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# **Kinship, Territoriality and the Early State Lower Limit**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

I consider the opportunity to contribute to this jubilee collection of articles as my great honor and privilege. During the thirty years that have passed after the Early State concept's presentation to the anthropologists' community it has grown into one of the most thoroughly elaborated and influential Europe-born approaches to the analysis of preindustrial complex societies that has put a clear imprint on the way of thinking of many researchers who have been coming to the discipline from the late 1970s on, including the present author. Last not least, I see my contribution as a modest homage to the Early State concept 'founding fathers' – Henri Claessen and Petr Skalník, the nice persons whom I am happy to have the right to call not just colleagues but also true friends of mine.

In the text below I deal with the aspect of the Early State concept that remains disputable both among its adherents and critics: Where is the lower limit of the early state (and hence of the state as such)? My approach stems from the presumption that the state should be perceived not as a specific set of political institutions only but, first and foremost, as a type of society to which this set of institutions is adequate; the approach that is basically consistent with that employed by the Early State concept elaborators, especially in the most recent years<sup>1</sup>. This leads to the necessity of paying special attention to the coming to the fore of the non-kin, territorial relations in the state society – the point which, consciously or not, is often evicted from many contemporary definitions of the state due to the wide-spread vision of it as merely a specific set of political institutions<sup>2</sup>. So, I insert the discussion into a broader context of anthropological theorizing, what is logical and worth doing even more so, as far as the Early State concept has become an inseparable part of it by now.

## **THE KINSHIP – TERRITORIALITY DICHOTOMY: FALSE BUT STILL GUIDING**

As it is well-known, Sir Henry Sumner Maine and Lewis Henry Morgan contrasted the kin-based prestate society (*societas*) to territory-based state

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society (*civitas*) as the one underpinned by presumably primordial ‘natural’ ties to the one formed by, in this sense, artificial ties. However, already at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Schurtz and ultimately as far back as in the middle of the last century the British structuralists and American Boasians demonstrated that Maine and Morgan (as well as later Engels<sup>3</sup> following Morgan) had postulated the opposition between kinship and territoriality too rigidly<sup>4</sup>, even if the social dimension of the former phenomenon had been acknowledged<sup>5</sup>. These and a number of other mid-20<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists provided conclusive arguments for the importance of territorial ties in non-state cultures. As a result, already in 1965 Lewis had good reasons to argue that ‘The fundamentally territorial character of social and political association in general is indeed usually taken for granted, and has been assumed to apply as much to the segmentary lineage societies as to other types of society’ (1965: 96). A year later Winter wrote categorically that although the dichotomy between kinship and territoriality had been ‘useful’ in the days when it had been introduced by Maine, ‘that day has passed’ (1966: 173). From approximately the same time on archaeologists and anthropologists do not hesitate to write about territoriality among even the most ‘primitive’ human associations – those of non-specialized foragers (*e.g.*, Campbell 1968; Peterson 1975; Cashdan 1983; Casimir and Rao 1992).

On the other hand, historians (especially medievalists) have also shown that typologically non- and originally prestate institutions of kinship could and did remain important in state societies (*e.g.*, Bloch 1961/1939–1940: 141ff.; Genicot 1968; Duby 1970). Susan Reynolds even complained in 1990 that though ‘all that we know of medieval [Western European] society leaves no doubt of the importance of kinship ... we (medievalists. – *D. B.*) have in the past tended to stress kinship at the expense of other bonds’ (1990: 4). As for anthropologists, by the mid-1950s, ‘experience in the field has shown again and again that for thousands of years and in many latitudes, kin ties have coexisted with the pre-capitalist state’ (Murra 1980: XXI)<sup>6</sup>. In fact, it has eventually turned out that the kinship *vs.* territory problem is that of measure and not of almost complete presence or absence, although the general socio-historical tendency is really to expect a gradual substitution of kin-based institutions by territory-based ones at supralocal levels of socio-cultural and political complexity. Really, Morton Fried was very accurate indeed in postulating that the state is organized not on non-kin but on a ‘supra-kin’ basis (1970/1960: 692–693).

Besides all that, the problem of appearance of the state as a basically and generally territory-based socio-political unit is complicated crucially by an important circumstance: On the one hand, the early state is invariably – by definition, hierarchic, or ‘homoarchic’ as I prefer to call such cultures (Bondarenko 2005a, 2006, 2007)<sup>7</sup>, while, on the other hand, non-

state homoarchic societies are characterized just by a greater role of kinship ties in comparison with the role these ties play in heterarchic societies of the same overall complexity levels (see *Idem* 2006). This regularity is observable already among non-human primates whose associations 'with more despotic dominant style of relations are more kin-oriented' (Butovskaya 2000: 48). A comparison of heterarchic and homoarchic societies of primitive hunter-gatherers (*e.g.*, the San and the Australian Aborigines) demonstrates the same (Artemova 2000). This pattern persists in much more complex cultures as well, including many contemporary Second and Third World cultures (see Bondarenko 2000; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000, 2004). Within them the connection between kinship orientation and homoarchic socio-political organization is much more sophisticated, the kinship orientation being normally institutionalized and sanctioned by conspicuous bodies of cultural norms, myths, beliefs and traditions, which in their turn influence significantly the processes of socio-political transformation. So, strong kin orientation serves as a precondition for socio-cultural and political homoarchization necessary for early state formation, and as an obstacle on the way to state as a predominantly non-kin based unit, at one and the same time.

One more tricky point is that while the state as a societal type, including the early state, to my mind cannot but be based primarily on territorial ties, this does not mean that there have never been complex non-state societies based mainly along lines other than kinship (see, *e.g.*, Berezkin 1995). Furthermore, the most complex of such societies, like the Mountainous Daghestani traditional unions of neighbor communities – 'republics' (*'respubliki'*) or 'free associations' (*'vol'nye obshchestva'*) of the contemporary Russian sources<sup>8</sup>, may be called legitimately 'alternatives to the (early) state', *i.e.*, they should be regarded as essentially non-rather than pre-state (*vide stricto* Korotayev 1995; Bondarenko 2006; Shtyrbul 2006).

Taking all the aforesaid into account, I nevertheless still believe that 'the most fundamental... distinction (between the state and non-state societies. – *D. B.*) is that states are organized on political and territorial lines, not on the kinship lines...' (Diamond 1997: 280). Hence, I also believe that the 'kinship – territoriality' criterion of differentiation between the state and non-state societies is valid and deserves attention. What should be realized clearly and not forgotten while dealing with this criterion is that it is really evolutionary. In this respect, history is a continuum of socio-political forms in the typological sequence. In this sequence one can observe a general dynamics from greater to less importance of kin vs. territorial relations that eventually resulted in the fact that 'kinship and other types of ascriptive relationship have ceased to be central organizing principles of society' (Hallpike 1986: 1). So, by no means should one

expect a gap from complete (or even almost complete) domination of kinship to absolute prominence of territorial ties.

### **EARLY STATE BEGINNINGS IN THE LIGHT OF THE KINSHIP – TERRITORIALITY CRITERION**

As it was declared at the outset – in the present article's Introduction, I basically see the state holistically, that is as a type of society to which a definite set of political institutions is adequate. However, at the same time I admit that on some occasions it may turn out reasonable to separate the two aspects of the state for analytical purposes and thus to talk about the state in two respects: political and social. The society is normally a broader notion: On the one hand, it supplements political characteristics by, and combines them with, social (and through them economic) ones. On the other hand, the social and political subsystems often develop asynchronously, the political system most frequently<sup>9</sup> evolving in a more rapid pace and being able to approach the parameters of state-type administration earlier than the social system acquires the primarily territorial division of the citizens and composition of the polity as its basis. As Johnson and Earle put it,

Whereas chiefdoms vest leadership in generalized regional institutions, in states the increased scope of integration requires specialized regional institutions to perform the tasks of control and management. ...Along with this increasing elaboration of the ruling apparatus comes increasing stratification. Elites are now unrelated by kinship to the populations they govern... (2000: 304).

However, it is clear that in preindustrial cultures all its subsystems (economic, social, etc., including the political) are intertwined and integrated inseparably. This fact gives us even better grounds for labeling a society by its general, overall societal type, not by the features of its political institutions only. The great majority of influential anthropological theories – varying from those of Maine, Engels, Durkheim, Mauss, Lowie, Evans-Pritchard, Fortes to those of Polanyi – have been based upon an understanding of the intertwining of the various subsystems (see Earle 1994: 947). Famous American neoevolutionist concepts (those of Sahlins, Service, Fried, Carneiro, and Haas) also derive, more or less openly and in this or that way, from this premise. Though, indeed, in the final analysis 'the whole progression (from band to state. – *D. B.*) ... is defined in terms of political organization' (Vansina 1999: 166).

I am convinced that scholars can use whatever definitions of the state they choose if it is appropriate for the purposes of their concrete research and if the definitions remain consistent throughout the single pieces of it, but within the general theoretical framework the notion of the state must

not be reduced to its political component. In the meantime, for instance, the Archaic State concept elaborated recently by a group of archaeologists headed by Gary Feinman and Joyce Marcus does limit the notion of the state to a specific kind of political organization, as the state is seen by them merely ‘... as a political or governmental unit...’ (Feinman and Marcus 1998: 4). The anthropologist Alain Testart in one of his recent monographs does proclaim the necessity of an approach to the state as to ‘a specific social form’, too. Notwithstanding this, curiously enough, really analyzing the process of state formation from this viewpoint, he fully accepts the purely political Weberian definition of the already formed state as a society in which ‘the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force’ can be observed (Testart 2004).

Contrary to the approaches of such a sort, Henri Claessen declares openly that the state ‘... is a *specific kind of social organization*, expressing a specific type of social order in a society’ (2002: 102; 2003: 161; my emphasis). As it was noted in the Introduction, precisely this vision (which also naturally presupposes embracing the political aspect of a social system) coincides completely with that of the present author. From this perspective, I shall not argue that the state in full sense that is in both the social and political respects begins when the division by territory supplants that by kin practically completely (following Maine, Morgan, and Engels). However, in the meantime, I will also disagree with Claessen that the ‘inchoate early state’, inchoate but nevertheless a state, may be ‘... associated with dominant kinship, family and community ties in the field of politics...’ (1978: 589). Just because the Early State concept treats the phenomenon of the state wider than I do, it postulates, quite legitimately within its own framework, that the solution to the most complicated problems pre-state societies used to face could be found (if it could be found at all) inevitably by means of the creation of a state (*Idem* 2000b; 2002). Actually, this argument, really inevitably, leads to consideration as states of the societies which I would rather treat as alternatives to the state societal forms (Bondarenko 2000; 2006: 22–25).

I will rather take an intermediate position between the postulates of the 19<sup>th</sup> century evolutionism and the Early State concept. Bearing in mind the older idea that in the state ‘territory’ dominates over ‘kinship’ on the one hand, and taking into account the achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists and historians mentioned above, I shall say that the state in its full sense may be fixed in the situation when territorial ties clearly (though not overwhelmingly) dominate over those of kinship on the supralocal levels of a society’s complexity. This threshold is lower than that established particularly by Morgan but higher than the one sufficient for Claessen and other Early State school adherents<sup>10</sup>.

In fact, in my view, ‘the completed state’ corresponds only to ‘the transitional early state’ in the canonical scheme of the evolution of the

early state, ‘...in which the administrative apparatus was dominated by appointed officials, where kinship affected only certain marginal aspects of government...’ (Claessen 1978: 589)<sup>11</sup>. As for the state in the narrower, merely political, sense – ‘the limited state’ or ‘incomplete state’, I would regard as such the societies which have at least reached the level of Claessen and Skalník’s ‘typical early state’ – ‘...the kind of state in which ties of kinship were [still only] counterbalanced by those of locality, ... [but] where non-kin officials and title-holders [already] played a leading role in government administration...’ (*Ibid.*)<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, categories like ‘clear but not overwhelming dominance’ sound not well-definable enough and probably even leave too much room for a researcher’s voluntarism, not like, for example, in the case when the state is defined through the category of ‘the kinship ties’ absence’. But such a ‘milder’ categorization does reflect and capture the essentially evolutionary, gradual nature of the processes of state formation.

Even highly developed prestate cultures, like complex chiefdoms, are normally characterized as essentially kin-based societies<sup>13</sup>, and it is symptomatic that in his recent critical reevaluation of the Early State concept Petr Skalník, its creator together with Henri Claessen, recognizes explicitly that ‘the early state in a number of concrete cases but also by its theory of inchoate (incipient) state, “swallowed” chiefdom as an independent category’ (Skalník 2002: 6). Actually, this fact was noted long ago by Malcolm Webb, the reviewer of the Early State project’s first two volumes<sup>14</sup> (1984: 274–275). For ‘the inchoate early state’ which I cannot regard as a state in any sense at all, Claessen and Skalník postulated not only the domination of kinship ties but also ‘a limited existence of full-time specialists...’ (Claessen 1978: 589). Their presence is thus seen as a ‘rare’ event in such societies (Claessen and Skalník 1978c: 23), *i.e.*, such administrators do not form an objectively absolutely necessary and hence non-removable core of the government<sup>15</sup>. Even the existence of a monarchy does not presuppose the state character of a society, just as a non-monarchical form of government does not inevitably predict a pre-industrial society’s non-state nature<sup>16</sup>.

At this point Aidan Southall’s remark is also worth noting: ‘Claessen and Skalník (1978a) distinguished inchoate, typical and transitional early states... The segmentary state conforms most nearly to the inchoate state, but Claessen considered the segmentary state as I defined it not a state at all’ (2000c: 150). Hence, in my turn, I would not label Southall’s ‘segmentary states’ as states at all. The same I can say about Lawrence Krader’s ‘tribe-states’ or ‘consanguineal states’<sup>17</sup> the rulers of which exercise cohesive control but kinship still remains the basic principle of social organization, and which Bruce Trigger rightly equated with Claessen and Skalník’s inchoate early state (1985: 48).

One more point significant for the present discussion has been elucidated by D. G. Anderson:

As I and a number of other authors<sup>18</sup> have argued, there are a great many social and environmental factors promoting organizational instability in chiefdoms, of which the fact that succession to power was based on kinship – and any number of a chief's close kin were thus qualified to take his or her place – was perhaps the single most important factor, ensuring incessant factional competition and warfare between rival elites in these societies (1997: 253).

This argument is consistent with the one of Ronald Cohen who considers the state's ability to resist fission in fact its most significant characteristic feature (1981). I believe that Cohen's emphasis on it is too heavy but, nevertheless, there seem to be factual and theoretical grounds for considering the state as an all in all firmer socio-political construction compared to pre-state complex societies. The substitution of kinship as the basic organizational principle by territoriality and specialized professional administration the appearance of which is intrinsically connected to this transition<sup>19</sup> is the pledge of the state's relatively greater firmness.

In the meantime, what I see as a true and reliably verifiable criterion of the territorial organization's coming into prominence (*i.e.*, of the state in its broader – full sense appearance), is getting the right and practical possibilities by the government to cut up arbitrarily traditional, by kin groupings determined divisions of the country's territory into parts. Given it is possible<sup>20</sup>, one has good reasons to argue that even if those social entities preserved their initial structure and the right to manage their purely internal affairs, they were nothing more than administrative (and taxpaying as well as labor providing) units in the wider context of the state polity. Naturally under such circumstances, such social entities are administered by functionaries either appointed or confirmed from outside the community – in the political center of the regional or/and the whole-polity level. Characteristically, with the transition to the state the internal structure of communities tends to become simpler, communalists are not only burdened by different obligations but also given the right to sell community land which would have undoubtedly undermined the society's background if it had really been community-based (Korotayev 1991: 183–184; Bondarenko and Korotayev 1999: 134).

The 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> millennia B.C. Near East gives especially vivid examples of the aforesaid<sup>21</sup>. This is vitally important for an early state: If it fails to adapt the community to its needs, stagnation and decline of the political system follow (as it happened, for example, in the cases of the 19<sup>th</sup> century West African Samori's state and Kenedugu [Tymowski 1985; 1987: 65–66]). In modern and contemporary polities structural discrepancies between the community and the state, the dependent position of the for-

mer with regard to the latter, are completely apparent (see, *e.g.*, McGlynn and Tuden 1991a: 181–272). Generally speaking, in a successful state supreme power does not develop the community matrix further but rather ‘on the contrary begins to restructure society’ in its own image (Beliaev 2000: 194). Indeed, as Kurtz rightly points out, ‘... the reduction of the influence of local level organization upon the citizens’ is ‘a major goal’ of states’ (or, more correctly, of ‘governments through the actions and practices of the incumbents of their offices’ [Kurtz 2006: 103]) legitimation strategies (*Idem* 1991/1984: 162). If it is a success, ‘the encompassment of the local sphere by the state’ (Tanabe 1996: 154) becomes the case.

In the meantime, the community’s adaptation to the needs of the state does not obligatorily mean the end of its development: The examples of the co-evolution of community and state structures are found, for instance, in medieval and modern Northern India and Russia (Alaev 2000). The community, as well as early institutions of kinship, usually decays only in the process of the wider society’s transition to capitalism<sup>22</sup> (Parsons 1960, 1966). Examples of the community’s disappearance in agricultural societies are rare, Egypt from not later than the Middle Kingdom on being the most prominent one (Diakonoff *et al.* 1989: 143; Diakonoff and Jakobson 1997: 26–27). However, even there ‘it is possible... that the ancient Egyptian peasantry, which for the most part seems to have continued to live in traditional villages long after the Old Kingdom, may have preserved significant aspects of communal social life...’ (Trigger 1985: 59). Besides, ‘... probably in some respect whole Egypt was considered as a community with the pharaoh as its leader, and as not a neighbor [community] but a kin one...’ (Diakonoff and Jakobson 1997: 27). It is true that bureaucracy can be developed poorly in early states<sup>23</sup>. Besides, it does differ in a number of respects from its modern incarnation (Weber 1947/1922: 333–334, 343; see also Morony 1987: 9–10; Shifferd 1987: 48–49)<sup>24</sup>. Yet, notwithstanding all this, in my opinion the presence or absence of a stratum of professional administrators that is of bureaucracy is a proper indicator of the state or non-state nature of a society<sup>25</sup>. The very prospects for its political organization becoming bureaucratic may arise not from the presence or absence of the community but from its essentially communal or non-communal foundations. The situation when the family, lineage, and community organization influences directly the form and nature of supralocal institutions was reversed with the rise of the state which tends to encompass all the spheres of social life including such an important one as family relations (Trigger 2003: 194, 271, 274; see also, *e.g.*, Schoenbrun 1999: 143–145; Crest 2002: 351–352, 353).

#### THE STATE AND IDEOLOGY OF KINSHIP

As it is especially stressed by Maurice Godelier, ‘Kinship can be *at any time* transformed into an ideological construction...’ (1989: 6; my emphasis). The very social nature of kinship that allows declaring and regarding

as relatives of not only those who are such in the purely biological sense, provides the opportunities for manipulating kinship as ideology for various ends. Due to this, 'in complex societies... you find... strategies using kinship in order to keep or to acquire wealth and power. Kinship is manipulated in order to handle the relations of wealth and power existing beside and beyond kinship' (*Ibid.*: 8). Indeed, not only 'primitive' but also 'extensive socio-political systems can be legitimized in kinship terms...' (Claessen 2000c: 150). For example, in the Inca state making manipulations with kinship terminology was a common practice employed extensively for different political ends (Silverblatt 1988; Zuidema 1990). Already in typologically pre-state societies the ideology of kinship may become an effective means for manipulating mass consciousness for the sake of building up the unequal social and political relations. The native and invader chiefs' fictive genealogies and attraction of the poor's labor by the rich under the mask of kin assistance are the most readily recalled reflections of this fact<sup>26</sup>. Of course, also in most early states, '... overarching identities were usually expressed in terms of symbolic kinship, with gods, kings and queens often portrayed as the "fathers and mothers" of their people' (Spier 2005: 120; see also Trigger 1985). Thus, it was typical of the early states' subjects to perceive the state by analogy with the family and the sovereign by analogy with its head (see, e.g., Ray 1991: 205; Vansina 1994: 37–38; Tymowski 1996: 248). Exceptions to this rule could be represented by not numerous in history vast pristine 'territorial states', for example in Egypt or China, where the supreme ruler's sacrality was universalizing by character, destined to substantiate the ideology of the territorial state by overcoming the resistance of the ideology of kinship (Demidchik n.d.).

Furthermore, not infrequently the connotations of society with a family and of an authoritarian ruler with the head of a family appears to be consciously exploited for the sake of power's firmer legitimation in mature states, such as, for example, in 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century France (Crest 2002). Queen Elizabeth I of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century refused to marry anybody as her ideological premise was that she was mystically betrothed with her nation, and the royal propaganda persistently represented her as 'the Mother of the Country' (Smith, E. O. 1976). In pre-1917 Russia the paternalistic discourse of the monarch–subject relation if not instilled officially and formalized, yet was cultivated in mass consciousness and determined crucially the popular ideas of the ideal sovereign's way of behavior and responsibilities (Lukin 2000)<sup>27</sup>. Even Joseph Stalin in the industrialized, territory-based, and heavily bureaucratized Soviet Union was unofficially but routinely called 'father of the peoples' by the propaganda (while children at kindergartens and primary schools were encouraged to call the leader of the socialist revolution 'grand-dad Lenin' till the very

end of the Soviet era). Also the founder of the modern secular Turkish state is known under the name of Atatürk – ‘the Father of the Turks’. The exploitation of the idea of the society's likening to a family and the head of state to its father is spread rather widely in the Third World countries with authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes. For example, the former President of Togo G. Eyadema during his long stay in office was proclaimed ‘the father of the nation’, as was the President of Kenya D. arap Moi (Sadovskaya 1999: 58). In Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) the populace was encouraged to learn by heart and sing in chorus the songs about the ‘matrimonial union of the people and the chief’ – the then Head of State Mobutu (*Ibid.*: 61). Another aspect of the problem of kinship ideology's flourishing in post-colonial African states is grasped by Abbink:

Most conspicuous in present-day African political culture is the role of ethnicity and its constructions: Culture and ‘fictive kinship’ are turned into a collective identity on the basis of which social and political claims are made and movements are made (2000: 5).

So, it is obvious that the idea of likening a society to a family and hence its ruler to the latter's head looks natural and suggesting itself within a figurative thinking framework, and it is not by chance that this image was readily exploited already in ancient states of the East and the West, Confucius's teaching being the most prominent but not at all the only one of the respective sort (see Nersesjants 1985; Stevenson 1992). It is also clear that this ideological postulate was not a complete innovation that appeared with the rise of the state but an outcome of reinterpretation under new circumstances of an older, pre-state ideology<sup>28</sup>.

However, the cases of the exploitation of a kinship-ideology in states should not be confused with cases of a completely different sort. Even in very complex pre-industrial societies, not less complex than many early states, one can observe the situation of the whole socio-political construction's encompassment not from above (as it must be in states) but from below, that is from the local community level up while the community itself is underpinned by kin ties. I believe that such societies cannot be labeled states and hence, taking into account their high overall complexity level, should be designated as ‘alternatives to the state’ (*e.g.*, Bondarenko 2006). For example, in the 13<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries the political relations in the Benin Kingdom were ‘naturally’ perceived and expressed in kinship terms, too, typical of an African society disregarding its classification as a state or not<sup>29</sup>. The spirits of royal ancestors ‘spread’ their authority on all the sovereign's subjects. However, in Benin kinship was not only an ideology; it was much more than this. It was the true, ‘objective’ socio-cultural background of this supercomplex society that tied it into a ‘megacommunity’ – a hierarchy of social and political institutions from

the extended family to the community<sup>30</sup>, to the chiefdom, and to the kingdom, built up by the kin-based community matrix (see, *e.g.*, Bondarenko 1995, 2001, 2005a; 2006: 64–88, 96–107).

The integrity of the whole construction of the megacommunity was provided by basically the same mechanisms as that of a community while at the same time its very existence and the prosperity of the populace was believed to be guaranteed by the presence of the dynasty of sacralized supreme rulers titled *Obas* (see *Idem* 1995: 176–180). Megacommunity institutions towered above local communities and chiefdoms, and established their dominance over them but in the essentially communal Benin society with its lack of pronounced priority of territorial ties over kin ones, even those who governed at the supreme level could not become professional administrators. The Benin megacommunity's specificity was the integration on a rather vast territory of a complex, 'many-tier' society predominantly on the basis of the transformed kin principle supplemented by a 'grain' of territorial one. This basis was inherited from the community, within which extended families preserved kinship relations not only within themselves but with each other as well, supplementing them by the relations of neighborhood. In the Benin community kin ties were accompanied and supplemented by territorial ones. No doubt, in the process of and after the megacommunity formation (probably by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century) the importance of territorial ties grew considerably. However, it should be stressed once again that, as well as before, such ties were built in the kin relations not in the ideological sphere only but in realities of the socio-political organization, too (Bradbury 1957: 31). The community did not just preserve itself when the supercomplex socio-political construction of the kingdom appeared: It went on playing the part of the fundamental socio-political institution notwithstanding the number of complexity levels overbuilding it (*Idem* 1966: 129).

Besides the Benin Kingdom of the 13<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century, I shall also designate as a megacommunity, for instance, the Bamum Kingdom in present-day Cameroon of the late 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century which as a whole represented an extension up to the supercomplex level of lineage principles and organizational forms, so the society acquired the shape of 'maximal lineage' (Tardits 1980). Analogously, in traditional kingdoms of another part of this post-colonial state, in the Grasslands, 'the monarchical system... is... in no way a totally unique and singular form of organization but displays a virtually identical structure to that of the lineage groups' (Koloss 1992: 42). Outside Africa megacommunities (although not obligatorily of the Benin, that is based on the kin-oriented local community, type) may be recognized, for example, in the Indian societies of the late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. – first centuries A.D. Naturally, differing in many respects from the Benin pattern, they nevertheless fit the main distinctive feature

of megacommunity as a non-state social type: integration of a supercomplex society (exceeding the complex chiefdom level) on a community basis and the whole society's encompassment from the local level upwards. In particular, Samozvantsev describes those societies as permeated by communal orders notwithstanding the difference in socio-political organization forms (2001). 'The principle of communality', he argues, was the most important factor of social organization in India during that period (see also Lielukhine 2001, 2004). In the south of India this situation lasted much longer, till the time of the Vijayanagara Empire – the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century when the region finally saw '... the greater centralization of political power and the resultant concentration of resources in the royal bureaucracy...' (Palat 1987: 170). A number of other examples of supercomplex societies in which 'the supracommunity political structure was shaped according to the community type' are provided by the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D. Southeast Asian societies of Funan and possibly Dvaravati (Rebrikova 1987: 159–163; see, however, Mudar 1999). The specificity of the megacommunity becomes especially apparent at its comparison with the 'galaxy-like' states studied by Tambiah in Southeast Asia (Tambiah 1977, 1985). Like these states, a megacommunity has a political and ritual center – the capital which is the residence of the sacralized ruler – and the near, middle, and remote circles of periphery round it. However, notwithstanding its seeming centripetality, a megacommunity culture's true focus is the community, not the center, as in those Southeast Asian cases. As a heterarchic non-kin-ties-based megacommunity, or a civil megacommunity, one can consider the societies of the *polis* type (Bondarenko 1997: 13–14, 48–49; 1998b; 2000; 2001: 259–263; 2006: 92–96; Shtyrbul 2006: 123–135).

So, there is no direct conformity between the socio-political (transition to the state) and ideological (departure from the ideology of kinship) processes and this seemingly clear fact should be acknowledged and given due attention by researchers.

## CONCLUSION

It is true that '... classification has been a major focus of research ever since politics was separated out as a subsystem worthy of specific attention' (Lewellen 1992: 21). However, nowadays many social scientists would hesitate to agree that there is any use of compiling evolutionary typological schemes and discussing where the borderline between one type and another runs. Indeed, for example, our labeling the pre-late 18<sup>th</sup> century Hawai'i as complex chiefdom or state does not either expand the compendium of evidence on this society at our disposal or increase our possibilities to study it, if we do not think that all societies of the same type must have the same list of characteristic features (as that was postu-

lated, no doubt wrongly, by Tylor and others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). The fair dissatisfaction with the ‘classical’ unilineal typological schemes like ‘from band to state’ (Service 1971/1962) or ‘from egalitarian organization to state society’ (Fried 1967) growing especially rapidly from the second half of the 1980s (see, *e.g.*, Korotayev *et al.* 2000; Guidi 2002), has resulted not only in a new turn of rejection of the idea of evolution altogether (see Trigger 2003: 40–42). Within evolutionism this dissatisfaction has led to the theoretically prospective shift of researchers’ emphasis from societies as isolated entities to them as elements of wider cultural networks, and in connection with it, from metaphysical evolutionary types-stages to dynamic transformation processes. The respective (yet not the only) reason for general discontent with the recently dominant theoretical paradigm was comprehensively resumed by Wenke:

The important point here is that simple categories such as ‘bands’, ‘tribes’, ‘chiefdoms’, and ‘states’ are static descriptive types that are not of much use in analyzing the origins and functions of the phenomena these labels loosely describe (1999: 344).

However, in my opinion, the key-point here is not that there are no social types or that in fact there are much more of them than four. The crucial point is that they cannot be arranged on the ‘stairs’ of one ‘ladder’, and that purely typological thinking, especially in the unilineal style prevents from giving full consideration to those changes which crucially transform a society but do not pull it up to the next stair of the notorious types ladder. Thus, I do believe that Carneiro is essentially right when he argues that the dichotomy ‘process *versus* stages’ is ‘false’: Both are important (Carneiro 2000; 2003: 155–156; see also Lewellen 1992: 44; Watson 1995: 25). The Early State concept proves this argument convincingly as it combines typologization of societies with an explanation of the processes that drive (or do not drive) this or that of them to the state. Just due to the framework of this concept I may also hope to some usefulness of the above presented discussion for those colleagues who look at the archaic societies from within it or even from within another one, similar to the Early State concept in this sense.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For discussions on the interrelation between the phenomena of state and society, see, *e.g.*: van der Vliet 2005: 122–123; Bondarenko 2006: 68–69; Grinin 2007a: 28–30.

<sup>2</sup> As well as to cultures in comparison with which the state is defined; *e.g.*, Earle postulates unequivocally that ‘... chiefdoms must be understood as political systems’ (1991: 14). However, for Morgan (who is *volens nolens* a predecessor of all the subsequent theorists and an initial, though by present mostly indirect,

source of inspiration for not so few of them) just the point we are concentrating on was of primary importance in comparison with the form of political organization as such (1877).

<sup>3</sup> In the Marxist theory the transition from kin to territorial ties has begun to serve as an essential precondition for social classes formation prior to what before the rise of the state was declared impossible, as the state was seen as the political organization predestined for guaranteeing the exploitative class' dominance in society. Particularly, Engels wrote:

As far as the state arose due to the need to keep in check the opposite of classes; as far as at the same time it arose in the very clashes of those classes, according to the general rule it is the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class which with the help of the state becomes the politically dominant class as well, and thus acquires new means for suppression and exploitation of the oppressed class (1985/1884: 198–199).

Most rigidly this postulate was formulated by Lenin: 'The state appears where and when the division of society into classes appears' (1974/1917: 67). In fact, hardly the main point of a Marxist social scientist's departure from the camp of 'orthodoxes' to that of 'creative Marxists' was his or her desire to reconcile this dogma with historical and ethnographic facts. Particularly, in the West this led to the appearance of 'structural Marxism' with its tendency '... to reverse the causal relationship between base and superstructure...' (Sanderson 2003: 180). At the same time, in the Soviet Union the meaningless euphemism for the Early State, *ranneklassovoe obshchestvo* ('early-class society') was invented (see Bondarenko 1991; also see Kubbel 1988: 15; Popov 1990: 51; Koptev 1992: 4; Bondarenko 1998a: 16; 2005b: 81; Kradin 1998: 6–7; Kochakova 1999: 65–66; Safronov 2006: 4; Grinin 2007a: 119–120).

<sup>4</sup> See Maine 1861, 1875; Morgan 1877; Engels 1985/1884 vs. Schurtz 1902; Evans-Pritchard 1940: 198ff.; 1951; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1987/1940: XIV–XX, 6–7, 10–11; Lowie 1927; 1948: 10–12, 317–318; Brown 1951; Schapera 1956; Kaberry 1957; Middleton and Tait 1958: 5; Mair 1970/1962: 11–16; 1965: 99–100; see also Balandier 1967: Ch. 3; McGlynn and Tuden 1991b: 5–10; Bargatzky 1993: 267–269. Recent criticisms of contemporary evolutionists' attempts to look at the process of the growth of complexity (including state formation) in the light of the idea of an unflinching move from kinship to territory see: McIntosh 1999: 1–30, 166–172.

<sup>5</sup> An overview of changes in the dominant standpoints on the essentially either biological or social nature of the phenomenon of kinship from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> till the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and the substantiation of kinship as a biology-related social phenomenon see Bondarenko 2006: 64–66.

<sup>6</sup> See also: Lewis 1965: 99–101; 1999: 47–48; Claessen 1978: 589; Claessen and Skalník 1978b: 641; 1978c: 22; Korotayev and Obolonkov 1998; Tainter 1990: 29–30.

<sup>7</sup> I have added emphases to those parts of the Claessen and Skalník's well-known definition of the early state that testify to their understanding of this phenomenon as clearly hierarchic / homoarchic by nature:

The early state is a centralized socio-political organization for the regulation of social relations in a complex, stratified society divided into at least two basic strata, or emergent social classes – viz. the rulers and the ruled – whose relations

are characterized by political dominance of the former and tributary obligations of the latter, legitimized by a common ideology of which reciprocity is the basic principle (1978c: 640).

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Khashaev 1961; Ikhilov 1967; Shikhsaidov 1975; Aglarov 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Although not always: The area giving probably the most important (in the historical long-run) exceptions to the rule is Europe, in some parts of which the unilineal descent groups disappeared at early stages of history being substituted by the nuclear family and neighbour (territorial) community. For example, in Greece it had happened by the Dark Age time (Andreev 1976: 74–78; Roussel 1976; Frolov 1988: 79–80; on *genos* as not sib, or clan, in anthropological terms see: Smith, R. C. 1985: 53). In Latiutherm it had become a fact before Rome was founded and the royal authority established there in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (e.g., Dozhdev 2004/2000; see here also criticism on the concept of *gens* as sib / clan). In Scandinavia the unilineal descent groups had disintegrated by the close of the Bronze Age after the transitory – in this sense – period (from about 2600 B.C.) of the lineage and extended family dominance (Earle 1997: 25–26, 163; Anderson, C. E. 1999: 14–15). This did not pave the way to the formation of the territorial organization prior to that of the well-developed bureaucratic apparatus only (Kristiansen 1998: 45, 46): Generally speaking, alongside with a number of other potentially democratizing innovations like insistence on monogamy (Korotayev and Bondarenko 2000), it contributed significantly to the ‘European phenomenon’, ‘European miracle’ – the appearance of the modern European civilization. Korotayev has demonstrated convincingly that ‘deep Christianization’ promotes the rise of community (and, in the long run, supracommunity) democracy by crushing the unilineal descent organization (Korotayev 2003; 2004: 89–107, 119–137). I think the reverse statement could also be true: Deep Christianization is easier achieved in the social milieu characterized by absence or weakening of the unilineal descent organization. Note also that Christianity is heavily rooted in the ancient Jewish monotheism while the Old Testament prophets entered the stage and started teaching in the situation of the sib / clan organization’s gradual weakening (though not disappearance) after the formation of the Israelite Kingdom (Nikol’skij 1914: 385–415; Jakobson 1997: 351–369). It is also reasonable to suppose that, first, there was a real weakening of the unilineal descent organization and not the formation of the territorial organization as such what contributed to the ‘European miracle’s’ birth, and secondly, the territorial organization is nevertheless an independent variable. Both of these propositions are proved by the late ancient – modern West and Central Asian, North African, and even modern European politically democratic tribal cultures in which one can observe territorial division, unilineal descent including clan (sib) organization, and non-Christian (nowadays predominantly Muslim) religion at one time (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1949; Barth 1959; Whitaker 1968; Irons 1975). The second proposition is also confirmed, for instance, by the North American evidence from tribal societies with distinctive unilineal descent groups (e.g., Morgan 1851; Lowie 1935; Dräger 1968). Finishing one of his recent articles, Berezkin asks the reader: ‘Would it be too bold to suggest that it was... lack of, or underdevelopment of, a clan-and-moiety system that contributed to the more important role of personality that, in turn, had hindered the development of hierarchies?’ (2000: 223). Indeed, it would not.

<sup>10</sup> Besides Claessen 1978, *vide stricto* Claessen and Skalník 1978c; Claessen 1984; 2005: 151–154; Claessen and Velde 1987: 4–5; Bargatzky 1987.

<sup>11</sup> In particular, Claessen attributes as 'transitional early states' the following societies from the 'The Early State' sample: China (late 2<sup>nd</sup> – early 1<sup>st</sup> millennia B.C.), Maurya (4<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.), France (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries), Aztecs (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries), Kuba (19<sup>th</sup> century), and Jimma (19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries [till 1932]) (1978: 593). In the post-1978 publications Claessen has characterized as 'transitional early states' the African polities of Congo (17<sup>th</sup> century), Dahomey (17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), and Asante (late 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) (see 2005: 152). Tymowski adds one more African society, Songhay (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) to the roster (1987: 59).

<sup>12</sup> In 'The Early State' sample the limited state (the 'typical early state' in Claessen and Skalník's thesaurus) is represented by Egypt (the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.), Scythia (6<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C.), Iberia (6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. – 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.), Axum (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries), Angkor (9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries), Mongolia (13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries), Incas (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries), Kachari (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), and Yoruba (19<sup>th</sup> century) (Claessen 1978: 593). To these, for example, Claessen later added the Carolingian state (8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) (1985: 203–209, 213). Other scholars added the Mycenaean Greek states of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. and the Polish state of the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. (Vliet 1987: 78; Tymowski 1996).

<sup>13</sup> *Vide stricto* Earle 1997: 5; Milner 1998: 2; Kottak 2002: 242, 259, 269.

<sup>14</sup> See: Claessen and Skalník 1978a; 1981.

<sup>15</sup> In 'The Early State' the societies defined as 'inchoate early states' are: Norway (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries), Volta (15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), Ankole (17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), Tahiti (18<sup>th</sup> century), Hawai'i (18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), Zande (18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) (Claessen 1978: 593). As for Hawai'i, Earle argues reasonably that the state did appear there but only in the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, founded by the great paramount Kamehameha I with the help of 'western ships, guns, and special personnel' (e.g., 1978; 1997: 44, 87–89, 132, 138, 202–203; 2000; Johnson and Earle 2000: 293–294; see also Lewellen 1992: 39–40; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2003: 108–111; Latushko 2006: 8–10, 17–23; Grinin 2007a: 189–195).

<sup>16</sup> See: Vansina *et al.* 1964: 86–87; Vansina 1992: 19–21; Quigley 1995; Oosten 1996; Wrigley 1996; Wilkinson 1999; Simonse 2002; Skalník 2002; Bondarenko 2006: 93–94. It goes without saying that monarchy is the most widespread form of political regime in preindustrial state societies, especially in early states or civilizations (see Claessen 1978: 535–596; Trigger 2003: 71–91, 264). Nevertheless, history has seen instances of non-monarchical bureaucratic governments yet in ancient and medieval times. For example, in oligarchic Venice from 1297 and till Napoleon's occupation in 1797 the Great Council consisting of adult males of specified elite families selected and elected functionaries including the head of polity (*doge*) among its members without any feedback from the populace. In fact, from the viewpoint of society as a whole, that was appointment by a small group of people, only to which the appointees were responsible (see, e.g., Romano 1987; Zannini 1993). The tendency toward gradual transformation into an oligarchic bureaucratic state (at formal legal equality of all citizens) also clearly revealed itself in the course of the Novgorod Republic's history until the tendency was stopped at a very late stage, if not after its full realization, as an outcome of Novgorod's integration into the Moscow Kingdom in 1478 (Bernadsky 1961). The integration was predetermined by the military defeat from Muscovites in the Shelon' river battle seven years earlier; characteristically, 'de-

generation of the Novgorod feudal democracy into open oligarchy during the 15<sup>th</sup> century led to lack of support of the boyar (patrician. – *D. B.*) government by the city's lower strata. Just this determined the defeat of the republic' (Khoroshkevich 1992: 453–454). In the Hanseatic city of Rostock in the late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries '... patricians formed not only the economically mightiest alignment of the city's population'. During this period 'they also concentrated in their hands absolute political power, the oligarchic character of the city self-government in the period under consideration increased. The right to sit in the city council was usurped by a limited circle of patrician families...' (Podaljak 1988: 131). The socio-political order of many other maritime trade-based independent cities of late-medieval Northern and Southern Europe eventually became basically the same (Schildhauer *et al.* 1985; Brady 1991; Shaw 2001). So, the absence of the monarchy should not mean *a priori* either the absence of the state or its non-hierarchical / non-homoarchical nature.

<sup>17</sup> Southall 1956, 1988, 1991, 1999; Krader 1968: 4.

<sup>18</sup> See, *e.g.*: Webb 1975; Peebles and Kus 1977; Wright 1977; Carneiro 1981; Smith, M. E. 1985; Spencer 1987; Earle 1991; Anderson, D. G. 1994, 1996. – *D. B.*

<sup>19</sup> *E.g.*, Diamond 1997: 281; Bondarenko 2006: 64. If we look at the state as at a societal type, not as at a form of political organization only, just the intrinsic link between the transition to basically territorial (suprakin) social organization and the appearance of bureaucracy does not allow me to accept the idea of 'non-bureaucratic state' (Vliet 1987, 2005; Testart 2004; Grinin 2007b). Firmly established bureaucracy may be necessary for administering only territory-based societies while not each and every society of this sort really needs and has bureaucracy. As it was said above, in my opinion, only the cases in which both of the phenomena are observed can be considered as full, completed states (corresponding to the transitional early state in the Claessen and Skalník's scheme). The rise of bureaucracy may start (and most often starts) prior to the transition to territoriality (at the typical early state level) but, if the incipient bureaucracy has prospects for true consolidation, it reshapes the society along the predominantly territorial lines for the sake of its own political and mercantile 'convenience'.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, if the central authority can solute original units with others or cut them into parts.

<sup>21</sup> Besides many publications on particular societies, see in general and comparative works, *e.g.*, Butinov 1967; Zak 1975: 242–265; Maisels 1987: 345–346; Iljushechkin 1990: 160–162; Diakonoff and Jakobson 1997; Baines and Yoffee 1998: 225–227.

<sup>22</sup> See, *e.g.*, Kamen 2000: 126–137.

<sup>23</sup> Among the most recent scholars emphasizing this fact see, *e.g.*: Claessen and Oosten 1996: 5–6; Claessen 2003: 162; Kristiansen 1998: 45, 46; Johnson and Earle 2000: 248; Chabal *et al.* 2004: 28; Christian 2004: 273–274; Kradin 2004: 179.

<sup>24</sup> Though numerous coincidences between modern Western and premodern Chinese bureaucratic machines are really striking, and it was noticed by Weber (see Creel 2001/1970: 13–17).

<sup>25</sup> See: Bondarenko 2006: 25–30; see also, *e.g.*, Flannery 1972: 403; Cohen 1978a; 1978b: 36; Britan and Cohen 1983; Haas 1995: 18; Johnson and Earle 2000: 35; Spencer 2003: 11185; Spencer and Redmond 2004: 173.

<sup>26</sup> See, *e.g.*, Averkieva 1970; Irons 1975; Hedeager 1992: 153–155; Robertshaw 1999: 124–127; Bulbeck and Prasetyo 2000: 133–134; Claessen 2000a; see also: Wolf 1966.

<sup>27</sup> In particular, the paternalistic discourse was reflected and expressed vividly in many widely-used Russian-language idioms, such as *tsar'-batjushka* ('tsar-father') or *tsaritsa-matushka* ('tsarina-mother').

<sup>28</sup> This prestate legacy is especially vivid just in the political philosophy of Confucius in which a state is likened to a clan.

<sup>29</sup> See: Diop 1958–1959: 16; Armstrong 1960: 38; see also, *e.g.*, Kaberry 1959: 373; Tardits 1980: 753–754; Tymowski 1985: 187–188; Ray 1991: 205; Skalnik 1996: 92.

<sup>30</sup> In Benin a community typically encompassed more than one extended family.

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