

# **The State as a Socio-Evolutionary Response to the Challenges of the Scale of Control and the Continuity Gap**

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The article is an experience of theoretical reconstruction of the origin of the state as a natural phenomenon of evolution in general and social evolution in particular, under the formation of necessary and sufficient conditions. The analysis of R. Carneiro's criticism of M. Weber's classical definition, as well as the discussion of M. Berent's original concept of the non-state status of the ancient Greek polis, allow to formulate a new synthetic definition of the state. We add a new feature to the known characteristics: a formal structure of managerial positions reproduced across generations and independent of kinship relations. The conceptual scheme of the general evolutionary mechanism of the emergence of new structures combines classical ideas (from C. Darwin to A. Toynbee), as well as models of such anthropologists and sociologists (R. Carneiro, A. Stinchcombe, R. Collins, etc.). The scheme includes the following concepts: concerns, challenges-threats and challenges-opportunities, ingredients, response attempts, fixation mechanisms, providing structures, the most flexible and polyfunctional of which were called magic wands. The application of this construct to the theory of the origin of the state raises the question of the ingredients of the processes of formation of the first states. The ideas and results of the work of anthropologists and historical sociologists have made it possible to visualize the trends in the development of barbarian societies that led to the ingredients sought. Such reasoning not only reinforces R. Carneiro's classical theory, but also complements it with a general evolutionary mechanism. The first states emerged in response to historical challenges and concerns related to the economic, military and social development of barbarian societies, and then became the main magic wands in the political evolution of all world civilizations.

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## **Introduction: Classical Definitions of the State**

To consider the mechanism of state emergence, we need a clear definition of the state. A scholarly consensus in this area remains elusive. According to Max Weber, a state is a human community with a monopoly of legitimate physical force in a given territory. We should listen to the words of Robert Carneiro with particular care. He developed the most convincing theory of the transition from pre-state to state societies. Here is how he criticizes Weber's definition:

This definition is by now famous. However, I think it is flawed. For one thing it is rather skeletal, leaving out what might be called the 'internal organs' of the state. Moreover, it fails to apply to polities which, on other grounds, one would want to consider to be a state. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon laws tell us that, for certain offenses, several kingdoms of the Heptarchy permitted individuals to take the law into their own hands [...] And I believe the same was true of the kingdom of Alor in East Africa, of Tahiti, and no doubt of other states elsewhere in the world. Thus, if we were to choose Weber's definition of the state as the 'official' one, it would fail to encompass a number of polities which we might otherwise want to count as states (Carneiro 2012: 136).

Carneiro's objections make it difficult to reject Weber's definition. A monopoly on violence may well imply the delegation of the authority to use violence to individuals, groups, organizations. If the monopoly is complete, someone can also take away that authority. The "internal organs" objection is more significant. Carneiro offers his own alternative definition:

A state is an autonomous political unit, encompassing many communities within its territory and having a centralized government with the power to draft men for war or work, levy and collect taxes, and decree and enforce laws" (Carneiro 1981: 69).

Here Carneiro clarifies the internal nature of the state, not structurally but functionally. Indeed, can a community be called a "state" even if it uses legitimate violence on its territory, if it is incapable of forcing its inhabitants to go to war and to work, of collecting resources in any form, of establishing rules and enforcing them? It is precisely barbarian chiefdoms that are quite ready for internal violence; it is justified (legitimate) within their normative context, while the rest may be only partially and sporadically present.

The addition of "plurality of communities" also seems significant. People commonly think of and refer to the Greek "polis" (city) as a "state," but most were small communities without formal laws or systematic tax collection. They were

more like walled-in Cossack strongholds. We can consider Athens and Sparta to be full-fledged states, although this is a controversial issue to which we will return shortly. In any case, these largest polises simply dominated the small surrounding villages, like the later Florence and Milan.

Having recognized Carneiro's attributes as necessary, can we abandon Weber's criterion? Imagine that a certain group of people calling itself the "central government" tries to collect taxes, to force people to go to war, to impose its rules. But this group cannot use physical force. And even if this group uses violence, this violence lacks coordination and so nobody considers it justified or legitimate.

In such situations, in response to attempts at coercion, people flee, evade, resist, respond to violence with violence, and organize themselves into their own groups and coalitions, which also begin to claim power. In the absence of full legitimacy and confident superiority of any of these groups, there is incessant fighting with uncertain results. Chaos ensues, "walk the field" flourishes, and civil war may break out. Examples in modern history include the post-state collapse periods in Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Thus, Weber's and Carneiro's definitions are not contradictory. In fact, they are complementary. So why not combine them? Yes, we should, but there are still some pitfalls to consider.

## **What were the ancient Greek polities? Already states or still chiefdoms?**

There is a curious objection, raised by Moshe Berent, to calling even Athens a "state". If the presence of a separate "centralized government" (according to Carneiro) or of a ruling group with a "monopoly of legitimate violence" (according to Weber) are considered indispensable signs of a state, then the republican system of filling positions by lot, which equalized citizens in rights, was not separate from them. It was as if the opposition between the authorities and the population disappeared, and thus there was no state.

According to Berent, the polis was not a state, but rather what anthropologists call a "stateless society". Stateless societies were relatively egalitarian, non-stratified communities. They lacked coercive apparatuses; no agency or ruling class monopolized the use of force, and the ability to use force was more or less evenly distributed among an armed or potentially armed population. Berent emphasizes the presence or absence of a special coercive apparatus separate from ordinary citizens. He quotes Ernest Gellner, who defined a state as.

“the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The ‘state’ is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may be concerned

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with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They are the state" (Gellner 1983: 4).

Berent (2000) argues that the polis had such coercive institutions as a ready-made state apparatus over which anyone who wished or was called upon to rule could preside. He notes that concerned individuals or volunteers brought cases before the people's courts, and that no system of public prosecution existed. Similarly, interested individuals, sometimes acting independently, carried out court orders, not officials (Berent 2000: 356-357).

Critics of this position insist that the polis as a specific "democratic state" or "civil state" had a political center. They argue that the polis was different from the early state as it was, and consequently the political system of the polis had a flat structure. Its center was not above but in the midst of its citizens (Hansen 2002; Grinin 2004; van der Vliet 2005). Berent claims that only the existence of a professional ruling class as an intermediate bureaucracy between the various civic assemblies and the population as a whole is a condition sine qua non for recognizing a social unit as a real state (Berent 2006).

Suppose a certain more or less egalitarian community (commune, canton), or rather an equal alliance of such communities, calls itself a "centralized government," makes rules for itself, collects taxes from each inhabitant, and can force everyone to work and fight by legitimate (according to its rules) violence. Weber and Carneiro would therefore classify such an alliance as a state. Berent insists that such a community is not a state.

Who is right? Intuition suggests that something important for the status of statehood is missing here. But what exactly is missing?

Self-help and self-defense, reliance on kin and neighbors: these are indeed more characteristic of barbarian chiefdoms than of states. Berent boldly and quite convincingly moves the Greek polities out of the realm of classical political science and into the realm of anthropology. But was the Athenian republic governed by the law of force, by kinship and neighborhood relations, or were families, clans, and fraternities for some reason compelled to obey common rules?

If the former, then we must recognize Athens, and even more so the other smaller and less ordered polis, only as barbarian societies of the chiefdom type. However, the image of Athens created in numerous monuments, starting with Plato's dialogues, with respect for the laws and duties of the citizens, corresponds more to the second version. Whether this image is realistic or mythological is another question. What else but laws (clearly revered) and a separate apparatus of coercion (clearly absent) could claim to be the basis of statehood?

## **Formal structure of management positions as a main distinguishing feature**

A clue is provided by the very structure of the offices that were filled by lot in republican Athens. If we apply Aristotle's categories here, let us put it this way: the point is not in the *matter* (citizens who fell to become chiefs for a certain period of time), but in the *form*: in the very framework of official posts, positions with succession according to uniform rigid rules (here there was a lot, but there could be another order). The specifics of new political structure lies in powers and relations between positions specified in the rules. Generally speaking, we have arrived at the classical notion of *organization*, which Weber and Carneiro do not have in their definitions of the state.

Establishing this framework of positions—the organizational structure — creates a pattern that reproduces itself when personnel change. More importantly, positions are replaced at generational change by explicit formal rules, not by changing personal, kinship ties. Obviously, the duties and powers of positions correspond in one way or another to Carneiro's functions, with Weber's reliance on legitimate violence. In other words, we are supplementing, not abolishing, the classical definitions. We get a complete set of attributes of the state, and now all that remains is to transform these thoughts into a unified construction.

*A state is an association of people with a government as a formal organizational structure of leading positions (posts, tenures) reproduced in generations, independent of kinship, which, thanks to its monopoly of legitimate physical force in a certain territory covering several communities, is able to force members of these communities to work and to go to war, to charge them with resources in various forms, to distribute and use the collected resources, to issue laws and to punish their violation.*

The transition to statehood was an extraordinarily important stage in social evolution because over many centuries of known history, virtually all inhabited areas of the planet came under the jurisdiction of one or another state. There is also no doubt about the essential qualitative and structural novelty of social orders with state governance. With a few temporary exceptions, states have prevailed over stateless communities.

These general observations form the basis for the following thesis. In terms of military power, attractiveness to rulers and elites, and often also in terms of internal security for inhabitants, states represented a higher level of social complexity and organization than stateless societies. In the paradigm of steady progress with an explicit or implicit teleology, the emergence of states seems "natural". If one accepts Carneiro's theory of state emergence, which convincingly integrates geographic, demographic, resource, and military factors (Carneiro 1970), the problem seems solved.

However, if we reject teleology and the dogma of inevitable progress, the mechanism of the emergence of a fundamentally new qualitative social structure remains unclear. It is doubtful that this mechanism is unique and completely outside the general processes and regularities of social evolution. In order to reveal it, we need to solve the following three tasks:

1) to present an abstract conceptual scheme of the emergence of new structures in evolution in general and in social evolution in particular;

2) to generalize the main known processes of the development of those stateless societies (barbarian chiefdoms and tribes) which, under certain conditions, were able to acquire statehood;

3) to show, using the conceptual means of the presented scheme, how the results of these processes led to the main components of the state, as noted in the new definition above.

## **Challenges and Concerns as Functional Drivers of Evolution**

The Toynbean scheme of "challenges and answers" has long been part of the vocabulary of political analysts, publicists, and writers of bureaucratic documents. On the one hand, too frequent and free use of the terms blurs and obscures their meaning; on the other hand, these difficulties do not cancel out the common sense and usefulness of the concepts.

Let us specify the elements of this scheme using the concept of *concern* as part of the comprehensive functional model (Stinchcombe 1987). Because the object of concern is a variable parameter—a scale with acceptable value zones—a *challenge-threat* is an action that takes or can take those values outside that zone. In other words, a challenge-threat manifests as tension harming, or perceived to harm, the object of concern by pushing a *homeostatic variable* beyond acceptable limits.

In addition, on the same scale, there is usually another zone of desirable, attractive values for the actor (more power, more resources, more prestige, etc.). Accordingly, we define *challenge-opportunity* as new or known circumstances that offer attractive prospects to the actor, enabling them to set specific practical goals for achieving new attractive values on the scale of their significant object of concern.

Critics usually fault functionalism in the social sciences for its apologetics for stability and its inability to explain structural change. The above treatment of Stinchcombe's model shows that it is perfectly suited to such explanations. In the evolutionary aspect, the main characteristic of each niche as a facet of the interaction between the environment and a living social unit (group, population, ethnos, society) is *a set of concerns of that unit that require provisioning*.

## **Providing Structures, Ingredients, and *Magic Wands***

*Providing structure* is a broader concept than "adaptation" in (neo)Darwinism. Each structure corresponds to a concern or set of concerns that are not tied to an organ or organism, but refer to the interaction between living systems and the environment at different levels of biological and social evolution.

Structures emerge only on the basis of pre-existing accessible *ingredients* (also structures!) if they are sufficiently relevant. Structures can provide different concerns, connect with other structures to fulfill new emerging concerns. Pre-existing structures have their limits and their lines of development, which do not always and not in all cases have an adaptive significance.

*Magic wands* are particularly flexible multifunctional structures, capable of combining with other ingredients to form new structures as the basis for new useful functions and abilities. If a *magic wand* has proven its effectiveness in a variety of situations early in its development, it will be used to respond to new challenges. In other words, "Nature" (in biological evolution) or people (in social and cultural evolution) will use, modify, and combine it with other structures in new tests, and attempt to apply it to various other concerns. If the potential of the magic wand is truly great, then with each new successful application, *fixation mechanisms*, different types and levels of *selection* will act: *positive reinforcement* in individual and group behavior.

Most prominent human *magic wands* are: shared intentionality, internalization, interactive ritual, normativity, language, consciousness, cultural patterns, planned and coordinated collective activity, organization, concepts, models, and abstract thinking [Rozov 2023]. Closer to the given topic are such *magic wands* as: production economy, storage technologies, military organization, power structure, forced collection and redistribution of resources, state.

## **Evolutionary principles**

We partly borrowed the principles directly and partly derived them through generalization from works in general evolutionary theory, anthropogenesis theory, developmental psychology, social psychology, and sociology (Spencer 1901/2021). The principles are not new and may seem trivial, especially to specialists in evolutionary biology. However, such a summary is useful because principles serve as heuristics and logical prerequisites for theoretical explanations. Moreover, it is non-trivial and promising to apply them together.

*Principle of provisioning, or "whip"*: When a new acute concern (an objective group concern) appears, if there are sufficient ingredients, persistent and varied attempts, and fixation mechanisms, the surviving populations will surely evolve a structure that provides that concern to a greater or lesser extent.

*Principle of sufficiency of available ingredients*; a new providing structure cannot emerge from nothing. Among many different attempts, some involve already existing structures that have other functions. Successful attempts—those positively reinforced—cause these structures to grow, connect with other successfully activated structures, and transform, acquiring new qualities and a new purpose (Fig. 1.).

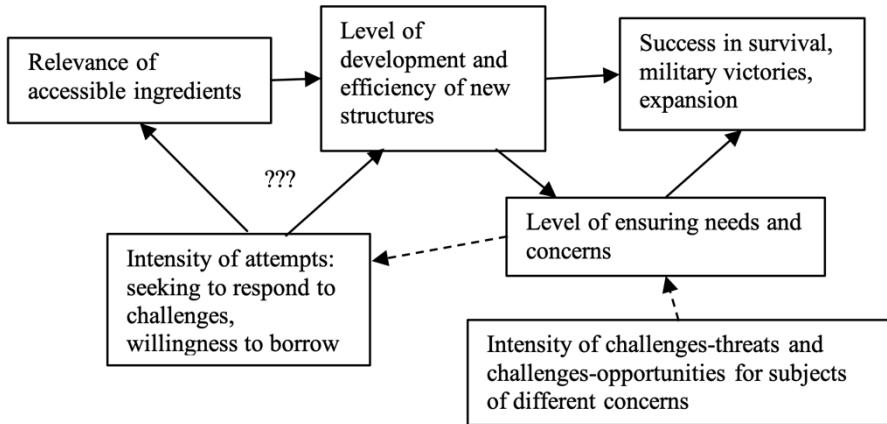


Fig.1. Mechanism of emergence of new structures in evolution as a variant of A. Stinchcombe's functional model (without taking into account costs and feedbacks). In this type of circuit, blocks stand for variables, solid arrows indicate positive, reinforcing coupling, and dashed arrows indicate negative, weakening coupling.

*Principle of spiral co-evolution of concerns and structures.* Each new structure (anatomical, physiological, behavioral, mental, social) as well as *the constructed niche* (part of the techno-natural environment) has side effects in the form of various *costs and tensions* (Stinchcombe 1987). The altered interaction with the natural and/or social environment, resulting from the obtained structure, generates challenge-threats, challenge-opportunities, and thus new superstructural concerns (objective, but somehow perceived by individual organisms and their groups). If the pre-existing structures provide these concerns, then the evolutionary change in this aspect is complete. If pre-existing structures do not provide these concerns, organisms and groups attempt different responses while the successful ones consolidate into a new structure. The new costs and tensions involved lead to a new cycle of spiral development.

*Principle of directionality of evolution.* The vector of development is determined to the greatest extent by the variability of those previously formed structures which, under a given evolutionary strategy of the species, proved to be the most successful in a wide range of conditions, capable of flexible change and effective combination with other structures. Alternative lines of evolution exist precisely

because each has a different directionality, which is largely determined by the original underlying structures, such as homoarchy and heterarchy (see above).

*Megatrend "Lift" as a typical mechanism of the most radical evolutionary changes.* "Radicality" here means either a large "distance" (a segment on the scale of a trait) that is successively overcome, or the appearance of a particularly significant trait, or its disappearance and replacement by another. This principle serves primarily as a heuristic: to explain any radical change in evolution, one must look for a "Lift": a set of positive feedback loops. Presumably, the co-evolution of concerns and structures constitutes the initial (deep) mechanism of any such complex.

*Conditions of expansion of magic wands* (spreading of the most flexible and successful structures): if found or established structures prove highly efficient in addressing current concerns, then living systems (including social communities) will certainly explore new applications. Positive behavioral reinforcement and positive selection activate the mechanism in ontogenesis and phylogenesis, respectively. If these structures are successful again, then the intensity of subsequent attempts to use them, to modify them for different purposes, to combine them with other structures, will increase.

## Transition to the Orders of Barbarism

The following ecological, technological, demographic and socio-political trends reinforced each other and led to the establishment of the Neolithic economy and barbarian orders:

- *Technologies of crop storage* (from cellars to ceramic vessels) developed, allowing for sedentary life of large communities; for nomads, herds of domestic animals played the same role of storage technologies;
- Food supplies and herds, the growth and concentration of wealth increased the *temptations to plunder*; the communities that survived and grew were those that used military force to defend their resources and/or seize those of others;
- *Military organizations with hierarchy and coercive power* were formed for defense and attack; under their leadership, communities began to build fortifications (earthen ramparts, ditches, stone walls) (Malešević 2017);
- Military and administrative elites were empowered to protect and redistribute accumulated stocks, land, herds and other resources; *socioeconomic inequality increased* (Roscoe 2013);
- *Polygamy increased*, the most influential and successful men had the largest number of wives, which, together with patrilocalization, led to the concentration of resources by the strongest clans and families and even greater social inequality (Smith et al. 2020);

- *The wars of the time did not reduce the population*, as previously thought, because with widespread polygamy it was not the number of men but the number of fertile women that mattered for demographic growth.

These and other trends closed in positive feedback loops and became the proverbial "development spiral" or, more precisely, the megatrend "*Lift*". The wide variety of institutional forms presented in anthropological descriptions testifies to multiple trajectories of evolution.

One dimension of this diversity plays a particularly important role for communities in choosing the vector of their further political evolution. Chieftdoms are characterized by a simpler, unambiguous social hierarchy (*homoarchy*), while tribes and their confederate associations coexist with heterogeneous hierarchies (*heterarchy*) (Bondarenko et al. 2002; Bondarenko 2006).

Presumably, the more barbarian communities feuded and warred among themselves, the fewer the geographical obstacles to establishing extensive territorial control, the more likely they were to tend toward homoarchy and chieftaincy, further evolving into complex chieftainships, and then into quite authoritarian, class-based, and class-oriented early states (Johnson & Earle 2000). The successful experience of violence, coercion in the conquest of "outsiders" always leads to the temptation to apply the same practices to "one's own".

If, for some reason, barbarian communities fought less among themselves, if extensive conquest and territorial maintenance were difficult (especially because of mountainous terrain), and if communities were more connected by relationships of exchange, gift-giving, and kinship, they developed more like tribes and confederations (Bondarenko et al. 2002). Even as they evolve into early states, they may retain a high degree of heterarchy and an essentially related high degree of collegially shared power (Collins 1999: 113-117).

This general proposition has some theoretical and empirical support (Kristiansen 1998: 48-49; Bondarenko 2006: 97-108), but it requires broader and more thorough comparative historical verification.

## **The Development of Barbarian Orders**

In a certain sense, the evolutionary leap from primitive hunter-gatherers to barbarian orders of farmers and herdsmen, and especially to homoarchies, can be called an "expulsion from social paradise," if by the latter we mean predominantly equal, free, and peaceful relations within groups and friendly alliances. Let us list the main trends in the evolution of barbarian societies:

- Increasing violence between communities brought some closer together while alienating others; communities grew by forced accession or voluntary alliances; united mainly by linguistic and cultural affinity, as "our own" ("like us") against "strangers" (who looked, spoke, lived differently); alliances

facilitated intermarriage; language and cultural integration, along with homogeneity of gene pool and somatotype, *formed ethnic groups* of different sizes;

- Population pressure, with migrations hampered by *physical circumscription* (natural barriers) or *social circumscription* (surrounding lands are occupied and not allowed), led to constant tensions over insufficient resources; conflicts and wars over land, especially over resource-rich areas (fertile soils, rich grasslands, wells and oases in deserts, etc.) became more frequent and intense frequent and intense (Carneiro 1970);
- The organization of military forces increasingly required training, systematic production of weapons, and preparation of fortifications (Malešević 2017; Smith et al. 2020; Turchin et al. 2021);
- As the victors consolidated, site conquests evolved into full-blown conquests involving the subjugation of local populations (Carneiro 1970); communities grew less through horizontal alliances and heterarchies and more through the power of some ethnic groups over others, or *ethnic dominance*;
- *Inherited social stratification* as the precursor of estates and classes emerged (Roscoe 2013). Homoarchy developed in conquering societies (complex chiefdoms); power tended to become hereditary, and force and tradition, rather than authority, supported it; chiefs and their inner circle (military-political elite) concentrated and inherited the main resources: political, power, economic and symbolic;
- Prolonged alienation with renewed violent conflicts and wars between communities led to a moral disengagement effect that allowed people to commit acts of violence while distancing themselves from moral responsibility for their actions; strategies to justify aggression, such as dehumanizing enemies or turning violence into a ritual act, allowed them to suppress a sense of empathy and present their violence as necessary or righteous (Armit, 2011);
- Without states and formal law, moral aggression spread widely, as people used violence to protect personal or collective honor and secure justice; personal reputation and the ability to retaliate were crucial for survival and social status (ibid.);
- Military leaders and elites are always interested in expanding the resource base for their community, for the army, so they forced the subordinate population *to intensify the economy*: accelerated transition to production agriculture, plowing of badlands, construction of terraces, etc. (Chase-Dunn & Hall 1997);
- Rituals were primarily designed *to legitimize leaders, elites, and the dominant ethnos*; glorification of military victories was most popular; people developed

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and widely disseminated myths and epics about heroes and gods (usually declared ancestors of leaders) defeating monsters and/or alien, hostile, "savage" peoples (Jonsson & Earle 2000);

- In large societies, *cults* of ruling elites and ethnic groups, capable of evolving into *religions*, expanded; a *priesthood* emerged with a monopoly on agricultural, medical, and magical knowledge;
- The fixation of data on crops, harvests, accumulated stocks, trade calculations, fixation of sacred formulas, texts led to the emergence of *writing*, which opened a vast space of challenges-opportunities..

## Ways of Selecting Social Orders: War and Visible Greatness

The generalized macro-level includes types of communities (e.g., migratory groups, villages, big-man communities, tribes, or chiefdoms), types of their orders, and interactions between communities. At this level, evolution is driven by the selection of orders through the success/defeat of communities in war, and by the diffusion of orders and their elements through military alliances and economic and cultural exchanges.

The first way of selection is the most brutal, but quite effective, if we agree with the concept of Peter Turchin, who explains the emergence of all great societies because they survived and expanded in wars (Turchin 2016). Note that total military defeat, the collapse of a figuration and the destruction of all its orders are rarely associated with the extermination of the population (genocide). The victor usually imposes its own orders, leaving the defeated in subordinate positions in institutions and organizations, and they still have their own attitudes, habitus, patterns and stereotypes of social interactions. Therefore, in the absence of state technologies of total control (which appeared only in the 20th century), the conquered provinces always had some hybrid regimes. Thus, the selection of orders through war also includes elements of diffusion.

The next model (Fig. 2) shows a macro process conditionally labeled "Neolithic generates barbarism." This is a natural consequence of the basic demographic, ecological, and economic processes of the Neolithic, over which the orders of barbarism are superimposed: the strengthening of military organization, always associated with growing hierarchies and increasing opportunities for elites to coerce and exploit.

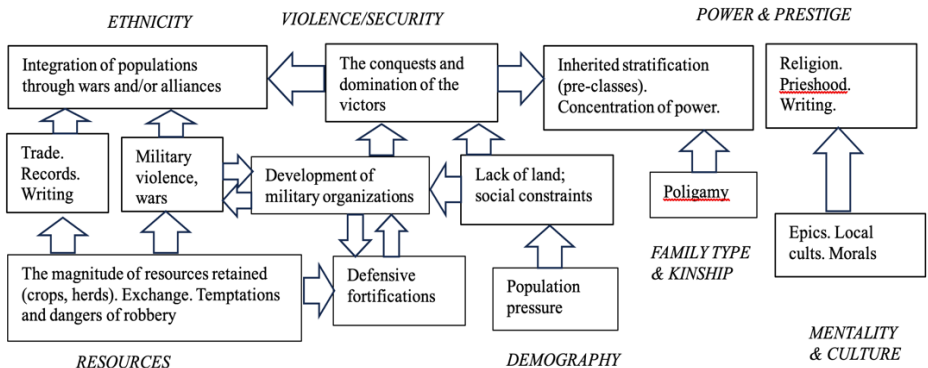


Fig. 2. Formation of barbarian social orders with military organization, hierarchy and ethnic groups. Here, blocks stand for phenomena and features of the social order, and arrows stand for major causal relationships between them.

The path of evolutionary progress through diffusion prevails in peaceful interactions when one community borrows institutions, forms of organization, and practices from other communities. This happens when new objects of concern lack their own providing structures. When a community faces multiple neighboring communities with differing systems and institutions, they choose among them. This leads to both diffusion and selection, not based on elimination, but on which system offers greater advantages in power, prestige, and wealth.

This explains and justifies all the large expenditures made by potential patrons to exert an impressive influence on potential clients. Ruinous feasts (potlatch), lavish and expensive festivals, burial mounds, and later: pyramids, temples, statues, palaces: all these are manifestations of the strategies of rulers and elites striving to increase the attractiveness of their orders. Communities that reflect these orders tend to become culturally and economically, as well as politico-militarily, dependent on their host.

The many characteristics of the social orders of barbarism presented constant and strong challenges-threats to the rulers and elite groups of the largest complex chiefdoms as a result of past successful conquests and the accession of allies.

In the barbarian type of kinship-based social order, people and their relationships naturally change. Members of new generations always have new relatives, new ties, and new disputes. The old structure of distribution of responsibilities ceases to work, collapses. *Ordinary concerns* that were somehow provided for on the basis of private, personal relationships of kinship, solidarity, and loyalty are no longer properly provided for.

Threats to such concerns as the maintenance of power, external security, and control over internal order include the fickleness of kinship-based loyalties, local revolts, political crises with the weakening and death of charismatic leaders, the dangerous dependence of military organization on changing personal and kinship relations, the destructive effects of internal violent conflicts based on private notions of honor and justice, and so on.

In full accordance with the model of evolutionary, the actors of barbarian politics, first of all, chiefs and elites made several *attempts* to respond to these and other *challenges-threats*. These attempts included borrowing social forms from the largest and most successful neighboring societies, transferring models of military organization to the sphere of collecting and redistributing resources, and using cults, religions, scripts, and local moral and legal systems to socially control the subjugated territory. These multiple attempts, with successes, failures, regressions, and accumulations of patterns, constituted the transition to statehood (Fig. 3). The inputs here include the main concerns of rulers and elites, as well as the *ingredients* as the results of developmental trends in barbarian societies. The outputs are the main components of the definition of the state proposed above.

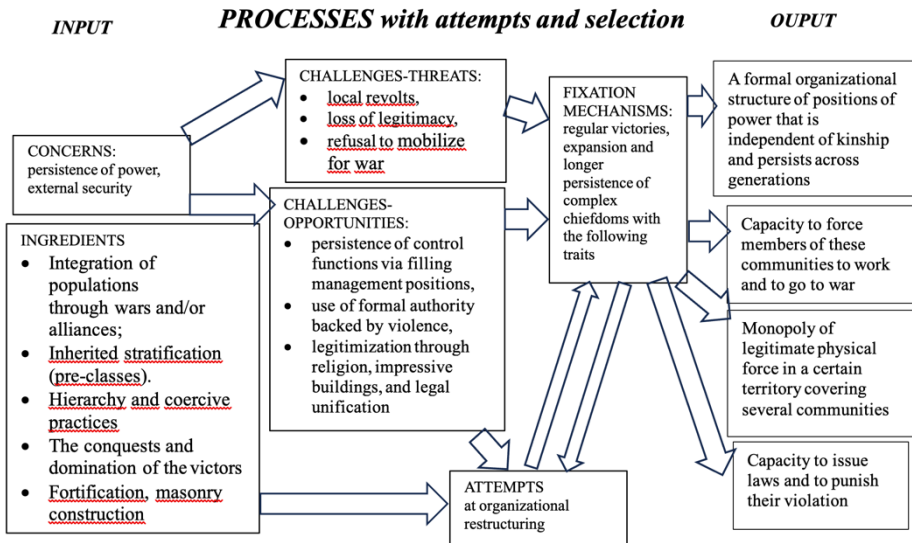


Fig. 3. Transition from large barbarian chiefdoms to statehood, presented as a systemic process using the evolutionary model of formation of new structures.

This scheme, of course, does not describe specific phenomena in a particular place and time. The methodological status of this type of schema is the ideal type

according to Max Weber. These thought constructs do not empirically describe historical events; instead, they serve as conceptual frameworks (lenses) to search for the underlying causes and drivers of macro-social processes.

Apparently, many early Bronze Age states were unstable and disintegrated rather quickly. Historical records have preserved more or less reliable information about the oldest empires, which were the most successful, long-lived, conquering, and therefore quite effective large states. Textbook examples are the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Persia, China, and India in the Old World<sup>1</sup>, and the Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans in the New World. Most of the reliable information about these empires concerns their mature form and decline. We know much less about their formative processes. It is this very sketchy, often circumstantial information that can and should be compared to the ideal type presented in Fig. 3.

### **Difficult transition from kinship to formal state structures**

The most ancient patriarchal and patrimonial ways of building social structures through kinship, marriage politics, which were dominant in pre-state times, did not disappear completely later. They began to give way to formal structures and rules independent of kinship ties, mainly because of the vagueness of the order of coordination (who is responsible for what, who obeys whom) and because of the practical impossibility of reproducing this order when the participants grew old and died.

A palliative mode of reproduction was probably replacement by kinship succession: "Now you will do everything your father (mentor, uncle, father-in-law, older brother) did". Institutionalized relics of such orders were medieval workshops with father-son (or son-in-law) dynasties and master-apprentice relationships.

As the complexity of practices, relationships, and necessary rules of interaction grew, the order of replacing those who dropped out became increasingly tied to functions, responsibilities, authority, access to resources, rather than to the specific people who could handle them all.

After crossing a critical limit of population and territory, polities with such organizational forms of power and control began to win wars. They maintained internal integrity through generationally reproducible structures of governance, routine resource mobilization, formal law, and religious legitimation. Other

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<sup>1</sup> As for the Trojan kingdom described in Homer's epic, by all accounts the real prototype of this artistic image had the characteristics of a large territorial and maritime empire with its capital on the Bosphorus, with a structure of positions in the central government that was reproduced through the change of generations. It was thus a full-fledged state (see the definition in italics above). A more detailed discussion of the Trojan kingdom, especially its dating, is hardly worth discussing. The point is that Homer's artistically brilliant poems are not only full of fiction, but also that we must consider the well-known "Homeric question".

societies followed their example as victors. Thus began the evolutionary transition to the new stage of social and cultural evolution.

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