

# COERCIVE OCCUPATIONS AS STATE FACILITATION: UNDERSTANDING THE U.S. STATE'S STRATEGY OF CONTROL

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The continuation of structural inequalities cannot be understood based solely on the power of the elite, such as conceived as a 1% and 99% dichotomy; it needs to be understood within the complex and sophisticated system that is supported and carried out by many non-elite. Central to this argument is the idea that segments of the population, including some of the most exploited and oppressed, derive material and ideological benefit from the misery associated with the inequalities that are rooted in the current established social arrangements.<sup>1</sup> It is this phenomenon that demands an explanation that can move beyond simple dichotomies (e.g., elite

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<sup>1</sup> The established social arrangement is the result of cultural and material forces that combine to bring about a stable social order. Stability in this sense is the byproduct of combinations of value consensus that are precariously propagated by the dominate ideology, economic, and coercive means.

vs. non-elite, white vs. black, etc.) to a greater understanding of how individuals collaborate with a system that is rooted in inequality. This article examines one of the ways that the U.S. state facilitates the incorporation of millions of individuals into the rank-and-file of policing, correctional, national security, and military organizations.

According to many leading theorists (such as Christie 1993; Garland 2001; Parenti 2008; Wacquant 2008a), the economic and political changes that have occurred starting about forty years ago lead to increases in the surplus population and a growth in the “dangerous class.” The economic crisis of declining profits and racial and class rebellion contributed to a move away from the politics of the carrot (a Keynesian welfare state) and the labor/capitalists compromise to the politics of the stick (i.e., the police build up and mass incarceration) (Parenti 2008, 240). According to Parenti, the implementation of neoliberalism in the 1980s and the 1990s re-established profit margins for the capitalists, while the state went about managing “the excluded, and cast-off classes” (2008, 241). Yet, as the state relied more on policing and imprisonment of particular sectors of the population, there was also a parallel growth in coercive occupations. Had it not been for this boom in coercive employment many more individuals would have more than likely joined the surplus population and dangerous classes.

The basic premise in this article is that the above circumstances created a positive correlation between the implementation of neoliberal policies and increased inequality and the increasing dependency on a vast amount of coercive forces required to sustain it. In understanding U.S. state power, we must understand its role as the enforcer of the status quo —i.e., unequal relationships that primarily benefit a national and a global network of elites, which the global and domestic repressive apparatuses are tasked with maintaining. A preliminary account of the pervasive coercive forces below illustrates a glimpse into the rise and pervasiveness of coercive occupations.

The role of state coercion in disrupting and neutralizing the mobilization of contentious action and the managing of marginality cannot be minimized.<sup>2</sup> Yet, what is often missed and is of equal importance is the role that the state plays in facilitating large segments of the population into the established order as enforcers of the status quo (Christie 1993; Katz 2007). As we will see, the U.S. state utilizes a multitude of strategies in order to maintain stability. This article is concerned with one particular state strategy: the use of employment in coercive occupations as a means to neutralize contentious action by incorporat-

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<sup>2</sup> For Katz (2007), the marginalized are people who are largely excluded from the rewards associated with full citizenship, including employment, housing, consumption, social benefits, and equal justice.

ing individuals into the system as a compliant and loyal member employed in one of the various coercive forces. There are over 10 million people employed in policing organizations, correctional, and military types of occupations. The U.S. has the largest number of coercive forces in the world, especially when you examine the actual versus official figures. One needs to consider coercive forces as the premier job suppliers, from law enforcement officers, prison guards, soldiers, to members of Homeland Security and in addition, all the supportive civilian and private contractor jobs that comprise its employment matrix. Incalculable millions of communities and families are also dependent on these organizations for their livelihoods. If we add the approximately 23 million military veterans, many of whom remain connected to military service through their active participation in veterans' organizations and/or through veteran benefits, we can begin to see the larger implications of this particular strategy.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, coercive institutions have far-reaching influence in academia as being benefactors of research funding and employment, which also offers a partial explanation for why critical analysis that addresses this phenomenon is largely absent. Upton Sinclair may in fact have been correct when he stated: "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his

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<sup>3</sup> "Projected Veteran Population 2013 to 2043," Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (2014).

salary depends upon him not understanding it” (in Parenti 2011, 2).

Understanding coercive forces such as policing, correctional, and military organizations is important because they employ large numbers of people with stable and secured jobs; this is increasingly true in the current times of employment insecurity. The U.S. Department of Defense alone, for example, is the world’s largest employer, with the Chinese military being a distant second (Ruth 2012).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the U.S. has only 5% of the world’s population, but accounts for more than 40% of the world’s military spending (Quigley 2010). When one combines all the budgets of all the coercive organizations—i.e., policing, corrections, national security, and the military—it is nothing less than astonishing in terms of the degree of spending and employment it spawns, from direct and indirect employment, as we will see below. In addition, these organizations are, to varying degrees, highly bureaucratic hierarchical organizations, which instill strict discipline and demand a greater degree of obedience than other occupations found either in the public or the private sectors. The common denominator that links these coercive occupations is that they function to a large extent as arms of the state to protect and enforce the status quo.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Ruth (2012), the world’s largest employers are the following: the U.S. Department of Defense, 3.2.; the Chinese military 2.3; and Walmart 2.1 (in the millions).

Explaining loyalty and allegiance cannot be reduced to economic motives and interests. Loyalty and allegiance are also culturally contrived with feelings of group solidarity, sense of duty, and patriotism. In fact, many employed in coercive occupations receive elevated status not because they possess stable employment, but because many of these occupations are awarded high degrees of esteem. The elevated status granted to the members of coercive occupations is orchestrated by the state and other agents of socialization such as the media and educational institutions. For Glen Greenwald, the U.S. military receives a tremendous amount of veneration from U.S. society and can be seen as the central religion, which “is by far the most respected and beloved institution among the U.S. population” (2012). This is hardly an exaggeration when one considers the degree in which society is saturated with the political socialization to respect and honor the military (e.g., in the mainstream media, in schools, and in all sporting events, especially at the professional level). Yet, the worship of “all things military” appears to be just a tip of the iceberg. Law enforcement and national security, in many ways, appear to also be afforded the same veneration when it comes to the mainstream media and formal educational systems. The police, for example, are often portrayed by the media as heroic crime

fighters (Surette 1998; Reiner 1985).<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that the corporate media are not at times critical of the police and the military or that these institutions do not have their critics, but on the whole, much of the coverage either in the news, movies, or TV programming appears overwhelmingly supportive. As a result, critical analysis of coercive occupations is a difficult endeavor because U.S. society does appear to worship all things coercive, especially when they represent the U.S. and are sanctioned and rationalized by the state.

What also appears to be a salient feature is that these coercive organizations tend to foster a type of master status in which their members primarily identify themselves and are identified by others by their occupation—e.g., as a police officer or as a soldier. In fact, these identities tend to trump all other identities such as social class, ethno-racial, and gender and develop a sense of group solidarity amongst those in coercive occupations. The “we versus them” mindset permeates throughout these professions, which hinders attempts at creating a more unified and just society and world that is based on solidarity and commonality. Rather than mitigate inequalities within the U.S. or between nation states, the U.S. state instead allocates endless

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<sup>5</sup> Lovell argues that police departments view the media as both supportive and adversarial and as a result developed specialized public information officers to insure that the pro-police message of professional crime fighting and how the brave men and women put their lives on the line every day to make the streets safe remain the dominant view (2010).

amounts of expenditures, resources, and lives in upholding the system of capitalism, the very system that simultaneously generates vast amounts of inequality, creates insecurity, and dysfunction at home and abroad, which then lays the groundwork for disruption—e.g., crime and organized/unorganized forms of resistance (e.g., Hagan 1994; Linebaugh 1976; Piven and Cloward 1977; Quinney 1977; and National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968).

This paper is organized in the following manner. First, its theoretical framework is presented as a means to contextualize coercive forces within the larger context of the U.S. state strategy. Secondly, the U.S. coercive forces are mapped out in order to illustrate their sheer size and the pervasive nature of their employment matrix. Thirdly, an analysis is presented that focuses on the capability of the hegemonic bureaucratic state's ability to develop, in many cases, esteemed identities that are ideologically sanctioned and operate like master statuses because they hinder solidarity among the oppressed and exploited and isolate its members from social movements and protest.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of facilitation has largely been absent in the analysis of state repression and when it is applied it is often interpreted as merely the flipside of repression. Although



social movement research has been insightful in understanding the nuanced relationships between social movements and state repression (della Porta and Reiter 1998; Davenport, Johnston, Mueller 2005),<sup>6</sup> it has not focused on the complex and multifaceted repressive and facilitative modes of the state; whose actions extend beyond protest policing and are not limited to mobilization phases.

In fact, understanding the strategies of the state goes beyond the policing of protest during periods of mobilization, because states cast wider nets that target larger segments of society and operate more as a permanent strategy (Montes 2008). The U.S. state, for example, should be conceptualized as having various modes of repression, which include such actions as covert counterintelligence operations (e.g., COINTELPRO) and the use of legal procedures such as federal grand juries that target political dissidents (Blackstock 1988; Churchill 1988, 1990; Davenport 2005; Deutsch 1984). In addition, Pamela Oliver attempts to expand the concept of state repression by understanding its connection to crime control (2008, 8). She argues that once we understand that one of the major functions of criminal law is to protect unequal distributions of resources, we can begin to see crime control as a form of state repression (2008,

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<sup>6</sup> These theorists focus on what is coined the repression and mobilization nexus, which analyzes how repression does not always produce demobilization; it in fact sometimes inspires greater resistance and wider participation in protest.

13). The use of state repression continued way after the riots in the 1960s and the demise of the social movements, but its aim was not preventing unrest by repressing riots but preventing unrest by repressing potential rioters (Oliver 2008). These potential rioters are seen as the ones who can start a revolution. The state and the supporters of the “law and order” agenda have linked ordinary crime with riots and social movements and pursue crime control policies that make no distinctions between these categories (Oliver 2008). This is an important contribution because it expands the state strategy beyond a narrow focus on political dissent to include crime control as a form of repressing of the poor and racial minorities, many of whom the state perceives as a threat to the social order (Marx 1970a; Marx 1970b; Oliver 2008; Parenti 2008). Yet, we know that no state, even the most authoritarian, rules with just only force and violence. Understanding the U.S. state requires an understanding of its complex and sophisticated strategies that are designed to maintain the status quo. Under the general rubrics of the concept of facilitation, facilitation can be seen as a series of non-coercive mechanisms such as co-opting and bribing, or what Charles Tilly (1978) referred to as any action carried out by a state that lowers the cost/consequences for collective contentious action.<sup>7</sup> In this modified version of the concept, the state

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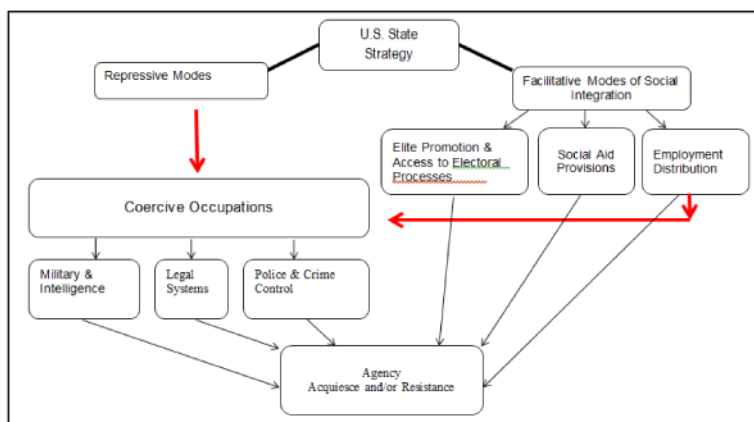
<sup>7</sup> Tilly provides examples to how the U.S. state authorities repressed some social movement groups, while protecting others and providing political access to them (1978, 100).

continues to be viewed as complex and as a strategic agent, but a facilitative measure is not reserved for only contentious actors or social movements. Gary Marx provides an example of a broader definition of this concept when he wrote that the U.S. “legal system, with the protected freedoms of the Bill of Rights and local ordinances regarding parade permits, is a more distant form of facilitation and control” (1979, 95). In this context, we define facilitation as any state action that is designed to persuade contentious or potentially contentious actors from targeting the state or elite with disruption. Some of the ways this is accomplished are by providing: employment; social aid (Piven and Cloward 1971); elite promotion, i.e., co-opting oppositional leaders into positions as intermediaries; and channeling movements’ grievances into electoral processes (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978).

Not all state facilitative actions are meant to co-opt or integrate the dangerous classes. In fact, some facilitative actions are intended to appease contentious and potentially contentious individuals, groups, and segments of populations. Although the state utilizes many facilitative strategies, employment is but one; it may very well be one of the most effective strategies because like social aid provisions it addresses subsistence and material needs, which have served as one of the key impetuses for mobilization. Employment in coercive occupations goes beyond the general objective of filling empty bellies in exchange for

compliance. As we will see, employment in coercive forces is a deliberate strategy designed to integrate individuals more firmly into the social order. Besides economic reward, members receive greater levels of institutional socialization that transcend a job into a duty, which is in many cases honorific and virtuous.

By situating coercive forces within the context of the U.S. state strategy framework, we will attempt to analyze coercive forces, which appear to be a critical component of it. Coercive forces overlap with repressive and facilitative modes and serve dual functions: one as enforcers of the social order and second as facilitation (see Chart 1).



**Chart 1:** The State Strategy

Because of the paramilitary and military bureaucratic structures in which these occupations are embedded are highly sanctioned and esteemed by the legitimacy of the state, we will

analyze the state's legitimacy below. For many of the members and supportive personnel employed in coercive forces, to act in a contentious manner that seeks change to the social order, amounts to not only acting against one's job security and benefits, but acting against one's sworn duty and oath. In addition, unlike other occupations that can be seen as having facilitative qualities, coercive occupations are the pillars and bedrock of the social order because they are directly responsible for upholding it. Their elevated status and honorific pride are sanctioned by the state and therefore contingent on the continuation of the status quo.

## MAPPING COERCIVE FORCES

Mapping the far-reaching tentacles of the coercive state is a difficult enterprise, and mapping its pervasive coercive employment matrix is even more difficult. It is one thing to locate accurate data on the numbers of individuals in the various occupations and entirely another to account for the all the supportive personnel and private sector employees that serve to supplement them. Of course, the sketches below do not begin to address all of the industries, communities, and families that economically depend on coercive occupations as their lifeblood.

### POLICE COERCIVE FORCES

We will begin with crime control and what is often referred to as an industry. Nils Christie wrote, the problems facing Western societies are that:

Wealth is everywhere unequally distributed. So is access to paid work. Both problems contain potentialities for unrest. The crime control industry is suited for coping with both. This industry provides profits and work while at the same time producing control of those who otherwise might have disturbed the social process" (1993, 13).

This appears to be an accurate statement because it largely captures the multiple roles that the criminal justice system plays in managing inequality and the lack of employment. Christie explicitly states that the criminal justice system is required to maintain relations of inequality. This observation can be verified by the fact that most of the 7,053,977 adults supervised by correctional systems (Glaze and Bonczar 2010) are poor. Fewer than half of those incarcerated held a full-time job at the time of their arraignment and two-thirds were from households with annual income amounting to less than half of the official poverty line (Wacquant 2008b, 61).

When the data for mass incarceration are aggregated by race, mass incarceration really appears to look like racial mass incarceration (Alexander 2010; Bobo and Thompson 2012; Loury 2008). The U.S. population consist of approximately 12% Black and 15% Latino, however some reports illustrate that these two groups represent about 60% of these incarcerated. In 2012, the incarceration rate per 100,000 was 2,841 for Blacks, 1,158 for Latinos, and 463 for Whites per 100,000 (Carson and Golinelli 2013). The rate of incarceration by race appears to demonstrate racial disparity within the criminal justice system. As noted above, the U.S. in-

carceration rate is the highest in the industrial world, but it is even higher when aggregating for race. Yet, Bruce Western (2006) illustrates that mass incarceration affects the poorest of the African American population, which points to the class element in racial disparity in those who are incarcerated.<sup>8</sup> In short, one can argue that mass incarceration really involves the containment of the most marginalized: the ones with the greatest distance from wealth and privilege and who are perceived as the greatest threat to the social order.

There is a sizable amount of the U.S. population under the control of the criminal justice system (see Table 1). For example, 1 in every 35 adult residents in the U.S. is under some form of correctional supervision in yearend 2012 (Glaze and Bonczar 2010). In fact, the U.S. leads the world with the highest incarceration rate, with approximately 716 per 100,000 (Walmsley 2011). One of the reasons why this has not generated popular moral outrage is because the prison population and those under its surveillance do not reflect the greater population (Cole 1998). Yet, Table 1 illustrates a fuller picture of those incarcerated. By calculating together Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detentions, and military, Indian country prisons, juvenile detentions, and territories/colonies' incarceration with all those in state and federal prisons and all the individuals under correctional su-

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<sup>8</sup> According to Western, the highest rates of incarceration among blacks and whites males are among those who do not possess high school degrees: for black males it tripled to reach over 58% and for white males it more than doubled to 11.2% during the period between 1979 and 1997 (2006, 26).

pervision the overall number increases to 7,142,563. Of course, these numbers do not include all the individuals that are held in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, CIA black sites or other nations in which the U.S. military is involved with counterinsurgency operations. Besides the containment of the most marginalized that are perceived as posing a threat to the status quo, Christie argues that the crime control industry also provides employment for many who are without jobs (1993).

**Table 1: Estimated number of persons supervised by adult correctional systems, by correctional status, 2012**

Probation	3,942,800
Parole	851,200
Federal and State Prisons	1,483,900
Local jails	744,500
ICE	9,957 (2008)
Military facilities	1,651 (2008)
Jails in Indian country	2,135 (2008)
Juvenile facilities	92,845 (2008)
Territorial prisons	13,575 (2008)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,142,563</b>

Sources: Glaze and Herberman (2013) and Sabol, West, and Cooper (2009)

This can be seen in numerous ways such as the fact that in 2014, there were 469,500 correctional officers, which required a minimal educational requirement of a high school diploma or equivalent for entry level employment.<sup>9</sup> In addition, in 2012, there were approximately

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Correctional Officers: Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Jan/2014.



90,600 individuals employed in probations and parole, as mainly probation and parole agents.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the management of the “dangerous class” has also created economic opportunities to the private sector in the form of privately run prisons, programs, and labor. In 2010, there were 128,195 state and federal prisoners housed in private facilities. Corrections Corporation of America, the largest private prison corporation, housed 70,000 prisoners, operated over 60 facilities, and ran 600 inmate programs.<sup>11</sup> They have approximately 17,000 employees (370 in corporate offices and 16,630 in facilities and transport businesses).<sup>12</sup> The second largest for-profit correctional and detention management corporation is the GEO Group Inc. (formerly known as Wachenhut), which has approximately 65,949 active beds, operates 106 facilities, and employs 19,000.<sup>13</sup> Edwin S. Rubenstein’s research discovered that investors in these for-profit companies, which trade on the New York Stock Exchange “have a financial interest in keeping private prison cells filled. Industry experts say a profitable private prison must have a 90 percent to 95 percent capacity rate” (2014). Private prisons are the most profitable in the prison industry complex (Palaez 2014; Parenti 2008).

According to Scott Cohn, “Small towns are trying to get in on the boom, along with architects,

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists*, January 8, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See Corrections Corporations of American website: [www.cca.com](http://www.cca.com).

<sup>12</sup> See the Public Interest website:  
<http://www.inthepublicinterest.org/organization/corrections-corporation-america>

<sup>13</sup> See Geo Group, Inc. 2012 Annual Report.

health care providers, and technology companies. They're all after their piece of the billions behind bars" (2012). In addition, many private corporations contract prison labor. The following corporations utilized prison labor such as "IBM, Boeing, Motorola, Microsoft, AT&T, Wireless, Texas Instruments, Dell, Compaq, Honeywell, Hewlett-Packard, Nortel, Lucent Technologies, 3Com, Intel, Northern Telecom, TWA, Nordstrom's, Revlon, Macy's, Pierre Cardin, Target Stores, and many more" (Palaez 2014). In this context, prison labor is highly profitable because labor is cheap and as Palaez states corporations don't have to worry about labor strikes or paying unemployment insurance and vacations (2014). Yet, the prison industrial complex has not provided a Keynesian stimulus comparable to the military industrial complex with its extensive spin-off industries and employment (Parenti 2008, 216). Nevertheless, a CNBC reported that there are 700,000 individuals working in city, state, and private prisons; approximately 450,000 as correctional guards and the other 350,000 workers working at various personnel levels.<sup>14</sup> Prisons appear to be a mini-jobs program, employing many with the promise of high salaries, good benefits, and minimal education requirements.

Besides correctional officers, parole and probation agents, and all its supportive personnel, the policing matrix includes various law-enforcement officers, which operate at the city, state, and federal levels and are attached to traditional policing and national security. According to a 2011 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, in 2008, state and local law enforcement agencies employed more than

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<sup>14</sup> See "Billions Behind Bars—Inside America's Prison Industry." CNBC. NBC Universal. 2013.

1.1 million persons on a full-time basis, including about 765,000 sworn personnel (defined as those with general arrest powers) (Reaves 2011). These organizations also employed approximately 100,000 part-time employees, including 44,000 sworn officers. (Reaves 2011). There are approximately 120,000 federal full-time sworn law enforcement officers (Reaves 2012). Not all of the federal enforcement officers are assigned to crime control; their role in policing varies. In all, there are 73 federal law enforcement agencies, which are divided into two branches: the Department of Homeland Security (e.g., U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and Homeland Security Investigation) and the Department of Justice (e.g., FBI, DEA, ATF, and Federal Bureau of Prisons). Both departments combined employ approximately 120,000 sworn officers: this figure is up from 69,000 since 1993 as a result of the USA Patriot Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

When factoring the official figures of city, state, and federal police, which are approximately 929,000, this number is relatively average when making international comparisons with advanced countries based on number of police per 100,000 (population) ratios.<sup>15</sup> However, this number, is highly deceptive when one considers all the other coercive forces that serve as auxiliary members meant to augment the coercive arm of the state. By including prison guards (493,100), probation

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<sup>15</sup> See “The Tenth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems” (Tenth CTS, 2005-2006), United Nations Office On Crime and Drugs. In this survey, the U.S. reported that it had a police size of 683,396, which is 225.66 per 100,000, which is very similar to Canada’s ratio of 191.73 per 100,000. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Tenth-CTS-full.html>

and correctional agents (90,600), private police (2,000,000), Transportation Security Agency (TSA) (60,000)<sup>16</sup> we arrive at an entirely different figure, which is approximately 3,572,700 million.

Studies on private security suggest that there may be as many as 90,000 private security organizations employing roughly 2 million security officers in the United States.<sup>17</sup> The Transportation Security Agency (TSA), with approximately 60,000 agents, whom are not sworn officers yet comprise of the increasing coercive apparatus, which is coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security and serve as an example of the increasing policing and its centralization. The reason for the inclusion of all the above categories is because the main objective of these organizations is to augment policing efforts. This is the case, regardless of whether they are sworn or not; they function to maintain the social order.

According to a 2012 U.S. Census Bureau report that in 2006, there were 424,946 (368,668 full-time and 56,278 part-time) civilian employees (i.e., nonsworn) in city and state policing organizations.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the two federal law enforcement branches: the Department of Homeland Se-

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<sup>16</sup> See Department of Homeland Security website.  
<https://www.dhs.gov/>

<sup>17</sup> See "Building Private Security/Public Policing Partnerships to Prevent and Respond to Terrorism and Public Disorder" (2004), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.  
<http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/BuildingPrivateSecurity.pdf>  
In a more recent study titled, "The United States Security Industry: Size and Scope, Insights, Trends, and Data," by ASIS International the Institute of Finance and Management (IOFM) find that private security in the U.S. is a \$350 billion market and that there is estimated to be between 1.9 and 2.1 million full-time security workers.

curity that proudly claims to employ more than 230,000 individuals;<sup>19</sup> and the Department of Justice that employs 116,512 individuals.<sup>20</sup> The problem with these figures is that they do not distinguish between direct (i.e., sworn) members and indirect members (i.e., unsworn) members. As we will discuss below, distinctions of sworn or unsworn really do not capture the importance of an individual's authority and role in the particular organization's hierarchy. However, adding these two figures together we have a total of 346,512 and then by subtracting the 120,000 estimated sworn federal law enforcement members and minus 60,000 for TSA, we arrive at the figure of 166,512, which we categorized as indirect federal personnel. In addition, as stated above, using the CNBC<sup>(See footnote 14 ◀)</sup> report, there are approximately 350,000 employees in various positions throughout corrections. We then calculate that there are 591,458 indirect employees working in the policing sectors; 424,946 in the city and state, 166,512 in the federal, and 350,000 in corrections (see Table 2).

While accounting for members of coercive forces in policing we estimate that there are approximately 4,514,158 million in direct and indirect occupations performing various supportive personnel roles in upholding the social order. This estimation is a mere glimpse into the policing matrix of employment. The coercive matrix

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<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012. Section 5: Law Enforcement, Courts, and Prisons, p. 216.

<sup>19</sup> Figures obtained from Department of Homeland Security website: <http://www.dhs.gov/>

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Dept. of Justice. FY 2014 Budget Request at a Glance Discretionary Budget Authority.

increases when factoring in the military members and personnel.

**Table 2: Police Coercive Forces**

City and State Law Enforcement Officers (full and part-time) <sup>21</sup>	809,000
Federal Law Enforcement Officers (full-time) <sup>22</sup>	120,000
Prison Guards (city, state, federal, and private) <sup>23</sup>	493,100
TSA <sup>24</sup>	60,000
Probation and Parole Agents <sup>25</sup>	90,600
Private Security Guards <sup>26</sup> (on following page►)	2,000,000
<i>Supportive Personnel (known)</i>	
City and State Policing Personnel <sup>27</sup> (►)	424,946
Federal Policing Personnel <sup>28</sup> (►)	166,512
Prison Supportive Personnel <sup>29</sup> (►►)	
(city, state, federal, private)	350,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,514,158</b>

<sup>21</sup> Reaves, Brian A. 2011. *Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2008*. U.S. Dept. of Justice. Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, July. <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/csllea08.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Reaves, Brian A. 2012. "Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 2008." U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, June, NCJ 238250. <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/csllea08.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Correctional Officers: Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Jan/2014. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Protective-Service/Correctional-officers.htm>

<sup>24</sup> See Transportation Security Agency details at the Department of Homeland Security website: <https://www.dhs.gov/>

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists*, January 8, 2014

⇐ Sources for chart on previous page: <sup>26, 27, 28, 29</sup> (& following page notes ▶▶)

## MILITARY COERCIVE FORCES

In 2010, the U.S. Armed Forces reported having had a total of 1,138,044 soldiers stationed in nearly 150 countries around the world for,

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<sup>26</sup> See “Building Private Security/Public Policing Partnerships to Prevent and Respond to Terrorism and Public Disorder” (2004), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. This report list 90,000 private security organizations and approximately 2 million provide security guards (p. 6)  
<http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/BuildingPrivateSecurity.pdf>

A more recent study titled, “The United States Security Industry: Size and Scope, Insights, Trends, and Data” (2013) by ASIS International and the Institute of Finance and Management (IOFM) found that private security in the U.S. is a \$350 billion booming market and that at the time of their study there were between 1.75 and 1.93 million full-time workers employed in operational security in the U.S. and with projected numbers of over 2 million by 2015. “Operational security” is defined as traditional protection activities undertaken to keep an organization from harm and which are typically carried out by a security department; this includes physical security and also protection functions such as threat management, investigations, fraud detection, and intelligence. As noted, this figure does not include part-time security guards or the 1 million employed in IT security. <https://www.asisonline.org/Documents/ASIS%20IOFM%20Executive%20Summary%208.23.13.%20final.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012. Section 5: Law Enforcement, Courts, and Prisons, p. 216.

<sup>28</sup> According to a 2012 U.S. Census Bureau report for the year 2006, there were 424,946 (368,668 full-time and 56,278 part-time) civilian employees (i.e., nonsworn) in city and state policing organizations (see Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012. Section 5: Law Enforcement, Courts, and Prisons, p. 216.). In adding the 230,000 in the DHS (Department of Homeland Security website: <https://www.dhs.gov/>) and the 116,512 in the DOJ (U.S. Department of Justice. FY 2014 Budget Request at a Glance Discretionary Budget Authority) we arrive at a total of 346,512 of individuals employed at these two federal law enforcement ■

which did not include the Navy or Marine Corps soldiers at sea.<sup>30</sup> Along with conflicting reports on the actual figures of soldiers, there are conflicting reports in the calculations of the actual number of military bases worldwide. Nick Turse states that

In the grand scheme of things, the actual numbers aren't all that important. Whether the most accurate total is 900 bases, 1,000 bases or 1,100 posts in foreign lands, it's undeniable that the US military maintains, in Johnson's famous phrase, an empire of bases so large and shadowy that no one—not even at the Pentagon—really knows its full size and scope. (2010)

For the historian, David M. Kennedy, today's military

wield unprecedented firepower and hold in their hands an almost incalculable capacity for focused violence. Not since the time of the Roman Empire have a single country's arms weighed so heavily in the global scales. (2013, 2)

According to Andrew J. Bacevich, "Americans... have fallen prey to militarism, manifesting itself in a romanticized view of soldiers, a tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness, and outsized expectations regarding the efficacy of force" (2013,

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■ branches. Then by subtracting the 120,000 estimated sworn federal law enforcement members and the 60,000 at the TSA, we arrive at the figure of 166,512, which we categorized as indirect federal personnel.

<sup>29</sup> See "Billions Behind Bars—Inside America's Prison Industry." CNBC. NBC Universal. 2013.

<sup>30</sup> See "U.S. Military Personnel by Country" CNN.



2). As a result of a militarized foreign policy, the U.S. military consumes a large part of the national budget. Lindorff provides a more comprehensive account of the U.S. military budget:

The US, in fiscal year 2012, budgeted a total of \$673 billion for the military, plus another \$166 billion for military activities of other government departments, such as the nuclear weapons program, much of which is handled by the Department of Energy, or the Veterans Program, which pays for the care and benefits of former military personnel. There's also another roughly \$440 billion in interest paid on the debt from prior wars and military expenditures. Altogether, that comes to \$1.3 trillion, which represents close to 50% of the general budget of the United States—the highest percentage of a government budget devoted to the military of any modern nation in the world—and perhaps of any government of any nation in the world (2012).

What this also means is that there are not only millions of soldiers who are connected to the coercive military employment matrix, but millions more civilians and industries which require a large budget to keep the empire afloat.

As Michael Parenti reminds us, imperialism is what empires do, because they “bring to bear military and financial power upon another country in order to expropriate the land, labor, capital, natural resources, commerce, and markets of that other country” (2011, 7). The actual number of individuals required in maintaining an empire, and the extensiveness of its employment matrix is what will be examined here. As of 2010, there were 1,458,697 million people in

active service and another 857,261 in the various reserve branches, totaling 2,315,958.<sup>31</sup> When including this figure with private contractors, the overall figure increases. According to a recent quarterly contractor census report (2012) issued by the U.S. Central Command that included Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as 18 other countries, there were approximately 137,000 contractors working for the Pentagon (Iseberg 2012).<sup>32</sup>

In a recent attempt to capture the actual number of people employed directly and indirectly by the military, a CNN report stated in 2012 that the military employed 3.1 million military personnel and civilians, with another 3 million who work for the defense industry, making weapons and operating various other businesses (Rizzo 2012). According to Robert Reich, the military is the biggest jobs program in the U.S. and any reduction to it would significantly affect unemployment (2010). Yet, this is only part of the story because the U.S. military or more specifically, the U.S. Defense Department is the world's largest employer with 3.2 million employees (the Chinese military is second with 2.3 million; followed by Walmart with 2.1 million employers) (Ruth 2012). The total number is actually larger than Reich reports. By subtracting the numbers in Table 3, active and reserve armed forces from 3,100,000 million of

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. 2010. "Population Representation in Military Services."

<sup>32</sup> There were 113,376 in Afghanistan and 7,336 in Iraq. Of that total, 40,110 were U.S. citizens, 50,560 were local hires, and 46,231 were from neither the U.S. nor the country in which they were working (Iseberg 2012).

military and civilian forces in the CNN report, we arrive at approximately 784,040 civilians directly on the payroll of the armed forces. Furthermore, within the Department of Defense is the National Intelligence Program, which has 16 intelligence agencies (e.g., the CIA, Army Intelligence, Department of State, and NSA) that make up the U.S. intelligence

**Table: 3: The U.S. Military Jobs Program**

Military and Civilian <sup>33</sup>	3,100,000
Defense Contractors <sup>34</sup>	3,000,000
National Intelligence Program <sup>35</sup>	107,035
Total	6,207,033

Sources: Author's compilations. See footnotes.

community, with 107,035 employees and a budget of \$52.6 billion of dollars in 2013 (Gellman and Miller 2013). As the result of recent revelations, a more accurate description is emerging of the real budget and number of employees attached to these agencies.

The figures in Table 3 provide a more accurate picture of how many individuals are integrated into the military coercive occupations. If we were to concern ourselves with conventional figures and official interpretations we would merely derive at a total of 914,300 thousand city, state, and federal law-enforcement officers (LEOs) and calculate a total of 2,315,958 million for members in all branches of the armed

<sup>33</sup> See Rizzo 2012.

<sup>34</sup> See Rizzo 2012.

<sup>35</sup> See Gellman and Miller 2013.

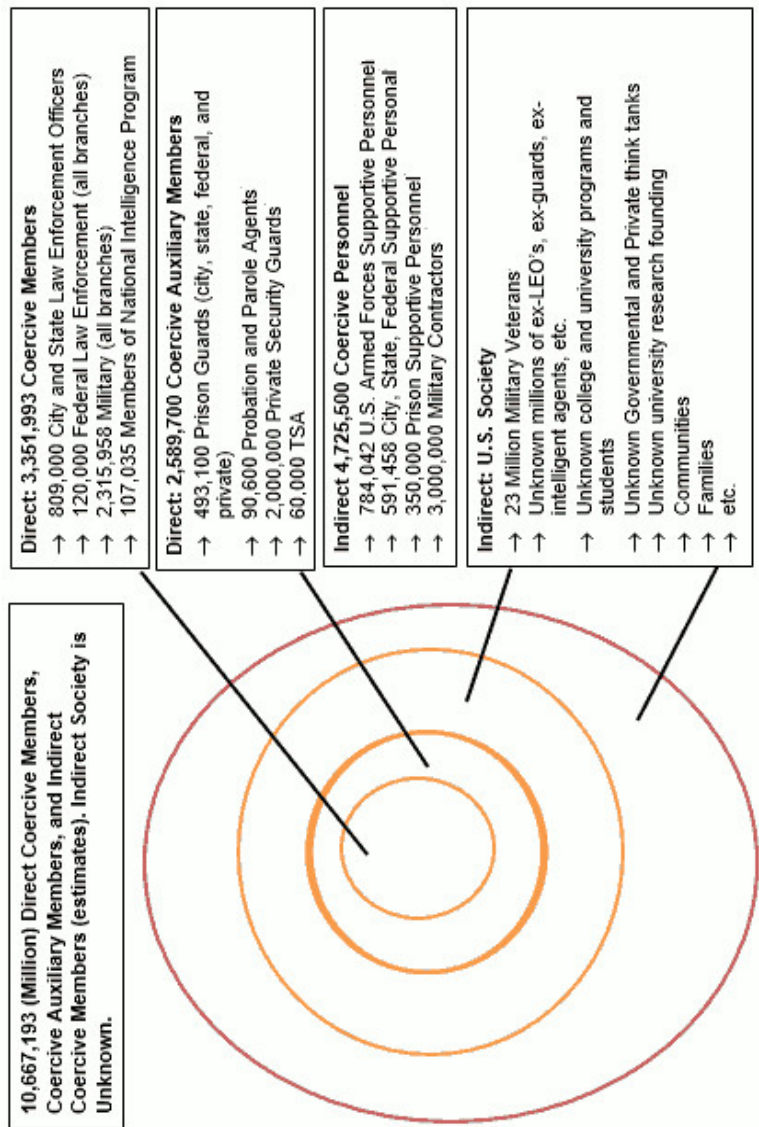
forces (see Table 3); these figures would undoubtedly present a distorted view of actual numbers involved in the coercive employment matrix, which is approximately 10,667,193 million in various sectors of U.S. coercive forces such as direct coercive members, direct coercive auxiliary, indirect coercive members and greater society. This makes the U.S. coercive forces the world's largest employer, without exception. Of course, one also has to include all the millions of families and, in some cases, entire communities (such as military communities), military veterans and ex-LEOs who continue to be attached to the military and policing services long after retirement, and all the military and police funded academic program and research that all rely on coercive forces for their living, careers, and esteem and identities.<sup>36,37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> By subtracting the 2,315,958 million individuals in active and reserve military branches (U.S. Department of Defense. 2010. "Population Representation in Military Services.") from the 3,100,000 million of military and civilian individuals (CNN report), we arrive at approximately 784,040 civilians directly on the payroll of the armed forces.

<sup>37</sup> Refer to Table 2: Police Coercive Forces, we calculate that there are 591,458 indirect employees working in the policing sectors: 424,946 individuals as City and State Policing Personnel and 166,512 individuals as Federal Policing Personnel.

CHART 2: U.S. COERCIVE EMPLOYMENT MATRIX<sup>38</sup>



Source: Author's compilations

<sup>38</sup> ← For chart sources, see also previous page, footnotes 36 & 37.

The above sketches are preliminary at best, but will serve as an outline for this inquiry into the pervasive nature of the coercive forces, and their role in the continuation of the structure of inequalities. There has been a growth in non-productive labor, which is what Samuel Bowles and Arjun Jayadev refer to as “guard labor:” the percentage of the labor force associated “with providing security for people and property and imposing work discipline” (2007, 1).<sup>39</sup> For reasons discussed herein, the system of capitalism has long been dependent on so-called non-productive labor, but this has increased during the rise of its neoliberal phase and should be considered a major form of state facilitation. This topic is extremely important if we hope to understand the vital mechanisms that the coercive employment matrix plays in sustaining inequality by making oppression and repression a problem for some and an opportunity for others.

## STATE COERCION, LEGITIMACY, AND FACILITATION

At the core of this inquiry is the argument that coercive forces are more firmly aligned with the social order than the other occupations. As we have seen these coercive forces range from the policing, corrections, national security, to military service. They are conjoined in their various tasks in upholding domestic and foreign policies designed to maintain the

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<sup>39</sup> Since 1890, according to Bowles and Jayadev, guard labor (police, corrections officers, and private security guards) has increased four-fold, and today police outnumber those working directly or indirectly for the Pentagon (2007, 1-20).

status quo in the U.S. and U.S. hegemony around the globe. It is important that we first understand why so many people, including some of the most oppressed and repressed, would participate, some very willingly, in coercive forces. Although the answer to this question cannot be reduced to individual economic self-interest or careerism, the economic factors are nonetheless important to consider. As we shall see, the best way to view this enigma is from the perspective that focuses on the capability of the hegemonic bureaucratic state's ability to develop identities that are ideologically sanctioned and operate like master statuses because they defy class and ethno-racial identities and solidarities.

Jobs in coercive forces tend to be more secured than other jobs in other industries. This is one of the reasons why they appear detached and insulated from the general public because they are largely shielded from the economic harsh conditions and in many cases have honorific positions. With all the many reports of a shrinking middle class and serious problems with upward mobility, the various occupations in coercive forces appear more secure and promising than others.

The idea that the capitalist system is maintained and reproduced because the capitalists solicit and entice classes into the system is not unique. Marx and Engels stated that the upper middle class (e.g., bankers, financiers, and lawyers) played a "supplementary part" in the functioning and managing of capitalism (1985, 108).<sup>40</sup> It is the

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<sup>40</sup> According to Karl Marx, although this group does not produce surplus like workers, their role is to assist the capitalists to manage and realize the surplus produced (Suchting 1983, 115).

upper strata that is thought to be the most conservative because of their direct relationship to the capitalist system while the rest of the middle class, depending on the historical context, conditions, and place, have generated much debate, as either being reactionary or revolutionary (i.e., having the potential to radicalize and side with workers and other oppressed people) (Burris 1995). In addition, one can also argue that various other segments of the population such as the working class also play an equally important role in maintaining the social order by following the rules of the game (e.g., respect for laws that protect private property and to work endlessly and obediently to maximize their own self-interests). In this reasoning, it is those outside the workforce, the surplus population who have the greatest potential for mobilization because of their distance from the benefits of capitalism and because they experience the full force of the misery that the system produces.

Understanding class structures and class interests is important because it moves us away from simple dichotomies such as between the 1% versus the 99% and exposes the complex nature of how the social order is maintained and reproduced. It would be extremely difficult to conceptualize members of coercive forces as being members of the so-called 1% or as members of the 99%. What appears to be a more accurate statement is that these occupations draw from a cross-section of the population. Military generals, directors, chiefs of police, and other high level officials may largely be from the upper and middle classes, but many of the rank and files have historically come from the working class and the poor. Military service and, for that matter, employment in law enforcement and corrections is often seen by many from



the disadvantaged classes as the only viable option for upward mobility, especially in times of economic insecurity. However, certain branches in the above occupations as well as for many positions in national security are reserved for middle and upper middle classes because of their higher requirements such as college education. In any case, coercive forces appear to be disconnected from some sense of class identity and solidarity, at least in the traditional sense, such as in the expression of a working class consciousness. Yet, they do appear to have a strong sense of solidarity and an alliance, but to themselves, the organizations they are embedded in, and the system that sustains them materially and ideologically.

The various organizations within coercive forces have lobbies, unions, and other organizations that operate like a “class-in-itself,” pursuing their own narrow occupational interests as opposed to broader “class-for-itself” interests. For example, their unions and associations are clear examples of how their organizations pursue narrow interests. Organizations such as The Fraternal Order of Police, Patrolmen’s Benevolent Associations, California Correctional Peace Officers Association, and the American Legion fight for job security, better wages, benefits, and they stand against legislation that will either reduce police sizes or prison populations. Many of these unions and associations also tend to circle the wagons and close ranks when a fellow officer or department is scrutinized by the public or media. Their organized power promotes their vested interests and appears to be firmly grounded in the continuation of the status quo rather than in a particular class, in the classical sense. After all, there have been very rare occurrences in which members in

policing, corrections, or military organizations have joined or acted in solidarity with other workers or participated in social movements with other sectors of society.

Yet, economic interests do not guarantee acquiesce. As a result, some organizations have developed such as the American Legion, established in 1919, in order to keep the sense of U.S. patriotism alive in veterans long after military service. The Legion currently has 2.4 million members.<sup>41</sup> The Legion developed as an anti-communist organization to prevent the radicalization of former soldiers by keeping them connected to the military (Campbell 1997). In addition, organizations such as the Legion were established to “build a cross class alliance dedicated to nationalism—Americanism in the language of the Legion—as a bulwark against an increasingly organized and radical working class” (Campbell 1997). Veterans have long been selected for special privileges such as pensions, loans, and medical treatment in order to keep this large segment of the population connected to the U.S. state long after their military service ends (Rodriguez-Beruff 1983, 25).

Nevertheless, there has been a history of contentious veterans and veterans’ organizations. For example, in 1932 during the Great Depression, some 15,000 WWI veterans and their families marched and occupied Washington, DC demanding payment promised to them. Contentious veteran actions ultimately lead to the passing of the G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944. Not all the actions of veterans were driven by narrow interests. There is also a history of veterans and active military soldiers working in common cause with others out-

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<sup>41</sup> See American Legion website: <http://www.legion.org/history>

side the military against U.S. foreign policies—e.g., during the Vietnam War and to a lesser extent presently against the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. This history includes anti-war organizations, conscientious objectors, and whistle blowers.<sup>42</sup>

There have been moments in which the police and correctional guards have gone on strike or engaged in other forms of contentious action, but much of their actions were restricted to the improvements of their working conditions and not the overall conditions of all workers or oppressed peoples. Ever since the Boston Police Strikes of 1919 laws were enacted to prevent law enforcement from striking. However, police now have the right to join unions; these unions are usually exclusively made up of police and excluded from broader labor coalitions. The police and correctional officers tend to be paid on average more and receive more benefits than other public employees and in many cases this includes the private sector and its millions of low-wage service sector employees. The state has enacted other mechanisms to prevent those in coercive occupations from sympathizing and identifying with the conditions of the exploited and oppressed by reducing discontent by raising wages and increasing pensions, which appears to have done much to increase separation not only from other occupations, but the general plight that many outside the employment matrix experience. Yet, there are rank and file police officers at city, state, and federal levels who have exposed corruption, racism, violations to the U.S. Constitution within their de-

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<sup>42</sup> A possible explanation for higher levels of veterans' opposition to the Vietnam War than the more permanent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and beyond is due in part to the military draft that was present during the war in Vietnam (among other factors).

partments and as a result, many of these have suffered severe consequences.

In fact, rather than joining in solidarity with labor movements and social movements, the historical record actually illustrates the opposite. The various organizations within the coercive forces have historically followed orders and policed, surveilled, incarcerated, contained, killed, or otherwise neutralized contentious (or combatant) individuals and oppositional organizations. The separation that divides the individuals in coercive occupations from a large part of the general public can be attributed to salaries, benefits, and job security, which all point to economic motive and interests. However, it would be a mistake to underestimate the degree of institutional socialization that individuals within these paramilitary and military bureaucratic organizations are subjected to. Many of these organizations are designed to instill discipline, loyalty, and to a large extent a particular sense of patriotism. According to Kottnerus, these organizations utilize ritualized symbolic practices such as trainings, drillings, parades, and other ceremonies that impact the cognitions or symbolic thoughts of actors and generate ritual experiences that heighten group and wider system allegiance (2005). For Weber, "The discipline of the army gives birth to all discipline" (Gerth and Mills 1946, 261). Bureaucratic organizations are capable of producing efficiency, but this is largely dependent on the development of hierarchical lockstep discipline. For example, bureaucratic structures in the military and police forces are designed to make obedient self-sacrificing soldiers and police officers, who have, by design, been socialized into being disciplined individuals that "go along" and comply with command hier-

archical structures, and above all do not disrupt the system but defend it.

According to Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce's extensive research on police paramilitary-bureaucratic organizations, police departments are "highly specialized, with complex divisions of labor, vertical authority structures, and extensive rule systems" (2010, 2). Even in the era of community policing, all the characteristics of highly bureaucratic structures, which are often associated with the production of individuals into cogs are seen in police departments. The paramilitary-bureaucratic structures in police forces move police officers away from "problem solving, community involvement, organizational decentralization, and prevention of crime" (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010, 2) and into top-down types of soldiers, who are removed from community involvement.

Unlike other types of occupations, coercive occupations draw significant numbers from the lower middle class, working class, and even from the poor, and since the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 there has been in many respects the racial integration of many coercive occupations. In examining the all-volunteer armed forces since 1973, Blacks and Latinos, which are the two largest racial minority groups in the U.S., have been heavily recruited into the armed forces. For example, in 2006, 12.6% of the civilian workforce aged 18 to 45 were Black, compared to 19.3% of active-duty enlistments and although Latinos had a civilian labor force participation of 17.1%, they only accounted for 12.8% of the enlistments (Segal and Korb 2013, 113-114). The above numbers only account for active-duty and not all the reserve branches. Clearly, Blacks were and continue to be overrepresented in active duty enlistments. Ac-

according to Segal and Korb, Latinos would likely also be overrepresented had it not been for enlistment requirements such as high school/GED and citizenship or permanent resident status (2013, 114).

According to Sklansky, the virtually all-white, all-male, and heterosexual departments of the 1950s and 1960s have given way to departments with large numbers of female and minority officers, which are increasingly commonplace (2006, 1210). A report in 2007 largely illustrates this increased diversity by stating that 1 in 4 full-time local police officers was a member of a racial or ethnic minority (estimated 117,113); this was about a 10% increase from 2003 (Reaves 2007, 14). Even with this increase in diversity “Nearly three-quarters of all police officers are White, while the U.S. population is about 63% White, U.S. Census data show” (Alcindor and Penzenstadler 2015). However, increases in racial and ethnic minorities have not translated into a major breakdown in the separation between the police and the poor and the ethno-racially oppressed.

In fact, Sklansky argues against the well-established argument that the new demographics are merely cosmetic changes because occupational outlook and organizational culture trumps the personal characteristics of new recruits (2006). Ronald Weitzer, an expert on diversity in the police force states that “Even if police officers of whatever race enforce the law in relatively the same way,” the problem is an image problem for police departments who do not represent the communities they police (Ashkenas and Park 2015). In other words, “blue is blue” and the job shapes the officer, not the other way around (Sklansky 2006, 1210). However, after extensive

research, Sklansky argues against the prevailing argument and states that police efficiency increases as a result of increases in the diversity of police departments. That basically, increased diversity has changed police culture to make it more effective in policing—i.e., more effective in maintaining the social order.

Although poor and racial minorities are considered threats to the social order, they still join coercive forces for a multitude of economic and ideological reasons. The fear of collusion between members of coercive forces with segments of the population appears to be the major motivator in the construction of master statuses that can buttress efforts to prevent class and ethno-racial alliances. It is in this way that the state conducts a dual-strategy of integration and neutralization by facilitating incorporation. In other words, in many cases, the most oppressed are tasked with essentially policing and oppressing themselves. After all, coercive forces are in direct proximity with the marginalized and are tasked with upholding the social order by physically managing and controlling the people who tend to be the most oppressed and exploited by the system. The military offers one of the very few escapes from poverty for many individuals and their families. The military appears to not have problems meeting its quotas in times of economic decline. Its enticements of a stable and secured salary and benefits can be overwhelming when employment is scarce and economic insecurity is pervasive. The military as a source of employment is well known, but the military also has a long tradition of providing career opportunities for the middle and upper

classes, which are concentrated in the command structure.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps the best way to address the supportive personnel's sense of duty and allegiance to the state is to not only consider economic interests, but to understand their proximity to coercive forces and to understand that they too are immersed in the very same bureaucratic paramilitary and military structures as are the more direct members. One might conclude that direct front-line forces and supportive personnel as well as most of the population are embedded in larger bureaucratic structures (Bensman and Vidich 1971; Mills 1951, 1959). The need to connect the larger hegemonic and bureaucratic structures of the U.S. state to the coercive apparatuses and more specifically to the individuals that carry out and support the coercive functions is essential.

Yet it is also assumed that many join coercive forces because they do not view the U.S. state as an imperialist and oppressive power, but believe its power to be legitimate. Some might even subscribe to such interpretations as that of Robert Kagan and others who view the U.S. as the world policeman and the keeper of order based on democracy and freedom (2003). The emphasis on belief is important, because of the ability of the state to socialize individuals, who in many cases have internalized the values and norms of the state. In addition, people may not simply submit

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<sup>43</sup> According to Robert L. Goldich, "Most first-term enlistees (like most people in the U.S.) certainly do not come from the more affluent sectors of American society," but the popular belief that the military is the last resort for the "substandard" was never accurate based on enlistees having higher standardized test results, higher physical aptitudes, higher family income, and less criminal involvement than their civilian counterparts (2013, 93).



to the social order because they believe it is just, but they may believe that there is no acceptable alternative to it and thus align themselves with it. Some may even be operating with the idea that they will reform it from within. Although reasons for becoming a member in coercive forces vary, one cannot deny the power and influence that a highly bureaucratic and hegemonic state has over individual motives and actions. According to David Held, the state “appears to be everywhere, regulating the conditions of our lives from birth registration to death certifications” (1989, 11); this power certainly includes the shaping of educational institutions, the media, and the validation and promotion of particular ideas that reinforce the legitimacy of social order. When it comes to the U.S. state, the most dominant institution in the world, its hegemonic tentacles reach not only into the public and private spheres of U.S. society, but reach around the world.

In evaluating the success of the U.S. state’s ability to utilize coercive forces as a means to facilitate the integration of segments of the population into the social order, we need to address the notion of legitimacy, more specifically how the state is able to legitimize its actions. The result has been that there is no short supply of new recruits and all the millions who aspire to be members. Legitimacy is based on the acceptance of a citizenry to state authority. In the context of legal-rational authority, the state exercises its power in accordance with some general notion of consent; this is usually accomplished with a politico-legal system. Of course, a belief in the legitimacy of a social order is not the only means in which a state ensures its continuation. Weber’s definition of the nation state centers on the monopoly of the legiti-

mate means of violence within a given territory (Gerth and Mills 1946, 78). For him the coercive apparatus of the state is fundamental to the formation of the state and its ability to maintain its right to dominate/rule. In other words, authority appears to be largely predicated on a (nation) state's monopoly of the legitimate use of violence to enforce its order. In this context, the military and police forces play key roles in this conception of the modern nation state.

Charles Tilly's research identified a link between coercion and legitimacy and wrote that whatever else nation states do, and however they go about legitimizing their power (e.g., the idea of social contract, etc.), "they organize and, wherever possible, monopolize violence" (1996, 171). For Tilly, state legitimacy is obtained over time because eventually "the personnel of states purveyed violence on a larger scale, more effectively, more efficiently, with wider assent from their subject populations, and with readier collaboration from neighboring authorities than did the personnel of other organizations" (1996, 173). Consequently, nation states, in part, maintain power through legitimizing themselves by creating ideologies, which socializes individuals to the norms and values of the state. As Tilly makes clear, control over the physical forces of violence is fundamental to nation states' authority and the fact that legitimacy depends on the conformity to abstract principles such as the consent of the governed only helps to rationalize the monopoly of force (1996, 171). After all, for Tilly it is through the concentration and accumulation of capital and coercion and interstate war waging that the present nation state emerged (1992).

Kent and Jacobs counter assertions that a society based only on coercion could not survive by stating that no social order, not even the most authoritarian, employs coercion by itself; it is often mixed with other means (2004). Kent and Jacobs nevertheless provide historical examples that illustrate what occurs when police suddenly become paralyzed (e.g., on strike) and don't respond; their research suggests that the social order is reliant on coercive force, because without it poor people would not accept the conditions of inequality and would engage in redistribution of wealth endeavors. Robert Cover provides a good example of the state's reliance on force by illustrating how "a convicted defendant may walk to a prolonged confinement, but this seemingly voluntary walk is influenced by the use of force. In other words if he does not walk on his own he will most certainly be dragged or beaten" (in Green and Ward 2004, 3). As pointed out above, coercion is aptly referred to as a crucial component to the establishment and continuation of the social order. The amount of force necessary to maintain order in the U.S. is often underestimated. According to many critical theorists, stability is problematic even in the most "democratic" societies because resource distribution is so skewed that only a few reap excessive rewards, freedom, rights, and security. In order to maintain unequal relations there are over 12 million members of coercive forces maintaining this status quo. As a result, there are approximately 7 million individuals under supervision in the U.S. alone and countless populations around the world that live in wretched conditions so that the U.S. state can maintain its global dominance.

State power is complex and possesses a multitude of means by which to repress and/or incorporate and integrate many individuals and groups into its social order. As Weber made clear, the modern rational-legal state was similar to traditional domination because both provide social stability and are “rooted in [their] ability to supply the normal, constantly recurring needs of everyday life and thus has its basis in the economy—the supplier of everyday requirements” (Runciman 1978, 226). The U.S. state fits this description on many levels, two of which stand out: (1) it serves to guarantee the status quo—i.e., stability; and (2) it is the major supplier of everyday requirements such as the material means—e.g., a major provider of employment. Social order, or to be more accurate, state power, functions to reproduce itself, not merely through coercion but by the use of economic means and ideology.

Similar to other imperialist powers, systems of slavery, or authoritarian regimes, the U.S. has managed to legitimize its power. All these regimes were made legitimate by those in power because they possessed and controlled the means of violence, and controlled the distribution of wealth, resources, and employment. Those regimes also had systems of law and order. In addition, those societies also had a large degree of citizen participation; this occurred with the exclusion of others. And those regimes certainly had the ability to integrate various segments of the oppressed population into their social order. It was not unusual to find colonial subjects fighting alongside their European masters. Nor is it incredibly unusual to see the poor or oppressed ethno-racial minorities such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans in the Armed Forces or in policing

agencies managing marginalized communities and countries. One could make the claim that these groups are acting against their own self and collective interests, but perhaps, self and collective interests are too narrowly defined and one needs to re-contextualize them within the larger context of the state's ability to define these. Understanding why so many have a vested interest in the continuation of the status quo seems to be a pressing issue if real change is the objective.

The legitimacy of the social orders presented above did not have invisible coercive apparatuses. The injustice and violence employed by them was/is easily identified by the victims and by those whose interests were undermined. Yet, those employed in coercive forces and those who collaborate with the unjust, violent, and repressive systems are more likely driven to comply out of economic motivation and material interest as well as the desire to carry out their duties. States have the ability to normalize and institutionalize their coercion and violence by the use of various ideologies to justify their actions such as the use of nationalism, patriotism, ethno-racial supremacy, "humanitarianism," or national security, and the upholding of the thin-blue-line that separates civilization from mayhem and disorder.

## CONCLUSION

The above inquiry is an attempt to address how the U.S. state uses coercive forces to facilitate the integration of millions into its social order. This inquiry contributes to our understanding of how structured inequalities are maintained and reproduced, and how coercive occupations are the byproducts of unequal relations. There

appears to be enough substantial evidence to be skeptical about a legitimacy that is dependent on millions of people who are tasked with upholding it through their participation in various coercive occupations. As seen above, large segments of the population, which cut across class and ethno-racial lines, feed off the current unequal arrangement of power within the U.S. and between the U.S. and a large part of the world by their active participation in the coercive employment matrix. This particular state strategy alone is indeed helpful in the development of an explanation of how organized contentious action is hindered when large segments of the population are either directly or indirectly dependent on its continuation.

By examining the coercive forces beyond their functions in maintaining the status quo, we can begin to understand these occupations in terms of their ability to integrate individuals firmly to the state. These occupations have organizational bureaucratic structures and cultures that integrate individuals more methodically into the social order. Further analysis is needed in order to explain the specific mechanisms that produce behaviors and mindsets of the individuals in coercive forces that appear largely detached and shielded from the realities faced by other segments of society because of their insulation from economic harsh conditions.

Ideology, economic reward, and elevated status are some of the ways in which the U.S. state hides and eases the burden for individuals employed in coercive occupations. One need not use the colonial social order or Nazi Germany to illustrate how problematic the concept of legiti-

macy is, especially the manner in which it is used to justify unjust authorities. What we know is that it is not only the 1% or even the 5% who benefit the most and who extract the greatest privileges from the continuation of the existing status quo. Clearly, the millions of non-elite (or the 99%) derive benefit as well and thus are also culpable. Although this inquiry is specific to understanding the role that coercive forces play in integrating individuals into the social order, it can be argued that large segments of the population in the U.S. as well as in other rich (or core) nations benefit from unequal global relations (see dependency theory, world systems theory, and theories of underdevelopment). As a result of these unequal relations, rich nations have higher standards of living and have more democratic rights because their core nation state in the capitalist world economy affords them the opportunity to appease its workers and alleviate poverty within the core nations (Wallerstein 1983).

It has always been difficult to question an enduring social order because it provides much reward and ideological justifications to many, including the academic scholar, while the needs of the rest are undermined. Analyzing the culpability and compliance of those involved in upholding unjust and violent social orders is no simple matter. Social orders are typically well camouflaged in deception and ideological justification. In fact, the U.S. state is no exception to the rule; it operates at a greater level of sophistication, which provides it the opportunity to better mask its coercion. It is in the tradition of sociology and its critical capacity, which has been largely reserved for authoritarian and non-western nation

states, where we now hope to further our analysis on the U.S. state's use of coercive forces in order to facilitate integration and assess the larger implications this has for mobilizations for social change.

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