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SUBJECT

To what extent does Weber's understanding of the state as having the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence continue to have relevance?

“The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty”¹. The very perspicacious Max Weber transposed that precept into its political analysis, acknowledging the state as the successful claimer over the monopolistic use of violence and as the respected legislator of that practice. For most of political thinkers, this legality derives from the acceptance by the population of a balance of power in favour of the state and its consecutive right to use force. However, following the twists and turns of the Weberian thoughts, the notion of legitimacy takes a different cast that has to be analyzed in order to understand better the ties between the nation and the state and its subsequent implications for the use of force in our contemporary societies.

The nationalist imperialism, characteristic of Weber political thoughts and period,² was framed by a strong European state-centred international system. At that time in Europe, the rule was the nation-state and citizens had no difficulties to develop a feeling of belonging with their state. However, after two world wars and one cold war period, the decolonization phase, the increase of globalization and privatization and a technology revolution, the context of international and national politics have certainly changed as well as the actors that compose the actual international order. It is possible that some features of what constitute the notion of state and its relations with the international order have also evolved. It is judicious to question how these exogenous parameters have influenced the magnitude of power that the state owns

¹ **Rousseau** Jean Jacques, *The Social Contract*, Chapter 3: the right of the strongest, 1762, http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm#003 (04/03/2010).

² **Kim** Sung Ho, *Max Weber's politics of civil society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.10.

nowadays. There is then a double problematic in that dissertation, that is to say the confrontation of the state's monopoly of coercion and its external environment and its legitimacy in front of internal players.

In the first part of the essay, I will argue that a state's strength depends on its ability to exercise a monopoly of coercion over the means of violence, but that the monopoly asserted by modern states is increasingly challenged by internal and external armed actors (more so by internal actors). Second, I highlight how some internal challengers of state authority (eg warlords) are being empowered by economic factors such as the evolution of the arms trade and the privatization of war, which the state struggles to respond to. Third, I argue that, despite its marketization process, the state is still the most effective entity in achieving securitisation, due to its ability to command legitimacy, especially via identity. I will finally conclude that, while the state has lost strength in front of the new threats that de-stabilize most of its functions, its role as main object of identification for individuals enables it to remain an inescapable and strong actor in international politics. Thus, despite the erosion of traditional sources of coercive capabilities, states continue to have a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence achieved via identity, in accordance with Weber's definition.

Part1: The political authority of the state and its main challenging rivals.

- **The influence of coercive means on the state strength.**

The Weberian state ideal, referring to citizens obeying to the legitimate force while rulers having at their disposal the monopoly of the use of violence³, remained a superlative for many countries in the world. Tilly goes further, considering that “no government ever gains control of all the coercive means within its territory”⁴. Only the ones that privileged capitalized coercion can today pretend to an effective military power.⁵ Yet, as Lizabeth Zack reminds us, even France, one of the most centralized states, had to wait until 1941 and the regime of Vichy to own national police force for all cities of at least 10 000 inhabitants. Numerous developing countries, or even developed countries, such as United States, never attained the almost total monopoly of the means of violence that West European States succeeded to achieve⁶.

Following that statement, Sørensen identified three types of political unit: the modern state, based on a centralized government having the monopoly of the means of coercion; the postcolonial state, which does not have that monopoly; and the postmodern state, “where there are multilevel layers of governance at the subnational and supranational levels” (as will be analyzed in the subsequent headings of that

³ **Weber Max**, *The vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2004.

⁴ **Tilly Charles**, armed force in Europe, in **Davis Diane E.**, **Pereira Anthony W.**, *Irregular armed forces and their role in politics and state formation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p.45.

⁵ **Tilly Charles**, armed force in Europe, *ibid*, p.53.

⁶ **Pereira Anthony W.**, **State formation and violence**, *ibid*, p.388.

essay).⁷ According to that distinction, postcolonial states did not witness the same evolution of military force as West European Countries, passing from private military forces to mass conscript based armies financed by the state.⁸

The Cold War played an important role in that different evolution, as armed forces of the third world and many secondary powers were dependent on one of the two super powers.⁹ Armed forces of countries within the Warsaw pact were controlled, trained and supplied by Moscow, whereas many African countries relied on Washington for their protection. Now that this patronage vanished or harshly decreased, states have difficulties “to secure the support and allegiance of their populations”.¹⁰ Moreover, for anthropological, historical or geographical reasons, the traditional governance of most developed countries did not implicate a so huge concentration of power within a central state such as Western European countries¹¹.

In democracies, armed forces are separated from and subordinated to the state and their use is subject to a strong process of authorization. Force remains a part of politics, but the state dispose of other options, such as legislative, ideological and fiscal, to manage the social life.¹² As Rosenberg explains, modes of domination differ in function of the incorporation of the population into the administrative control of the state, politically and economically. If that integration is low, as in authoritarian states, the state is dependent on and has to divide its power with the military, which can

⁷ **Hobson** John M., Bringing the State Back in, Kicking the State Back Out!: Reconstructing the Identity of the Discipline of International Relations?, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37; 437, 2002, p.438.

⁸ **Pereira** Anthony W., **State formation and violence**, *ibid*, p.389.

⁹ **Barkawi** Tarak, *Globalization and War*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2006.

¹⁰ **Rich** Paul B., *Warlords in International Relations*, MacMillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1999, p. Xi.

¹¹ **Rosenberg** Justin, A Non-Realist Theory of Sovereignty?: Giddens' The Nation-State and violence, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 19; 249, 1990.

¹² *Ibid*, p, 5

oppress the civil society.¹³ For Buzan, this institutionalization of the military emphasizes its overwhelming role for security matters and jeopardizes the primacy of the state in security affairs¹⁴. In that case, it is not anymore the state that owns the means of violence.

Furthermore, as Pereira explains, “state capacity appears to be the result of intricate, contingent, inter- and intra-institutional political bargains that are frequently renegotiated”¹⁵. It means that the monopoly of legitimate force is not stable but on the contrary is reversible, because lots of factors, as I will try to demonstrate, can influence that situation.

- **The impact of violent domestic armed actors on the state structure.**

Following the analysis of Van Creveld on the 160 armed conflicts taking place during the period 1945-1990, it appears that around 75% were “low intensity conflicts”, “rarely involving regular armies on both sides”.¹⁶ This asymmetrical relation of violence between protagonists of contemporary struggles is in opposition with forms of warfare from the early modern Europe. In fact, at the contrary of modern wars, which were fought between public institutions of organized violence, postmodern wars are performed by numerous types of actors, such as guerilla armies, foreign

¹³ **Davis** Diane E., **Pereira** Anthony W., *Irregular armed forces and their role in politics and state formation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p.10.

¹⁴ **Buzan** Barry, **Weaver** Ole and **De Wilde** Jaap, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1998.

¹⁵ **Pereira** Anthony W., **State formation and violence**, *ibid*, p.388

¹⁶ **Van Creveld** Martin, *On future war*, London: Brassey's, 1991, p.24.

mercenaries, irregular forces, local defense units, de-territorialized terrorist network, and so on.¹⁷

The lethal violence is easier to administer for these non official actors, for several reasons: First of all, because there is no legal regulation of these conflicts. And secondly because the transport of people, information and goods as well as the reduction of the costs of communication between combatants and their supporters, have been facilitated by the phenomenon of “globalization”.¹⁸ For Munkler, these changes in the mode and location of the use of force have rendered the civilian population and infrastructures the crucial resources of the war.¹⁹ Consequently, this new type of warfare has destroyed the monopoly of war detained by official soldiers.

For Weber, the modern state kept all the material resources of organization in the hands of its leaders, expropriating the control of “autonomous officials of the estates”²⁰. However, social conditions and the composition of armed forces differ nowadays in many countries in the world from the ones in Western countries. In weak states, members of the army remain loyal to their leaders, often on the basis of kinship, ethnicity, religion or other ties,²¹ eventually across boundaries.

It is important to underline that Great powers, such as the United States, have played a role in the strength of certain irregular forces. The Pashtun militias in Afghanistan,

¹⁷ **Latham** Andrew, Warfare Transformed: A Braudelien Perspective on the `Revolution in Military Affairs', *European Journal of International Relations*, 8; 231, 2002, p.257.

¹⁸ **Pereira** Anthony W., state formation and violence in **Davis** Diane E., **Pereira** Anthony W., *Irregular armed forces and their role in politics and state formation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p.392.

¹⁹ **Munkler** Herfried, *the new wars*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.108.

²⁰ **Weber Max**, *The vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2004.

²¹ **Pereira** Anthony W., *ibid*, p.398.

the Kosovar Liberation Army in Kosovo or the Kurdish resistance fighters during the desert storm operation have obtained a US sustainment that undermined sovereignty of particular states.²²

The great majority of the contemporary literature dealing with the state coercive ownership focuses on the warlord phenomenon. Some authors consider it quite threatening, as it proposes a substitute to citizenship²³. It could also reflect the fracturing of many sovereign state structures.²⁴ For other authors, warlordism is a marginal phenomenon, being confined in peripheral regions of the international system, in states too weak to create a strong allegiance. They intend only a limited ideology and identity affiliations²⁵ and then command only on the basis of their personal prestige and ability to secure benefits for their followers on the local level. Moreover, as Reno judiciously asserts, “it is safer to be associated with those with guns rather than be a victim of the same”²⁶; it can be considered then only as a temporary affiliation, for interests or survival, not a real threat for the state.

Drug barons represent another category of internal actors threatening the state’s monopoly of coercive means. In fact, even if barons need the state to facilitate and disguise their own international trade and will not develop a political organization,²⁷ they however secure their business through the use of force. The best example is

²² **Pereira** Anthony W., *ibid*, p.393.

²³ **Chan** Stephen, **The warlord and global order** in **Rich** Paul B., *Warlords in International Relations*, MacMillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1999, p.164.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.1.

²⁵ **Rich** Paul B., *Warlords in International Relations*, MacMillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1999, p. XII.

²⁶ **Reno William**, *Warfare and State-Building in Africa*, in **Davis** Diane E., *ibid*, p.340.

²⁷ **Chan** Stephen, *ibid*, p.167.

embodied by Columbia, which have to face an escalation of violence, including an increased guerilla, paramilitary, and narco-traffickers activities.²⁸ In other words, the local militaries facing drug barons are not capable to maintain sovereignty over their own state.²⁹ As I will demonstrate it, some solutions are provided by the supranational level.

- **The supranational dimension and the strengthening of the state system.**

As Kaldor highlights it, new international or regional organizations have been created; they enable an internationalization of the military sector, as for example through NATO forces or the UN “blue helmets”. A supra-nationalization of military forces is also possible, as demonstrate it the Western European Union intergovernmental defence organization.³⁰ This internationalization is due to a new range of threats, such as the transnational crime organizations, that require a better cooperation between states, within a “broader structure of security governance”.³¹ The Weber understanding of the state “regarded as the sole source of “right” to use violence “³² is then not anymore topical.

Furthermore, it is the very phenomenon of economic globalization that jeopardizes the state’s monopoly over the use of force. In fact, the economic interdependence of states limit the legitimacy of unilateral use of force as it could have negative

²⁸ **Pereira** Anthony W., *ibid*, p.398.

²⁹ **Singer** P.W., *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, Cornell University Press, 2003, p.52.

³⁰ **Kaldor** Mary, *New and Old Wars: Organized violence in a global era*, 1999, p.139.

³¹ **Holmqvist** Caroline, *Private Security Companies: The Case for Regulation*, *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Policy Paper No. 9*, 2005.

³² **Weber Max**, *The vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2004, p.33.

repercussions for partners³³. For Hardt & Negri, the use of the means of violence is now seen in a global and systemic approach and has generally been legitimized within a “supranational legal political structure”, as the United Nations.³⁴

However, international commitments for the practice of war activities are not new. For example, the 1856 Declaration of Paris uniformed certain laws of neutrality and the 1909 Declaration of London codified principles of neutrality concerning the law of the sea. For Rosen, “the neutrality laws provided the state with a domestic legal instrument for making a claim allowing the state to have a monopoly on war-making activities”³⁵. Then, even if the international legal system evolved toward a deeper political integration, the states remain commanders of the army, as all these forces are still organized on a national basis.³⁶

To summarize, while western modern state represent the most achieved form of control over the means of violence and is even strengthened by the supranational dimension, most of developing countries face internal problems that challenge their political authority. As will be now argued, economical factors amplify that development.

³³ **Reis** Elisa P., The Lasting Marriage between Nation and State Despite Globalization, *International Political Science Review*, 25; 251, 2004, p.254.

³⁴ **Hardt**, Michael & Antonio **Negri**, 2004. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, London: Penguin, p.30.

³⁵ **Rosen** Frederik, Commercial Security: Conditions of Growth, *Security Dialogue* vol. 39, no. 1, February 2008, p.89.

³⁶ **Wulf** Herbert, *The bumpy road to re-establish a monopoly of violence*, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Publications/HumanSecurityReport/Wulfdraft.pdf> (04/03/2010), p.5.

Part 2: The impact of economical factors on state's strength

- **The privatization of war.**

The use of private military force (PMF) does not necessarily undermine state capacities. On the contrary, numerous operations involving PMFs aimed at restoring an efficient centralized state. For example, in her study of the use of private security companies (PSC) by the Croatian Government, Avant emphasizes the improvement in the control of force that Croatia could get thanks to the PRMI Corporation.³⁷ For her, weak states are initially limited in their capacities and thanks to PSCs, they can obtain “short-run functional gains”³⁸ As demonstrate the war archive data trends of Hamburg University and others, the number of civil wars, after having increased in the first years after the end of the cold war, has finally stabilized and then decreased to a lower level than in the past fifty years³⁹.

However, for Rich, it is the increasing state incapacity to impose its authority and provide security that created a vacuum profitable for the implementation of private security companies.⁴⁰ For other scholars, it is more the end of the cold war that created a “security gap”. Helped by the “privatization revolution”, a new market is born for what previously was the state domain. After 1989, the demilitarization of many soldiers increased the supply of the market. The withdrawal of the superpowers

³⁷ **Avant**, Deborah, *The Market for force: The Consequences of privatising security*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.113.

³⁸ **Avant** Deborah, *Ibid*, p.81.

³⁹ **Newmann** Edward, *The 'New Wars' Debate: A Historical Perspective is Needed*, Security Dialogue, 35; 173, 2004, p. 180.

⁴⁰ **Cooper** Neil, the Arms trade and internal Conflict in **Rich** Paul B., *Warlords in International Relations*, MacMillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1999, p.23.

from their sphere of interests weakened many already fragile states⁴¹ politically and economically and diminished their possibilities of local military response. It is also the change “in the nature of warfare itself that influence this trend, with global threats more proficient and varied, while “traditional responses to insecurity were at their weakest.”⁴²

“Between 1994 and 2002, the US Department of Defense entered into over three thousand contracts for a total value of around \$300 billion with private military companies.”⁴³ This tendency is part of what Kaldor describes as the new wars, that is to say privatized wars, in which the distinction between public and private actors and political or economic interests is not easy.⁴⁴ This vague distinction between private and public actors logically creates problems of accountability and undermines directly the state ownership over the means of violence. In fact, PMCs largely benefitted from the extension of arms trade after the end of the cold war.

- **The arms trade.**

After 1989, millions of light weapons (grenades, machine guns, rifles, etc) flooded the world market, without any governmental regulation, and ended in the hands of arms brokers and gunrunners⁴⁵. That huge offer reduced the price of light weapons, which became the weapons most often used in warfare. Thus, what was primary the prerogative of the state is now out of state control.

⁴¹ **Rosen** Frederik, *Commercial Security: Conditions of Growth*, Security Dialogue vol. 39, no. 1, February 2008, p.78.

⁴² **Singer** P.W., *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, Cornell University Press, 2003, p.49.

⁴³ **Barkawi** Tarak, *Globalization and War*, ibid, p.45.

⁴⁴ **Kaldor** Mary, *New and Old Wars: Organized violence in a global era*, ibid, p.2.

⁴⁵ **Singer** P.W., ibid, p.54.

Nevertheless, there is not a direct correlation between the huge availability of arms and the exacerbation of internal conflict. As Cooper explains it, “it is not the gun that is important in explaining war but the finger on the trigger”; that is to say the policy intentions of the actors determine events.⁴⁶ Otherwise, the USA would have known many civil wars. Nevertheless, “the proliferation of arms within the weak state is more likely to produce acute versions of the security dilemma than it is to produce stable deterrence, making conflict more and not less likely”.⁴⁷ As we will examine, economic interests can even worsen that tendency.

- **economic interests that weaken the state authority.**

For Tilly, Western countries are characterized by the monopoly of force, maintained by a monopoly of taxation (thanks also to the use of credit) and concentrated in the hands of a central authority.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, in most of developing countries, “less-intense war-making resulted in much smaller levels of taxation and conscription, creating states that were weaker, less able to monopolize the means of coercion”⁴⁹.

Consequently, after the cold war, many states which were dependent on external support to maintain their fragile economy, could hardly preserve a social cohesion, a strong state authority and then their monopoly on the means of coercion.⁵⁰

Moreover, because of the process of globalization which created open war economies, because of the availability of low-priced combatants and light weapons,

⁴⁶ **Cooper** Neil, the Arms trade and internal Conflict, in **Rich** Paul B., *ibid*, p.26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.28.

⁴⁸ **Tilly** Charles, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, Malden, Blackwell Publishers, 1990, p.85.

⁴⁹ **Davis** Diane E., **Pereira** Anthony W., *Irregular armed forces, ibid., p.389*.

⁵⁰ **Singer** P.W., *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, *ibid*, p. 50.

new wars have become cheaper and are now lucrative for many participants.⁵¹ In fact, “Warlords and militias leaders exploit the present at the expense of the future” as short term costs are inferior to the interests generated by the use of force, whereas long term costs are borne by others.⁵²

These transnational entrepreneurs are independent from the state tax collection system and use war as a commodity. As Collier highlights, the risk of civil war is strongly correlated to a few economic factors, such as the availability of resources (like diamonds in Sierra Leone), whereas social grievances have no systematic effects on risks of war.⁵³ Consequently, for many actors, war became an end and not anymore a means, and black economy became a huge source of funding for irregular forces. A 2\$ billion diamond trade enable the rebel UNITA group in Angola to invest in a mechanized army⁵⁴; Columbian guerilla’s income with drug trade are estimated \$800 million a year⁵⁵. Warlords have then emancipated themselves from the specific social and economic structures to which they used to be tied and their presence correlate the progressive disintegration of the state.

However, “while the state has lost much of its power to regulate its own internal economy, it has acquired a new importance as a support of the transnational financial, commodity, labor, and capital markets.”⁵⁶ In fact, these transnational

⁵¹ **Munkler** Herfried, *the new wars*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.98.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.92.

⁵³ **Collier** Paul, **Hoeffler** Anke, Greed and grievances in civil war, *Policy research Working Paper, The World Bank Development Research Group*, May 2000, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTKNOWLEDGEFORCHANGE/Resources/491519-1199818447826/multi_page2355.pdf , p.5 (04/03/2010).

⁵⁴ **Singer** P.W., *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, *ibid*, p. 61.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.65.

⁵⁶ **Turner** Terence, The contradiction of “globalization, in **Friedman** Jonathan, *Globalization, the state, and violence*, Altamira Press, Oxford, 2003, p.48.

movements enhanced economical differences between states and the importance of their boundaries that preserve the successful ones from the others.

To summarize, despite some endemic problems linked to the privatization of war, such as the one of accountability, there is no direct correlation between the development of a private defence market, the democratization of light weapons and the weakening of state authority. Nevertheless, internal challengers over the political authority of developing state are reinforced by the economic globalization and have interest in perpetuating chaos. Yet, as we will now analyze, the social capacity of the state represent a good defence against that new threats.

Part 3: The state efficiency in the process of legitimizing violence.

- **the process of securitization and legitimating violence.**

For Barker, “legitimacy is the belief in the rightfulness of a state, in its authority to issue commands, so that those commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self-interest, but because they are believed in some sense to have moral authority”.⁵⁷

This definition is in phase with what Max Weber considered the foreground of legitimacy, that is to say: the legal supremacy which derives from the procedural rules and the belief in the legality of law; the traditional domination, that refers to the prescriptive law (custom and precedent); the charismatic power of the leader that

⁵⁷ **Barker** Rodney, *Political Legitimacy and the State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p.11.

ensure him binding force for his policies and norms.⁵⁸ Thus, apart from the normative criteria, the subjective disposition of the citizens to accept the authority of a state is primordial.⁵⁹

It is that subjective dimension that allows Buzan to consider the state as the primary and durable referent object and the ideal security actor for the securitization of military matters.⁶⁰ One of the reasons he invokes to justify that logic is that limited collectivities strengthen easily their “we-feeling”, engaging in rivalries against other limited collectivities (state or nations).⁶¹ Therefore, it is easier to obtain a shared understanding of a threat inside of a state, generally in term of preservation of an identity or of a state sovereignty, in order to legitimize the use of force.⁶² The notion of nation and state as referent objects remain quite distinct and Buzan emphasizes the fact that other social movements or institutions than the state can securitize, then legitimize the use of violence⁶³. But the state remains the most powerful one.

Nevertheless, Beck interprets the actual “war on terror” as “fundamentally determined by the global mega-power of the state against which it is aimed”.⁶⁴ In other words, terrorism, interpreted in the first part of the essay as an example of transnational actors that undermine the state monopoly of the means of violence, is, for Beck, only an enemy-image created by the state in order to open new strategic military

⁵⁸ **Mommsen** Wolfgang J., *The political and social theory of Max Weber*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2004, p.21.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ **Buzan** Barry, **Weaver** Ole and **De Wilde** Jaap, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1998, pp.23 & 36.

⁶¹ **Buzan** Barry and **Waever** Ole, Macrosecuritisation and security constellations: reconsidering scale in securitisation theory, *Review of International Studies*, 35, 2009, p.255.

⁶² **Mc Donald** Matt, Securitization and the Construction of Security, *European Journal of International Relations*, 14; 563, 2008, p.569.

⁶³ **Buzan** Barry, **Weaver** Ole and **De Wilde** Jaap, *ibid*, pp.36 & 37.

⁶⁴ **Beck** Ulrich, War Is Peace: On Post-National War, *Security Dialogue* 36(1): 5–26, 2005, p.23.

options.⁶⁵ It then reinforces the position of the state into the international order and its capacity to model physically and mentally the political map of the world. In opposition to that statement, Rosen highlights the narrower differentiation between civilian and criminal and the consequent loss for the nation-states and boundaries of their functions to determine the notions of friend and enemy⁶⁶.

For Beetham, Weber was conscious that mass demagoguery could become a distinctive device of the military dictatorships, as he assumed most of the nations were during the world war⁶⁷. Some authors, as Van Ferber⁶⁸, believe that for Max Weber, “the readiness to use physical force contained a “value of its own”, a legitimating power”, as the “right of the stronger” provided him with an inner justification for political action”. This “Machtstaat” (Great Power state) policy and the possibilities of the external use of the means of violence that this theorization enables,⁶⁹ is very near to the contemporaneous Mearsheimer offensive realism. While “Weber regarded a vigorous external policy as the best form of national defence” because of the configuration of international relations in that period⁷⁰, Mearsheimer analyzes the current international system as favouring aggressive behaviour : “States are disposed to think offensively toward other states even though their ultimate motive is simply to survive.”⁷¹ In fact, for contemporary realists, from Waltz to Hedley Bull, the State remains the primary entity, disposing of the physical violence to face the anarchical international order.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.24.

⁶⁶ **Rosen** Frederik, Commercial Security: Conditions of Growth, *Security Dialogue* vol. 39, no. 1, February 2008, p. 87.

⁶⁷ **Beetham** David, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1974, p.105.

⁶⁸ **Von Ferber** Christian, *Die Gewalt in der Politik* (Stuttgart, 1970), p.53, in **Beetham** David, *ibid*, p.132.

⁶⁹ **Beetham**, *ibid*, p.133.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷¹ **Mearsheimer** John J., *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2001, p.34..

- **The marketization of the state.**

For Reis, there is an evolution in the monopolist position of the state to manage identity and solidarity, a separation between state authority and solidarity.⁷² For him, the state is today equated to a market and the citizen to a customer which revolves to privatized public functions if he is not satisfied with the state allowances. That tendency is proved by the rise of the private security companies all around the globe in the last two decades. In United States, it exists more than 20 000 “gated communities”. “In South Africa, the ratio of private security personnel to uniformed police officers is approximately four to one” while two to one in United Kingdom and Australia.⁷³ On the other hand, as Ian Taylor points out, the “fear of crime” is one of the (worst) motivations that can renew the state- community partnership.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the state is pervaded by a variety of armed actors that provide alternative guarantee of security and, in some weak states, challenge the monopoly of force⁷⁵. For Sampson, that trend is also due to the “criminalization of the state”, including “corruption, privatization of state function and other behavior carried out by state functionaries.”⁷⁶ In fact, many African leaders, afraid to quit their functions in violent conditions as most of the continent’s rulers, have developed alternative centers of coercive powers.⁷⁷ For example, “Liberian president Charles Taylor spent

⁷² **Reis** Elisa P., The Lasting Marriage between Nation and State Despite Globalization, *International Political Science Review*, 25; 251, 2004, p.253.

⁷³ **Singer** P.W., *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry*, *ibid*, p.69.

⁷⁴ **Newmann** Edward, The ‘New Wars’ Debate: A Historical Perspective is Needed, *Security Dialogue*, 35; 173, 2004, p. 141.

⁷⁵ **Rich** Paul B., *Warlords in International Relations*, *ibid*, p.32.

⁷⁶ **Sampson** Steven, trouble spots in **Friedman** Jonathan, *Globalization, the state, and violence*, Altamira Press, Oxford, 2003, p.325.

⁷⁷ **Reno** William, Warfare and State Building in Africa, in **Davis** Diane E., **Pereira** Anthony W., *ibid*, p 324.

in 1999 an estimated 75 percent of Liberia's official budget on agencies primarily responsible for his personal security"⁷⁸, included the famous Charlie's angels.

- **identity evolution.**

Numerous scholars invoke the existence of new wars. Nagengast wrote that "since 1945, state-sponsored violence toward ethnic and political groups has caused more deaths, injuries, and general human suffering than all other forms of deadly conflict, including international wars and colonial and civil wars"⁷⁹. The mobilization of people for violent purposes, towards political ends, advents thanks to ethnic or religious identity.⁸⁰

As Wieviorka points out, there are two types of identities, the traditional ones that are ruined by the modernization and globalization and generate resistance for their survival⁸¹. The modern ones, that "are produced far more than reproduce, an invention than a tradition", creating new collective identities.⁸² This theory meets the one of Huntington⁸³, for who "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural". The interest of Huntington's analysis for our purpose is the prospect of the globalization of identities, the possibility to create new sentiments of belongings to new groups, such as Al Qaeda, across state boundaries. Nevertheless, as Barkawi (and Amartya Sen) underline, Huntington misses the "fluidity of identity" and "the power of discourse" to generate the use of

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ **Nagengast** Carole, Violence, Terror, and the Crisis of the State, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, pp. 109-136, Vol. 23, 1994, p. 126.

⁸⁰ **Wieviorka** Michel, the new paradigm of violence, in **Friedman** Jonathan, *Globalization, the state, and violence*, Altamira Press, Oxford, 2003, p.109

⁸¹ Ibid, p.132.

⁸² Ibid, p.110.

⁸³ **Huntington** Samuel P., The Clash of Civilizations, *Foreign Affairs* 72:3, 22-50, 1993, p.22..

violence.⁸⁴ Indeed, it seems that conflicts shape and radicalize identities, refashion cultures, emphasizing the self-consciousness of individuals.⁸⁵ War is a crucial moment to depict the figure of the enemy.

Even more remarkable is the parallel between Weber's fear of general bureaucratization and the Foucault's analysis of power, for which sovereignty is today a less relevant model of power than the one of governance.⁸⁶ He emphasizes the fact that nowadays, the decision-makers for the use of violence are all functionaries having certain interests, no matter if they belong to a state, a supranational institution or a corporation.⁸⁷ The means of violence are then in the hands of individuals which interests do not obligatory belong to the state, as demonstrate it Dick Cheney's case in the Bush administration.⁸⁸ In opposition to that understanding, Giddens understand the move from traditional to modern state as an enhancement of administrative power that intensify the state capabilities for "the elaboration of codes of conduct enforceable beyond its own apparatus and the maintenance of a dominant capacity for violent sanctions."⁸⁹

⁸⁴ **Barkawi** Tarak, *Globalization and War*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2006, p.143.

⁸⁵ **Comaroff** John, quoted in Barkawi Tarak, *ibid*, p.143.

⁸⁶ **Jabri** Vivienne, War, Security and the Liberal State, *Security Dialogue*, 37; 47, 2006, p.58.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸⁸ **Murphy** Jarrett, *Cheney's Halliburton Ties Remain*, Washington, CBSnews, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/09/26/politics/main575356.shtml> (28/02/10).

⁸⁹ **Rosenberg** Justin, A Non-Realist Theory of Sovereignty?: Giddens' The Nation-State and violence, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 19; 249, 1990, p.4.

Conclusion

For Max Weber, the “Machtpolitik” was essential to ensure nation survival from external and internal threat⁹⁰. He went even further, considering national honour, the character, the quality and the possibilities of culture linked to coercive power of the nation and influencing positively the life and values inside the nation.⁹¹

Yet, as I have demonstrated, total monopoly over the means of violence is utopian. The western modern state represents the most achieved form of control over the means of violence, while developing countries face several problems to achieve that control. This is due in particular to the end of the cold war and the end of sustainment from the superpowers, but also the different modes of governance developing countries achieve.

Broadly, subnational menaces are successful in weakening the state strength.

Warlordism is a real threat for developing countries, and indirectly for developed countries, as it represents an alternative and autonomous form of citizenship; it is the product of globalization, in phase with the marketization of the state and the consumer society. In fact, economical factors, such as the vigorous black economy or the prolific arms trade, boost its potential of harmfulness.

Privatization of war represents today a big market of what was previously a state domain. It narrows the difference between public and private domains. However, it is not a competitor against the state authority and can even increase its capacity, as

⁹⁰ **Dronberger** Ilse, *The political thought of Max Weber: In Quest of Statesmanship*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Meredith Corporation, 1971, p.271.

⁹¹ **Weber Max**, *The vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2004.

PMRI did in Croatia. But it increases the risk of state destabilization and contributes to the erosion of state monopoly over the means of coercion.

I finally revealed that the Weber understanding of legitimacy outline a strong relationship between the state and its citizenship. This process of identification with the state create a “we-feeling” powerful enough to maintain a strong state authority and integrity in front of these new threats.

The international order, still based on a state system, legalizes and reinforces the state strength. Thus, despite the erosion of traditional sources of coercive capabilities, states continue to have a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence – so Weber’s understanding continues to have relevance, albeit in a new way. Nevertheless, I want to stress the fact that the marketization of the state is a big threat, as it destroys the solidarity and communitarian feelings. With the privatization and the erosion of social cohesion, state could become an empty shell without real strength. “Of all things human the most precarious and transitory is a reputation for power which has no strong support of its own.”⁹²

⁹²**Tacitus** Publius Cornelius, *Annals (Ab excessu divi Augusti)*, 109 A.C.E., <http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.9.xiii.html> (03/03/2010).

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