

An Overview of State Crimes Against Democracy by Daniel K. Sage, PhD

State Crimes Against Democracy (SCAD). Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith (2006; 2010; 2013) has offered a penetratingly useful approach to better diagnose the American political/psychological complex that is reflected in widespread citizen feelings of distrust, being threatened, and being shamed by our political-corporate Empire. It is evident that this political/psychological complex exacerbates the wider and deeper collective trauma that traverses ethnicity, gender, the workplace, and cultural identity (Garrigues, 2013). Moreover, it is patently obvious how it traverses the arenas of public administration, policy formation, law enforcement, economic manipulation, and a daily lack of a sense of well-being in the workplace or livelihood.

Because public policy and administration is the area of expertise for Professor deHaven-Smith, he applies his concept of State Crimes Against Democracy (SCADs) to scholarly standards of verification. SCADs are outlined by deHaven-Smith as illegal or extralegal actions by public officials or elites that weaken or subvert democratic structures or popular sovereignty (deHaven-Smith, 2006) – in other words, SCADs are attacks by insiders/elites on the political system's organizing principles (deHaven-Smith, 2013).

Such actions can be state crimes, elite criminality, or imploring extralegal methods to reduce or obstruct democratic processes and functions. This is the context for deHaven-Smith explaining that SCADs include both illegal and extralegal or unethical elite acts (2006). The construct

SCADs liberates analysts and activists from becoming mired in what he calls “incident-specific myopia” — theories and inquiries isolated from a broader context (deHaven-Smith, 2006, 2010, 2013).

SCADs permit a larger perspective of criticism by interrogating many elite activities for recurring patterns, motivations, structures, and functions that increase elite power and subvert democracy (deHaven-Smith, 2006; 2010; 2013) Election tampering, political assassinations, voter fraud, government graft, non-governmental rogue operations, state counter-democratic actions, and corporate collusion with extralegal initiatives all can be classified as SCADs (deHaven-Smith, 2006, 2010, 2013).

A proposed list of SCAD-like operations not specifically offered by Professor deHaven-Smith might also include:

- false flag operations (Dr. deHaven-Smith clearly includes 9/11)
- government-corporate partnership manipulations of financial markets and mortgages
- agribusiness friendly farming regulations
- a concocted drug war
- the militarization of local law enforcement and local judicial systems
- the increased pervasiveness of the surveillance state
- the privatization of the military and the prison-industrial complex
- censorship and deliberate cognitive infiltration/priming/subliminal indoctrination throughout popular media formats
- torture
- using unwitting human subjects in science experiments
- union busting
- creation of laws, regulations favorable to corporate

interests over popular interests/needs (e.g., hydraulic-fracturing exemptions from federal laws, Monsanto patents on seeds, etc.)

- voter restrictions

Countless other operations can be added to this list and considered likely SCADs. Real lives are intimately impacted by all of these and need no scholarly analysis. In fact, in many ways some scholarship interferes with activism around these concerns. However, for the purposes of bringing solid evidence against the legal and psychological dominance of the American Empire, all of these will need further verification in order to see how they illuminate the patterns and characteristics of SCADs. This endeavor begun by Professor deHaven-Smith accelerates the effectiveness of social activism on many fronts.

As Martin Luther King, Jr., advised in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” activists on many fronts can more effectively work together armed with truths gained from thorough fact-finding that creates and fortifies political action (King, 1964). Such truth and fact-finding also makes for more robust political-activist alliances and coalitions. Now more than ever these kinds of coalitions and alliances are needed among social and political activists.

A notable portion of the sense of distrust, threat, and shame afflicting the American citizenry can be attributed to actual and potential elite criminality and abuse of power (Blum, 2005a, 2005b; Chomsky & Herman, 1988; Chomsky, 2006; Zinn, 1980). In fact, well executed efforts to induce systemic psychological disorders/complexes have on occasion been deliberately applied to economic, social, and political structures in order to advance the interests of elites to the outright detriment of the health and well-being of the

remainder of the population (Davis, 1991; Klein, 2007; Perkins, 2006).

Using social and political theory to illustrate how SCADs cannot simply be subject to the oft employed pejoratively dismissive term “conspiracy theory” (Hofstadter, 2008; Willis, 2002), deHaven-Smith (2006, 2010, 2013) opens a pathway through which activists, social critics, and even helping/healing professionals can utilize facts, scholarship, social actions, and friendly encounters to promote truth, political transformation, and hopefully increased possibilities for authentic participatory democracy.

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Lance deHaven-Smith, PhD: Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith is Professor in the Reubin O'D. Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University. A former president of the Florida Political Science Association, deHaven-Smith is the author of more than a dozen books, including *The Battle for Florida*, which analyzes the disputed 2000 presidential election. DeHaven-Smith appeared on "Good Morning America," the "Today Show," "NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw," "CBS News with Dan Rather," the "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," and has appeared on other national TV and radio shows. His latest book, for which he has been invited to the Denver area, is *Conspiracy Theory in America*, in which he outlines his conceptualization of State Crimes Against Democracy

(SCADs). He details between 16 and 20 SCADs that are well-documented since WWII.

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