

*PART ONE:
POWER AND POLITICS FROM STATELESS
SOCIETIES TO GLOBAL CAPITALISM*

**FACING POLITICS AND POWER IN
ANTHROPOLOGY**

Early Anthropological Perspectives on Power

Power and social stratification

Power and “complex societies”

Politics is the process by which power is distributed and decisions are made

Weber: power—coercion & authority

Early Anthropological Perspectives on Power

AUTHORITY:

1. Legal-Rational Authority
2. Traditional Authority
3. Charismatic Authority

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

Evolutionary typologies

Kinship to State

- Maine (1861): Status vs. Contract
- Morgan (1877): Descent group vs. Property
- Engels (1884): Kinship vs. Territory
- Durkheim (1893): Mechanical vs. Organic
Solidarity
- Mauss (1925): Gift exchange vs. Commodity
exchange

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

<i>Childe (1936)</i>	<i>Service (1962) Johnson and Earle (1987)</i>	<i>Sahlins (1963) Earle (1978)</i>	<i>Fried (1967)</i>
Hunter-gatherers	Band (family level)	Head man	Egalitarian society
Farmers	Tribe (local group)	Big man	Ranked society
Civilization	Chiefdom	Simple	Stratified Society
Complex	Stratified society		
State	State	State	State

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

Structural-Functionalist correspondences:

Meyer Fortes & E. E. Evans-Pritchard
(1940:5-6) sub-Saharan Africa, two forms of
polity:

“primitive states”—kingship & office

“stateless societies”—descent

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

--evolution of social complexity as a political process

--control over labour of non-kin

--Elman Service (1962):

Band, Tribe, Chiefdom, State

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

1. Foraging Bands

- nuclear family
- flexible band membership
- kin networks

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

2. Tribal Cultivators

- descent groups
- leadership as an achieved status
- Village Headman
- “The Big Man”
- persuasion rather than coercion

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

3. Chiefdoms

- permanence of the office as a position of authority
- seniority of descent
- control over production, distribution, consumption

Typologies of Power and Political Systems

4. States

--Carneiro (1970): “an autonomous political unit encompassing many communities within its territory, having a centralized government with the power to collect taxes, draft men for work or war, and decree and enforce laws.”

Typologies of Inequality

Morton Fried (1967):

Egalitarian—acephalous—generalized reciprocity

Ranked—kinship—redistribution—balanced
reciprocity

Stratified—market principle

State—“specialized institutions and
agencies...that maintain an order of
stratification” (Fried 1967: 235)

Typologies of Inequality

Differential access to means of production

Technology & cultural evolutionism

Marx (1904: 12):

The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life

Typologies of Systems of Production

Foragers

Horticulture

Pastoralism

Agriculture

Summary

Sociopolitical Type	Economic Type	Type of Regulation	Examples
Band	Foraging	Local	Inuit, !Kung-San, Comanche
Tribe	Horticulture, pastoralism	Local, temporary regional	Yanomami, Nuer, Cheyenne
Chiefdom	Horticulture, pastoral nomadism, agriculture	Permanent regional	Cherokee, Polynesia (Tahiti)
State	Agriculture, industrialism	Permanent regional	Ancient Mesopotamia, Incas, modern United States and Canada