

# The revolutionary tradition

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Lenin and Weber hold different views on the state, and explore the pitfalls and praises of democracy through their respective paradigms. In Weber's *Politics as a Vocation* he takes a militant view of the state, claiming that if the notion of violence and militantism did not exist, the concept and existence of the state would also be absent. In contrast Lenin adopts a traditionally Marxist view of the state, claiming that the mere notion of the state is transitory, evolving, and hallucinatory in *State and Revolution*. Weber heavily emphasizes the relationship between violence and the state as the binding solution to the stability and sustainability of government. The emphasis of Weber's state is also centered on three models of authority, which are represented by the leaders of the state: the eternal yesterday (effectively divine right), the charismatic (with messiah-like qualities), and legality (a rational process like democracy). These three authority models all have power and a right to authority in a different sense; the strongest of these being charismatic due to the devotion towards the individual and the leader's crusade. Weber argues that without a strong leader, preferably with a charismatic character, or without the military capabilities to enforce geographic and ethno-centric borders the state will ultimately fail as the state is directly brought to genesis and developed through the actions of the prince. Sheer military force is not enough within modern context, however the structuralism within the military in reference to rank, units, and a division of labor, is directly applicable to the power structures of a modern government, mainly the implementation of bureaucracy. Weber argues that a new source of power is found within the bureaucracy that upholds the leader and, in turn, the state. Weber also makes reference to the potential of

economic power outweighing sheer military power; that to a certain extent economics could play the suitor to the prince in place of violence. Weber's general sentiments towards the state are violence and authoritarian oriented, allowing room for a strong, dictatorial leader in order to control an irrational world. While Lenin's view of the state will prove to be a contrast, Lenin and Weber both agree on the use of professionals within the political realm. Lenin advocates for professional revolutionaries to help organize and systematically approach the revolution, allowing the workers to follow through with the plans made by the professional revolutionaries. Much like Lenin, Weber also leans strongly towards an organization of the political power, and presses for professional politicians- people who make politics a vocation in the idea that they devote their lives, money, and purpose to a particular cause or a particular vision. Much like a prophet, Weber finds this vision and charisma critical to the success of a professional politician (who also should not be Christian in religious practices). Both Lenin and Weber want strong, organized, intellectual, and visionary men to be the leaders of these socio-political movements. Lenin's view of the state takes after a Marxist tradition in which the state is slowly withering away allowing for a new form of itself, mainly communism, to emerge in place of this old system of government. This transition from capitalism to communism is what Marx focuses on, and the withering away of the states the decay of capitalism. Lenin, and by extension Marx, views the state as a transitory and nonexistence façade for the next step, the state itself is nothing but a shell to Lenin, and thus has no true power and doesn't need violence. The use of violence in Lenin's paradigm is to bring about a revolution that will bring

about a “ true democracy”, the idea of using force to maintain geographical borders seems almost foreign to Lenin as he points out the fluxuations of the German and Swiss border due to cultural and government changes. Lenin goes on to talk about democracy, mainly condemning capitalistic-democracies for pushing out the labor classes and elevating the bourgeoisie and their pursuits of greater wealth. He advocates for a dictatorship of the proletariat, which would be a more honest and pure form of democracy as opposed to the capitalist-democracy found in America. Weber on the other hand advocates for democracy as an acceptable form of authority (falling under the legal category) as long as there is military or economic (preferably both) behind the political figure. As a whole, Lenin’s argument is more persuasive in tone, but Weber is more rationally persuasive. The concept of the decay of the state due to the unbridled force of capitalism is in direct contrast to Weber’s use of capital as a replacement for violence. Lenin takes a traditional Marxist approach to his argument for a revolution, taking history and the transition from capitalism to communism into account. The structure of the arguments is different, and thus their effectiveness also differs, making two arguments fundamentally different.