

On the Withering Away of the State and the Three M's

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The modern state as the locus of power and authority has been rapidly withering away for the last two centuries, but not at all in the way Karl Marx predicted.

In the last century, the state was already dwindling, not as a result of the rise of the industrial proletariat, but rather with respect to three major domains of social and economic power: The **Market**, the **Military** and the **Mass Media** –which I have labeled **the three M's**.

Along with the deflation of the state, other traditional domains associated with it were rapidly deflating or were assimilated into the **three M's** (i.e., representative government, the judiciary, public education, public works and services, the trade unions, the authority of the churches and of the intellectual class, etc.)

What or who are the **three M's**? They are (generally speaking): the **MARKET** (or the “**Economy**”), the **MILITARY** and the **MASS MEDIA**.

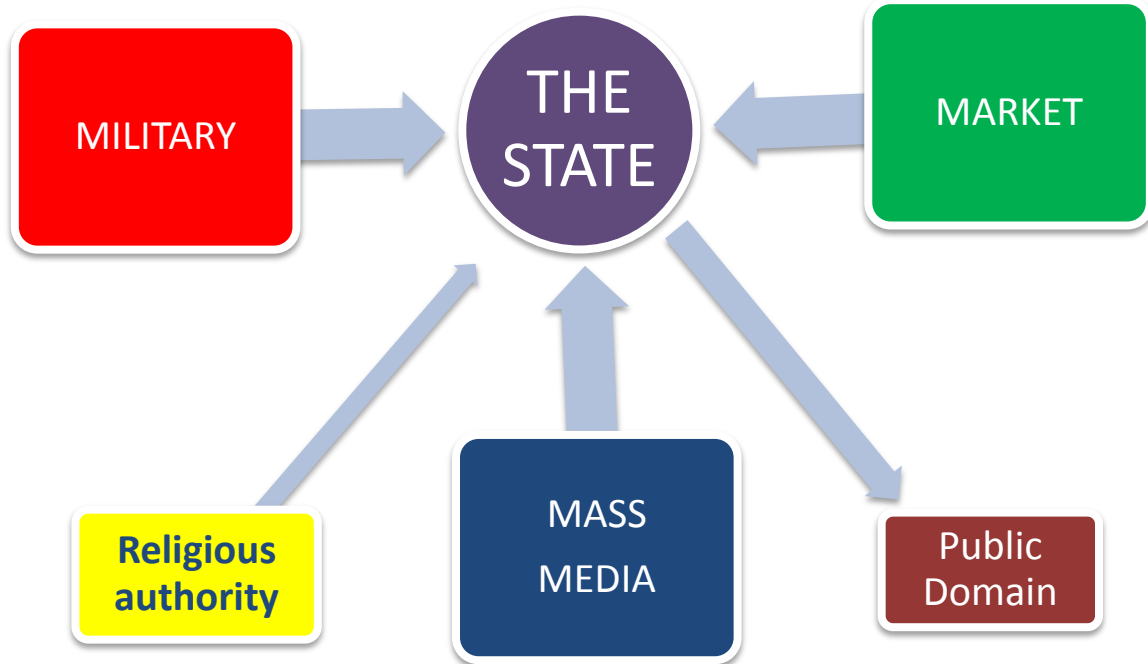
- (1) The **MARKET**: The rise of the Market is exemplified by the ever-increasing commercialization of all human relations, the power of the advertising industry, the steady rise of the financial and corporate élites, the popularization of investment in stock markets, and unbridled industrial development among other factors.
- (2) The **MILITARY**: The increasing militarization of human relations, exemplified by the increase of GDP allocated to Defense and to armaments research and development, the proliferation of more and more powerful weapons of mass destruction, the growing centralization and autonomy of all armed forces, the overemphasis on public security, the increase in police powers, espionage, etc.
- (3) The **MASS MEDIA**: The exponential growth of electronic and digital communications technologies, globalization of the news and entertainment sectors, first following the invention of radio, then television; the film industry and the music industry; the “social” media; personal super computers; the internet; cellular telephony linked to GPS, etc.

As the 21st century progresses, these trends have continued, undermining the ability of the modern state to rule and to administer the public sector in vital areas such as protecting the environment, social services, education and the justice system.

I've tried to simplify these phenomena with the following two diagrams:

THE THREE M'S VIS-À-VIS THE MODERN STATE (20th Century)

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In contemporary 21st century society, the **three M's** interpenetrate each other and are integrated into an inseparable trinity, overwhelming the state's ability to administer society in a fair and egalitarian manner on behalf of all its citizens.

The citizens' right to democratic participation in government through a fair and neutral electoral system is being undermined by media-driven false propaganda and new voting technologies vulnerable to manipulation. The public's right to receive free healthcare and social services, its right to well-funded public education, people's access to legal representation before the courts, and the workers' right to unionize, are all being sabotaged through the privatization and commercialization of services and programs, effectively becoming the exclusive privilege of that upper strata of society –the only ones who can afford them. As a result, poverty, homelessness and disenfranchisement have increased exponentially.

A vicious cycle has been created whereby the modern state has become the *chasse gardée* of the **three M's** élites, thereby ensuring that all investments decisions as to public resources only favour the needs of the wealthy corporations, the armed forces and the great mass media conglomerates, to the detriment of all other sectors of society.

THE INTEGRATION AND INTERPENETRATION OF THE THREE M'S IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY (21st Century) © Pascual Delgado (2018)

