

The Seeds of Statism

Introduction

- Seven types of action that distinguish a coercive org from a voluntary one
- For each action, define, describe close voluntary analog, home in on difference
- How do incentives move the action?
- List some alternatives
- One type is more dangerous than the others because it enables them

1. Taxation

- The “big one,” ragged on the most; taxation is theft
 - When libertarians/anarchists/voluntaryists yell something, it’s usually this
- A fee taken from an individual for services that the government deems as its function
- Services provided may have dubious value or be provided shoddily
- Good companies will reimburse the user for failed service times
- Voluntary organizations provide a definite service
- Coercive orgs begin to provide less and less service for more and more money
- No incentive to provide good/timely/effective service, no competition, ability to take funds from non-payers
- Alternatives:
 - Privatize existing tax-funded orgs
 - Fee structures
 - Crowdfunding
 - Legitimate contracts administered and judged by a third party, with specified services

2. Conscription

- Forced labor, slavery
- Usually for military purposes, but may be used for plain labor
- Extend the life of a bad organization by requiring people to defend it physically
- The most “intense” action of a coercive org, must be used sparingly, but threats are pervasive
- Can be used for aggressive war-making (seed #7)
- Alternatives:
 - Mutual-defense contracts with exit clauses
 - Vigorous cultural support of self-defense of person and property
 - Voluntary defense organizations
 - Trade agreements: where goods cross borders, soldiers (usually) don’t
 - Letting coercive or poorly-administered orgs fail and collapse
 - Governments pretend they *are* the people, but may not deserve defense
 - Not enough defenders? We’ll enslave some!

3. Legal Positivism

- Creation of laws and penalties against actions with no victim
- Eventually confuses morals with laws (if government started making shoes...)
- Concept of “lawful orders” as justification for permitted murder, kidnapping, robbery
 - The “law” says X is punishable, but no victim

- May pity someone indoctrinated into believing that “just following orders” is an excuse, but not necessarily forgive/absolve
- Regulation of commerce/industry beyond protection from theft, fraud, etc.
- A way for cultures to preserve prejudices at others’ expense
- Incentives create a tangled web of ad-hoc solutions, lawyer class grows
- Breakdown of sensible law leads to sporadic enforcement
 - Exactly the situation needed to create two-tiered justice system/anarcho-tyranny
 - Breakdown of property rights, clogging of arbitration system, etc.
- Alternatives:
 - Voluntary arbitration agreements
 - Voluntary “vice prohibition” agreements
 - “Walled” cities, market squares
 - Rights of way along borders
 - (To mitigate existing systems) Exile/confiscation rather than punitive action
 - Procedural agreements for gathering/vetting evidence, etc.

4. Information Control

- Media/news control; science/engineering control; education; moral double standard
- Teaches people that the other pillars are righteous even when damaging
- Lenin: Give me the children...
- Promote or censure cultural norms
- Incentives push toward more and more false info pushed by gov’t
- Bad science/engineering, funded by stolen money
- Indoctrinated children into cult of the State
 - Believe that taxation isn’t theft, that conscription isn’t slavery, etc.
- Lots of distraction for culture warriors, let them bicker while the State takes their kids
- Cultural stagnation or being pushed in one specific (pro-State) direction
- Alternatives:
 - Private, decentralized funding of education, research, journalism, etc.
 - Self-reliance in defense of positive cultural norms
 - So much reliance on gov’t while it was “helping” means nobody knows what to do when it starts “hurting”

5. Prerogative

- The government doing things it isn’t authorized to do because they’re “good”
 - Ignores trade-offs
 - Vague definition of “good”
 - “Subscribers” not bound to pay for unauthorized, “good” acts
 - You may provide a reward for going above and beyond the call of duty, but reserve the right to limit that award to something you find reasonable
 - Accountant putting out a fire; offer and haggle
- Crowd out charity with coerced giving
 - Incentives to increase the number of recipients
- Even voluntary contracts vulnerable to expansive/biased readings
- Expansive readings of the contract cause problems in long run
 - Less of a problem for very short-term contracts
 - A major problem if the government also interprets that “contract”

- Any reading but the most restrictive is a path to unlimited power over time
- Alternatives:
 - Forethought and care when drafting contracts
 - Narrowest-possible interpretations of State contracts/constitutions
 - Reciprocal, voluntary charity, mercy, forgiveness as cultural norms
 - Clearest, most precise possible language in State contracts

6. Dominion

- Also sometimes called “jurisdiction”
- The most important pillar
 - Taxation can’t really be taxation if you can exit the contract
- Contracts need exit clauses
 - We get used to contracts not having them because the exit clause is implied by the system under which the contract is created
 - But contracts to detail such a system need an exit clause!
- You do generally give up some property rights to join a protection contract
 - Agree to allow agents on your property under certain conditions
 - Agree to submit to investigations handled under proper protocol
 - Agree not to obstruct investigations under proper protocol
 - Pledge to use the arbitration option for certain crimes
 - All questions to be determined by different societies trying different methods
- Distinguish between consent, complaint, dissent
 - Without ability to leave, complaint and dissent look identical
- Non-violent outlet for dissent
 - You don’t get to determine whether others think some government action is legitimate
 - Theft, slavery, kidnapping, etc. all can be reasonably perceived as violence
 - Cut out the required connection
- Incentive structure for governments to improve
- Prevent feelings of ownership over land by government agents
 - Nowhere else is ending a subscription to a service seen as unforgivable violence
 - Revenge against those who leave
- Avoid possibility of subjugated minorities
- Alternatives:
 - Secession down to the individual household level
 - With land
 - Must be less expensive than the market price of the land itself
 - Handing over rights and gaining services on a piece of land necessarily less than its full value
 - No direct retaliation
- Chaotic at first but only because it’s been stifled for so long

7. War

- Left this for last because it is dependent on other pillars
- Something States do to outsiders, rather than subjects
- Taxation to fund, conscription to fight, regulations to prevent dealing with the “enemy”
- Information control to propagandize and dehumanize the “enemy”
- State pretends to be an individual, gets “offended” = prerogative

- Fighting over dominion of territory
- All the bad stuff States do combined and directed against innocent people
- Heads of State kept safe and insulated from direct effects
- Alternatives:
 - Self-defense, possibly organized
 - No “right” to collateral damage
 - Targeted, not general
 - Defensive in nature
 - Up to some reasonable restitution if possible?