. The protection it offers depends on the obedience of the citizens. If people disobey, they get punished, lose their rights, get fired for not accepting the ideology of compulsory diversity, etc. It is an offer that no one can refuse. The State – including nowadays the big corporations - looks and acts like a protection racket but also like a spiritual power that needs to mold the way the people think and feel. So-called sensitivity-training sessions or diversity trainings that now pervade the former Western democracies is such a mechanism. Reeducation and brainwashing are now pervasive and everyone can become subjected to it due to wrong think (hate-crime: being guilty without actually committing a crime). To complete this task, the corporate State employs the same tactics used to abolish the social and political role of the Church. New categories akin to that of religion are employed to demonize and ostracize the groups or individuals that do not integrate in the new mold. Some examples are islamophobe, homophobe, bigot, toxic masculinity, Fascist, Nazi, populist, white supremacist, etc. The tolerance of plurality goes in so far as the opinions are superficial and do not question the underlying ideology of the corporate State. The State is not so much the expression of the will of a people, but a kind of entity that, even if it is used for other purposes by dominant groups, functions as a spiritual power that seeks self-perpetuation, domination, and redefining the humanity of its citizens as the main purpose.

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