The Crisis of Power and the Emergence of the Corporate State in Globalizing Realities

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Within the current dynamic of history we are witnessing the construction of original political and social forms. This is particularly so regarding the state or the hitherto dominant political form of the nation-state which in the argument here is giving way to a new kind of political assemblage which might be called the corporate state (see Kapferer 2005b). The emergence of the corporate state is associated with globalization processes widely linked to the decline of the nation-state as a centralizing commanding institution of territorially defined power. However, I will argue that globalization is integral with the emergence of the corporate state both being the condition and effect of the other. If globalization, as numerous commentators suggest, appears to undermine the nation state it is a process that is also giving rise to new state assemblages which are increasingly of a corporate state kind.

Broadly my discussion extends from Karl Polanyi’s The Great Transformation in which he discussed the historical development of the idea of the self-regulating free market. The great transformation effected a disembedding of the market or economic forces of accumulation and distribution from their integument within the institutional orders of society. Exploring anthropological and historical evidence Polanyi describes economic functions as being effected, for example, through religio-political institutions (the temple system of ancient Egypt, or, until recently the ritually-based caste orders of India, or the symbolically and kin-mediated processes of the Melanesian kula). The economy or the market did not act as such. Trade and exchange are historically everywhere in existence but where it appeared to act independently of social controls and religio-political orders it was often conducted by populations who were externalized, marginalized and sometimes radically demeaned as, for instance, Jews in Europe. In the disembedding of the economy and the market in the great transformation, the ideas of the economy and the market achieve a heightened conceptualization and are broken free from their social and religio-political constraints – thus the idea of the free and self regulating market – and increasingly achieve determining import. That is, it is the economy and the market that are conceived of as having independent force and value and are regarded as being primary in the very constitution of the social. In many ways, the great transformation of Polanyi’s interpretation describes what is widely recognized as modernity in which the economy and associated technologies is regarded as being of paramount importance from which everything else is derived.

The Great Transformation was published as the Second World War was drawing to a close. Polanyi saw much that he conceived of as leading towards it and the human devastations and destructions that grew in its wake as connected to the development of the idea of the self-regulating free market and, simultaneously, the efforts in the political sphere to curb both its socially disruptive effects and, through the oligarchical operation of the political, to gain or maintain authority and position by controlling the economic. This gave birth, in Polanyi’s analysis, to the era of the nation-state or a period of nationalist capitalism giving rise to such extremes of human suffering as those brought about in the Soviet Union and in the various European fascisms. Here I must stress that Polanyi’s argument stresses the symbiosis of state-political forces with that of the market. That is the nation-state is not a consequence, effect or reaction to the market but its key instrument. Through the mediation of the political order of the nation-state the social world is transformed in order to create the circumstances within which the market can rise to determining potency. The economy and the market is not against the state so much as tightly embroiled with it. State forces are those that both fetishize the market and are engaged in processes of restructuring social orders so that the market can expand. In this dynamic there were the seeds of a further transformation.

What begins as in many ways the invention of the economy and the market as a phenomenon disembedded from or relatively autonomous of society and, most importantly, controlled by the political, begins a process whereby the political becomes subordinated to and controlled by the terms of the economy or the market. This led, I
shall broadly argue, to the transformation of the political itself, a restructuring of the nature of the state and of the social order commanded by the state. Moreover, the economic and the market become re-embedded in society and in the political but in a way very different from before. They become themselves the very shape of the political and of society rather than shaped by society in which they were inseparably submerged. This is the crux of that political assemblage that I address as the corporate state which refers to a process in which there is a radical rearrangement of the very nature of the social and of society. As Stephen Gudeman (2009) explains, there is a re-embedding of the economy and of the market in society. However, what I assert as a distinction is that if a re-embedding occurs this is of a radically different kind in the context of the great transformational processes that Polanyi describes. Effectively the re-embedding is, rather, a socializing of the idea of the economy and the market. What has been isolated and conceptualized as distinct and given heightened autonomy is re-conceived as in fact the essence of the social. The market becomes the principle of social processes. This orientation is established through political processes that in themselves recognize their own constitution in the dynamics of the economy and the market. The idea of the corporate state that the following discussion is oriented to explore suggests that the market and the conceptualization of the economic is not so much re-submerged in the social and the political but becomes their very constitution and form. The political and the social, society itself, are not founded in the economic – as many arguments dubbed as economistic might assert - but are, in themselves, shapes of the economic and of the market or the various guises of the economic.

The notion of the corporate state that underpins my discussion is that it both represents the transmutation of the political as the economic and is the instrument for the realization as well as transmogrification of the social being of human being as an economic being not in the last instance, as Althusser might have said, but in the first instance. In this sense there is no distance between the economic and the social. The latter is not determined in the former, rather the economic and the social are thoroughly identical.

I pass off these considerations in what immediately follows to return to them in conclusion. For the present I wish to discuss some of the processes leading to the emergence of the corporate state as a dominant forming of the political and with this of social orders. I shall do this by examining the dynamics of state processes often in the context of war and violence. These phenomena and the various shapes they take throw up some of the key distinctions that I want to make between the nation-state, on the one hand, and the emerging dominance of the corporate state, on the other hand. Here I should make it clear that my overall position is not that the state essentially or necessarily is the cause of war and violence (and there are many excellent approaches that assert this) but that war and violence assume their shape in the socio-political and ideological dynamics and organization of state power as well as in the wider environments of state practice. In other words, the character of war and violence, as well as practices oriented to their control, are shaped through state practice that are integral to its particular dynamics in the contexts in which it is located and to some extent creates. To put it another way, the very methods and procedures whereby states achieve and legitimate the domains of their control and power are integral to the kinds of violence that is produced both by state orders and by those in reaction to them.

**The State as Crisis: Dynamics Not Form**

I conceive of the state in general non-specific terms (applying to both nation states and corporate states) as a self-sustaining totalizing constellation of forces whose dynamic might together be conceptualized as a politics machine directed to the creation and shaping of relations in its socio-cultural field relevant to the reproduction of state power. Moreover, the dynamics of the state is one which is oriented to achieving an exclusive and overarching determining potency in the diverse sets of social relations in which it is situated. State agents and agencies achieve this through numerous procedures among them being the incorporation, regulation or else exclusion, marginalization or suppression of communities, organizations or other kinds of socio-political orders (including competing state entities) that may be present in the environment of the state. Some of the typical political techniques of the state, its agents and agencies, in achieving these effects are territorialization (not necessarily geographical but the bounding and controlling of regions or spaces of interest), social coding and redifferentiation usually of a bureaucratic kind,
and control of subjectivities, as well as their capture and production, relative to the
hegemonic interest of those in command of state agencies.iii

In the foregoing I follow Deleuze and Guattari (2002 [1980]; 2004 [1972]) who suggest
that such dynamics are intrinsic or immanent in all social and political assemblages
regardless of whether an actual state order exists or not. They conceive this state dynamic
to be counteracted by that of the "war machine" – each dynamic being bound to and
implicit in the other but with its own distinct (violent) potential. Altogether different in
principle, the war machine dynamic is rhizomic in practice and open-ended, a relational
and structuring process that spreads out laterally and horizontally in all directions. Both
dynamics are apparent in most social processes although they will manifest in particular
ways relative to the manifold historical, cultural and other contingencies of context or
situation. These kinds of dynamics draw their conceptual distinction through contrast. Thus
the state dynamic is hierarchical (an apical tree-like process), vertical and bounding
(territorializing), whereas the war machine is thoroughly ahierarchical (radiating across a
number of nodal points, often unconnected). It is acentred and relatively unsystemic or
counter systemic in a closed or bounded sense. The relations and structuring of the war
machine create and generate the flow of their socially forming energy along spreading
networks, blurring or overrunning bounded, territorialized or categorical entities. The war
machine is a deterritorializing dynamic when brought into relation with state, tree-like
processes. iv

In the Deleuze and Guattari approach these dynamics coexist perduringly and are
intertwined.v They are so not in a dialectical sense of either an Hegelian or Marxian kind,
perspectives which Deleuze and Guattari seek to avoid. Thus the two dynamics are
irreducible to each other. Neither are they dissolvable or capable of being synthesised, in a
Hegelian sense, into a third term that is either their singular base or ultimate resolution.
One of Deleuze and Guattari’s central arguments is that these processes are potentially
mutually annihilating (and in their full emergence in the context of each other realize
thoroughgoing destruction). This clash is of the nature of the cancelling out effected
through the coming together of two positive forces (see Kapferer 1997 for an empirical
example of insurrection in Sri Lanka).

What Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize as “state” and “war machine” dynamics I regard
as comprising key aspects of the structuring logics involved in contemporary empirical
contexts of globalizing and state processes. The dynamics, of course, assume particular
accent and significance in the cultural and social constructions and situational
contingencies that comprise the flux of history. It is my concern here to outline
dimensions of the dynamic logics of state and war machine as these may be
contemporarily apparent.

Here I should stress that the approach to the state that I am articulating is one which
stresses dynamics over form. Further they are dynamics that should be distinguished from
the institutional orders of actual states or of those political or social phenomena that may
be seen as antagonistic or resistant to actual state controls. Thus the concepts of state
and war machine are not concrete oppositional terms and refer to dynamics that can
appear together and in a diversity of mixtures in any realized political practice whether
that, for example, of the bureaucratic institutional apparatuses of the state or
organizations of resistance to state orders. Actual historical states may give greater
prominence to the dynamics of the war machine (and not just in military enterprise or in
processes of conquest) at particular moments of (re)formation or at particular sites of their
extension. Examples from the past might be Ottoman Turkey or China pursuant on the
Mongol invasions. In the case of Ottoman Turkey the imagination or mythos of the state
has many of the dynamic features of what Deleuze and Guattari would describe as the
dynamic of the war machine (see Fosshagen 2003).

The dynamics of the war machine are very much part of what I will describe as the shape
of the practice of emerging corporate states. I shall suggest that a feature of corporate
states is that the rhizomic moves from a position more external or peripheral to state
processes to one more at the heart of the state as well as having more overt state-like
ordering effects throughout national territories. Moreover, in many ways, the hegemonic
forces of control, both directly and indirectly associated with state power, if often more
hidden, become intensified. There is in the formation of corporate states a re-
territorialization of the orders created in nation-state formation, in the ideological terms of
corporate states, expressing a greater flexibility and openness, which drives a particular
crisis of control reflected in the use of borders as filtering mechanisms (e.g., acting in response to the shifting corporatizing demands of changing state-ratified interests) and an increasing obsession with security.

Overall my approach is not one that is for or against the state as such in relation to violence and war. Neither is it directed to ascertaining some kind of idealistic hierarchy of socio-political forms defined in terms of their propensity to inflict the suffering and devastations of violence and war. Undoubtedly in my opinion dictatorships are likely to engender more harm than democracies though this is by no means certain. Democratic populisms are vulnerable to sliding into autocracies as De Tocqueville (2001) indicated as a potential for America. The totalitarianism of socialist and populist states in Europe in the last century achieved the peak so far of human devastation. The colonial states and the violence with which they subduced the majority of their subjects are also stark examples of this human destructive potential. The Athenian democracy wrought extreme destructions upon the states and societies in its environment, a factor which Thucydides observed at the time. Sahlins (2004) in an analysis of the forces leading to the defeat of the Athenian democracy in the Peloponnesian wars offers an ironic commentary on the current democracy-inspired adventure of the US and Britain in Iraq. John Gray (2007) most recently has attacked utopian idealisms of human liberation and peace mainly of the doctrinal sort as in themselves leading to annihilating consequences, a view also expressed by Adorno (1973) in general regarding idealisms. In my perspective, what is conceived of as the state has innumerable potentialities, their realization for the benefit or destruction of human populations being empirically contingent. 

The Crisis of the State and the Aporia of Power

The state, as any social or political assemblage, is in a continual process of formation. This is so simply because the state, its structures and practices, is a social fact created in social processes and constantly subject to them. Forces within the domains of state sovereignty as well as external to them demand that state orders in the disparate contexts of their practice must constantly be adjusting to shifting circumstances, events and situations. That the state is in constant formation (in dynamic assembly) is exacerbated in what by and large defines it: that is, an assemblage given to power and intrinsically oriented to its monopolization and/or regulation. Such monopolization is distilled in the idea of the state’s capacity to command the greatest violence -- the principal condition of state sovereignty as Hobbes made clear (1991 [1651]). But power is continually emergent in social processes which can never be completely controlled or circumscribed by state-oriented or controlled apparatuses or practices. It is because power arises in social processes not necessarily controlled by the state (and is often an effect of the very attempt of state agents and institutions to attempt control) that the state may be regarded as in a constant crisis. Such may be regarded as a kind of paranoia endemic to states and particularly those totalitarian states given to complete command of the social – the constant source of potential challenge or resistance to state authority.

The state as a focus of constant crisis, virtually the spectre or imaginary of crisis, even where the state is non-existent, is evident across time and space (see Clastres 1998 [1974]). This is unavoidable in so far as it is the crucible of power in all its disguises (see Gledhill 2000 [1994]). But the crisis of the state achieves a particular intensity in modernity and especially in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Europe and the Americas. This is manifested by the questioning of the legitimacy of sovereign power and its relation to human misery and oppression. Ancient debates were reinvigorated, and continue to be so, but achieved mass appeal as they were given impetus in processes of secularism fuelled in the energies of religious reformation, the Enlightenment argument, the development of scientific rationalism, and industrialization and urbanization.

What may be typified as the modern state emerged from the challenges to the various formations of the state in the intensification of its crisis especially in Europe but also in the U.S. In the reconfiguration of state orders that ensued, the state was effectively redirected as thoroughly an assemblage oriented to the production of society.

Thus the modernist state in Europe and in America was oriented to the production of society as the society of the state. This was evident in ideological representations of the state such as those that declared the order of society as being dependent on the power of the state. Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan (1991 [1651]) ideally depicts the state as the condition for the existence of an harmonious society whereby the state controls and
mediates the conflicting and fractious elements of society that the power of the state encompasses. Written at the time of the English Revolution, and still a major reference in discussions concerning the architecture of the state, *Leviathan* expresses what most modern states claim to be their central function as both ordering and protective of the social. The nation-state, still the globally dominant form, marked common identity or the creation of a person/individual similarly oriented to the production of a common community – even despite surface differences – as the cohering principle of its society of the state.

Foucault’s work devoted to comprehending the modern state demonstrates how much of its institutional practice had the effect of habituating the state in the person and routine social practices. In effect, Foucault’s argument might be seen as also theorizing how the interests of ruling groups largely in control of state apparatuses are met through processes not immediately associated with state power. The general point is that in modernity the state became not merely a transcendent entity but also became hegemonically involved (as Gramsci had already developed), its agents and agencies active in the invention of the ideological practices of everyday life in support of the reproduction of state power. I stress two points.

First, the modern state, its agents and institutions, became consciously oriented to the creation or production of the very society in which its sovereignty was defined and, furthermore, engaged the citizenry to this task in a variety of discursive practices. Power and control became an effect of social production in line with state interest. This is so much for democracies as for dictatorships. In other words, the activity of the agents and agencies of the state in social production and the creation of its moral order, and in varying degrees the involvement of the citizenry, can be seen as a major strategy for addressing forces that may challenge or resist the state.

Second, and arising from the first, the violent power that is at the heart of the authority of the state was distributed through a variety of state and non-state disciplinary practices involving education, the family and work among others. Not only are such practices supported by the ultimately violent power of the state but also these reinforced the overall authority of the state further facilitating the state as the central force in the production of the social and of society. The very notion of the social contract between state and society, so vital in the legitimating of state power, is further grounded in such processes and itself is a major ideological instrument for the production of the society of the state whereby the crisis of power at the heart of the state may be averted or reduced.

It should be noted that while the physical violent power at the centre of the state is covered or suppressed in other less violent practice, it is an ever-present capacity underpinning state order and far from being a practice of last resort. This aspect has led Agamben to argue for the centrality of the *state of exception* in analysing the nature and practice of state power, the state of exception marking “...a threshold at which logic and praxis blur with each other and pure violence without *logos* claims to realize an enunciation without any real reference” (2005:40). However, its controlling and ordering function is augmented and dissipated as well as transmuted, often into what Bourdieu has called a *symbolic violence* (1992 [1977]:190-197), through the establishment of state agencies, institutions and practices (including state-supported ideologies) of social production.

Modern nation-states have commanded and directed social production through bureaucratic institutions and related practices of cultural (re)invention. Both accentuate what I have referred to as a state dynamic and especially in conjunction. The modern state largely took its current form through the development of a rational bureaucratic system. Its logic – what Handelman (2004) describes as a bureaucratic logic – involves a process of coding or recoding populations largely according to the way personal attributes fit with pre-determined categories relevant to the bureaucratically defined problem at hand. In this process, for example, dimensions of the person that are constituted in the fluidity of social action and often are contextually relative become assigned to the more fixed categories of a bureaucratic order (see Kapferer 1997a [1988]). The nature of their everyday social production is interrupted or subverted in state-authorized bureaucratic processes. In the recoding of the state dynamic, abstracted bureaucratic categories may then be regrounded through a variety of institutional practices (educational, medical, varieties of planning etc.) often assuming a factuality that they did not previously have. In other words, state-bureaucratic processes are engaged in redrawing social realities in such a way that they
may generate a relatively original habitus or what I, following Marx, have referred to as the society of the state.

The authoritarian, oppressive, rigid and dehumanizing – indeed violent potentialities – of state bureaucratic practices have been widely discussed (cf. e.g. Bauman 1989; Scott 1998). The Holocaust, the Stalinist pogroms or the Pol Pot massacres demonstrate the extremes of human annihilation that state-bureaucratic machineries have facilitated. But I stress that modern state bureaucratic processes, as a particular exemplar of what I refer to as a state dynamic, have impetus in creating the conditions for human destruction. A factor, of course, as Arendt (2004; 2006) and others have stressed is the abstract rule-governed rationalism of bureaucratic processes that can appear to have an energy of their own, often anti-humanitarian within which human agents can avoid responsibility for their action. However, I focus upon the logic of inclusion/exclusion of bureaucratic processes and their fixing of relatively unambiguous boundaries in order to produce a legible, ordered and striated space. Added to this is the tendency of bureaucratic processes to classify into discrete categories that can assume a purity of typological abstraction. These came to function not merely as categories but can operate as indicators for action oblivious to situated complexities. The abstract is made concrete through the power of the state. The social terrain so bureaucratically mapped can force the abstract as the real creating or inventing social communities of the category not only systemically simplifying complexity in the recoding but also effectively freezing them in the category (or identity category). This forcing of the abstract as real can generate a resistance that itself frequently engages the same categorical logic of the impositional bureaucratic dynamics. Broadly, the kind of bureaucratic dynamic outlined not only operates a symbolic violence, a violence of the category, but can be a critical factor both in the generation of actual physical destruction even influencing a particular shape to the violence.

**Shapes of Violence in the regime of the Nation-State**

Much ethnic violence and racism in contemporary nation-states provides support for this argument. British colonial bureaucratic coding of India laid some of the groundwork for the shape of the communalism that burst out so destructively at the time of Partition in 1947. Undoubtedly political and religious passions drove the violence. But these were distilled in bureaucratic categories instituted by the power of the Colonial state exacerbated by hastily drawn-up and bureaucratically decided territorial assignments. The bureaucratic categories of the current Indian state concerning backward and scheduled castes and tribes involving various entitlements is a filter for current violence both in resistance and reaction, for example, relating to dalit (outcaste) and adivasi (tribal) movements. In regard to these, one among many cruel paradoxes, is that bureaucratically realized categories permit the recognition of disadvantage and inequality but simultaneously may exacerbate disadvantage.

Kerala is an example of a state within India that has in many ways successfully attacked some of the key socio-economic structures producing disadvantage. But this has accentuated the difficulties of certain maximally excluded and depressed communities such as dalits and adivasi (see Raman 2005) whose situation continues to be affected by the imaginary force of caste ideology, for instance, despite redressive socio-economic changes and strong anti-caste rhetoric. In Kerala a certain public silence surrounding the matter of caste has occurred which enables its contemporary discriminating force to gain a subterranean potency (see Vadakkkiniyil 2009, Jayaseelan 2010).

The ethnic civil war in Sri Lanka owes some of its direction to the bureaucratic coding of the colonial period and its postcolonial extensions. British Rule was facilitated through the bureaucratic designation of distinct cultural communities and social-political regions that were in varying ways given degrees of autonomy within the colonial state. The colonial process was one which sought control by capturing within the colonial order a variety of cultural/historical processes and subduing them to the hegemonic interests of the colonial state (see Roberts 1979, Seneviratne, Kapferer 1988, 2002). In so doing the colonial authorities accentuated earlier divisions giving them new significance in the colonial order and effectively politicizing dimensions that previously did not have this import.

Thus, religion was politicized both in its capacity to organize resistance to colonial power and also as a means of social ordering in terms of the political rationalism of the colonial state. In effect the latter, the subordination of the religious to the political or the creation of the religious as an arena of politics within rather than against the state, was oriented to
defusing the religious as a challenge to state control. In Sri Lanka, the Colonial government placed all religions in an equal relation to the state thereby reducing the status of Buddhism as the religion of the majority (and therefore facilitating the emergence of a religious identity as vital in the birth of a political consciousness) by placing it in equivalent relation to other religions and, therefore, effectively subordinating it, with other religions, to the authority of the Church of England the denomination of the ruling group. The effect of course was to radicalize the Buddhist clergy and to turn them into representatives of Sinhalese in a nationalist struggle that continued well after Independence becoming a major force in the subsequent ethnic war between Tamils and Sinhalese.

The colonial society of the state also intentionally suppressed class forces and encouraged ethnic and caste communalism. The authorities prevented the formation of political parties and instead facilitated a system of representation based in ethnicity and caste. To a considerable extent the forces of class assumed a dominating ethnic and religious character and it was this that was to drive a nationalism of a radically ethnically divisive kind.

In the postcolonial years the communalist direction already implicated in the bureaucratically constituted colonial society of the state was pursued further and in a nationalist interest to assert Sinhala hegemony over Tamils. Much of this was and is oriented to the reproduction of the class power of communally-supported elites and gathered increasing force leading to the 1983 anti-Tamil urban riots. These precipitated thirty years of communal war which was brought to a savage conclusion in the extermination of the LTTE by the end of 2009, the major agency of Tamil violent opposition to Sinhala domination. In the aftermath of the war, the state dynamic, engages the bureaucratic orders to recreate a society of the state in which Tamils are by and large excluded, unless they accept, in effect, an inferior position in realities subordinated to Sinhala hegemony. However, in this specific case, the bureaucratic orders, it must be noted, are in the process of taking a more corporate form operating far more intensely than before in the familial, managerial interests, of a new elite that is detaching the state from its previous colonial/imperial nexus and affiliating itself more closely with China.

Numerous other examples can be given of the role of bureaucratic processes in modern nation-states in establishing the ground upon which war and other forms of human suffering build. Prunier (1995) has demonstrated how the ethnic extermination in Rwanda took its direction through a colonial bureaucratic fixing and hierarchializing of ethnic difference. The case of apartheid in South Africa is well-known.

Bureaucratic processes which assume particular force in the social assembly and regulative dynamics of modern states and, indeed, can inhabit the conventional thought processes of citizenry (a thinking as much as a “seeing” like a state), giving form to state violence. In Sri Lanka government forces concerned to root out insurgents against the government used the logic of bureaucratic categories or social indicators (e.g. age, caste, village) to identify potential threats. This magnified the extent of the human destruction and defined the nature of state terror. The bodies of victims were often thrown to the margins of human habitation, an action which simultaneously symbolized their exclusion from the social order commanded by the state (and indicating their threat to it) as well as indicative of the reterritorializing discourse of state violence (see Kapferer 1997b). Variations on this Sri Lanka example are common worldwide.

While the efforts of modernist states and especially nation-states can be conceived of as oriented to overcoming the crisis of power by constituting the social order upon which their power feeds, this is ultimately an impossibility. This is so, I claim, because the social and its complexity (what is contained in the abstraction “society”) is an excess, enduringly emergent and always more than anything that the agents of state order might imagine. It is the aporia of the impossibility of the state to finally constitute, control or order society which in itself can provoke state violence as varieties of totalitarian dictatorship demonstrate. No amount of bureaucratic overcoding or recoding, for example, of social identities and relations into the categories of state ordering, or the engagement or expansion of institutional agencies (e.g. educational, religious, penal) for the capture, production, or confinement of citizens, can enable those who dominate the state or those who act or guard its interests contain completely the social within the machineries of state or to finally subordinate the social to superordinate power. The dynamics of social generation is such as always, if not immediately, to escape controlling institutions of state power and to be capable of establishing potentially rival centres. Modernist states, as other
state assemblages throughout history, are always vulnerable to such internal crisis. This is so as a consequence of their own organizing logics and especially when in a mix with other dynamics such as those of that Deleuze and Guattari describe as that of the war machine (2002 [1980]). In their understanding this is ultimately antithetical to state processes, even though this might be captured into the impetus of state forces.

**Rhizomic Processes and the Orders of Nation-States**

The rhizomic nomadic dynamics of the war machine often complements the destructive potency of modern states, who engage it to their own deterritorializing and reterritorializing interests. Forces that arrange themselves against modern states repeatedly take a rhizomic form deliberately refusing the spatializing, territorially containing aspects of state dynamics. Paramilitary organizations often promoted by states to counteract resistant movements regularly assume rhizomic tactics mirroring those of the organizations they oppose (e.g. Jinjaweed in the Sudan.) The Israeli army operating in Gaza has in fact engaged Deleuze and Guattari virtually as a training manual for the IDF (see Weizman 2007). The IDF adaptation of the rhizomic dynamic of the war machine involves military units smashing through walls of houses, suddenly breaking into living areas, and then breaking through walls adjacent to living space of neighbouring families. Given the housing arrangements in which the dwellings of lineage members are closely abutting, the Israeli military units in their movements parallel the rhizomic patterns of Palestinian kinship. Effectively a state terror courses along the lines of relatedness invading the very social dynamics of everyday support and security of Palestinians, which is likely too to be the basis of Palestinian resistance. In Israeli use the state terror of the military – already organized in terms of a bureaucratic logic – amplifies its own deterritorializing potential when used against Palestinians by combining it with the deterritorializing potency of the rhizome. I note that this may be even more destructive than the conventional Israeli method of simply bulldozing and clearing away space, a tactic relevant to a state dynamic. This is so for in the Israeli instance the use of the war machine strategy attacks the very process of Palestinian social and political formation, that of kinship relatedness. Such radical rhizomic deterritorialization is combined in the building of the wall sealing off Palestinian settlements with a reterritorialization and intensification of Israel’s bureaucratic coding processes.

As the foregoing exemplifies, state and war machine dynamics can coexist and generally do so in state systems. The rhizomic dimensions of kinship, of lineage, can bolster elite control operating independently of bureaucratic or state dynamics, indeed can be the force for capturing state power as is clear in so many contemporary and historical contexts, and vital in directing the violent force of the state. But these can undermine the authority of those in control of state apparatuses especially in modernist contexts of bureaucratic rationality where rhetorics of corruption (a thoroughly state discourse) render such states vulnerable.

The political economy of many past and above all contemporary states is rhizomic, particularly where trade and consumption assumes predominance over production. This is all the more so where production itself is decentralised, as in the cyber-mediated forms of industrial production (sometimes referred to as Toyota-ism) dislocated from state-regulated territories, or as Hardt and Negri, building on Deleuze and Guattari, put it: “The transcendence of modern sovereignty thus conflicts with the immanence of capital” (2000:327). The nesting of rhizomic processes within state processes and their often synchrony masks the potential of a mutual negativity, indeed a destructive conjunction, that is the enduring crisis of the state. Indeed, the current global financial crisis might be regarded as an instance of the rhizomic forces of the market subverting the controlling and regulating dynamic of the state.

**Globalization and the Intensification of Crisis**

What is generally glossed as globalization, both past and present, has distinct rhizomic war or machine properties which also has affinities with some uses of the concepts of network and notions of assemblage that have gained momentum in relation to contemporary globalization.
The engagement of these concepts reflect the kinds of social relations and connections, as well as their labile shifting character, that express critical dimensions of globalization and, most importantly, constituting a further crisis for the nation-state to which it is forced to adjust. This is particularly so for relatively recent nation-states that superficially have achieved their autonomy from imperial and colonial control.

A common descriptive feature of contemporary globalization is its contravention (transgression) of the territorial integrity of nation-states, its threat to their autonomy (especially fiscal, for international transactions can escape financial regulations), and its counteraction of the authoritarian hierarchical ordering characteristic of state control (an example of Deleuzian rhizomatic processes). Post-colonial and post-imperial states have confronted an increased crisis of control and have been vulnerable to autonomous or secessionist movements of usually ethnic and religious kinds. Civil wars have become a dominant form of conflict and in some contexts (specially Africa and Latin America) a process of what I have called "wild sovereignty" (Kapferer ) - where the sovereignty of the state is challenged and a diversity of effectively warring groups becomes established is occurring. Joxe ( ) has discussed this as a proliferation of cruel little wars.

The growth in the phenomenon of warring fragmentation in post-colonial states has occasionally been discussed in terms of the concept of failed states which, in my view, is rooted in a theoretical grasp of state processes from within the perspective of the nation-state. Furthermore, it is committed to what could be termed a statist mythos of post-colonial national autonomy which hegemonically disguises the continuing dependency and, indeed, vulnerability of superficially autonomous territories to political economic forces centred in the often erstwhile colonial and imperial metropoles. The structure of international aid often expresses this.

But the failed state orientation insufficiently examines the ways globalization can interrupt the capacity of states to engage in practices of creating and reproducing the social order in which state agencies and agents can maintain political control. A positive example of this concerns the circumstances whereby the apartheid regime of South Africa was ended. I refer to the civics program whereby organizations parallel to and often superior to those of the ruling regime were established at local levels (often taking the form of NGOs, inspired by political activists and external agencies) creating alternative forms of rule and generating or supporting social orders antagonistic to and subverting the bureaucratic mechanisms of state.

New communication technologies and their opening of cyberspace initially, at least, independent of state controls not only enabled the bypassing of regulations vital to state political and social reproduction but also opened arenas of cyber-social formation and connection. This enabled social collectivities often constituted on the basis of identity to form and to shape and express mutual interest relatively free of state intervention. The capacity of nation-states to command the creation of the society of the state was reduced. Cyberspace further facilitated the expansion and sustenance of on the ground movements of autonomy and resistance. First nations indigenous groups and other "tribal" minorities, such as the current outcaste and tribal movements in India (dalit, adivasi), have engaged the internet with success in pushing their diverse causes. Ethnicity, through the internet, might be said to achieve a new kind of concretization within virtual space, a reality of its own – a territorialisation that escapes and supercedes that grounded in geographical space.

The development of global cyber or virtual communities is implicated in the maintenance of intra-national state and anti-nation-state violence and war. In Sri Lanka the nationalist ethnic Sinhala/Tamil war drew much of its energy from diasporized members of the ethnic categories. Much of this diasporization had its roots in the imperialism of the past but gained further impetus in globalization which was further fuelled by the social dislocations of the ethnic war and the largely forced migration of many Tamils to India and also Western countries to escape the destruction of war.

The war found sustenance in cyberspace. It mediated material support for the Tamil war effort and the news briefings through blogs on TamilNet effectively challenged official government war reporting. Counter Tamil propaganda through the Sinhalese diaspora facilitated by a growing Sinhala and government control and use of cyberspace were factors that assisted the final successful push of government forces against the Tamil movement for autonomy.
Other factors were more immediately effective in ending the Tamil resistance, at least momentarily, such as the emergence of Chinese power and the ability of the Sri Lanka government to shift away from a postcolonial dependence on the West. Nonetheless, the US-led War on Terror which led to the proscription of the main Tamil movement as a terrorist organization effectively cut off most important external material support. But the significance of the control over information and especially cyberspace was indicated in the restrictions by Sri Lanka on NGO and foreign correspondent access to the war zone. With the end of military operations the Sri Lanka government is exerting greater control over the internet and following China in subjecting it to government censorship and restrictions. In other words, attempting to deny the new spatializations and trans-territorial or anti-territorial potentials of cyberspace.

Of course cyberspace is no longer free space undergoing increasingly successful efforts by governments to bring it under control. It is now, perhaps more so, a major agency in the pursuit of state interest, including that of war.

Several recent conflicts evidence a cyberspace war fought alongside the physical battlefield in which hackers and other so-called cyberwarriors are involved. A case in point is the second Intifada in 2000 where pro-Israeli hackers shut down Hezbollah's website while pro-Palestinian hackers took down both the main Israeli government website as well as that of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. All in all over 100 websites were manipulated or else shut down (Denning 2001). In mimicking the physical non-cyberspace battlefield, the virtual attacks and battles within cyberspace are seemingly propelled by the rhizomic logic of a destabilising war machine. As such, it seems to represent a formation of non-territorial communities and a corresponding non-territorial warfare. However, by aligning itself with, or being aligned by or being directed from nascent or actual state formations, the transcending (and some would still argue emancipatory potential) of much of the type of cyber warfare seems to be only partly rhizomic. Moreover, the massive employment of digital warfare or information warfare (Mandel 2007), the alignment of the blogosphere with formal political entities (Williams, et al. 2005), and the increasing presence and control of cyberspace according to state and corporate interests (cf. e.g. Google’s deal with China to censor the software and application of its search engines (Healy 2007) or the government of Burma’s recent shutdown of internet access in a time of crisis to quell opposition (BBC News 2007)) suggest that, in a Deleuze and Guattarian sense, the encroaching state presence also must be seen as striating smooth space – also in the context of cyber wars and political conflict. In other words, in contemporary processes rhizomic and state dynamics are being brought into greater complementarity.

Perhaps the clearest instance and most commented dimension of globalization and its effects on state orders is the current War against terror and the heightening of state security concerns. These indicate the development of new forms of violence and war that are conditioned in globalizing forces (Kapferer 2004b). But the general direction of the argument I now pursue is that the forces of globalization are integral to reconfigurations of the state which becomes the vital agency in the restructuring of social realities in which the dynamics of globalization – and especially the expanding innovative intensity of its cyber technologies – are crucial. That is, as an extension of Polanyi, the processes widely described as globalization are driven in state processes that have themselves transformed into a corporate form that forces a greater complementarity and, indeed, centring of rhizomic dynamics with that which Deleuze labels the arboreal.

The Corporatization of States and Globalization

Globalization and the cyber networks that contribute to its current intensity are implicated in the changing circumstances of state political orders. I have noted that Polanyi saw that the North American and European nation-states were organizations for the restructuring of social life which gave force to further capitalist formation. Western nation-states and their colonial and imperial expansions were vital in effecting a great transformation in the patterns and structures of social existence within which the dynamics of capital grew and thrived. In Polanyi’s analysis the nation-state aided in a variety of nationalist ideologies carried out major processes of social structuring that were vital for the flowering of capital and the further changes in all domains of human existence it was to bring. But the state, while it propelled capital expansion also attempted to offset – through regulation in fact – the social consequences of its fetishism of the self-regulating market. An inherent opposition between hierarchical dynamics of the state and the rhizomic anti-state
potentials of the market was sustained and intensified. While the two dynamics were closely linked they nonetheless had a mutually negating potential evident, for example, in the Great Depression and most recently in the current recession and the collapse of the sub-prime. However, in the former situation the political was able to achieve some regulative and redistributive control over the economic and to protect socially disruptive processes. This appears to be far more difficult in the most recent financial crisis and, I suggest, is connected to the corporatization of nation-states or the emergence of the corporate state in which arboreal and rhizomic forces display particular conjunction giving the corporate state distinctive processes and tensions. In such a situation, the political (as this is concentrated in official state apparatuses) is given less reign to exert hierarchical control over the potentially subversive effects of rhizomic dynamics that economic processes may intensely manifest and which can achieve expanded force in the social and political reconfigurations or re-territorializing occasioned by the corporatizing of the state. I underline that the corporate state in the discussion here gives force to economic processes and is not a simple function of them. My usage of the concept of corporate state both indicates the particular force of the economic in its processes and refuses a simple reduction of the corporate state as a mere expression of the contradictions of capital or as a product of the economy (as this is typically defined as independent of the social) and the material that operates outside state social mediation. The corporate state in my usage is first and foremost a socio-political assemblage through which what can be conceived as economic forces achieve particular articulation.

Many of the terms of the Hobbesian society of the state, integral to the nation-state are suspended or suppressed in the corporate state. Within the nation-state dynamics of a rhizomic sort were marginalized often achieving their specific dynamic potency at the perimeters of nation-state extension and expansion. Within the domain of the nation-state hierarchical ordering was/is at the centre of its invention and ordering of its socio-political realities. The corporate state, post-Hobbesian in its assemblage, overtly abandons such a project positively asserting the value of rhizomic-like structures and accordingly modulating, co-opting them to erstwhile state institutional function and practice. The state opens up as it were bothdelimiting its formal operations and transferring its work to both private and public institutions or vacating space to be filled by the rapid growth of non-governmental organizations who perform erstwhile bureaucratic state functions. In the corporate or corporatizing state the dynamics are more inclusive than exclusive. In the re-territorializing processes of the corporate state what was outside comes inside and that which was controlled, regulated and subordinated to the terms of an ordering hierarchy are brought within the political machineries of state or are enabled to effectively contest or to replace them.

The consequence of such re-territorializing processes are various and potentially highly disruptive, productive of forms of violence and war that are both part of the transition to corporate states and potentially endemic to their specific assemblage. This appears to be the case in post-Soviet Russia and its post imperial satellite states in both Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Rigi (......) describes the war and violence of certain such states as chaotic domination and may be indicative, if paradoxically so, of the way some corporate states exert their control and dominion. Their order is thoroughly founded on the social and political fragmentation brought about by their combination of arboreal and rhizomic processes as a dynamic of control. This would appear to be the case in the corporatizing reconfiguration or re-territorialization of Iraq.

But I note that the social disruptions as well as their potential for violence is a dimension of their articulation into encompassing global processes. This is an aspect, I suggest, of a de-centering of the institutional organization of power: a consequence of the redistribution of power, either forcefully or voluntarily, to other bodies both within the national territory of the state and outside it. While formal state organs may insist on their sovereignty this is threatened for example in the claim to sovereign authority (or their contestation or subversion) by non state orders such as those of banking, engineering, industrial production, and mining. Here might also be included charitable, ecological and religious organizations. Rhizomic in structure, globally spread, they can function either as relatively independent nodal points of controlling power or else as the often covert neo-imperializing force of dominant metropolitan states. Although different in shape there is an underlying similarity in the continuing imperializing moves of North America and Europe with those more recently evident in China’s expansion following its own specific corporatization. Broadly, I am positing that the corporatization of the state further facilitates globalizing processes, such globalizing being integral to the augmentation and in many instances the
realignment of power within corporate states. The corporate state brings to the fore a
diversity of different organizational structures oriented to the social ordering of people in
relation to different kinds of material circumstances and political and social contingency. It
totalizes by means of organizational variation in contrast to the nation-state that tends to
control through an insistence on uniformity or the repletion of a particular bureaucratic-
ordering structure through all levels of state order. Diversity achieving its own systemic
organization in the corporate state (an assemblage of often different organizational modes
in relatively loose interconnection) rather than uniformity becomes a potentially totalizing
instrument of the corporate state order.

The corporate state does not exist above society in a Hobbesian sense, making society
possible as it were, rather the state forms more overtly as an assemblage with other social
institutions and organizations that in the circumstances of the nation-state, for example,
might have been understood as once being defined and subject to state control and order.
The emergence of the corporate state is a combination, on the one hand, of the sinking of
state institutions within the ongoing social fabric of social orders and, on the other hand,
the assumption of what could be seen as state functions – including those of social control
by agents and agencies who previously might have been more the subject of state
control and regulation.

In North America and especially Europe the rhetoric of individual agency and
empowerment and policies of community responsibility and privatization of hitherto state
services are both ideological dimensions of the dismantling of the nation state and integral
to the construction of the corporate state. Power is redefined as less abstract and more
personable and apparently accessible. The agents of authority and control are presented as
partners in a common project with their clients or consumers. State power is relatively de-
centralized and distributed across many agencies throughout the social terrain once
regarded as external to the offices of state and government, previous interconnections
notwithstanding. The power of the state becomes more hidden or made less visible, the
boundaries between state and non-state agents and agencies increasingly blurred. In this
 corporatization of the state, controlling or dominant power from all areas or fractions of
the national socio-political terrain are drawn together having the potential effect of
augmenting and extending power. Oligarchic power in such circumstances is likely to be
expanded through an assemblage network of shifting alliances dictated often by particular
localized concerns or interests.

Here I expand that a drawing together of state and rhizomic dynamics in processes of the
emergence of the corporate state involves what may be described as a totalizing by
inclusion rather than by exclusion – a dimension of nationalism in the circumstances of the
nation state. Such inclusion can be conceived of as a response to what I discussed earlier
as that general and enduring crisis of the state (perhaps any kind of state throughout
history) ontologically given to control over the circumstances of the reproduction of its
defining concern – power. Neo-liberalist ideological discourse is an expression and a means
for achieving this. It is an ideology organic with the construction and emergence of the
corporate state and, as North American and European contexts demonstrate, is in force
across the political spectrum. While in the West neo-liberalism was overtly ushered in by
rightist governments (e.g. Reagan in the US, Thatcher in the UK) it should be viewed as an
ideology produced out of a particular crisis of the state and, I think, should be de-linked
from a dualistic political conception, usually of the Left/Right variety, which persists in
much commentary. What is described as neo-liberalism gives ideological force to
structural shifts of corporatization which have long been in process (before Reagan and
Thatcher) and effected, as I have said, through transformational processes already at work
in nation-states.

There is more than a suggestion in neoliberal ethos and the expression of greater
democracy and transparency that the totalitarian sometimes racist exclusionism of nation-
states is overcome in processes of corporatization. But, of course, the corporate state (as
various such state assemblages in the recent past illustrate, if distinct from current forms
of corporatization, such as states under fascism) is no less open to such and other
totalitarian potential. As corporate states emerge from nation states ethnic nationalism and
other forms of hierarchialization and exclusion persist, as they may change register, often
facilitated by a rhetoric of freedom and liberation.

The corporatization of the state in England and in other states such as India has seen a
greater increase in the gap between the rich and the poor complete with its social
exclusionary effects and very probably as a consequence of the corporatizing
reconfigurations of state practice. Sri Lanka in the course of a thirty year ethnic war against secessionist Tamils was transforming (perhaps as a partial effect of the war) from a nation-state into a corporate state and new rhizomic forces of caste and family alliance (other than those connected with the colonial past) captured the apparatuses of state and further systematically subverted the various principles upon which state offices and functions had been based. Bureaucratic and legal orders are being made into overtly effective instruments of oligarchic control and re-territorialization. Following the destruction of Tamil resistance controlling agents of the corporatized Sri Lanka state are re-drawing the internal ethnic and social lineaments of the state in line with popular sentiment but no less in the oligarchic interests of those who are in command of state machineries.

The totalitarian potential of corporate states (as in Sri Lanka) receives some indication in discourses of security and surveillance. Escalating extraordinarily since President Bush’s declaration of the War on Terror, citizenry throughout the globe have accepted an exponential rise in surveillance intrusions – usually organized by private companies - into their everyday and personal lives. The state in its corporatizing is intensifying its controls over citizenry even as claims are made for democratizing and liberalizing. The extension of security concerns and surveillance is not merely a response to terrorism, I contend, but born in a crisis of control born of reterritorializing processes affecting the structures of life of local populations.

The corporatization of the state has effectively given corporate bodies (business, financial, engineering, extractive and manufacturing corporations) increased roles in the social reorganization of populations in connection with both production and consumption. Through the re-structuring of the state the economy can be said to have achieved a determining intensity that surpasses that achieved in nation-states. This is so because those commanding economic practices have gained greater command of regulatory mechanisms that placed limits on many of the socially disruptive potentials of new developments. It is through the corporatization of the state that the economic is enabled to gain ascendance over the political and the social. Indeed, within the corporate state the assertion of the economic and the disciplining of the social in terms of the economic is a major hegemonic force and tied to reterritorializing practices.

There are widespread efforts to get the public to participate in corporate-like practice, indeed to mimetically participate in what seems to be identical action – playing the market, investing pensions and become “stakeholders”. The rhetorics of individual liberation from the oppressive shackles of the nation-state is often employed in this process.

In countries where poverty is of considerable issue (and always potentially subversive of ruling groups and state power) there are anti-poverty programs that quite aside from their potential benefits constitute a new kind of disciplining – a regimen of support for the corporatizing state. An example is micro-credit. Targeting particularly women – who in certain regions as in Southern Africa are disadvantaged by the long-term migration of men to regional centres, cities and overseas in search of work (cf. Wolpe 1972) – common practices involve the “schooling” of participants in activities of investment, the taking of loans and the calculation of interest. There is the production of an illusion both in rich and also in impoverished countries of participation in practices which as a cruel paradox are involved in the reproduction of disadvantage (see Lazar 2004).

**Re-Imagining the Corporate State and the Social Realization of the Economic**

Much intellectual discourse widely, both consciously and unconsciously, is organic with state reconfigurations into the assemblage of the corporate state. They express a neoliberal discourse often despite an intention otherwise. I refer specifically to shifts in sociological thought. Lord Gidden’s ”Third Way” in the UK, ideologically integral to the corporatizing process of Blair’s New Labour in the UK, was part of a widespread shift in sociological thought.

Approaches that assert an interpretation of the social as shifting assemblages formed through the inter-meshing of network ties as in Latour’s Actor-Network Theory or in DeLanda’s rhizomic (and Deleuzian) notion of organismic interconnections are expressing approaches which match the way business or scientific corporations appear to operate (see Bourdieu , Kapferer). This does not deny the potential sociological value of these perspectives in the same way as those analytical orientations born in the high modernist period of the nation-state (such as those of Durkheim, Marx and Weber) continue to throw
major insight on contemporary matters. Theories are able to transcend the historical circumstances of their construction but nonetheless express in their own conceptual abstractions dimensions of the realities upon which they claim objective or realist reflection.

A frequent observation underlying state formation in modernist and post-modern times is the emphasis on individualism linked to a growing economic determinism. Polanyi (and numerous others, notably Louis Dumont in anthropology) pursued this point. This certainly appears to be the case even more so in the context of the emergence of the corporate state. Commanding rhetorics associated with business and management such as efficiency, strategy, negotiation, targets and a choice/consumerist focus lends further support. In this, and in the circumstances of the corporate state, the conception of the social and social structural process is becoming thoroughly grasped in the terms of an individualism that frequently asserts essentialisms of a biological and psychological nature that are gathered together in an overarching economistic discourse. The economic is the most inclusive in the sense that its dynamics are vital across hitherto different or relatively distinct registers of human-related action. Economic, business-management metaphors are in commanding position. Furthermore, they have been naturalized (they have achieved a truth-level more thoroughgoing than mere assumptions). Even more there has been a subtle shift (or not so subtle depending on perspective) where the economic is not at the root of the social, as it were, but IS the social. It is the lens through which the social action is to be comprehended both by scholars and I contend, among the lay public.

Polanyi argued that in the context of the Great Transformation and the development of nation-states the idea of the economic was socially disembedded. Gudeman (2009) has observed that this is so only to a point, for the contemporary context is of the re-embedding of the idea of the economic. He notes (also ) the way much sociological/anthropological theorizing embeds economic assumptions in the very production of ethnographic description so that evidence is thoroughly constructed (often in ways oblivious to analysts) to support the veracity of economistic concepts: their confirmation as universally intrinsic to the social. This has been a longstanding criticism offered by anthropologists such as Dumont and Sahlins. The extension I would make here is that the economic is not re-embedded in the social so much as the idea of the social and sociological understanding has been thoroughly reconfigured into economistic terms. This has happened elsewhere, notably in biology where varieties of economic argument become intrinsic to the description and understanding of biological and these days genetic processes (see Gould, Lewontin, Prindle, ). The ideological dimensions are so ingrained that they are not seen as such.

Insofar as there is a society of the state constituted in the circumstance of corporate state assemblage then this is thoroughly economic even though it is conceived as being thoroughly sociological. This is not a re-embedding of the economic in society as Gudeman suggests but rather an embedding of the social within the economic. It is an intensification of what Polanyi was observing, a dissolving of the economic so as to become the social.

Concluding Comments

The assemblage of the corporate state emerges from within the context of nation-states and, dependent on local contingencies, is likely to take different shapes. This discussion has been informed by North American and European experience and there is reason to suspect that some of the dimensions I have outlined are likely to be different elsewhere (e.g. see Arrighi for China). One feature of the corporate state emergence in the West is the break from Hobbesian notions of the state or else ideas concerning the social contract of the state whereby the state gained legitimacy either through its institution of society or its contract to safeguard the social. By and large these projects of the state are being abandoned, although traces remain as in the role of the state as a guardian of social morality. However, even this is being deflected to international bodies that are relatively impotent freeing those in command of the state to pursue a more egregious pragmatism. My example here is Sri Lanka where the impotence of UN humanitarian intervention was displayed in the largely state-mediated abuses against an unarmed civilian population in the closing stages of the war. In some aspects the state and its various machineries worldwide is oriented to erecting protective barriers around the instruments of state/corporate power and forcing a growing division between state-corporate-oligarchic potencies and instruments on the one side and society or the social mass on the other. The latter is in effect becoming more disenfranchised (even as they are declared more
democratized) their electoral action as well as protests achieving little to modify the political and oligarchic course of those in control of state machinery. Ross Douthat summarizes excellently the tenor of my broad discussion here, a process that is being facilitated by what I have described as the corporate state and the particular dynamic it expresses.

“This feels like a populist moment. Americans are Tea Partying. Greeks are rioting. Incumbents are being thrown out; the Federal Reserve is facing an audit; Goldman Sachs is facing prosecution. In Kentucky, Ron Paul’s son might be about to win a republican Senate primary. But look through these anti-establishment theatrics to the deep structures of political and economic power, and suddenly the surge of populism feels like so much sound and fury, obscuring the real story of our time. From Washington to Athens, the economic crisis is producing consolidation rather than revolution, the entrenchment of authority rather than its diffusion, and the concentration of power in the hands of the same elite that presided over it in the first place (New York Times, May 17, 2010).

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i I wish to thank Bjorn Bertelsen for many ideas and suggestions presented in this discussion which is a more abstract development of an article we have written together on the corporate state (see Kapferer and Bertelsen 2009).

ii I wish to thank Bjorn Bertelsen for many ideas and suggestions presented in this discussion which is a more abstract development of an article we have written together on the corporate state (see Kapferer and Bertelsen 2009).

iii An important argument for the territorializing dynamic being crucial to the state is made by Scott (1998) in his analysis of modernist state planning schemes and its effects in countries as diverse as Russia, Brazil and Tanzania. As a central element of organising, disciplining and surveillance, social redifferentiation by bureaucratic means was central to and evident in the establishment of the colonial state (cf. e.g. Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1996). The formation and production of subjectivities is also a central dynamic in a Foucauldian vision of power, state and its workings, he for instance argues that in an analysis of domination and power one should be “…showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects” (Foucault 2003 [1997]:45).

iv The concept of “war machine” suggests that it is a dynamic oriented to war. This is not what Deleuze and Guattari. War machine or, perhaps less ambiguously, rhizomic, dynamics assume warlike, annihilating properties, in their relation with state dynamics. The destructive potential of rhizomic dynamics are realized when they are confronted by the bounding, categorizing, spatializing forces of state-like dynamics. There is no essential or inherent warlike orientations of rhizomic dynamics.

v Examples and imagery of the nomad and the state is used extensively to analyse the dynamics of war machine and state. The directionality of the war machine in its nomad form against the state is central: “The was machine is that nomad invention that in fact has war not as its primary object but as its second order, supplementary or synthetic objective, in the sense that it is determined in such a way as to destroy the State-form and city-form with which it collides” (Deleuze and Guattari 2002 [1980]:418).

vi Buck-Morss (2009) has presented an interesting argument against common notions, such as that of Agamben, that democracy is given to totalitarian potential as exemplified in his discussion of the state of exception. Developing from a discussion of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right in the context of the revolutions in Haiti, Buck-Morss suggests that it is the failure of democratic forces to thoroughly democratize that lies at the root of their self-defeat. Haiti, in her argument attempted a thorough democratization that, of course, was ended by Napoleon’s intervention. More generally, she argues, the failure of democratic regimes in Europe and elsewhere is because they did not thoroughly democratize but denied or disguised the continuation of great inequities in their midst such as slavery. It is the persistence of such inequity within democratic systems that is the root of their defeat and inclination to totalitarianism. In other words, as Buck-Morss discusses for Europe, the
Enlightenment discourse while liberating in the abstract refused the enduring existence of slavery in its midst.

vii The directionality or telos of the state towards oneness and against multiplicity, concentration of power and verticality has been consistently argued by Clastres – both in terms of state and non-state societies and in the relations between ethnocide and the state (1974:105; 1998 [1974]).


ix Cf. e.g. Foucault (1991). However, in other works, especially the 1977-1978 lectures contained in Security, territory, population (2007 [2004]) Foucault expands his work on government to also encompass the political techniques and workings of the state in more detail.

x For Gramsci (1996 [1973]:52ff), the unity of the ruling groups within the context of the state, the state’s organic relations to wider societal and political institutions and arrangements and the corresponding non-unity of what he terms the subaltern classes are central elements in understanding how elite/class interests, the state and wider society are interwoven.

xi The class force of contemporary elites owes much to the British colonial period when powerful families were able to build the political and economic power by establishing themselves in imperial metropolitan centres (such as London, Paris and New York). The building of local power was expanded through their multiple locations in foreign parts. Globalization is continuing and expanding this process.

xii This manipulation of websites is often called web defacement and is a growing trend in both international political conflicts and among activists critical to for example globalization and the expansion of capitalism in what is often called cyberconflicts (Karatzogianni 2004).


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