



ics
Universidad
de Navarra

Instituto Cultura y Sociedad

**VIII Encuentro Anual del Instituto Cultura y Sociedad ICS:
"Vínculos sociales y desarrollo (II): Vínculos familiares"
21 noviembre 2018**

**How to Minimize Abuses of Parental Authority without Arming a
Leviathan State**

David Thunder
Religión y sociedad civil, ICS

Parents exercise two forms of authority over their children: (a) moral authority: a right to educate and care for their children, in accordance with their children's welfare; and (b) institutional authority: a right to direct their education and care for their welfare, derived from their biological & socially recognized role as parents. The State can define certain limits to a parent's institutional authority, but it cannot protect children against more subtle forms of parental abuse, that violate a parent's moral authority but not their institutional authority, without opening the door to worse abuses by the State.

Therefore, we must rely on other social actors, such as relatives, friends, and civil society organizations, to exert "soft power" over parents who might be otherwise inclined to abuse their sphere of legal immunity from state interference to act against the best interests of their children.