7. State definition: States are information platforms for their citizens

'If you leave this problem unsolved it will hardly be possible to solve the ones which come next.'

Cicero

Synopsis: *States are information platforms for their citizens (1–4); States store, create and disseminate information on their citizens (5–6); States create the processing environment necessary for their citizens to live in, (7–8); States are Beings (9); Other questions that blur the picture (10).*

1. *

States are information platforms for their citizens. Basically, at their core, they are information processing infrastructures, individualisation mechanisms,[278] that make each and every human uniquely identifiable throughout space and time.

States are Beings that can and will process information;[279] they are organisations that have materialised in the analogue world.[280]

This definition applies as much today, when the digital world is taking shape and challenging the assumptions and understandings of the analogue world, as it did in the depths of human history, from the moment when humans first became self-conscious, developed language and started communicating with each other.[281]

Regardless of any other context or role (artificially) ascribed to them throughout human recorded and unrecorded history, states are, and always have been, first and foremost information platforms for their citizens.

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278   See Chap. 11, par. 3.
279   See Chap. 2, par. 9.
280   See Chap. 9.
281   With none of these actions taking place in any particular order, see Chap. 8, par. 1.

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2.

States are information platforms for their citizens in the sense that it is (only) on their platform[282] that the processing of information on[283] and by[284] their citizens is made possible.

3. *

How is this definition best visualised? In essence, whenever any two individuals communicate, a third, silent interlocutor is implied. This is the state, which warrants their communication. The state warrants that, for example, John is John and Maria is Maria, so as for John and Maria to be able to communicate. Unless this assumption is made, there is no way for these two individuals (unless they are within the same family and therefore already know each other) to be certain that the other party is actually who he or she claims to be. It is the silent, omnipresent[285] third party, the state, that warrants this, and thus makes any human contact, and meaningful[286] human life, possible.

4. *

The mechanism through which this is accomplished is so common that it is perhaps overlooked. Immediately at birth every human is given a name. Who gives this name? Most likely, his or her parents. But who is it that makes this name possible?[287] It is the state that this human is born into. In other words, the state is the indispensable registry[288] for a name, any name, that allows it to function as it is meant to,[289] to uniquely identify an individual.

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282 On the choice and use of the term see Chap. 7.1.

283 See par. 6.

284 See par. 7.

285 But not omnipotent, see Chap. 16 pars. 2 and 3, as well as Chap. 12 par. 10.

286 As in the human life we all know and, hopefully, appreciate (hence, 'meaningful'; see also Chap. 8, par. 1 and note 8/1/3), and not, for example, the life of an animal, an organisation or an artificial Being; see also Chaps. 1, par. 9, and 2 pars. 6 and 12.

287 See also Chap. 8.1, par. 3.

288 .A ledger, or in contemporary computing terms, a blockchain; see also Chap. 8.1, par. 5.

289 Using, of course, human logic, see note 1/1/1.

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Without a state, a name as an identification mechanism is useless: because many may share it, it is unusable outside the strict limits of that human's family (or close circle of people who know him or her from birth). It is the state that warrants a name's uniqueness and continued existence, so as for it to uniquely define a specific human throughout space and time. In this way this personal[290] information is co-created[291] between the human (his or her parents, acting on his or her behalf) and the state.

At the same time, meaning at birth, every human is provided with a citizenship. The state that made the naming possible also provides its citizenship to that same human. This is the second, equally indispensable, part of (humans') unique identification: a name needs to belong to a, similarly uniquely identifiable,[292] registry.[293]

Without these a human cannot exist; a nameless or stateless human being is unthinkable. In this way, through the state's provision of a name and citizenship, a human becomes an individual. Likewise, in this same way, every human is born into, informational, chains.

5. *

Once in place, these two pieces of information are subsequently (tacitly or expressly) warranted by that state each time the individual communicates with other individuals. In other words, whenever John talks to Maria (and neither belongs to the same family), it is their respective states that make this communication possible, warranting that John is John and Maria is Maria. Without this intervention any communication between John and Maria would be impossible.

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290 See note 1/8/1.

291 Because, however, the part played by parents is arguably the less important in this procedure (they basically select a name from a list, subject to approval by the mechanism that in any event makes this procedure possible), the 'co-' part will be removed from the remaining of this analysis, i.e. states create information on their citizens.

292 Thus, states also need a registry for themselves, hence the archipelago (see Chap. 19).

293 The name of the ledger (or of the blockchain) itself (see footnote 289).

Accordingly, once John or Maria has been given a name, whatever new processing of information either one of them carries out[294] is warranted by (registered with, created on) the information platform that is their state.

Importantly, once a human is individualised in this manner, it becomes impossible for any other human to ignore the fact. One[295] cannot choose to ignore, refuse or challenge it: a name and a citizenship is granted at birth to a specific human and one has no choice other than to acknowledge the fact. It may be that one will never interact with that person, whether out of choice or out of chance. However, should any individual initiate communication with another Being, that other Being has to react to the communication (in any way it pleases, of course) on that basis, taking the assumption of a name and a citizenship, that is, of a specific unique identification, for granted.[296] In other words, in the above example, Maria may choose to ignore a contact request from John, but she cannot ignore the fact (or avoid making the assumption) that it is John who contacted her.[297]

6.

Therefore, states create, store and disseminate information on[298] their citizens.

7.

States also create the processing environment necessary for their citizens to live in,[299] in which information can be processed by them.

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294 The processing of information leading to the creation of new information, see Chap. 1, par. 7.
295 A human, or any other Being for the same purposes.
296 The cases of forced name changing in recorded history being the precursor to the committing of horrendous crimes against the victims of this (dehumanising, because it is de-individualising) practice.
297 In stark difference to state relationships, where a state may simply ignore the name (and existence) of another (see Chap. 19, par. 2, where it is clarified that states are still found in a 'state of nature' (in terms of human development)).
298 Not 'for', see Chap. 1, par. 6.
299 See Chap. 8.1, par. 4.

States make it possible for the humans that participate in them,[300] that is, their citizens, to augment their information processing (thus fulfilling a need specific to humans[301]).

8. *

A state's citizens ('its' citizens), means the citizens registered with it, whose citizenship they hold. Other categories of residents are, of course, possible (travellers, immigrants, etc.), but each requires a detailed (in terms of time and location) analysis (never forgetting that name and citizenship, once granted, are permanent for the individual concerned, their bond is unchangeable and unbreakable[302]).

9.

States are Beings, they will process information because they can. As such, they will process information on other Beings (i.e. animals, organisations and artificial Beings, including, of course, their citizens), as well as, on Things.

10. *

The question 'what is the state' (its definition) must remain separate from other questions that may be relevant but could blur the picture, such as 'what is the state for?' or 'how does a state develop?', or the quintessential questions of 'how is it best to govern a state?' and 'what is the optimal type of government?'[303] All these are related, and extremely important, questions, but they are not the same as the first one. They have been used either to assist in the definition of the state ('if we understand what it is for then we can understand what it really is') or as substitutes for a definition from a pragmatic point of view ('it is fine if we cannot define it; it is not necessary because we all know what it means, so let us focus on the questions that really matter, such as what it is for or what is the best

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300 See Chap. 2, pars. 6 and 7.
301 See Chap. 5.1.
302 See Chap. 8, par. 6.
303 See also note 0/1/6.

political system'). Nevertheless, these approaches leave the matter wanting: only once we have provided a satisfactory definition of the state will we be able to provide adequate answers to (or, at least, shed new light on) questions regarding what the state is for or how it is best governed.