On the cultural origins and the historical formation of the traditional state: some theoretical considerations

Eder, Klaus

Postprint / Postprint
Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

Walter Dostal
(Editor)

ON SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Contributions to Anthropological Concepts

Proceedings of the Symposium held on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Wiener Institut für Völkerkunde in Vienna, 12th–16th December 1979

(Offprint)

ON THE CULTURAL ORIGINS AND THE HISTORICAL FORMATION
OF THE TRADITIONAL STATE:
SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

KLAUS   EDER

I

I am neither a professional archeologist nor a professional
anthropologist; so I have to justify why I will talk as a
professional sociologist about the problem of the origins and the
formation of the state. There are two reasons.

The first reason is: I am doing research on the interplay of
cultural, political, and economic factors in the development of
modern society. More specifically my research question is: in what
way and to what extent do socio-cultural factors affect the
development of the modern state and what role does the economy play
in this process. This research question implies an evolutionary
hypothesis: there are different forms of political organisations
ranging from less complex to more complex types; the evolution of
these types is shaped (I avoid intentionally the term 'determined')
by developments in the socio-cultural sphere; these developments
follow a developmental logic in the socio-cultural sphere which
structures the different forms of political organization found in
history.

The second reason is: I have a theoretical interest in testing and
reformulating the basic assumptions of 'Historical Materialism' as a
general theory of societal development(1). By stressing the role of
the social-cultural factor I have to reassess the importance of
normative and evaluative factors for the constitution of social
formations and for the change of modes of production within these
social formations.

Taking the example of state formation as a relevant test case for

these assumptions I have asked myself the question: is it 'possible to explain the origins of the state (more exactly: of the traditional state) by some kind of developmental changes within the primitive (I use this term in a non-pejorative sense) socio-cultural world? And in what way are the changes of the political sphere related to modes of production based on kinship relations?

Posing this question I was confronted with the predominant types of explanations of the origins of state, explanations which - for the most part - can be subsumed under the heading of functional theories. Functional theories are characterized by the following structure of argument: there is some kind of functional imperative in the environment of the system in question which can be met by functional differentiations and specializations of the system in question.

In this way Engels has argued(2). Surplus production caused by increases in the forces of production, which leads to new forms of the division of labour; in order to secure these new forms of division of labour, the state becomes a functional necessity; thus the state has to be differentiated out of the natural bonds of primitive society. In a similar, somewhat more complex way, Carneiro has argued(3). Given natural (or social) circonscriptions which impede the segmentary division of a growing population, the society is faced with the Hobbesian problem of order; the state is the functional solution of this problem. Wittfogel takes the irrigation system to be a functional imperative which makes the state necessary(4), Fried(5) has taken increasing stratification, defined as unequal access to basic resources which sustain life, and the resulting exploitation of human labour as the functional pressures which cannot be met by internalized social controls; the state then is a more adequate functional equivalent to internalized social controls. Recently B.J. Price(6) has offered a modified version of Fried's approach, a so-called cluster-interaction-model. It differs from the other version by analyzing not just a single society on the way to statehood, but a cluster of societies which are in constant

interaction while under the way to statehood. She arrives by this procedure at a more complex conception of environment: it adds to nature as an environment the possibility that within a cluster the different societies are to each other environments. But besides this modification she proceeds in the classical manner: changes in modes of production (understood mainly in technical-instrumental terms) produce changes in social organizations; the intensification of irrigation agriculture makes changes toward state-organizations probable.

Recently Claessen/Skalnik(7) have listed in a systematic analysis of several case studies the factors that have had a relatively direct influence upon the 'Road to statehood':
(a) population growth and/or population pressure, (b) war, the threat of war or conquest, and raids, (c) conquest, (d) the influence of previously existing states(8) They introduce some specifications insofar as they try to relate these variables to structural and processual aspects of statebuilding; but they don't break the closed circle of functionalist argumentation.

All these factors have had somewhere in the world some relevance; but you can't construct a general theory of state origins upon these variables because you always find some exceptions. Therefore R. Cohen favors the so-called 'systemic approach'. In his own words: "Whatever starts the sequence off tends to change other qualities of political, social, economic, and cultural life so that a number of different starting points, following different trajectories of change, very comparable results ensure"(9). Thus theoretical explanation is reduced to a formalistic mode of argumentation; all explanatory variables are interdependent, so you have - in the last instance - to renounce of causal explanations.

I don't want to go back to simple monocausal explanations. But what I am interested in is the following question: what is it that gives to all these interacting variables a specific direction in such a

way that the state is a necessary outcome. To say - as Cohen does - that different trajectories have very comparable results is just begging the question. It is not at all clear that a factor or a combination of factors in the relevant environment must lead to the state; we can't but say that it can lead to the state; maybe we can also say that it facilitates the road to statehood - but this is all, we can say. My central question is then: what structures the adaptive process of the system of society in such a way that specializing and institutionalizing the political function in the state is the necessary outcome. This question is not just a question for analyzing the formation of the state; it is the central question for every theory of societal development including Historical Materialism.

Henderson(10) has stated succinctly the limitations of the old evolutionary paradigm: it is a theoretical simplification which allows for a "systematic concentration upon factors that may be called 'external' to individuals: (a) social factors, or the constraints imposed by a few major types of socially structured situations (economic, political, ritual, etc.), and (b) ecological factors (the relationship between technology and environment). By setting all human social behavior within a comparable structural framework, and assuming that each actor acts simply to maximize his own wealth or power and orders his learning processes toward this end, the scholar may readily direct attention to the social and ecological constraints that either produce equilibria within and between groups or else tend to change their structures"(11). What is lacking - according to Henderson - is the analysis of symbol systems, of culture as against society, which are shaped by the specific capacities of the human mind, by its competences. Cultural patterns or schemata are as essential parts of a social formation as are its institutional arrangements and environmental conditions.

Some theories of the origins of the state have tried to stress this subjective factor by giving psychological explanations. Thurnwald-(12) assumed that those people who had to herd big flocks of beasts

learnt the herding of men too. MacIver and Lowie(13) assumed that the associational structures of people like the Crow of the Great Plains or of the Kpelle of Western Africa were the cultural model upon which state-like associations could be erected. Recently E.R. Service(14) has tried to interpret the origins of the state as the result of a kind of social contract: people accept the state because they benefit from it. The state is something which is wanted by the people out of utilitarian considerations, is something which is based on a collective consensus. It is a learning process by some groups of people which is supposed to have structured the adaptive reaction to environmental imperatives. These ideas can be taken as a step in the direction I would like to go. But they are still very insufficient, they aren't but ad-hoc assumptions about social learning. This is probably the reason why they didn't have any influence upon the dominant evolutionary theories.

Thus we have arrived at the distinction of two complementary perspectives: a social system perspective and a social learning perspective. The social system perspective analyzes institutional arrangements like the state as something which is out of reach of the individual actor, as something which is the product of environmental conditions; in Durkheimian terms: as a social fact imposed upon social actors. The social learning perspective on the contrary analyzes institutional arrangements like the state as something which has been produced, generated by social actors, as something which is not behind, but between social actors; social reality is a social construction by social actors (15).

II.

The system perspective and social learning perspective allow to discriminate between two functions of social action: manifest functions and latent functions.Manifest functions are the intended consequences of social action, latent functions the unintended consequences of social action. Thus we are confronted with two types of social reality which can't be reduced to each other. Distin-

guishing analytically the intended and unintended consequences of social action we are able to make the difference between a hidden logic and an overt logic of social systems. The overt logic has to be analyzed as the logic of the normative integration of the explicit intentions, interests of the social actors; the hidden logic has to be analyzed as the logic of the social aggregation of unintended consequences.

I contend that you find such an analytical distinction in the theory of Historical Materialism. It is the distinction between infrastructure an superstructure.

Within the different branches of marxist theory structural marxism seems to be the most fruitful elaboration of the distinction between infrastructure and superstructure(16), and - what is more relevant in this case - it has applied this version of Historical Materialism to the problem of the formation of the state.

I think this distinction is not only valid for modern societies, but also for primitive societies. Kinship relations make up the social relations of production. Using the example of Australian Aborigines Godelier has made it lucidly clear:
"...it has been observed that the social relations that govern the hunting and gathering territories, determine the composition of the groups doing the hunting and gathering, and decide how the product of these activities is shared out are relations of kinship, i.e., relations of descent, marriage, and residence. To be more precise, we may observe that the (somewhat) abstract condition of appropriation of nature is membership in a descent group, which inherits common (though 'nonexclusive') rights over the undomesticated resources of different territories from generation to generation. In the everyday process of concerete appropriation, what happens is that consanguineal and affinal relations form the cooperative framework for hunting and gathering and for the distribution of produce. But we need to go farther still, for in practice an Australian band - a unit of direct, everyday appropriation of nature

- is composite in structure. It is composed of a central core of men descended patrilineally from a number of common ancestors and heirs to rights over a given portion of territory; around this core is a cluster of allies, i.e., representatives of different groups that have either given or received wives in the course of earlier generations. This provides the group with the possibility of using several different territories should the need arise. The chief feature of the system, then, is the fact of shared ownership of resources by a number of kinship groups; these kinship groups, moreover, are not exclusive owners of these rights, since, in certain critical circumstances, allied groups also have rights to the same territory."(17)

But these kinship-institutions which serve as relations of productions in primitive societies aren't the only institutions which exist in these societies. It has been an old favorite topic of social anthropology to overrate kinship and to underrate political and religious institutions. I would like to use the term 'cross cutting' institutions for the latter type. These imply ritual gatherings, conflict resolution activities ('legal gatherings'). Thus we have also on the level of primitive societies infrastructural institutions and superstructural institutions. The internal imperatives on these two levels of social reality are different: on the superstructural level it is 'inner nature', the needs, aspirations, interests which have to be socially integrated through institutions; on the infrastructural level it is 'outer nature', the regulation of activities to appropriate nature, which regulates social relations in a way that it forms a functioning system.

I emphasize the distinction between superstructure and infrastructure, for it seems to be a central analytical tool in order to explain the formation of the state. On the infrastructural level we analyze processes which are independent of the intentions of the people concerned; they perceive them as moments of a crisis, as something which is out of their reach. Friedman(18) (a representative of structural Marxism) has given us an analysis of the

objective logic of a mode of production based on kinship. Technological conditions are regarded in this model not as mobilizing, but as inhibiting factors for a logic of change in this type of mode of production. In analyzing the gumlao gumsa-cycle (reinterpreting Leach's Political Systems of Highland Burma(19) he takes the hill swidden technology as the limiting factor upon the possible evolution of the gumsa system. He assumes that this technology is the limiting factor which forces the gumsa system to return to the gumlao state. Then he tries to work out the logic under the hypothetical condition of a positive change of the productive technique. He describes this process as follows:

"Relative rank is first established by horizontal exchange, than converted into absolute rank through claims on the supernatural. With the continued growth of surplus and the emergence of the state, the political hierarchy which had formerly been generated by the economic flows of horizontal exchange comes, finally, to dominate that flow. The chief who becomes a sacred king naturally appropriates all of the community rituals. This is certainly the case for pre-Han China, where all shrines were housed in the royal compound. The head of state climbs a good deal further up the ancestral hierarchy - he is no longer the representative of the community to the gods, but descends from the heavens as the representative of the gods to the community."(20)

Relations of production are dominant in this analysis of state formation. The historical formation of the state can now be stated in the following manner. Prestate societies are shaped by a specific mode of production in which kinship relations function as relations of production. This determines the systemic logic of this structure. Environmental factors may more or less inhibit the possible development of his system. If environmental constraints are absent, the system develops up to a point where the given structure, i.e. kinship relations, have to be altered. This is the moment where a given mode of production is in crisis(21) This is the point from which on a mode of production is in the process of its dissolution. On the other hand one can observe on the superstructural level a

strengthening of political and religious ties. Old cross-cutting institutions assume a substitutive task: they have now to fulfill the integrative functions the mode of production can't guarantee any more. Political authority and supernatural ceremonial activities fulfill this substitutive function. But in fulfilling this function superstructural restrictions have to be met. Superstructures being a manifest function of social action have to be consensual structures. This implies that the state being a structure of domination has to rely upon the consent of those dominated. This is the reason why - as Godelier(22) has pointed out - the emerging political relations have to present themselves as an exchange of goods and as an exchange of services. This exchange implies - for it is just a substitutive mechanism (this is a point against Godelier) - the involvment of invisible realities, imaginary means of reproduction, which depend for existence upon a specific type of consciousness in these societies. And this is the point, where cultural factors interfere directly in the formation of the state.

The historical formation of the state is thus determined by two interrelated processes: the strengthening of political and religious ties and the weakening of relations of production based on kinship. We can now translate this descriptive statement into a theoretical statement: it is the dissolution of the systemic logic of a mode of production and the construction of a new moral order by institution-building which explains the formation of evolutionary innovations like the state. And within this theoretical conception is it possible to define the state by its manifest and latent function: its manifest function is to integrate people within an hierarchical institutional framework, its latent function is to serve as a social structure which prevents fission(23), which breaks and substitutes the systemic logic of segmentary differentiation.

III.

The distinction between infrastructure and superstructure wasn't but a step. What I want to discuss now, is the theoretical base upon

which this distinction has been founded within Historical Materia-
list theories.

Two opposing theoretical traditions, cultural materialism(24) and
structural (French) Marxism(25) have offered against this dualism a
tertium quid: culture. But they are divided as to how to analyze
culture. This division has been known as the division between 'emic'
and 'etic'-approaches(26). Emic-procedures are those in which social
action is described through categories and relations which are
appropriate and meaningful to native actors; etic-procedures are
those which describe social action through categories and relations
developed independently by a community of observers. At first sight
this seems to be nothing but a methodological opposition. But it has
far-reaching consequences: it determines the content of culture and
thus the conceptualization of the meaning of social action. The
cultural logic which determines the meaning of action is conceptua-
lized in etic-procedures as a universal logic of utilitarian action,
as social action oriented by material advantage. In emic-procedures
this utilitarian aspect is itself variable according to the cultural
definitions given by some people to what they consider to be to
their advantage. In this latter conceptualization the term 'advan-
tage' is itself an empty concept to be filled with cultural mea-
ning(27). These cultural definitions of action serve as definitions
of the goal-states of social systems.

What I want to show is how the definition of culture affects the
conceptualization of a social formation (28). As far as cultural
materialism is concerned there is an ambiguity in what exactly fixes
the goal-state of a social formation. There are two - Sahlins called
them - naturalistic models: the model of ecological adaptation and
survival and the model of maximation of advantage. The first implies
only a minimum necessary functioning, anything over the minimum
being adaptive. The second implies the generalization of the modern
bourgeois acquisitive interest (the capitalist ethic in Weber's
terms) as an anthropological universal; this is a reprojection of
our own notion of culture upon all historical societies. But the

decisive objection is: the logic of action which underlies cultural materialist thinking is not a logic of social action, but a logic of instrumental and strategic action. And such a logic will never be able to analyze social evolutionary processes.

The result of this approach for the conceptualization of a social formation is a naturalization of a marxist strategy: the mode of production is not defined first of all by the social relations of production, but by the productive forces in a wide sense(29); the superstructure (or mode of reproduction) is not defined as the mechanism of social integration of social relations of production, but as a mystification of an instrumental logic underlying as well the mode of production as the mode of reproduction.
This conceptualization is a reductionist version of the conception of a social formation. It is based on a non-social conception of action and is methodologically linked (I leave open the question whether this is necessarily so) to etic-operational procedures. Insofar as this conception can be taken as the most general formulation of the functionalist paradigm which has dominated evolutionary thinking, certainly with respect to the question of the formation of the state, I have to refute this approach because of theoretical and methodological weaknesses. This does not imply that I hold the results of the empirical work done within this theoretical tradition obsolete. On the contrary: questions of demography, geographical location, nutritional equilibria etc. are important aspects in the explanation of societal change. What I contend are the theoretical claims linked with cultural materialism. What I want to do is to strengthen the structuralist marxist paradigm (Godelier, Friedmann). Godelier(30) uses the term 'idéel' to describe the cultural side of a social formation. Idéel elements are contained already in productive forces (f.e. the knowledge of nature by natives as analyzed in ethnoscience). They are also contained in each social relation. The idea is that "all social relations arise and exist simultaneously both in thought and ourside of it... The idéel element exists not only in the form and content of consciousness, but in the form of all those aspects of social

relations that make them relations of signification and make their meaning or meanings manifest"(31). Explicitly Godelier adopts here an emic-operational procedure that relates social action to the cultural meanings social relations have for the people concerned. This cultural definition of reality is by itself social, for meanings are by nature intersubjectively shared; they determine social practice. As Godelier puts it: "...thought not only interprets reality, but actually organizes every kind of social practice on the basis of this reality, thereby contributing to the production of new social realities" (31a).

Thus the conceptualization of a social formation is based on a social action perspective. It is not - as in cultural materialism - a naturalization, but a culturalization of a Marxist strategy. The mode of production is first of all defined by its social relations of production; the superstructure (the mode of reproduction) is defined as a mechanism of social integration. This conceptualization amounts to a sociological conception of a social formation.

IV.

Thus far I have concentrated the theoretical argument upon the sociological conception of a social formation and its relevance for the explanation of the formation of the state. In this chapter I want to consider the problem how social relations exist in thought (and not, as before, how they exist outside of it in a social formation). What I will do is to develop the topic of the idéel element in social explanation and its relevance for the formation of the state.

To make sure that I can't be misunderstood I want to add at once that I don't contend that the idéel element is a causal mechanism of social change; this would imply an idealistic position. What I want to contend is that the idéel element is - after having been confronted with an increasing amount of changes in the social world - reorganized in a definite way. I interpret this definiteness as

the consequence of a developmental logic of symbolic structures(32).
Symbolic structures develop in a sequence of structurally discrete
stages. This is the idea of an evolution of the idéel element.

To start with such an hypothesis you have to assume that this idéel
element is not a fixed reservoir, an ontological given, but that it
is the result of a generative symbolic praxis. This point of a
cultural creativity in the symbolic praxis has been made by M.
Sahlins:

"The eternal problem of this symbolic economy of praxis is not
scarcity, as in the bourgeois conception of economic rationality,
but a surplus at once of objective means and of conceptual ends. The
world, on one hand, is too much with us: in the great variety of
objects and their several attributes that it makes available to any
society, reality affords a potential surfeit of empirical distinc-
tions. On these each historic group operates selectively, valorizing
certain material features while ignoring others, and so realizes
after its own fashion the objectivity of the objective world. On the
other hand, apart from the negative natural limits, the range of
meanings attributable to the objective distinctions is a priori
unlimited - the symbol being 'stimulus-free'. Each society thus
integrates a selective set of objective features according to a
project of symbolic construction which is never the only one
possible. Such is the double action of culture in nature, analytic
and synthetic, a segmentation of natural differences in the service
of a cultural scheme."(33)

This is an important remark. Culture has a generative capacity; this
can be linked with the idea of Godelier that culture (the idéel
element) produces new social realities. What I want to do now is to
push this point one step further and see wheter the historical
variability of cultural schemes is just random or whether this
variability is itself a product of a cultural evolution, of an
evolution of socially relevant meaning systems. I will propose the
idea of a moral evolution of the structures of a symbolic praxis and
then reformulate the problem of the historical formation of the

state according to this symbolistic perspective. And the proposition
is: to explain the formation of the state you have first of all to
explain how the idea of the state originates in the mind of social
actors. My contention is: the state is first of all not an
organizational phenomenon nor a structure functioning as a relation
of production, but it is an idea, a 'modèle culturel' in Touraine's
terms, which gives the developmental processes on the infrastruc-
tural and superstructural level a normative direction. Posing the
problem of state origins (not state formation) in this way I have to
look for quite another process than usual in order to explain them.
What I have to look for is the process whereby the idea of the state
is constructed, i.e. I have to analyze the symbolic construction of
the idea of the state(34).

The idea of the state (and this idea has been called 'state' since
Aristoteles) is the cognitive representation of a specific social
relationship. The state is - to push the definitional aspect a step
further - a cognitive conception of social relationships having a
moral meaning. But how do we get at the moral meaning of the idea of
the state?

Besides the methodological question how to operationalize such a
proposition we are confronted with the theoretical question what
these so-called 'structures' or structuring principles of the
symbolic praxis exactly are.

Symbolic anthropology(35) has - in its turn against the dominant
anthropological empiricism - provided the ground for this approach.
In its most elementary sense the word idea has become synonymous
with 'difference', be it the difference between 'we' versus 'they',
'culture' versus 'nature', 'pure' versus 'impure'. The cognitive
operator lying behind these differences is binary differentiation.
Binary structures have been the basis for the symbolic-structural
approach to the idéel aspect of social reality. It allowed for the
identification of some orderly structure in a mass of incoherent and
superficially unrelated phenomena.

The models generated by binary differentiation represent an ideal plan of social reality; behind the more or less distorted symbolic performance by social actors there are ideal plans for this performance. These models change from society to society in its complexity. This implies to acknowledge the historical variability of such ideal plans. To account for this varying complexity it is necessary to look at the way how different binary structures are related to each other. They are ranked with respect to each other in a specific way and this is a second cognitive mechanism which allows for the construction of increasingly complex models. And my contention is: these ranking procedures have a moral meaning. My intention is to broaden the symbolic structuralist approach in a double way: to give a developmental account of the historical variability of cognitive models(36) and to stress the relational aspect within these models as constitutive for their moral meaning. Both aspects are interrelated. My thesis is: what changes in a developmental sequence is the type of ranking which gives to cognitive orderings a specific moral meaning.

Morality in early non-state societies is characterized as a mode of cognitive ordering which is constructed in accordance with analogical orderings of the natural universe(37). This analogical relationship between culture and nature shapes the kind of ranking possible in this model. It is restricted to a kind of natural harmony to which man subordinates himself. The corresponding morality is the morality of concrete solidarity which allows for ranking within natural groups but not between them. This doesn't exclude to have a family head, to give inferior status to women (more seldom to men), i.e. sexual ranking and also age-ranking. As long as the cognitive dichotomy of nature-culture and its analogical relations hold, ranking is bound to concrete interactive morality. Moral sanctions are dependent upon the objective consequences of action for the maintenance of interactive relationships.

As soon as the conception of nature becomes ambiguous - and this happens with the enlargement of craftmanship - nature itself is

being divided into two realms: that of poiein and that of prattein(38) (to use a culturally familiar example). The unitary conception of nature is broken, nature is divided into the natural (that which can be handled instrumentally) and the supernatural (that which has to be communicated with). Having thus rationalized a part of nature social consciousness can construct a supernatural world which is related to culture not by analogy, but by superordination: supernature becomes a higher level natural order. The basic notion is the belief in a parallelism between Macrocosmos and Microcosmos, between the universe and the world of men. Ranking can now be based on hierarchical and authoritarian patterns. Morality is now the authoritarian postulate of a compelling 'higher' order. Thus binary differentiations can be brought into a hierarchical order. A case in point is the caste system. Here you find the binary distinctions of nature – culture, material – immaterial, pure – impure in an hierarchical order which produces the ideal image of society:

Sudra (agriculturalists) (unfree peasants	Vaisya merchants (farmers)	Kshatriya (warriors and royality)	Brahmans (priests)
nature	culture material	Immaterial Impure	pure

(according to R.N. Adams (39)

Morality now depends on the conformity with a given normative order. Individual guilt and punishment define the structure of moral sanction.

As soon as this conception of the supernatural is put into question by the rationalization of the supernatural, the problem of theodicy arises: how is it possible that an ideal world of God(s) presides over such an imperfect and unjust social world (this is the dominant topic of Weber's sociology of world religions(40). This breaks up the unitary structure of the supernatural; it poses the problem of individual responsibility vis-à-vis the will of God(s). The division between human nature on the one hand and natural law on the other hand arises; but they are still tied together as aspects of the supernatural order. But by rationalizing the idea of a human nature

and secularizing the idea of natural law new relations binding the social world together had to be found.

What happens is the establishment of an egalitarian relationship between and within binary oppositions. The ideal model of society is egalitarian, with 'homo aequalis' as its reference point((41). The philosophical critique of natural law is the last turning point: man becomes the measure of all things(42). Morality can now be located within man, as a set of priori principles everybody must follow using his reason. Individual responsibility is the criterion of moral sanction.

These aren't but cursory remarks concerning the idea of a moral evolution. But they give an impression as to how a developmental sequence, stages of cognitive orderings and moral orderings can be constructed. The stages I have distinguished above have also been called the preconventional, the conventional and the postconventional stage(43). This terminology has been borrowed from the theory of moral development in ontogeny(44). I think it has - in the process of elaboration - become clear that the stage level of an interactive morality is constitutive for an ideal model of pre-state social structures. It characterizes an institutional system by bonds of solidarity and reciprocity; breaking these bonds calls forth a typical reaction of society: ritual cleaning and legal self-help are the mechanisms which restore the broken order. The infrastructural system based on kinship can be interpreted as a system the limits of which are defined by the normative logic of possible kin-relations. The stage level of authoritarian morality (or conventional morality) is constitutive for an institutional order characterized by authority relationship; it is here that the state emerges as a moral idea and then as an institutional form. The break of the normative bonds of superordination/subordination is met by religious condemnation and by legal sanction of a political authority. On the infrastructural level patron-client-relationships define the structural limits of newly emerging modes of production. The stage level of a principled (or postconventional) morality is - as evident -

characteristic for modern society. Formal rule of law on the super-
structural level, a mode of production based upon legally free
individuals are the results of this stage of moral evolution(45).

Having definded the idéel element which is constitutive of state
structures I can come back to the question, how this cognitive
structure is generated within the real life of a society. I will
make the attempt to bring together the points made in chapter II and
III and offer a theoretical formulation of the cultural origins and
historical formation of the traditional state (and you notice: this
is the full title of this paper).

V.

In a situation where a mode of production reaches its systemic
limits a social formation tends to rely for its survival upon
reproductive structures (superstructures). These structures then
assume a leading function in social evolution. The symbolic sphere
directly affects the development of a social formation. By its
generative potential the idéel element produces new institutional
devices by which the social conflicts resulting from the "hyperde-
velopment" of a mode of production can be regulated. The task now
will be to explain the process by which cognitive models are
changed. What we have gained by a theory of moral evolution for the
problem of the cultural origins of the state is a model of the ideal
functioning of political institutions on different moral levels.
This theory assumes that - in order to have the state as a social
institution - you have to have a conventional mode of moral thinking
in society. This implies that the formation of the state is
correlated with the formation of a conventional mode of reasoning.
Service(46) has made a similar point in his last book. The
institutionalization of leadership roles (which give more adaptabi-
lity to decision-making procedures) is legitimated supernaturally,
not habitually; it is further backed up by new types of conflict
resolution in society. Conflicts aren't resolved any more infor-
mally-publicly; they are resolved by a neutral third person which

has the right to binding decisions. The problem is to explain how in the process of political evolution starting in prestate societies such a thinking, such a cognitive-moral structure develops. At the end of chapter III I mentioned a possible causal mechanism. In order to fulfill the function of relations of production in a dissolving kinship mode of production the political institutions have to present themselves as maintaining reciprocal exchange relations. To do this political institutions have to have a monopoly (an exclusive property) over imaginary means of production(47); but these imaginary means have to be invented and have to be wanted by everybody. This pre-supposes a change in the religious ordering of the world; symbolic praxis is made moving. The change which is logically possible consists in the division of nature accessible to everybody and the "supernature" accessible only to those who have a more direct relation with the gods. The ranking of nature (opposing lower spirits against higher deities) involves a change in moral outlook: it allows for an authoritarian transformation of political institutions.

This step toward a reorganization of the religious symbol system is linked to a first type of state-like institutions: the theocratic state. Theocracies are different from primitive political institutions because of their reliance upon supernatural reinforcements and sanctions. This is the cognitive aspect of political evolution.

Theocratic organization implies first of all the change of institutional practices. Rituals have been substituted by ceremonialism; priests and temples emerge as adequate forms of social organization of ceremonialism. Within this institutional structure a first form of political domination, the theocratic form of political institution has developed. This change has manifestly a self-serving function(48), namely the legitimation of a differential access to political power, But it had also a system-serving function: it was more flexible than ritualistic forms of decision-making and conflict-resolution; it was better able to solve the problems of a mode of production still being based on kinship. The new

institutional device was not only more flexible, but it could also introduce new social structures which could function as social relations of production, namely patron-client-relationships. Thus we have two modes of production on this level of institutional development: a dissolving and an emerging mode of production, the emerging mode of production being the latent function of a symbolic universal which organizes action on the level of a conventional morality.

Webster(49) has made an attempt to describe the theocratic type of domination as a transitional form toward a full blown state. He points to the fact that early states (including advanced chiefdoms) didn't have yet enough organized power to be effective on the legal level. So they had to rely upon ideological power, at least as long as coercive institutions weren't developed. The ruler has power only because of his moral example which gives to him the monopoly of moral sanction. Supernatural sanctions were necessitated by the ineffective centralization of coercive force, and they were feasible because of the small size and the relative homogeneity of early states. Theocratic institutions are relying upon legitimate values which presuppose an already vertically structured symbolic universe, a universe which contains the cognitive model of authoritarian relations, of a conventional morality.

This conception of a theocratic type has been formulated in a similar manner by Claessen/Skalnik(50):
Chiefdoms are socio-political organizations with a centralized government, hereditary hierarchical status arrangements with an aristocratic ethos, but no formal, legal apparatus of forceful repression, and without the capacity to prevent fission. These organizations seem to be universally theocratic, with submission to authority taking the form of that of a religious congregation to a chief-priest."(51).

This formulation raises again the old question whether these theocracies were just chiefdoms or whether they were already states.

If you look only for institutional features, then this question is a semantic problem and therefore no problem at all. It is nothing but a definitional problem of the scientific community. When you look for normative features, it is clear that theocracies contain already authoritarian structures, but these are authoritarian structures which are restricted to the religious sphere. A full blown state is given, when authoritarian structures have transformed the legal sphere too. Examples for a theocratic stage in political evolution are found - according to Webster - in early Chinese state formation where the emperor was characterized by ritual and liturgical prerogatives which never could be trespassed by local "big men". This stage of evolution lasted long in Chinese history, and Webster pointed out that this "weakness" of legal centralization was a guarantee of institutional stability in a vast region with a tiny per capita surplus production(52). Early Mesopotamia is another case. Here we find - for the time of literary evidence - religious and legal positions in competition with each other. The 'en' was the head of the temple corporation in Protoliterate times; during early Dynastic period the 'lugal' (literally: great man) characterized by military functions also emerged; he gave rise to the 'ensi', the temple leader acquiring legal control as well(53). The religious and the secular legal element are now functionally separated, but contained within religious institutions. Similar competitions between religious and militaristic leaders are reported for Central Mexico (the follower of Quetzalcoatl versus the supporters of Tezcatlipoca)(54), for Egypt (the rivalry between temple organization and the Pharaonic bureaucracy), and last not least, the competition between church and state in the early middle ages.

This theocratic stage is but a first step toward the full blown state. The second step is what M. Weber called the "Veralltäglichung" of the theocratic form of domination (which can be equated with what Weber called charismatic type of domination). Political institutions have to become more secular, more normal in an everyday sense (it was precarious for all supernaturally legitimated rulers to survive, if - f.e. - they couldn't bring about the rain needed

for agriculture). Domination had to be switched from the religious value sphere to the legal normative sphere. Legalization was the mechanism of the "Veralltäglichung" of theocratic domination. This makes up the mature state. It is an institution which is secular, rational and has appropriated the legal function at least insofar as the ruler is the final judge in society, as his sayings are law. Service has made this point too: "basically the problem is the bureaucratic one of how to transform charismatic hierarchies of leadership into institutionalized, permanent offices."(55).

This secular or - as I prefer it - this legal stage of political evolution is a transformation of non-religious institutional arrangements in prestate societies. Whereas the theocratic form is an evolution out of the ritual complex, legal forms of political domination are derived from the mechanisms of conflict resolution in pre-state societies. In contrast to pre-state mechanisms of conflict resolution political authority has the right to final judgment in conflict resolution. The underlying cognitive model remains the same as in the theocratic stage. What happens is an application of the model upon the legal sphere. What has been changed here? The self-help of kin-groups is substituted by state-organized judicial procedures; it is not retaliation, but punishment which underlies the procedures of conflict resolution; it is not collective responsibility, but individual guilt which serves as the measure of legal sanction; it is not private vengeance, but law and order which characterizes legal action(56). The new legal procedures have a self-serving function: by their very structures they produce the moral legitimation of authority, the acceptance of law and order. It has also a system-serving function: it limits the extent and economic costs of interkingroup conflicts (f.e. blood feuding); it makes membership in a society dependent upon juridical definitions, and thereby it gives a legal backing to patron-client-relationship. Thus the institutional frame for the functioning of patron-client-relationships in a social formation is constructed. The new state has emerged as the cross-cutting institution which replaces or at least makes secondary the old and "primitive" mechanisms of social

integration'. This new model of social relationships can now become the starting point for the formation of a new mode of production. To grasp this process theoretically I have distinguished between manifest and latent functions of social action. The formation of the state is the manifest function, the formation of a new mode of production the latent function of a cognitive switch from a preauthoritarian to an authoritarian morality. The formation of a mode of production is not an intentional process; only after having reorganized the institutional framework a new mode of production can come into being. And how this mode of production is shaped, depends upon environmental, ecological conditions.

The most simple mode of production based on patron-client-relationship seems to be the feudal mode of production. The ruler is a moral person who is dependent for political power upon local magnates, local big men. This mode is the more stable the more vast and geographically diversified the territory to rule is. Relations of production develop in this case as a result of the subordination of village communities to local masters. This is a transitory mode of production. The so-called Asiatic mode of production is a functional equivalent to the feudal mode; it is the result of very specific circumstances, namely the nearly total dependence of productive work upon irrigation. This calls for the legal subordination of local magnates and thereby a more direct subordination of producers to central authority. The patron-client-relationship is then defined by the social relation between ruler and the working people. This mode also seems to be a transitory mode. What has become dominant in the evolutionary process were the slave modes of production and the "European" mode of production. In the ancient mode of production (slave mode of production) urban centers, city states, assume the role of the social integration of the patrons; their economic base has been the rural populace and later on the slaves. The European mode of production is a development out of the feudal mode; it is the substitution of early feudalism by systems of estates/corporations which are economically based upon personal subordination of peasants and craftsmen.

I don't want to go deeper into these speculations. I just wanted to show you the line of further inquiry of the development of the traditional state and its accompanying modes of production on the basis of the proposed theory of societal changes.

REFERENCES

1) The literature upon which I rely in the attempt to reformulate basic aussumptions of Historical Materialism is (a) Jürgen Habermas, Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus, Ffm: Suhrkamp 1976, (b) Maurice Godelier, Perspectives in Marxist anthropology, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.1977, (c) Marshall Sahlins, Culture and Practical Reason, Chicago: Chicago U.P.1976, and last not least my own book (d) Klaus Eder, Die Entstehung staatlich organisierter Gesellschaften. Ein Beitrag zu einer Theorie sozialer Evolution, Ffm: Suhrkamp 1976

2) F. Engels, Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staates, Berlin/DDR:VRM 1950

3) K. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism, Princeton: Yale Univ.Press 1957

4) R.L. Carneiro, A Theory of the Origins of the State, in: Science, 169, 1970, 733-738

5) M. Fried, The Evolution of Political Society, N.Y.: Random House 1967

6) B.J.Price, Shifts in Production and Organization. A Cluster-Interaction-Model, in: Current Anthropology, 18, 1977, 209-233

7) H.J.M.Claessen/P.Skalnik, eds., The Early State, The Hague: Mouton 1978

8) op. cit. p. 642

9) op. cit. p. 642

10) R.N.Henderson, The King in Every Man. Evolutionary Trends in Onithsa Ibo Society and Culture, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press 1972

11) op. cit. pp. 3/4

12) R. Thurnwald, Werden, Wandel und Gestaltung von Staat und Kultur im Lichte der Völkerforschung (Bd. 4 von: Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno- soziologischen Grundlagen), Berlin, Leipzig 1935

13) R.M.Mac Iver, The Modern State, London 1926; R.H.Lowie, The Origin of the State, New York 1961

14) E.R.Service, Origins of the State and Civilization, New York: Norton 1975

15) A. Touraine, Production de la société, Paris: Seuil 1973

16) I refer primarily to the theoretical work of M. Godelier, esp. his succinct statement in M. Godelier, Infrastructures, Socie- ties, and Histories, in: Current Anthropology, 19, 1978, pp. 763-771

17) ibid., p. 764

18) J. Friedman, Tribes, States and Transformations, in: M.Bloch, ed., Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology, London: Malaby 1975, pp. 161-202

19) E.R.Leach, Political Systems of Highland Burma, London 1954

20) Friedman, op. cit. p. 196

21) see also the remarks on the mechanism of crisis in neolithic modes of production in Eder, op. cit. pp. 39-67

22) Godelier, op. cit. p. 767

23) This is a definition given by R. Cohen, State Origins. A Reappraisal, in: Claessen/Skalnik, op. cit. p. 35

24) Its main proponent is M. Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory, New York: Crowell 1968

25) The representative figure is M. Godelier

26) For a discussion of this opposition see A.H.Berger, Structural and Eclectic Revision of Marxist Strategy: A Cultural Materialist Critique, in: Current Anthropology, 17, 1976, 290-305 (includes a discussion of this article by - among others - M.Godelier); for an anti-critique of cultural evolutionism from a Marxist point of view see D. Legros, Chance, Necessity, and Mode of Production. A Marxist Critique of Cultural Evolutionism, in: American Anthro- pologist, 79, 1977, 26-41

27) M. Sahlins, ibid., p. 298f

28) relevant for this theoretical considerations is M. Sahlins, Culture and Practical Reason, op. cit. pp. 55-165

29) one can find this conception very clearly in the article of B.J.Price I mentioned above

30) M. Godelier, Infrastructures, Societies, and Histories, in: Current Anthropology, 19, 1978, 763-771

31) ibid., p. 766

31a) ibid., p. 766

32) for the concept of a developmental logic see Habermas, op. cit. and Eder, op. cit.

33) M. Sahlins, in: Current Anthropology, 17, 976, p. 299

34) The cultural aspect in state formation is taken into account f.e. by R.L.Winzeler, Ecology, Culture, Social Organization and State Formation in South East Asia, in: Current Anthropology, 17, 1976, pp. 623-640, esp. pp. 626ff

35) Most relevant in this context are: E.R.Leach, Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols are Connected, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1976; M. Douglas, Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology, London: Routledge & Kegen 1975; R. Firth, Symbols. Publicand Private, London: Allen & Unwin 1973; V.Turner, Drama, Fileds, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press 1974; H.D.Duncan, Symbols in Society, New York: Oxford Univ. Press 1968; J. Skorupski, Symbol and Theory. A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion in Social Anthropology, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1976. A critical statement is I.C.Jarvie, On the Limits of Symbolic Interpretation in Anthropology, in: Current Anthropology, 17, 1976, 687-701.

36) cf. W. Mayrl, Genetic Structuralism and the Analysis of Social Consciousness, in: Theory and Society, 1, 1978, 19-44; the central idea of genetic structuralism is the idea that the very laws of structure are historical.

37) M. Godelier, Myth and History, in: -, Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology, op. cit.

38) J.P. Vernant, Travail et Nature dans le Grèce ancienne, in: -, Mythe et Pensée chez les Grecs II, Paris: Mapero 1965

39) R.N.Adams, Energy and Structure. A Theory of Social Power, Austin: Univ. of Texas Press 1975, p. 142

40) M. Weber, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie, Tübingen: Mohr 1963

41) L. Dumont, Homo aequalis. Génèse et épanoussement de L'ideologie économique. Paris: PUF 1977

42) I think of the so-called 'copernican and kantian' revolutions

43) cf. J. Habermas, op. cit.; K. Eder, op. cit.

44) see J. Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin 1977; L. Kohlberg, Stage and Sequence, in: D. Goslin, ed., Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research, Chicago 1969

45) For an extensive discussion see J. Habermas, op. cit., esp. pp. 9-48; K. Eder Zum Problem der logischen Periodisierung von Produktionsweisen. Ein Beitrag zu einer evolutionstheoretischen Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus, in: U. Jaeggi, A. Honneth, eds., Theorien des Historischen Materialismus, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1977, pp. 501-523

46) E.R. Service, op. cit.

47) cf. M. Godelier, Infrastructures, Societies, and History, op. cit., esp. pp. 676/768

48) cf. K.V.Flannery, the Cultural Evolution of Civilizations, in: Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics, 3, 1972, 399-426

49) D.L. Webster, On Theocracies, in: American Anthropologist, 78, 1976, 812-828

50) Claessen/Skalnik, op. cit., pp. 3-30

51) ibid., p. 22

52) The empirical evidence is taken from L.E.Stover, The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization, New York: PICA Press 1974

53) Empirical evidence is given by R.McC.Adams, The Evolution of Urban Society, Chicago: Aldine 1966

54) Empirical evidence is given by P. Kirchhoff, Quetzalcoatl, Huemac y el fin de Tula, in: Cuadernos Americanos, 14, 1955, 163-196

55) Service, op. cit. p. 293

56) Eder, op. cit. pp. 68-95

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAMS, R.N.:
  1975   Energy and Structure. A Theory of Social Power;
                 University of Texas Press
                 Austin

BERGER, A.H.:
  1976   Structural and Eclectic Revision of Marxist
                 Strategy: A Cultural Materialist Critique, Current
                 Anthropology, 17: 290-305

CARNEIRO, R.L.:
  1970   A Theory of the Origin of the State, Science, 169:
                 733-738

CLAESSEN, H.J.M. - SKALNIK, P. (Eds.):
  1978   The Early State; Mouton
                 The Hague

COHEN, R.:
                 State Origins. A Reappraisal. In: Claessen, H.J.M.
                 - Skalnik, P. (Eds.): op. cit.

DOUGLAS, M.:
  1975   Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology; Rout-
                 ledge & Kegan
                 London

DUMONT, L.:
  1977   Homo aequalis. Génèse et épanoussement de l'ideo-
                 logie économique; PUF
                 Paris

DUNCAN, H.D.:
  1968   Symbols in Society; Oxford University Press
                 New York

EDER, K.:
  1976   Die Entstehung staatlich organisierter Gesell-
                 schaften. Ein Beitrag zu einer Theorie sozialer
                 Evolution; Suhrkamp
                 Frankfurt/Main
  1977   Zum Problem der logischen Periodisierung von
                 Produktionsweisen. Ein Beitrag zu einer evolu-
                 tionstheoretischen Rekonstruktion des Historischen
                 Materialismus. In: Jaeggi, U. - Honneth, A.
                 (Eds.): Theorien des historischen Materialismus;
                 Suhrkamp, 501-523
                 Frankfurt/Main

ENGELS, F.:
  1950   Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und
                 des Staates
                 Berlin/DDR

FIRTH, R.:
    1973   Symbols, Public and Private; Allen & Unwin
                        London

FLANNERY, K.V.:
    1972   The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations, Annual
                        Review of Ecology and Systematics, 3: 399-426

FRIED, M.:
    1967   The Evolution of Political Society; Random House
                        New York

FRIEDMAN, J.:
    1975   Tribes, States and Transformations. In: Bloch, M.
                        (Ed.): Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology;
                        Malaby, 161-202
                        London

GODELIER, M.:
    1977   Perspectives in Marxist anthropology
                        Cambridge U.P.
    1978   Infrastructures, Societies and Histories, Current
                        Anthropology, 19: 763-771

HABERMAS, J.:
    1976   Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus;
                        Suhrkamp
                        Frankfurt/Main

HARRIS, M.:
    1968   The Rise of Anthropological Theory; Crowell
                        New York

HENDERSON, R.N.:
    1972   The King in Every Man. Evolutionary Trends in
                        Onithsa Ibo Society and Culture; Yale University
                        Press
                        New Haven

JARVIE, I.C.:
    1976   On the Limits of Symbolic Interpretation in
                        Anthropology, Current Anthropology, 17: 687-701

KIRCHHOFF, P.:
    1955   Quetzalcoatl, Huemac y el fin de Tula, Cuadernos
                        Americanos, 14: 163-196

KOHLBERG, L.:
    1954   Stage and Sequence. In: Goslin, D. (Ed.): Handbook
                        of Socialization Theory and Research
                        Chicago

LEACH, E.R.:
    1954   Political Systems of Highland Burma
                        London

1976   Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols are Connected; C.U.P. Cambridge

LEGROS, D.:
1977   Chance, Necessity and Mode of Production. A Marxist Critique of Cultural Evolutionism, American Anthropologist, 79: 26-41

LOWIE, R.H.:
1961   The Origin of the State New York

MAC ADAMS, R.:
1966   The Evolution of Urban Society; Aldine Chicago

MAC IVER, R.M.:
1926   The Modern State London

MAYRL, W.:
1978   Genetic Structuralism and the Analyses of Social Consciousness, Theory and Society, 1: 19-44

PIAGET, B.J.:
1977   The Moral Judgment of the Child; Penguin Harmondsworth, Middlesex

PRICE, B.J.:
1977   Shifts in Production and Organization. A Cluster-Interaction-Model, Current Anthropology, 18: 209-233

SAHLINS, M.:
1976   Culture and Practical Reason Chicago

SERVICE, E.R.:
1975   Origins of the State and Civilization; Norton New York

SKORUPSKI, J.:
1976   Symbol and Theory. A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion in Social Anthropology; C.U.P. Cambridge

STOVER, L.E.:
1974   The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilisation; PICA Press New York

THURNWALD, R.:
1935   Werden, Wandel und Gestaltung von Staat und Kultur
                    im Lichte der Völkerforschung (Bd.4 von: Die
                    menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologi-
                    schen Grundlagen)
                    Berlin, Leipzig

TOURAINE, A.:
1973   Production de la société; Seuil
                    Paris

TURNER, V.:
1974   Drama, Fileds and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in
                    Human Society; Cornell University Press
                    Ithaca

VERNANT, J.P.:
1965   Travail et Nature dans le grèce ancienne. In:
                    Mythe et Pensée chez les Grecs II; Maspero
                    Paris

WEBER, M.:
1963   Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie; Mohr
                    Tübingen

WEBSTER, D.L.:
1976   On Theocracies, American Anthropologist, 78:
                    812-828

WINZELER, R.L.:
1976   Ecology, Culture, Social Organization and State
                    Formation in South East Asia, Current Anthro-
                    pology, 17: 623-640, esp.p.626ff

WITTFOGEL, K.:
1957   Oriental Despotism; Yale University Press
                    Princeton