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AUTHOR King, Preston
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ABSTRACT

Societies are constantly changing; there is no natural end to social evolution. Societies can be regarded as modernizing in the sense of continually undergoing change, but also in the sense of trying to achieve specific goals already achieved elsewhere. A society can become modernized in the latter sense by becoming more specialized or industrialized or democratic, or by improving health services or educational facilities, as long as it is assumed that it is overcoming some gap that separates it from other societies. Specialization may be the most plausible notion involved in the concept of modernization, suggesting that modernization is but another expression vaunting the good of state formation. It is doubtful whether state formation is good in itself, although it becomes necessary for smaller, less specialized units in vulnerable positions. Thus modernization, even conceived in a very minimal way as a transit from less to more specialized forms of social control, is not an end nor a good in itself. It merely calls attention to the need to create a greater equality between some societies and others without which some would remain significantly vulnerable to others. A related document is SO 007 169. (Author)

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Preston KING
University of Nairobi

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SOCIETY, STATE FORMATION AND MODERNIZATION

by Preston King

A society represents some form of unit. It is clearly not a physical unit, in the manner of a house or an aeroplane. It is a unit rather in respect of some species of orderly interaction among the membership. In the nature of things, social order cannot exist where the intended membership do not perceive it to exist. Social order cannot exist where the membership do not intend it to exist. Social order is a function of perceptions and intentions but most importantly of the latter. When we intend something, others may attach various expectations to our intentions. When we expect something, we may be laying claims upon other peoples' intentions. It is from this crossing and sometimes clash between intention and expectation that habits, rules, norms and laws (etc.) are formed.

Norms can be said to operate in at least two ways: they express our goals, and also the means by which we may seek to realize our goals. There are certain goal-expectations which we could say were characteristic of all societies. There are more specific means-expectations which vary greatly from one society to another. Goal-expectations we could qualify as generalized functions operative everywhere. Means-expectations we could qualify as structures which of course are highly variable.

Any social unit, for example, will be characterized by some number of shared rules, by some process of rule interpretation and by some process of rule enforcement (sanctions). These functions - we may say these goal-expectations - obtain universally. But the particular structures - the means-expectations - which obtain here and there (i.e. the concrete forms assumed by these functions) will vary enormously.

A society is some form of patterned interrelationship, or organization, of human beings. In this sense any human organisation can be called a society, whether a state, at the widest point of the continuum, or a tennis club, at the narrowest. A society, to be such,

instances some form of unity. This unity consists in a more or less legitimate, valid or accurate sharing of expectations among the membership. 'Expectation' is a very broad expression, but we can take it to refer to the actual regularities which obtain in and are characteristic of social life. And these regularities merely reduce to the patterned behaviour of the membership which may be variably and summarily referred to in terms of 'habits', 'rules', 'norms', 'laws' and the like.

Societies differ from one another in term of scale, function, ideals and structure. Thinking ~~primarily~~ in terms of structure and scale, a conventional distinction is established between societies that are states and societies that are not (i.e. acephalous). A state society is generally regarded as being 'modern' and a stateless society as being 'traditional' but more likely 'primitive'. The idea of modernisation in fact usually captures the notion of moving from one to the other, that is from the primitive to the modern. For this reason the theory or theories of modernisation reduce to a theory or to theories of evolution - even indeed of progress. Of course intermediate resting points are normally allowed between the primitive and the modern. And most frequently the expression 'traditional' is allowed to capture or to express this intermediacy. Thus there emerges some notion of a primitive society being transformed into a traditional or primitive 'state' which in turn strains to become modern - i.e. to become a 'genuine' state.

Where the distinction is made between state and non-state systems (between hierarchical/pyramidal and acephalous societies) the assumption is that they perform similar functions, but through dismilar structures. In the one case group decisions become the restricted province of a specific group (or groups) of individuals, and in the other case they become the preserve of no one in particular at all. The distinction between state and non-state is not, however, as fundamental as it has been often made to appear: the functions are common, and the conceptual shading off from one to the other is gradual.

~~Having said however that~~ The state is characterised, not necessarily by more stable structures, but by the allocation of some degree of central decision-making to some more or less numerous sub-group within the social whole. So the important question becomes that of determining whether there are further significantly distinctive features of the 'state'. Having said that the state performs the same basic functions as the 'non-state', the real question becomes whether (in general terms) it does anything different or anything more. This question is distinct from the consideration whether a state can create different possibilities or must encounter different problems; it can (in the one case) and must (in the other). But it is difficult to say that it does anything more.

States have been defined in various ways. For example, in one form of contract theory, the state unit is defined in terms of the creation of order. But of course if a state is some sort of society, and if a society is definitionally understood to involve some form of patterned interrelationship amongst the membership, then the state, if it is a distinct sort of society, cannot be so in terms of being identified with order, but only with some distinctive sort of order.

The State has also been defined as a distinctive social unit in virtue of its possession of sovereignty - one most important aspect of which is understood to consist in a final power of command. In this sense it is the existence of sovereignty, the finality of command, which creates the state. And it is assumed that this finality is internal and not external to the social group. But in this sense of course even a family could be sovereign, and therefore constitute a state, where for example one of the adult members of such a unit has conferred upon him or her such a finality.

The state has also been defined, this of course in the Austinian tradition, as existing where some sub-unit of the whole enjoys a monopoly of force. But one is reminded of the homily that one can do everything with bayonets except sit on them, which underscores the counterproductiveness of force.

If 'monopoly of' means 'having all', then no society can be characterised by rulers exercising such force. Rulers do of course employ some force. But then so do or might all members of a society. For we are always confronted with robbers, burglars and worse and less. Rulers then might be said to dispose of more force. But in the first place to have more is not the same as having a monopoly. And in the second place rulers are fairly frequently being overturned or (in some cases) voted out of office - which would suggest that they must have (and have had) less force. Does it remain, however, that while in office, i.e. while ruling, rulers can avail themselves of greater force? Not necessarily, since we can only tell if they can employ greater force when this is tested. And such tests are not constantly being made. And when they are made they may reveal that the ruler, even while ruling, wields less, not more, force (than some other group or combination in the society). Since the quantum of force held is not being tested all the time, it becomes impossible to say that the ruling element wields a preponderance of force all the time.

Since rulers acquire, and also lose, their power, the question arises as to how rulers come by it in the first place. Three questions have to be considered. How large is the ruling group? How cohesive is the ruling group? How distinctive is the technology/magic/knowledge/skill which it can employ to buttress its position? If a ruling group is large, cohesive and possesses a distinctive technology, then it automatically is capable of falling back upon considerable force in case of need. But the degree of force available is a function of the three factors mentioned and is not sui generis.

Since cohesion among the ruling group cannot be reduced to force (it may spring from common culture, language, history etc) it is accordingly misleading to speak of a 'monopoly of force' as constituting 'the essence' of the political relationship. The preponderance of force may merely flow from a preponderance of accord; it cannot be maintained that accord is merely or mostly a function of force.

In any event one can have as much or as little of a monopoly of force in a 'primitive' as in a 'modern' society. The arguments indeed cut across one another. Sometimes it is said that power in 'primitive' societies is more absolute more concentrated - i.e. that there is more of a monopoly - than in 'modern' societies. And then it is sometimes said that power in 'modern' societies is more absolute, more concentrated than in 'primitive' societies (accordingly 'totalitarianism' is held up to us as a distinctively contemporary development, taking its origain in or from the French Revolution.)

These defintions of the state - by contrast with stateless societies - which identify it with the creation of order, or with a final power of command, or with the possession of a monopoly of force prove to be of very little value to us in the attempt to distinguish between the so-called primitive or traditional and the so-called modern. Societies which we call primitive or traditional are as likely to display 'order' (or the lack of it), a 'final power of command' (or the lack of it), and a 'monopoly of force' (or again the lack of it) as any 'modern' state.

Demarcation lines of the kind we have reviewed as regards the distinction between 'state' and 'stateless' societies seem faulty and unhelpful. They are certainly surrounded by considerable dispute. I cannot develop this discussion fully here and shall merely return to the minimal idea with which we began: that a 'state' is a total socio-political unit which performs the same basic functions as all other such units, but is distinguished from 'non-states' only by the performance of these functions through more specialized agencies.

A state, clearly, is some form of social organisation. It may often be regarded as equivalent to the whole of some society, or as identical with some subunit (like the government) of a society, or (more vaguely) with a principle of organisation which obtains in and coordinates the activities of a society (e.g., bureaucracy, sovereignty, etc).

The most relevant of these notions for my purposes is that where the state is regarded as a distinct, governing sub-unit of a larger society. This notion is central to any concept of the state as featuring increasing specialisation of function. Here there is a clearcut assumption of a distinction between rulers and ruled, and a differentiation of function between them. It is not then the word 'state' with which we are concerned, but rather with this notion of specialisation which as it emerges often projects a different form of social organisation from that or those types which may have preceded it.

A word is of course a second-order reality. It is not a thing or an event but merely a convenient means by which we refer to and handle these. For shorthand purposes we often ask what a word means. But this is only another way of enquiring after the species of reality to which it refers. The situation with the word 'state' is no different. The word is used in a variety of ways and I have no desire to merely review this variety. The only question of interest that arises is what sort of distinctive reality one might reasonably be referring to.

The reality with which we are for moment concerned is the emergence of what we might call a distinct ruling element (which is variably referred to as a class, clan, family, race, caste and so on) which performs the specialized task of establishing or securing the unity of the whole.

The larger a socio-political whole becomes, the more likely is it that some specailized sub-unit within it will be required to pay specific attention to the problem of maintaining its coherence. Within certain limits such specialization is a condition for further expansion. And such specialization, insofar as it involves the allocation to a group of persons the task of coordinating the activities of the whole, automatically entails a degree of centralization. Governmental specialization and centralization is then the minimal reality underlying the notion of state formation.

'State' is merely a label which we can apply to this process. Since however there are different degrees of governmental specialization and centralization in different societies, we are directly confronted with the fact that the 'state' is far from being a uniform phenomenon: states will vary from one another in proportion to the spheres and degrees of governmental specialization/centralization they reveal. As these potential differences are to be regarded as inexhaustible, so too must be the actual variation between different states.

If we inspect a variety of precolonial African states, such as Kush (18th century B.C.?), Axum (5th century B.C.?), Zimbabwe (12th-19th century B.C.?) - all these in eastern Africa - or Ghana (4th century A.D.?), Mali (14th century A.D.), and Songhai (15th century A.D.) - all these in western Africa, as well as any number of others (like traditional Ruanda, the Zulu, the Ashanti and so on) we can detect in all cases the emergence of a distinct ruling element. This might be called a class, clan, family, race, caste and so on and what it does is to perform the specialized task of establishing or securing the unity of the whole. Precolonial African states of the kind mentioned above were quite varied but they still shared certain characteristics. They betray a distinction in the first place, and as already indicated, between rulers and ruled. (This is a distinction which it would be difficult to say obtained, for example, among the Saan or Pygmy peoples.) The rulers perform as a specialized class of controllers who integrate the whole. This specialized class takes the form of a dominant clan or lineage or royal family. The membership of the state system over which this class presides was normally expanded in some significant degree through conquest. The economy of the system is essentially of a subsistence type but normally yields a sufficient surplus to sustain some handicraft industries (such as leather-working, perhaps) certain extractive pursuits (such as slaving, gold mining or ivory-hunting) as well as of course the ruling element itself. This system of control might be called 'pyramidal' or 'mechanical' as opposed to 'hierarchical' and 'organic'. The ruling element is a semi-subsistence kinship group; and the subject units which it groups are of the same

type; but the latter receive no external reward (are taxed but do not normally reap the benefit of taxes). Thus the subject groups are organized on a purer subsistence basis, modified by the fact that they have advanced beyond this into an elemental peasant stage. The ruling element taxes farmers/peasantry, traders, craftsmen, and of course subordinate rulers are taxed by (made to pay tribute to) their superiors.

This sort of state could be called a 'tribute-state', 'pyramidal', 'monarchical' and so on. Whatever it is called it is normally characterized by two perhaps contradictory features: 1) great de facto decentralisation, and 2) great de iure centralization. That is to say, there are relatively few spheres in which it is assumed that the ruling element may not interfere (assuming that human interference is allowed at all). But given an only rudimentary communications, etc. technology, there is little opportunity and little need to sustain center-periphery contacts which are more than sporadic.

All societies are heterogeneous. That is to say, they all assign different roles to the membership. The assignment of different roles to different individuals does not entail that there must accompany this an assignment of distinct roles to distinctly organized classes of individuals. Thus the fact that there may be distinct categories of people performing the tasks of herdsmen, hunters, farmers, and child-minders does not mean that any such group will necessarily congeal as a self-conscious and distinctly organized class of persons. It is notoriously common however that such class consolidation does take place. And where it occurs we confront, in however rudimentary a fashion, a two-tier social heterogeneity: in the assignment of roles to individuals, and to groups of individuals. The emergence of distinct corporate groups within a society is not to be equated with the emergence of a state; but we cannot understand a state to have emerged except where it is either preceded or accompanied by the emergence of distinct corporate groups within society.

Where a corporate group emerges within (or is imposed upon) a society, acquiring as a distinct purpose that of directing the group, then we have a correlation between class formation and state formation. In this case the corporate groups within the society are not randomly related units, in the manner of isolated sub-groups collected together here or there for purposes of worship or ceremony or play or collective harvesting. In a state, there is not merely an assignment of distinct roles to distinct groups, but also an ordering or ranking of such groups so that one may supervise and direct the activities of another (or others).

Not only does every society assign different roles to different individuals but every society also reveals some form of ranking or stratification as accompanying this process. Some writers maintain that the term 'stratification' is best reserved to the ordering of groups, rather than of individuals, within a society. I shall ignore such a recommended distinction, in order to speak of individual and collective ranking by an identical term. Thus we can say that every society reveals functional specialization among the membership, and also some form of individual stratification among the membership; and many societies will additionally reveal functional specialization among its sub-groups, and also a ranking or stratification of these sub-groups.

Many pre-industrial states, (of the kind for example which we have mentioned in the African context, and which we often label traditional) reveal group stratification. What is often characteristic of them is the predominance of kinship principles. The ruling element is merely another kinship group. If the members of the state are all regarded as kinsmen, such a perspective does not, all the same, remove the fact of group stratification from the state. The relationship between dominant and dominated is merely one of superior to subordinate kinship groups.

There are a great variety of principles according to which a society can be stratified. In the most common and elementary form it is by kinship. Here the group which is defined as being nearest, genealogical time, to some given ancestor, can be accorded a

rulership function. Distinct from this, but often merging with it, is a religious principle. Here it may be assumed that the group, by whatever means, which has access to the divinity (or to the ancestral spirits, perhaps) has the proper claim to rule. As distinct from these principles it may be assumed that a race or caste or specific occupational or technocratic group have a special claim to rule. The kinship principle is no doubt the earliest and most common and elementary of these principles, but it is of course only one among a variety. We may make a distinction between kinship and non-kinship principles of group stratification, but it is little more helpful than, say, a distinction between class and non-class principles of stratification. It would certainly be difficult to argue that kinship group stratification was any more or less 'voluntary' than racial, caste, 'tribal', technocratic or class stratification. In any event, as a society becomes both larger and more centralized, the greater is the likelihood that it will display a wider variety of stratification principles.

Since kinship principles are generally the earliest, the expansion of membership combined with centralization of control usually throws up the following pattern: of kinship principles being increasingly cut across, which is not to say ultimately or entirely supplanted, by other principles, which are not necessarily any more 'voluntary'. One of the earliest non-kinship principles around which groups have cohered is of course sex: males banding together as males, for whatever purposes, such as war, sport, the chase or ceremony. Then there is the matter of persons being grouped by age (and sex): as for circumcision ceremonies, and again for war, etc. Age-groups are in a sense more 'universalistic': i.e., in the simple sense that they cut across kinship principles. But kinship principles can also be 'universalistic': as for example when they cut across class or meritocratic principles of association. Age-groups, as cutting across kinship principles, are fairly common in Africa, as among the Kikuyu, Meru, Nandi, Kamba, Ibo, Swazi, Zulu and so on.

A kinship group, so conceived, can dominate other groups, and states may be formed on this basis. But a sexual group, as of men, can dominate the other sex - and states can be formed on this basis too. And finally an age-group, taken as such, can be accorded a certain leadership function, as in war or ceremony, and a society may propel itself in some degree towards 'statehood' by relinquishing a variety of control functions to such a group. In any event, the movement from a segmentary society to a pyramidal or traditional state would normally involve the attribution of a larger number of functions to intermediate non-kinship groups (like age-groups).

One of the morals that will spring from this discussion is that every socio-political grouping acquires a certain distinctness in virtue of the principle upon which it is erected; but also that no society can ever be built upon, or be directed by, one principle; and thus that every society contains within itself an internal tension and set of potentially contradictory pulls. There is no society which does not in some degree organize and direct the activity of its membership by reference to kinship, sex and age; being grouped by age or sex however, may obviously cut across the loyalties implied in

being grouped by kinship.

Lloyd Fallers, in his BANTU BUREAUCRACY (Chicago, 1965), draws our attention to a significant tension within the traditional Soga state, as between strong kinship loyalties and the emergence of bureaucratic principles.

Fallers is concerned with certain basic types of conflict which obtain between the norms or principles which, in his view, govern Soga society at the time of his study. He is studying a traditional state, now a part of Uganda, which featured both segmentary lineage groups (as in the 'stateless' or 'acephalous' systems) and a centralized state machinery. He assumes that the conflict between local kinship loyalty, on the one hand, and loyalty to the state, on the other, make for instability. The kinship institutions attempt to absorb the individual entirely, while the state institutions attempt in some measure to detach him from such loyalties.

This thesis is plausible, even convincing, but it should be kept within comparative perspective. The tension (within traditional African and other states) between corporate lineage groups, on the one hand, and the central institutions of a pyramidal state, on the other, is probably of the same order as the tension (within contemporary non-African industrial states) between class groups, on the one hand, and the central institutions of a hierarchical state, on the other. A corporate lineage group is of course capable of seceding from a state unit in a way not open to a social class. A social class, nonetheless, can threaten and implement strikes in a manner equally destructive of the whole. The traditional pyramidal state strives to overcome the kinship particularism of its corporate lineage components. Similarly, the hierarchical industrial state strives to overcome the disruptive class particularism of its component functional units. The aim of the one is usually some species of 'modernization'; the aim of the other, explicitly or implicitly, is usually some species of 'classlessness'.

Society is characterized by continuity and discontinuity, integration and disintegration, order and change. This is true of all societies. [redacted] Humans are directed by expectations, and these congeal as norms, laws (etc.). The norms etc which guide <u>individuals</u> lend coherence to their activities, but also map a certain <u>incoherence</u> in such activities. The norms, etc. which guide <u>groups</u> of individuals lend these groups coherence, but again map a certain incoherence; and of course the norms, principles, rules and so on guiding different groups also provide a basis for coherence (or harmony) and conflict (disharmony) among them. Because no society is completely ordered (or harmonious), no society is completely stable either.

As a state grows, increases in size, becomes more specialized, and further centralizes the control function one of the distinct problems which it increasingly confronts is that of legitimacy. For it is one thing within a group to accept decisions to which one is (or feels oneself to be) a party. It is another matter to accept in a group the decisions of an even smaller group over which one

knows one exercises virtually no control. Given the specialization of the state form, the class of governors must continually seek means of assuring the governed that their interests, however defined, are being taken account of in the governmental process. Elections which are held, for example, twice within each decade merely to decide who is going to decide, provide an instance of one means which may be adopted to convey such assurances. In this sense 'indirect rule' and (what J.S. Mill called) 'representative government' fit onto the same continuum of measures adopted to fill the inevitable gap (in a state system) between elite and mass, rulers and ruled.

Basically we started from some notion of a contrast between 'primitive' and 'modern' social or political organisation. This contrast lies at the heart of the discussion of 'modernization'. We translated this discussion - not altogether justifiable - of the contrast between 'state' and 'stateless' societies. In the context of this discussion we restricted our concern [redacted] to Africa. Which means that we can so far discuss the notion of a transition from the primitive to the modern (which is a discussion of modernization) entirely within an African context. This proves quite easy to do since we are impliedly taking 'modernization' to involve primarily some form of 'specialization' of the control function within a society. We are basically establishing a contrast between more specialized societies like those of the Ashanti and Zulu at one extreme, with those of less specialized societies like the Saan, Pygmy and Wanderobo at the other. In all of these cases I would argue that we find 'order', 'finality' and even - in so far as it exists anywhere - a 'monopoly of force'. The difference I have in mind only relates to the degree of specialization in the control function obtaining between them.

We are fully aware of the difficulty involved in establishing any distinction between 'state' and 'stateless' societies. It is a bipartite distinction which inevitably does violence to the reality it is intended to describe. But I have used these expressions because I believe that they are implicit in discussions of modernization. This idea, in its supremely political sense, involves some notion of movement from a stateless society to the emergence of the state, and beyond this, assuming that we have a state, to certain forms of state (and social) organisation which we seek to install or imitate. This bipartite distinction, all the same, is as inadequate as we know it to be, and it is as well to dwell on the fact for a moment.

James Coleman made a five-fold distinction between traditional African polities, rather than the basically two-fold distinction (which might be made three-fold) established by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard earlier still. Coleman's distinction was between large-scale states like the Hausa-Fulani emirates (where kinship structure was superseded by a class system); centralized chiefdoms like the Bemba (in Zambia, where power was concentrated in the hands of hereditary chiefly lineages); dispersed tribal societies like the Luo, Kikuyu, Nuer, and Ibo, which could attain a size of hundreds of thousands of people (but which were bound together, in the absence of an integrative royal lineage, by common rites,

arbitration procedures, descent ties, and age-grade associations); and small, autonomous local communities (which would prove both isolated and distinct from surrounding groups).

This complex typology blows up entirely simpleminded distinctions of the kind with which we began in regard to a society being a 'state' as over against being 'stateless'. All societies are intended to fit onto a continuum and a mere two-fold distinction is quite inadequate to capture the range of this continuum and the variety of different social groups which can be fitted onto in. The only difficulty about Coleman's typology is that it is not really clear as to what criteria he is using.

The criterion to which I referred initially is merely the matter of specialisation. It can only provide, as presently formulated, a very crude rule of thumb and he who applies it must note or remember that he is dealing with a continuum with almost infinite gradations from less to greater specialization. In Coleman's typology it would appear that he had a variety of criteria in mind: such as degree of centralization, kinship/non-kinship character of rule, size of unit, degree of autonomy and perhaps others still - as well as the principle of specialization. I do not wish to insist upon the variety of criteria involved, and necessarily involved, in such a complex typology. The important point is that no bi-polar distinction between state and stateless societies is likely to get us very far.

I have suggested the importance of the notion of a continuum of specialization vis-a-vis the control function exercised in a society. I have suggested by reference to the African context that there are very many different loci upon this continuum and this means that the 'state' and 'stateless' societies are conceptual extremes which, if they are regarded as opposing one another, must also be regarded as interrelated and as leading into one another.

No society can be said to be completely unspecialized in the sense of there being no individual or group somehow set apart, or whether set apart or not, somehow performing - randomly or otherwise - some sort of control, regulatory or directing function within the society. Many societies may evince little formalization of this function in the sense that there is no distinct or coherent individual or group that is allocated the job of performing that function. But the function still has to be performed. Otherwise we should be confronted with pure anarchy - in the ideal sense.

At the same time no society can be said to be completely or totally specialized in the sense that no individual or group can perform the control/regulatory function with total authority, with complete understanding, with automatic and therefore uninterrupted control over other members of the society.

Thus the 'stateless' extreme does not correspond to a society in which there is <u>no</u> specialization of function and the emergence of the 'state' does not correspond to a society in which the control function is <u>totally</u> alienated which is to say automatically and predictably, to some single or plural agent.

The continuum of specialization then is a species of ideal construct on which societies can never really be placed at either extreme. They are all bunched together somewhere towards the middle of the continuum and away from either extreme. If societies could be aligned along the ultimate 'stateless' end of the continuum then the anarchy this would represent would ultimately have to imply some sort of instinctive and all-encompassing mechanism of group control. If they could be located at the theoretical end of the continuum on the 'state' side then this would imply some equally instinctive and unquestioning obedience to authority, which (as we are aware) is never conferred.

Every society then (to the extent that it remains a society) can be supposed to be making continual adjustments within itself so that it achieves or retains some degree of directional coherence. Societies will differ among themselves in the type and degree of coherence they establish but the striving for some form of equlibrium must be assumed to be basic to them all and further that there are no abstractly uniform end-states to which they could all aspire. A small and self-enclosed society will necessarily achieve a different type of coherence from that to which, let us say, a continental or imperial polity would aspire, and vice-versa. This suggests that although we can speak of a specialization continuum it would be foolish to suppose that different societies must or will attempt to move along it in the same direction. Why should a traditional Bushman band attempt to govern itself by legislative enactment when for its purposes such a mode of regulation would be superfluous? And equally, why should a much larger traditional state like that of the Baganda try to dispose of a more centralised council of elders, given that its unity could probably not have been maintained on the informal basis characteristic of the traditional Bushman band?

It might of course be argued that every small-scale society, though effectively limited by its size to a restricted range of organisational options, ought to see the wisdom of trying to become something larger, and therefore to merge with neighbouring states. Up to a point this is probably true. But the first point to remember is that merger, although it may mean protection, might also mean elimination. The merger of the Amerindian into various American states has mostly meant his extermination. Sometimes merger implies a corporate expiry of lease on life. All the same, it could be said that every group that is small ought to try to merge with others so as to gain in size, insofar as this process is not inconsistent with the survival and (more than that) the retention of the dignity of the merging group. The only difficulty that now arises is the fact that we have no clear idea as to what the ideal size of a state or society is. Either we enjoin inexorable movement into a world state with global centralization of control, or we say that there are certain acceptable, if not ideal, resting places along to the way to such an apotheosis. When we look about us of course we find a wide variety of state sizes - as witness Switzerland or Gambia nearing one extreme, and Canada and the U.S.S.R. lying towards the other. And because we can specify no ideal size and are unaware of masses of people anywhere clamoring for a world state we are forced to regard the continuum as providing more a descriptive than a recommendatory t

How does this discussion of the state in terms of the specialization continuum help us in respect to our concern with modernization? Doubtless the best way to answer such a question is by looking more directly at the idea of modernization itself. But before we do so perhaps it is worth suggesting that the method of control utilized in any society must obviously emerge as a function of its circumstances, not least of these being its size. The question in turn of what size a society ought to achieve can only be assessed in terms of the aims or purposes that are set it. If the most minimal of these is survival with dignity, then how large the society ought to become must prove a function of how large it has to become to achieve the survival-plus function stipulated. One may of course have to combine with others in the face of a hostile environment (wolves, lions and that sort of thing). But most people have most to fear not from other species, or Martians, or acts of God - most people have most to fear from their fellow men. It is we who kill ourselves, whether in Shaka's time or today, both in wars and in petty family or community squabbles. Since men have most to fear, thinking now in terms of violence and insecurity, from other men, then the appropriate sizes of the units in which they are grouped - taking account now only of the survival factor - will be the size (in relation to quality) sufficient to ensure that they can face down their opponents.

I would suggest, and this is not a novel suggestion, that some such logic as that outlined above is what underlies our notions of modernization. How specialized the control function should be in a society must be a function of that society's circumstances. If it is more specialized or less specialized largely depending on its size; and if its size can only rationally be adjudged appropriate or the reverse as a function of the safety and well-being that is secured or undermined by that size (in relation to security), then whatever else may be said it is plain that we are basically dealing with a comparative notion. How specialized or large or good one is, largely a question of how well one is able to cope when confronted with other groups differently organized or directed, etc. To come back to the Bushman, there is no intrinsic reason why he should become 'modern' (if it is not now too late) - the reason derives from his circumstances, his confrontation with his neighbours, who have defeated him and exiled him into heart of a barren desert, ensuring that he cannot thrive, nor possibly even survive.

Modernization projects no concrete or determinable end-point. The modern is what is ahead and to a large extent what is ahead controls and disposes of what is behind. All control as such is not evil. Between states, some control others. Within states, some (as e.g. classes) control others. It is rather late in the day, with so many states, and so many classes, with control operating throughout the world in so supremely bureaucratic a fashion, and so often from an external vantage point, for us ever to assume either intrastatally or extrastatally that we can avoid external control. We will remember that it can never be complete, and that to work it has to recruit our support. But we shall also recognize that the day of the city-state has long since passed, along with the town-meeting and vigilante parties and home-made justice modelled after the feud, the duel and other equally quaint practices (but not all of which have been consigned to yesteryear). Modernization is relevant to all states because no state today can any longer be genuinely

independent or autarchic or isolated, unless possibly they achieve the power or approximately the size of the U.S., or the U.S.S.R. or China - and only a few states, like India or Canada can be regarded as falling into that sort of category. More and more states crowd upon the world scene and enjoy the heady exposure while fearing the vulnerability which attends it. 'Modernization' is understood to be the or a chief means of defending against such vulnerability.

Moderization involves the notion of becoming 'modern'. To be modern inevitably carries some suggestion of being à la mode, not so much in the sense of being ahead of one's time, but minimally in the sense of being abreast of one's time, riding the crest of the new. To behave or to be organized in a traditional way is to behave or to be organized according to norms that have been in existence for some time. To behave or to be organized in a modern way suggests some form of break from or distinctiveness vis-a-vis the old. It is obvious that to be new, and therefore to be modern, is not necessarily to be good, since there is much that is new which is destructive, evil, inefficient and so on. Thus we have to be careful about attributing to modernization features which are regarded as necessarily or intrinsically favorable or good. There is nothing necessarily good about modernization in the literal sense of keeping abreast of the new - whatever it happens to be. This is probably so clear that it scarcely needs saying. But I say it here perhaps because I am struck that it is rarely said. For 'modernization' seems most frequently to be equated with 'improvement', so that to modernize and to improve are generally taken to mean the same thing. Change of course there has to be; for good or bad, and in these days least of all, nothing stands still. Modernization has pretty widely come to mean change for the better - again improvement. The question that arises has to do with what is distinctive about this change envisaged that makes it for the better (or that is regarded as making it for the better). I do not suggest that my answer contains the whole of what might reasonably be said on this head. But I would argue that those new elements which Russia and China and so many others have sought to incorporate into their own organizational features are novel elements which have provided those who have acquired them with extraordinary new strengths and advantages which render those without them highly vulnerable.

It might be thought that I am merely entertaining some notion of modern weaponry. In part I am. But I am also disposed to believe that weaponry is in most cases merely the tip of the iceberg. Let us take a ~~different sort of case altogether~~ France. In 1942 all of Africa, with the ambiguous exception of Liberia, was subject to external control. Today, apart from the Portuguese exception, almost the reverse is true. African peoples however wielded no weaponry during the transitional period sufficient to account for the change. The vulnerability of African states is not essentially or most importantly derived from the fact that they dispose of no modern weaponry equal to that wielded by a whole range of nations external to the continent. Militarily speaking, African peoples are even more vulnerable today than they were in the 1940s. And yet they have achieved independence. Thus the perceived vulnerability is largely though not entirely of another kind.

The establishment of new African states involved the creation of a far greater degree of distance between rulers and ruled than obtained in virtually all traditional African societies. As in all cases the functional elite is continually trying to bridge the gap between itself and those whom it directs. We are aware of a whole variety of strategies intended to achieve this: mass parties, then single and legally exclusive parties, various regional inducements (schools and bore-holes, for example), and a variety of punishments and authoritarianism. We are aware, finally, despite these tactics and sometimes because of them, of the aggravation of present instabilities, and not merely the persistence of these. What we realize is that world is not a series of nation-states, but far more of an integral whole than ever it was in the last century, despite European expansion and the proliferation of colonial controls that existed then. No African state makes (nor therefore controls) the cars, planes, ships, even traffic lights that it uses. No African state really or even largely controls its own economy; for while producing more for export, it earns less from what it exports and pays more for the imported goods it buys. No African state produces even most of its university lecturers nor therefore controls the process of higher education in its own country. Virtually no African ruler is any sort of traditional chief nor is he surrounded by subordinates of a similar kind. He is surrounded by administrators, civil servants, representing a variety of African and non-African ethnicities, who have been trained sometimes in as many as a dozen different countries. Modernization for such people essentially means catching up, bridging the gap, achieving powers of independent decision presently beyond imagining.

Rulers are constantly having to battle against the left. And what is the left? A whole world of people, not so desperate as to be unaware of events shaping their condition, nor so affluent as to have become indifferent to such events, a whole world of people then, who perceive their corporate weakness, and who through this perceive also the weakness of their rulers, and despise themselves, or their rulers or both. No family head is more despised by his children than he who is seen to bow and cowtow to his betters and his neighbours while acting the tyrant at home. Those in power will make a point of being authoritarian, and those out of power will make a point of being abusively rebellious. And a large part of this stems on both sides from a feeling and a fact of being vulnerable before external powers vis-a-vis whom there is no accepted or foreseeable means of drawing abreast and thereby shedding that haunting and sometimes terrifying vulnerability. This condition of vulnerability then is far more complex than any reference to a merely military dimension would suggest. Let us then have a final look at modernization (in the round, as it were).

James Coleman (1968 & 1971) makes a distinction between three different perspectives on the concept of political development or modernization. He refers to these perspectives as the historical, the typological and the evolutionary. He rejects the first two and embraces the third. The first he regards as being basically a study of the expansion of Europe from the Reformation. The second he seems to regard as largely an extrapolation from the first, ...d by a 'traditional' beginning and a 'modern' conclusion.

A difficulty with both the first and the second, he thinks, is that they display too marked a western bias, both in terms of the limited historical experience referred to and in terms of the normative assumptions underlying it. A second difficulty, more specifically relating to the 'traditional-modern' typology, is that it obsures from view the great variety of both traditional and modern polities. Finally this typology suggests that there is a fixed progression that must be followed from one stage to the next without the possibility of omitting any intermediate steps.

Coleman contrasts the first two perspectives with what he calls the evolutionary perspective which views the process of development or modernization as having no fixed beginning or end. Coleman holds that this process, the 'development syndrome', is characterized by a causal interplay between political differentiation, political equality and political capacity. Coleman seems to assume - indeed, with Machiavelli - that the differentiation of (or specialization within) a society requires the emergence of a distinct ruling element which is only strong in the degree that it wins the support of (and is this sense representative of) the population governed. Coleman, then, thinks that 'modernization' or 'political development' can best be discussed in terms of the interrelated capacity (power) of a polity, its degree of equality (which is representativeness translated as support) and its degree of specialization (which involves some form of adaptability or flexibility). I think Coleman is right to be suspicious of this concept of modernization or political development conceived in terms of the historical and typological perspectives. But it is questionable as to how far the evolutionary perspective can get us.

Where writers approve of modernization, and most do, whether it be called historical or typological or evolutionary or other, it is to be assumed that they are not approving change or novelty per se, but some particular type of change as being better than some other. Whether 'modernization' means: Become 'European' - or 'American' or 'Japanese' or something less encompasssing than any of these end-states - it still means or implies approbation of some particular form of change or evolution. Now suppose we said, with Coleman, that evolutionary political modernization refers to an unending capacity to develop structures, resolve problems, absorb change, achieve new goals. If we said something like that, in an approbatory sort of way - and there is perhaps no reason why we shouldn't say such things - it is clear, on one level, that we are offering a recommendation, but one without too much content. Which structures are we to develop, problems to resolve, changes to absorb, goals to achieve? And how? Obviously the answers vary enormously from one polity to the next.

On another level, however, it could be suggested - and quite rightly too - that this notion of evolutionary political modernizati is as much a description as a recommendation of a political process. But to the extent that this is true, however, we are compelled to recognise that all societies, in whatever way we classify them, develop structures, resolve problems, absorb change, adapt to change,

establish and modify their goals; and accordingly - if this is what modernization means - then all societies, past and present, can be described as 'modernizing' or undergoing 'modernization'. If all societies can be described as modernizing and none can be denied the title, then either the meaning ought to be narrowed or perhaps the word defined should be dropped.

But let us keep the word. 'Modernization' does have its uses. But to be of any use I think we must accept (which I think Professor Coleman for example may not wish to do) that modernization is necessarily a limited or 'parochial' (although not necessarily an 'ethnocentric') concept. It projects a description of some conceived means and the desirability of the end of certain societies becoming like or catching up to certain other societies in certain respects. It does not matter from which side this view is taken, i.e., whether from the perspective of the 'developed' or the 'underdeveloped'. The germ of the notion lies in the idea of 'becoming like' or 'catching up to'.

Of course it is widely assumed that modernization means objectively attaining certain socio-politico-economic characteristics, such as - most importantly - sustained economic growth, which is identified with the elimination of so many evils, such as poverty, illness and various forms of eliminable oppression. A basic difficulty with this view however hangs upon the relationship between needs and wants. We are not disposed to view an average life-span of 70 as an evil because it appears to us that such a rate is the best that - at the moment - can be achieved. We view an average life-span of 35 years as a decided evil because we are unequivocably aware that, under attainable conditions, that rate could be doubled. We are not disposed to want things which we are convinced that it is impossible to get. And we are disposed to need things that we think everyone is entitled to get (which presupposes that we are able to get them). I cannot argue the matter out here. I rest with the proposition that modernization does project the achievement of certain concrete goals, but that these are goals basically have been already achieved by others - and this always involves comparing one agent with another.

(Abstract)

SOCIETY, STATE FORMATION AND MODERNIZATION

A society is a unit, consisting of a variety of agents, who cohere through a sharing of assumptions, expectations, norms, and so forth.

A state is a unit which can be identified with the whole of any society but is here being used as representing some degree of specialization in the control and administrative function vital to retaining or establishing the unity of the social whole.

There is no generally satisfactory distinction that can be established between 'state' and 'stateless' societies since this is a mere bi-polar formula, which contrasts starkly with the reality of an infinitely gradated continuum along which both the state and stateless forms merge.

All the same we use the words state and stateless because to do so stresses a contrast, or is made to do so here, between a relatively high degree of control specialization over against a relatively diffuse degree of the same.

Modernization means a great variety of things. But one of the most important notions it is used to cover is that of a transition from 'state' to 'stateless' forms of organization.

A small-scale society has less reason to differentiate out the control function than a large-scale society. Put crudely, and taking account of a variety of exceptions, increasing governmental specialization correlates positively with expanding territorial size and membership.

Societies are constantly changing; there is no natural to social evolution. Societies can be regarded as 'modernizing' 1. in the sense of continually undergoing change; but also, and differently, 2. in the sense of trying to achieve specific goals already achieved elsewhere. Since all societies qualify as modernizing under the first meaning there does not appear to be much point in using the expression to cover that.

A society can become modernized in the second sense by becoming more specialized or industrialized or democratic, or by improving health services or educational facilities and so on, as long as it is assumed that it is overcoming some gap that separates it - to its disadvantage from other societies.

Specialization may be the most plausible notion involved in the concept of modernization. If so it suggests that modernization is but another expression vaunting the good of state formation. It is doubtful as to whether state formation is good in itself. State formation becomes necessary however for smaller and less specialized units which find themselves in a vulnerable position vis-a-vis those that are larger and more specialized.

Thus modernization, even conceived in a very minimal way, as a transit from less to more specialized forms of social control, indeed from 'stateless' to 'state' orders, is not an end in itself nor a good in itself. It calls attention merely to the need to create a greater equality between some societies and others - without which some remain significantly vulnerable to others, and in ways other than military.