

Private Authority, Corporate Power and Political Science [First Draft – Do not cite]

Terry Hathaway, University of York

Contemporary Political Science emerged from a particular historical (and geographical) juncture in the 20th Century where the state was the predominant regulating factor in social life and which, ostensibly, acted in the interests of the public. Reflecting this particular period, political scientists (Dahl, most influentially) assumed that they could understand the operation of power through the operation of the state – that nominally democratic government was the undisputable (and perhaps only) centre of power and that by understanding influence over decision-making at this level they were understanding power. Hence the definition of political science as the "discipline of the state" (Goodin, 2009).

International Relations reinforced this focus on the state, with Realist thinkers of the post-war era adopting a reductionist understanding of the international system. While the understanding of international system as a system of states has been challenged in many and various ways, the dominance of Realist thought make it the centre of gravity for IR and IR-related sub-disciplines. While globalisation and the seeming proliferation of "sub-state actors" challenged the centrality of a state-state international system and also saw the growth of disciplines such as International Political Economy (Berger, 2000; Cutler et al., 1999), yet the centreground remains (not least due to the centrality of orthodox IR to University pedagogy). Insofar as other actors are considered, they are considered in their relationship and dependence upon states – indeed, the language of "sub-state" or "non-state" actors seeks to define different organisations by what they are not, rather than what they are, while also obscuring the heterogeneity of states.

This divide was reinforced by the emergence of other disciplines, most notably economics. As political scientists sought to narrow the scope of their inquiry to the state, economists sought to monopolise the study of the economy; rendering asunder the pre-discipline of classical political economy. This monopolisation was a conscious project of both Leon Walras and William Stanley Jevons, who sought the trappings of scientific authority by, among other things¹, having a clearly defined topic of study. With disciplinary boundaries set, the assumption was of having divided the domain of power (political science) from the domain of free and fair exchange (economics), which had the effect of obscuring powerful economic actors.

Such disciplinary assumptions are founded upon a worldview, and a set of assumptions, inherited from liberalism as a historic ideology. Walzer (1984) outlines these assumptions

"[Before liberalism] society was conceived as an organic and integrated whole. It might be viewed under the aspect of religion, or politics, or economy, or family, but all these interpenetrated one another and constituted a single reality. Church and state, church-state and university, civil society and political community, dynasty and government, office and property, public life and private life, home and shop: each pair was, mysteriously or unmysteriously, two-in-one, inseparable. Confronting this world, liberal theorists preached and practiced an art of separation. They drew lines, marked off different realms, and created the sociopolitical map with which we are still familiar. The

¹ Piketty (2014, p. 32), reflecting on attempts toward scientific authority in economics, wrote 'To put it bluntly, the discipline of economics has yet to get over its childish passion for mathematics and for purely theoretical and often highly ideological speculation, at the expense of historical research and collaboration with the other social sciences'

most famous line is the "wall" between church and state, but there are many others. Liberalism is a world of walls, and each one creates a new liberty. This is the way the art of separation works. The wall between church and state creates a sphere of religious activity, of public and private worship, congregations and consciences, into which politicians and bureaucrats may not intrude."

These walls are what facilitated the disciplinisation of the social sciences; from the divisions imposed by liberalism disciplinary projects sprang. Moran (2006) links these ideas – liberalism and disciplinarity – in a different way

"Disciplinarity – the systematisation of knowledge into discrete, specialised, hierarchical domains – was strengthened in the Enlightenment, both by the emergence of modern scientific specialisms, and by the Enlightenment mania for the classification and codification of knowledge into encyclopedic systems."

As Walzer notes, the desire to divide the world into discrete spheres was born of a normative desire to have such walls in order to allow freedom. For example, there was a desire to have the church and state as separate in the real world (as was built into the US Constitution), and so liberals created an ideology where they were separate. Liberal idealists built these walls to allow democratic government, private religious beliefs, and free and functioning markets, which serve also to constitute the basis for political science, theology and economics as disciplines.²

However, wanting a separation and there being a fundamental separation are two different things. While the liberal project was undoubtedly successful in realising its aims – witness the decline in the institutional political power of Christianity in Europe – it provided a warped optic for the understanding of power within society. That is to say, liberalism's walls were successful normative devices, but had an enduring negative analytic effect. Still to this day, religious groups and ideas hold substantial power – Islam, for instance, not only effects domestic politics in many countries, but it also presents a challenge to the centrality of states as it has a constitutive role in a unified transnational Islamic identity represented in the concept of the *umma* (Sheikh, 2016) – yet, in both Political Science and International Relations³, the power of such groups is still understood in relation to states and the state system. As such, substantial power to shape "who gets what, when, how" (Laswell, 1936) is held by actors other than the state and operates inside, through and beyond the state, but whose power is obscured by liberal walls.

Power and Authority

² Horwitz (1982), writing from a legal perspective, similarly writes "What were the concerns that created a virtual obsession with separating public and private law, both conceptually and practically, during the nineteenth century? Above all was the effort of orthodox judges and jurists to create a legal science that would sharply separate law from politics. By creating a neutral and apolitical system of legal doctrine and legal reasoning free from what was thought to be the dangerous and unstable redistributive tendencies of democratic politics, legal thinkers hoped to temper the problem of "tyranny of the majority." Just as nineteenth-century political economy elevated the market to the status of the paramount institution for distributing rewards on a supposedly neutral and apolitical basis, so too private law came to be understood as a neutral system for facilitating voluntary market transactions and vindicating injuries to private rights. The hostility to statutes expressed by nineteenth-century judges and legal thinkers reflected the view that state regulation of private relations was a dangerous and unnatural public intrusion into a system based on private rights."

³ Mandaville writes that "By locating "the political" within the state, conventional IR theory reproduces a set of political structures unsuited to circumstances in which political identities and processes configure themselves across and between forms of political community."

At the same time as working to define itself as the discipline of state, political science worked to produce definitions of power that could guide its understanding of the state (Haugaard, 2015). This process, famously, resulted in the Community Power, or Faces of Power, debates, which outlined three dimensions of power. Recounted briefly here, the first dimension of power, Dahl defined as when “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” Bachrach and Baratz, adopting Dahl’s language, added a second dimension arguing that:

“[P]ower is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A’s set of preferences.”

Lukes (1974, p. 23), again following Dahl’s format, characterised the third dimension thus:

“A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have – that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?”

In quick summation, the three faces of power concern decision-making and coercion, agenda-setting and ideational manipulation.

Yet, this schema of power concerns power as domination – that is, they are a joint conception of power *over*. This view of power necessarily conceives of power as a negative social phenomena. Yet power is also productive, sometimes necessary and can be positive for society. Power enables individuals to live free from the fear of other individuals (one powerful individual could protect another from murder, for instance). Equally, power allows the realisation of goals that are in the collective self-interest, but may not be in an individual’s interest.

Furthermore, due to the focus on power over, the faces of power are concerned only so much with the power of actors. This aspect of the faces of power is problematic, as its focus becomes the exercise of power, rather than just the possession of it – it misses the structural empowerment of actors.⁴ Taking the second dimension quote again, if power can work through “institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process” why must we limit power to only when actors seek to create or reinforce these practices? If the result is the continued realisation of interests, then we’re talking about power – actors can be structurally empowered, as well as being powerful (Hathaway, 2016).

Building on this view of power, authority is regularised, and generally non-disrupted, power. In this view, authority is power that is (mostly) unquestioned and exists over a significant period of time. An authoritative actor is one whose words, actions, and decisions constitute the rules for a certain constituency in circumstances whereby the actor regularly goes unchallenged – authority serves to create relationships of dominance and rules of dominance (Beetham, 1991, p. 49). To realise one’s interests in one particular place and time is not the same as having authority, it is only as power accretes and becomes established over time that authority hardens. Equally, a person can be an authority, but not possess authority – they can be institutionally empowered, but unable to enact that power. Take, for example, a weak king.

⁴ Lukes specifically rejects the notion of power being structural.

They may well be an authority figure, but not authoritative – their decisions could be ignored as power lies elsewhere. Authority, like power, can be fleeting.

Also like power, authority need not be viewed as purely an oppressive force. Authority can, for example, facilitate the operation of mass societies by offering binding decisions in disputes. Authority in the classroom, for another example, allows the creation of more productive learning environments than would necessarily be possible in. Of course, in both these examples, authority can work against the operation of mass societies and the creation of good learning environments, but the point remains that it does not necessarily have to – authority can be a positive force.

Many definitions of authority seek to differentiate it from power by involving the notion of legitimacy (Scott, 2012, George,) – that is, authority is legitimate power. Yet, a three-dimensional view of power warns against such an approach as legitimacy could simply be a product of ideational manipulation; legitimacy could well be an after-effect of power, rather than a standard by which we can judge power. Indeed, the diversity of understandings of legitimacy around the world, and the congruence of these understandings of legitimacy with the status quo power structure, lends credence to this view (Beetham, 1991, p. 9). As such, a discussion of the legitimacy of authority and power of different actors is not included in this paper.

Finally, the evaluation of power and authority should not be zero-sum or definitive. Authority can overlap and there can be multiple centres of power. While we may, through a final analysis, seek to judge who of two powerful actors would prevail in a direct conflict (who is more powerful), oftentimes the trick to maintaining power is not undermining your own base of power through conflict with other powerful competitors. Pyrrhic victories should not be used as an arbiter of power.

Private Authority Actors

While the distinction between private and public spheres is a historical-normative construct, making such a distinction in terms of “private authority actors” is useful in that it facilitates a discussion of the role of these actors using currently existing ideational language. Simply put, a private authority actor is an actor who operates with regularised power is not subject to public oversight and who works primarily to follow their own interests. These two criteria – public oversight and own interests – do not provide a hard and fast distinction between public and private authority, as public oversight, in particular, is not a binary notion. Yet, they do draw attention to several important actors who have been neglected in contemporary scholarship.

What’s interesting and important about this definition is that it actually doesn’t separate states from other actors. States can well be private authority actors depending on their institutional organisation and actions; kleptocratic governments who “implement highly inefficient economic policies, expropriate the wealth of their citizens, and use the proceeds for their own glorification or consumption” (Acemoglu et al., 2004) could well be considered private authority actors. Similarly, monarchies – where rule is determined by familial bonds – could well be considered private authority actors, as one of the main liberal idealist walls between public and private was the family.

In fact, despite the insistence of orthodox IR, there isn’t even a clear cut off point between states and other actors. Not only do states vary hugely in their power and in their capacities – Luxembourg and China are fundamentally different actors – but the boundaries of what constitutes a state is not well-defined. Islamic State, for instance, controls territory, seeks to provide social services and has crafted an ideology of legitimate authority. As Cronin (2016) writes “If ISIS is purely and simply anything, it is a pseudo-state led by a conventional army.”

Yet, Islamic State primarily remains classified, and understood, as a terrorist group – as a non-state actor – because it lacks the formalistic trappings of established states (and because political actors are unwilling to risk legitimating the group). Indeed, even Weber – who provided the classic definition of the modern state as the body that “claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force” – recognised the distributed nature of permitted force in feudal societies (Weber, 1946).⁵ Claiming that the state occupied the monopoly on the legitimate use of force was more an empirical observation of a particular point in time, rather than an eternal feature of a state. Put another way, “the extent to which the state has a monopoly of physical force and the extent to which the use of force is legitimate are variables, not elements of a definition” (Levi, 2002, p. 40)

There are many and various private authority actors in the world today, with various bases of their power. The Catholic Church is perhaps the most powerful single religious private authority actor. On a crass basis, it has 1.2 billion followers, with particular dominance in Latin American countries, and owns billions of euros worth of assets. The Pope himself has a huge public profile, being ranked as the fourth most powerful person in the world by Forbes (2016a), and the position carries with it a transnational moral authority. The Catholic Church is also involved in the running and administration of the largest non-government education system in the world, which educates 48 million students (Engelbreton, 2014). Its annual spending in the US alone has been estimated at \$170 billion (The Economist, 2012). Yet all this power of the Catholic Church does not inhere in its control of a 44-hectare, 842-people-strong state.⁶

Another powerful type of private authority actor are transnational criminal networks. For example, the Mexican cartels are hugely powerful actors. Together, the cartels were estimated to make between “\$17 billion to \$38 billion annually in gross wholesale proceeds from drug sales in the United States” by the (now defunct) National Drug Intelligence Centre in 2009 (Mallory, 2011 p.69). The largest cartel group, the Sinoloa cartel, alone is reported to control, and grow drugs in, an area larger than Costa Rica (De Llano, 2015). Before his (second) arrest, (second) escape and re-arrest, the leader of Sinoloa cartel, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, was estimated to have a personal fortune of \$1 billion and was ranked as the 63rd most powerful person in the world by Forbes (Forbes, 2016b).

Likewise, the Colombian cartels, before being supplanted by the Mexican cartels, were massively powerful. Pablo Escobar’s Medellín cartel, at the height of its power, was earning so much money that Escobar offered to pay off the entire Colombian national debt (Naim, 2010, p. 3). Even when technically “jailed” by the Colombian government, Escobar was allowed to build his own prison – nicknamed both “La Catedral” and “Hotel Escobar” – and to choose the guards that would operate the \$5 million jail, which included a football field, Jacuzzi and bar (Mallory, 2011, p. 59).

In comparison, for example, the New Zealand government spends \$73 billion a year, rules a population of 4.4 million people and has a military consisting of 9,000 active service personnel. While New Zealand pales in comparison to states such as the US or China, it is not the weakest, nor the smallest, state in existence. Instead these numbers (which are much easier to find for states) help to compare some elements of the power of different actors. There is

⁵ Weber (1946, p.81) writes that “Everywhere the development of the modern state is initiated through the action of the prince. He paves the way for the expropriation of the autonomous and ‘private’ bearers of executive power who stand beside him, of those who in their own right possess the means of administration, warfare, and financial organization, as well as politically usable goods of allsorts.” The justification for the centrality of the state, then, rests on its assumption of power.

⁶ To return to a historical view of the state and power, the Papal State (which existed up to 1870 and was under the direct rule of the Catholic Church) is a good example of the fusion of religion and politics in the pre-modern period.

obviously large scope for debate about the relative merits of different forms of power that each actor possesses. However, the very opening of such a debate would render the issue of state primacy an empirical question, rather than its current status as an unquestioned assumption of political science and IR.

Corporate Power

The most dominant form of contemporary private authority actor is the corporation. We currently live in the second age of corporate power. The previous age of corporate power saw the largest and most powerful corporation ever – the East India Company. At its height, the British East India Company ruled “fully one-fifth of the world’s population, with an army of a quarter-million men and revenues greater than the whole of Britain” (Ciepley, 2013, p. 139). The possession of such power in the hands of business made early liberals very wary of corporations and large businesses. Adam Smith (2014, p. 140) wrote that business leaders, through the

“superior knowledge of their own interest that they have frequently... persuaded [politicians] to give up both his own interest and that of the public, from a very simple but honest conviction, that their interest, and not his, was the interest of the public. The interest of the dealers, however, in any particular branch of trade or manufactures, is always in some respects different from, and even opposite to, that of the public. To widen the market and to narrow the competition, is always the interest of the dealers. To widen the market may frequently be agreeable enough to the interest of the public; but to narrow the competition must always be against it, and can serve only to enable the dealers, by raising their profits above what they naturally would be, to levy, for their own benefit, an absurd tax upon the rest of their fellow-citizens.

These views led Smith (*ibid.*, p.140) to warn that

“the proposal of any new law or regulation of commerce which comes from [business], ought always to be listened to with great precaution, and ought never to be adopted till after having been long and carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous, but with the most suspicious attention. It comes from an order of men, whose interest is never exactly the same with that of the public, who have generally an interest to deceive and even to oppress the public, and who accordingly have, upon many occasions, both deceived and oppressed it.”

The suspicion of early liberals saw significant changes in the powers and rights corporations could possess. It should be noted that the origins of corporations were not as large private businesses⁷ but instead were created through the power of government, which reserved the right to rescind the corporate charter. For instance, when the East India Company was rolled up, its functions were absorbed by the British state.

However, as liberalism progressed, the zeal for classification and the erection of walls to allow freedoms, the nature of corporations was forgotten and they were fundamentally misclassified. As Ciepley (2013, pp.139-140) makes clear, liberal walls facilitated corporate power by obscuring the nature of the corporation

“One of the signal projects of nineteenth-century American liberalism was to sharpen the distinction between public and private and divide the social world between them.

⁷ There is a degree of complexity when discussing “corporations”. There are several – Mars and IKEA, among them – who are very large privately-owned businesses, and are not technically corporations. However, the difference in ownership structure has not had such a large impact upon their political activities and so it can be overlooked for the purposes of this paper.

Business corporations were placed on the private side of this divide, assimilated to liberalism as private partnerships and, in some contexts, even as private persons...The corporation became a pure creature of the market rather than a creature of government, exempting it from any duty to the public, or accountability to the public, or even publicity to the public, and rendering it eligible for a raft of constitutional rights, including electioneering rights”

Making the corporation a creature of the market has complicated attempts to understand how corporations work as politico-economic actors. Gilpin echoes this point, arguing that:

“Although both professional economists and political scientists have written on the multinational corporations from the perspectives of their respective disciplines, there has been no discussion of the subject that sufficiently integrates its economic and political aspects. This dual neglect arises out of the fact that economists do not really believe in power; political scientists, for their part, do not really believe in markets.”

The situation has not improved much since Gilpin wrote these words in 1975. In fact, the situation has got worse as political scientists went through a long period of ignoring the corporation as an actor⁸, leading Wilson (2006, p. 33), to note that “there are about a hundred political scientists studying parties and elections for every one studying business and politics.” Similarly, Wilks (2013, p. 1) notes “The business corporation is arguably the most influential and least studied institution in contemporary political life”.

However, that is not to say that there has been no attention to the corporation as a private authority actor at all. Yet, overall the literature on corporations is balkanised and patchy. It lacks a cohesive theoretical framework, shared set of empirical concerns and consensus on what the corporation is. One major element missing from the discussion is authority *within* the corporation. Strange (1994 p.25), thinking on this issue, writes that

“corporations or state enterprises that have set up their own hierarchies of authority and chains of command in which decisions are taken that are essentially political more than economic. I do as the company president or the managing director says, not because I shall gain economically, but because he has the authority to command me, a middle manager or a shopfloor worker. Mine is not to reason why – just as if he were the general and I am a private soldier.”

These hierarchies can be substantial. Wal-Mart reportedly employs 2.2 million people, the UK central government 2.95 million (total public sector employment in the UK is 5.35 million). Yet, accounting for employment is complicated by different organisational structures and a general lack of transparency. Wal-Mart’s total of 2.2 million is the number of “associates” – workers directly employed by Wal-Mart. In addition, Walmart contracts “thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people”. Nike, for a much more transparent example, is reported by Forbes to have 56,500 employees. Yet, Nike also indirectly employs around 1 million factory workers, in 655 factories across 42 countries. While Nike is a well-known global brand, Nike-producing factories such as Asena 3 Textil S.R.L. on Lenin Street in Kipcak, Moldova are much less well known.

In addition to authority *within* the corporation, there is the authority *of* the corporation. This area is perhaps the most neglected given its size. That said, there is a strong body of literature concerning “private regulation”, whereby corporations are either directly empowered to set

⁸ A related body of literature is that of interest group theory, which only documents corporate activity in the political arena – i.e. it is only concerned with corporations when they transgress the boundaries established by liberalism and considers corporate power *through* governmental authority.

standards or, due to their market dominance, set de facto standards throughout their supply chain (for an overview see Vogel, 2008). However, there are still several major, and expanding, areas of corporate power that are missing from the (limited) discussion of the corporation in political science and IR, and that involve corporations both taking on functions previously the preserve of (ideal-type) states and being given special rights.

First, corporations, through their extensive role in the market, help to determine a whole range of eminently political concerns. In their day-to-day activities corporations take decisions that go to the heart of “who gets what, when, how”. Lindblom makes this point, writing that

“in any private enterprise system, a large category of major decisions is turned over to businessmen, both small and larger. They are taken off the agenda of government. Businessmen thus become a kind of public official and exercise what, on a broad view of their role, are public functions.”

This political power of corporations can be seen in the decision to add lead to gasoline. In the 1920s, a coalition of General Motors, DuPont Chemicals and Standard Oil of New Jersey (now ExxonMobil) decided that, in order to stop the accidental auto-ignition of gasoline that had been damaging engines (Rosner and Markowitz, 1985 p.354), gasoline should be blended with lead. This decision became standard practice across the world, and is still practiced in some developing countries. The addition of lead to gasoline, while increasing engine durability, did however lead to the majority of the world’s population being regularly, consistently and knowingly⁹ exposed to a “neurotoxin that causes renal damage, neurological dysfunction, anaemia, and, at high doses, death” (Lovei, 1998 p.1). Recent research has even suggested that the exposure to lead in preschool children that resulted from lead’s use in gasoline was responsible for high crime and murder rates (due to lead’s impairment of neurological function) within the Western world during the postwar period and that the end of its use resulted in a significant decline in the crime and murder rates (Nevin, 2007).

This power has also been enhanced through privatisation. Privatisation has both enlarged the scope of this type of corporate power, and helps illustrate the artificiality of the public/private divide. Through the extensive privatisation of state assets that has been undertaken since the 1980s in many Western countries, corporations are now in control of many and various industries and services that were, at one time, viewed as sufficiently important to the national interest to need to be in public hands. Some of these privatised industries/services see businesses in control of what would be considered traditional areas of state provision (see the privatisation of Royal Mail, or elements of the prison service, in the UK, for instance), alongside more politically-contentious areas of state provision (energy, rail, or water, for instance). So, to extend Lindblom’s point, businessmen now exercise what used to be public functions.

Second, the international institutional architecture has been remade to give corporations more rights and previously than previously. Through the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995, corporations were granted a vast extension to their property rights. The provisions made by the WTO’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement saw the internationalisation of copyright and patent law, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure this internationalisation. Never before had the idea of “property” extended to ideas and research outputs on an international scale – even on most national scales the idea of intellectual property is barely a century old. This extension of the idea of property has further empowered the legal possessors of the property – i.e. corporations.

⁹ Knowledge of lead toxicity had been strongly established in the 1920s. However, chronic lead poisoning by lead particulate matter had not been established. For an account of the (somewhat corporate) politics surrounding the science of lead intoxication in the 1920s see Lewis (1985).

There has also been a further expansion of corporate power through the state-state system, in the form of new rights being granted to corporations through the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and other trade agreements made since the Doha round of WTO talks stalled. For instance, the Trans-Pacific Partnership will, if ratified by its signatory countries, see the institution of an “Investor-State Dispute Settlement” mechanism that empowers foreign corporations to sue governments over changes to domestic laws that effect the corporation’s ongoing profitability. Through mechanisms such as this, the global trade regime is increasingly limiting the policy options available to states and locking in corporate privilege, while not limiting corporate capacities for action.

Third, the transnational nature of corporations has enabled them to circumvent many and various domestic laws. The most notable of these circumventions has concerned taxation. Through the use of complex tax structures, even the most powerful states have struggled to extract tax revenues from corporations. The 50 largest corporations in the US have stored more than a trillion dollars offshore in recent years, and tax avoidance is estimated to cost the US government \$111 billion every year (Campbell, 2016). With developing countries, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated the total annual cost of corporate tax avoidance to be \$250-300 billion (UNCTAD, 2015). While there has been a great deal of state facilitation of tax avoidance, such help, and the capacity for offshore tax avoidance, inheres the fact of global economic actors being regulated/taxed by domestic actors.

Fourth, the increasing influence of private military and security companies (PMSCs) has seen the erosion of the state’s monopoly on legitimate force. While the largest PMSCs tend to be outgrowths of the US military, and locked into exclusive contracts with them, there are several international PMSCs who operate either semi-independently of the state they are based in or who operate transnationally. South Africa, in particular, has been a territorial home to many of these organisations, although they have been employed around the world by various states.

Fifth and finally, the new online tech giants have unprecedented access to a whole range of information. Companies such as Google, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft have databases of personal information that the Stasi or Gestapo could only dream about. While oftentimes the information is freely given, the collection of such a huge amount of personal data should be a worrying trend for individuals, and organisations, who value their privacy – as the NSA’s PRISM program proved. Furthermore, the amount of information available is growing as networked technology increasingly gets adopted in to all elements of life. Cloud services, smartphones, smart-TVs and the like have all increased both the amount of documents available to corporations (e-mails, word documents and videos) and the amount of data on personal online actions (browsing habits, interests, and contacts).

These five elements of corporate power see corporate decisions and actions fundamentally effect the running of societies, global societies, and political institutions. While it may well be possible, should states wish, for the reassertion of state primacy, the fact remains that national and international political communities are heavily influenced by corporate actors. In other words, a theoretical claim for (possible/ultimate) state primacy is insufficient reason for disregarding the empirical situation, as the very point of theory is to reflect and comprehend the existing reality.

Conclusion

The existence of private authority actors is challenging for many and various social science disciplines and sub-disciplines. The disciplines were predicated on being able to separate religion, politics, and the market as discrete areas that can be analysed on their own. The

focus on political institutions in political science, the focus on the state as the primary actor in IR and the focus on a disembodied and harmonious market in economics are all facilitated through this separation. However, the separation was a normative project of liberal idealists, not the foundations of analysis.

As such, private authority actors have been poorly understood by the disciplines, in that only the part that “fits” within a discipline is analysed. This situation was not too problematic in the era that the disciplines were establishing themselves, as the state was the dominant actor and institution in the west at the time. However, reflecting a more global perspective and reflecting the current time period necessitates much greater attention to private authority actors and, perhaps, a rethink of existing disciplinary lines. Separating the world into discrete analysable units made sense in that people wanted them to be separate. However, the distinctions between public and private, between state and market, between religion and politics actively harms our understanding of the world; as Cutler (1997 pp.280) writes “today the distinction obscures more than it clarifies about the nature of power and authority.”

Bibliography

- Acemoglu, D., Verdier, T., Robinson, J.A., 2004. Kleptocracy And Divide-And-Rule: A Model Of Personal Rule. *J. Eur. Econ. Assoc.* 2, 162–192. doi:10.1162/154247604323067916
- Beetham, D., 1991. *The Legitimation of Power*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berger, S., 2000. Globalization And Politics. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 3, 43–62. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.43
- Campbell, A.F., 2016. The Cost of Corporate Tax Avoidance. *The Atlantic*.
- Ciepley, D., 2013. Beyond public and private: Toward a political theory of the corporation. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 107, 139–158.
- Cronin, A., 2016. ISIS Is Not a Terrorist Group [WWW Document]. *Foreign Aff.* URL <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-not-terrorist-group> (accessed 5.31.16).
- Cutler, A.C., Haufler, V., Porter, T., 1999. *Private Authority and International Affairs*. SUNY Press.
- De Llano, P., 2015. The cartel that never gave up [WWW Document]. *EL PAÍS*. URL http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/07/13/inenglish/1436790509_614345.html (accessed 6.2.16).
- Engebretson, K., 2014. *Catholic Schools and the Future of the Church*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, New York.
- Forbes, 2016a. The World’s Most Powerful People [WWW Document]. *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/list/> (accessed 6.2.16).
- Forbes, 2016b. Joaquin Guzman Loera [WWW Document]. *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/profile/joaquin-guzman-loera/> (accessed 6.2.16).
- Goodin, R.E., 2009. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. OUP Oxford.
- Hathaway, T., 2016. Lukes Reloaded: An Actor-Centred Three-Dimensional Power Framework. *Politics* 36, 118–130. doi:10.1111/1467-9256.12099

- Horwitz, M.J., 1982. The History of the Public/Private Distinction. *Univ. Pa. Law Rev.* 130, 1423–1428. doi:10.2307/3311976
- Laswell, H., 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Levi, M., 2002. The State of the Study of the State, in: Katznelson, I., Milner, H. (Eds.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. W.W. Norton, New York.
- Lukes, S., 1974. *Power : A Radical View*. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Mallory, S.L., 2011. *Understanding Organized Crime*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers, Sudbury, MA.
- Moran, M., 2006. Interdisciplinarity and Political Science. *Politics* 26, 73–83. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00253.x
- Naim, M., 2010. *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy*. Random House, London.
- Piketty, T., 2014. *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Sheikh, F., 2016. *Islam and International Relations: Exploring Community and the Limits of Universalism*. Rowman & Littlefield, London.
- Smith, A., 2014. *The Wealth of Nations*. Shine Classics.
- The Economist, 2012. Calculating the Size of the Catholic Church [WWW Document]. The Economist. URL <http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2012/08/catholic-church-america> (accessed 6.7.16).
- UNCTAD, 2015. *World Investment Report 2015*.
- Walzer, M., 1984. Liberalism and the Art of Separation. *Polit. Theory* 12, 315–330.
- Weber, M., 1946. Politics as a Vocation, in: Gerth, H.H., Mills, C.W. (Eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press, New York, p. 77--128.
- Wilks, S., 2013. *The political power of the business corporation*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Wilson, G., 2006. Thirty Years of Business and Politics, in: Coen, D., Grant, W. (Eds.), *Business and Government: Methods and Practice*. Barbara Budrich, Michigan.