

Lo Stato moderno come detentore del monopolio della forza legittima: considerazioni sull'uso delle categorie weberiane in sede di ricostruzione storica

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The Modern State as the Holder of the Monopoly of Legitimate Force: Considerations on the Use of Weberian Categories in Historical Reconstruction

Abstract: This article examines Weber's conceptualisation of the modern state as the holder of the monopoly on legitimate physical force, questioning its analytical effectiveness and its implications for historical reconstruction. The aim is to assess the extent to which Weber's ideal-typical model explains the formation and consolidation of the modern state in Western Europe, taking into account the diverse dynamics that have shaped its evolution. Particular attention is given to the persistence of decentralised power structures and competing normative orders, which have continued to interact with central authority, influencing its institutionalisation. The analysis highlights how the monopoly on force did not emerge uniformly but rather through a gradual process marked by conflicts, compromises, and local resistance. From this perspective, the transition from the late medieval state to the (proto-)modern state is examined comparatively, emphasising the different trajectories of state development across Europe. The article argues that some alleged shortcomings of the Weberian model stem not from an intrinsic flaw but from a rigid, overly descriptive interpretation. When integrated with a historically situated analysis, the concept of the monopoly on legitimate force retains significant heuristic value in understanding the processes of political power centralisation.

Keywords: Monopoly of legitimate force, Max Weber, Modern state, Political legitimacy.

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