State and its formation

Political organisations refers to groups that exist for the purpose of public decision Making and leadership, maintaining social cohesion and order, protecting group rights, and ensuring safety from external threats. Political organisations have several Features:

- Recruitment principles: Criteria for determining admission to the unit.
- Perpetuity: Assumption that the group will continue to exist indefinitely.
- Identity markers: Particular characteristics that distinguish it from others, such as costume, membership card, or title.
- Internal organisation: An orderly arrangement of members in relation to each other.
- Procedures: Prescribed rules and practices for behaviour of group members.

Social anthropologists cluster the many forms of political organisations that occur cross-culturally into four major types. The four types of political organisations (given below) correspond, generally, to the major economic forms. Societies in the ethnographic record vary in level of political integration- that is, the largest territorial group on whose behalf political activities are organised- and in the degree to which political authority is centralised or concentrated in the integrated group.When we describe the political authority of particular societies, we focus on their traditional political systems. In many societies known to anthropology, the small community (band or village) was traditionally the largest territorial group on whose behalf political activities were organised. The authority structure in such societies did not involve any centralisation; there was no political authority whose jurisdiction included more than one community. In other societies political activities were traditionally organised sometimes on behalf of multilocal groups, but there was no permanent authority at the top. And in still other societies political activities were often traditionally organised on behalf of multilocal territorial groups, and these have been incorporated into some larger, centralised political system (Ember, 2007: 420). Elman Service (1962) suggested that most societies can be classified into four principal types of political organisations: bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. Although Service's classification does not fit for all societies, it is a useful way to show how societies vary in trying to create and maintain social order.

We often use the present tense in our discussion, because that is the convention in ethnographic writing, but the reader should remember that most societies that used to be organised at the band, tribe, or chiefdom level are now incorporated into larger political entities. With a handful of exceptions, there are no politically autonomous bands or tribes or chiefdoms in the world any more.

Band

Band is the form of political organisation found among foragers and hunters comprising anywhere between twenty people and a few hundred people, who are related through kinship. Because foraging has been the most long-standing form of political organisation, these units come together at certain times of the year, depending upon their foraging patterns and ritual schedule (Barbara D. Miller, 2002).

Band membership is flexible. If a person has serious disagreement with another person, one option is to leave that band and join another. Leadership is informal, and no one person is named as a permanent leader. Depending on events, such as organising the group to relocate or to send people out to hunt, a particular person may come to the fore as a leader for that time. This is usually someone whose advice and knowledge about the task are especially respected.

There is no social stratification between leaders and followers. A band leader is the "first among equals". Band leaders have limited authority or influence, but no power. They cannot enforce their opinions. Social leveling mechanisms prevent anyone from accumulating much authority or influence. Political activity in bands involves mainly decision making about migration, food distribution, and resolution of interpersonal conflicts. External conflicts between groups are rare because the territories of different bands are widely separated and the population density is low (ibid).

The band level organisation barely qualifies as a form of political organisation because groups are flexible, leadership is ephemeral, and there are no signs or emblems of political affiliation. Some anthropologists argue that "real" politics did not exist in undisturbed band societies. The Guayaki (Amazon basin), the Semang (Malaya peninsula), Iglulik Eskimo, the Kung (Africa), the Cholanaikans (Kerala), Andaman tribes are some examples of Band organisation

Tribe

A tribe is a political group comprising several bands or lineage groups, each with similar language and lifestyle and occupying a distinct territory. Kinship is the basis of tribal membership. Tribal groups contain from a hundred to several thousand people. They are usually associated with horticulture and pastoralism. Tribal groups may be connected to each other through a **clan** structure in which members claim descent from a common ancestor. Tribal political organisation is more formal than band-level organisation. A tribal headman or headwoman (most are males) is formally recognised as a leader. Key qualifications for this position are being hard working and generous and possessing good personal skills. A headman is a political leader on a part-time basis only, yet this role is more demanding than that of a band leader. Depending on the mode of production, a headman will be in charge of determining the times for moving herds, planting and harvesting, and setting the time for seasonal feasts and celebrations.

 Internal and external conflict resolution is also his responsibility. A headman relies mainly on authority and persuasion rather than on power (Barbara D. Miller, 2002). Pastoralist tribal formations are sometimes linked in a confederacy, with local segments maintaining substantial autonomy. The local segments meet usually at an annual festival. In case of an external threat, the confederacy gathers together. Once the threat is removed, local units resume their autonomy. The equality and as a segmentary model of political organisation. This form of tribal organisation is found among pastoralists worldwide. The Tiv (Nigeria), the Nuer (Sudan), the Oran, the Santal, the Bhil, the Gond are examples of Tribal political organisations.

4.2.4 Chiefdoms

Chiefdom is a form of political organisation with a central leader encompassing several smaller political units. Chiefdoms have larger populations, often numbering in thousands, and are more centralised and socially complex. Hereditary systems of social ranking and economic stratification are found in many chiefdoms, with social divisions existing between the chiefly lineage or lineages and non-chiefly groups. Chiefs and their descendents are considered superior to commoners, and intermarriage between two strata is forbidden. Chiefs

are expected to be generous, but they may have a more luxurious lifestyle than the rest of the people. The chief ship as "office" must be filled at all times. When a chief dies or retires, he or she must be replaced. This is not the case with a band leader or big-man or big-woman. A chief regulates production and redistribution, solves internal conflicts, and plans and leads raids and warring expeditions. Criteria for becoming a chief are: ascribed criteria (birth in a chiefly lineage, or being the first son or daughter of the chief), personal leadership skills, charisma, and accumulated wealth. Chiefdoms have existed in most parts of the world. Anthropologists are interested in how and why chiefdom systems evolved as an intermediary units between tribes and states and what are its political implications. Several political strategies support the expansion of power in chiefdoms: controlling more internal and external wealth and giving feasts and gift exchanges that create debt ties; improving local production systems; applying force internally; forging stronger and wider external ties; and controlling ideological legitimacy. Depending on local conditions, different strategies are employed. For example, internal control of irrigation systems was the most important factor in the emergence of chiefdoms in prehistoric south eastern Spain; whereas control of external trade was more important in the prehistoric Aegean region (Gilman 1991)

States

State is a form of political organisation with a bureaucracy and diversified governmental institutions with varying degrees of centralised control. The state is now the form of political organisation in which all people live. Band organisations, tribes, and chiefdoms exist, but they are incorporated within state structures.

Powers of the state: socio cultural anthropologists ask how states operate and relate to their citizens. In this inquiry, they focus on the enhanced power that states have over their domain compared to other forms of political organisation. (Barbara D. Miller, 2002)

- *States define citizenship and its rights and responsibilities.* In complex societies, since early times, not all residents were granted equal rights of citizens.
- *States maintain standing armies and police* (as opposed to part-time forces).
- *States keep track of the number, age, gender, location, and wealth of their citizens through census system that are regularly updated.* A census allows the state to maintain formal taxation systems, military recruitment, and policy planning, including population settlement, immigration quotas, and social benefits such as old-age pensions.
- *States have the power to extract resources from citizens through taxation.* All political organisations are supported by contributions of the members, but variations occur in the rate of contributions expected, the form in which they are paid, and the return that members get in terms of services. In bands, people voluntarily give time or labour for "public projects" such as a group hunt or a planned move. Public finance in states is based on formal taxation that takes many forms. **In-kind taxation** is a system of mandatory, non-cash contributions to the state. For example, the Inca state used a labour tax, to finance public works such as roads and monuments and to provide agricultural labour on state lands. Another form of in-kind taxation in early states required that farmers pay a percentage of their crop yield. Cash taxes, such as the income tax that takes a percentage of wages, emerged only in the past few hundred years.
- *States manipulate information.* Control of information to protect the state and its leaders can be done directly (through censorship, restricting access to certain information by the public, and promotion of favourable images via propaganda) and

indirectly (through pressure on journalists and television networks to present information in certain ways).

Symbols of State Power: Religious beliefs and symbols are often closely tied to the power of state leadership: the ruler may be considered a deity or part deity, or a high priest of the state religion, or closely linked with the high priest, who serves as advisor. Architecture and urban planning remind the populace of the power of the state. In pre- Hispanic Mexico, the central plaza of city- states, such as Tenochtitlan was symbolically equivalent to the center of the cosmos and was thus the locale of greatest significance. The most important temples and the residence of the head of state were located around the plaza. Other houses and structures, in decreasing order of status, were located on avenues in decreasing proximity to the center. The grandness and individual character of the leader's residence indicate power, as do monuments-especially tombs to past leaders and heroes or heroines state formation

State formation is the process of the development of a centralized government structure in a situation where one did not exist prior to its development. State formation has been a study of many disciplines of the social sciences for a number of years, so much so that Jonathan Haas writes that "One of the favorite pastimes of social scientists over the course of the past century has been to theorize about the evolution of the world's great civilizations."[1] The study of state formation is divided generally into either the study of early states (those that developed in stateless societies) or the study of modern states (particularly of the form that developed in Europe in the 17th century and spread around the world). Academic debate about various theories is a prominent feature in fields like Anthropology, Sociology, Economics and Political Science.[2] State formation can include state-building, statecraft and nation-building.

States are minimally defined by anthropologist David S. Sandeford as socially stratified and bureaucratically governed societies with at least four levels of settlement hierarchy (e.g., a large capital, cities, villages, and hamlets). Primary states are those state societies that developed in regions where no states existed before. These states developed by strictly internal processes and interaction with other non-states societies. The exact number of cases which qualify as primary states is not clearly known because of limited information about political organization before the development of writing in many places, but Sandeford lists ten likely cases of primary state formation in Eurasia, the Americas, and the Pacific.

Studies on the formation of **early states** tend to focus on processes that create and institutionalize a state in a situation where a state did not exist before. Examples of early states which developed in interaction with other states include the Aegean Bronze Age Greek civilizations and the Malagasy civilization in Madagascar. Unlike primary state formation, early state formation does not require the creation of the first state in that cultural context or development autonomously, independently from state development nearby. Early state formation causation can thus include borrowing, imposition, and other forms of interaction with already existing states.