



This is an attempt, more or less, at a defense of neocameralism and patchwork against the blows struck by Vince Garton .

Skins

The Game



Leviathan's Termites

Yet patchwork remains, despite itself, peculiarly ambivalent. It is obsessed with the state: creating new states, cutting up states, states on top of states. ... At an elementary level, however, it seems that competition between states must favour states themselves, and for this we have many great proofs throughout history — the emergence of the truly protofascist Qin Empire from the fissiparous warring Chinese states; the rise of Alexander's empire from the Greek poleis; the birth of *raison d'état* in Renaissance Italian city-states.

The question, then, is this: 'How can the sovereign power be prevented — or at least dissuaded—from devouring society?' [...] In the end, Hobbes shows us that it cannot be maintained. [...] But to be sustained even in the most radical state of exception, in conditions of overwhelming catastrophe, the commonwealth's domination must expand irrepressibly from the radical root of human thought into every circle of existence. It **must** 'devour society'. [...] Once threatened, Leviathan must warp everything around itself in order to maintain its existence — all thought, all ideology, all behaviour. Politics must get a grip — whatever the cost.



More promising, by far — for the purposes of tractable argument — is a strictly formal or contractual usage of ‘control’ to designate the exclusive right to **free disposal** or **commercial alienation**. Defined this way, ownership is a legal category, co-original with the idea of contract, referring to those things which one has the right to trade (based on natural law). Property is essentially marketable. It cannot exist unless it can be alienated through negotiation. A prince who cannot trade away his territory does not ‘own’ it in any sense that matters.

(...)

Neocameralism necessarily commercializes sovereignty, and in doing so it accommodates power to natural law. Sovereign stock (‘primary property’) and ‘secondary property’ become commercially inter-changeable, dissolving the original distinction, whilst local sovereignty is rendered compliant with the wider commercial order, and thus becomes a form of constrained ‘secondary sovereignty’ relative to the primary or absolute sovereignty of the system itself. Final authority bleeds out into the catallactic ensemble, the **agora**, or **commercium**, where **what can really happen** is decided by natural law. It is this to which sovereign stockholders, **if they are to be effective**, and to prosper, must defer.

