

Chapter 8: Power and Sociopolitical Organization

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the ways social control are managed differently in each sociopolitical organization
- Differentiate key concepts such as power and authority and consider how they are expressed in each sociopolitical organization
- Know how status or leadership positions are maintained in each sociopolitical organization
- Understand how nation-states create allegiance to a country and other citizens
- Consider the coercive and subtle ways that nation-states use power to ensure social control
- Understand how nation-states may remove people's rights and protections under certain contexts and within particular spaces
- Know the different 'effects' of states and how these processes shape people's daily lives and interactions with state bureaucracies

Introduction

All societies demonstrate some type of political and social organization. Using the framework first introduced by Elman Service, anthropology recognizes four ideal types of sociopolitical organization: bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. Within each, anthropologists carefully consider how cohesion, control, order, flexibility, and adaptability are expressed in those societies. While this neat typology allows anthropologists to theorize and understand the underlying foundations of societies, the actual expression of sociocultural and political economic realities can vary greatly. The same way that cultures in the United States share some patterning with cultures in Germany, Italy, or Mexico, each state-level society also exhibits important differences. The same is true for bands, tribes, and chiefdoms. As noted in chapter two (*The Concept of Culture*), culture is something that is universal but also wildly diverse.

Despite societal differences in these types of sociopolitical systems, two fundamental elements underpin their structure and organization and often ground anthropological analysis: power and authority. Most commonly **power** is defined as the ability or potential to bring about a change or an action in individuals or groups, at times against what people might actually want to do. Power can exist in formal and informal ways, in coercive and subtle forms, in overt or hidden structures, in striking or mundane expressions—anything from parents disciplining a child to federal authorities arresting suspected terrorists or a partner that gaslights and manipulates another person's emotions to the police serving an eviction notice to a family behind on rent. Expressions of power can also carry the use or risk of using

force to ensure compliance. Similarly, power connects with the idea of **authority**, or the ability to induce some action or change in an individual or group through persuasion. This ability is generally based on perceived characteristics such as knowledge, status, or lineage. It is important to differentiate these concepts and understand how they can become entangled. For example, as a child you may have followed your parents' wishes on not doing this or not doing that (insert your own deviant behavior). In such situations, your parents had the authority to limit your behaviors—authority granted through respect and lineage. Simultaneously, since they also controlled access to toys, technology, food, and the like, they could withhold those and express power over you. Or in the case of someone controlling another person's behavior through the threat of physical violence (perhaps they wield a knife or a gun), they certainly have power in that moment. But they may not have the authority, respect, and social standing to support such an action. Relatedly, within both power and authority, the question arises as to whether someone has **legitimacy** in their expression of control (that is, a valid right to a leadership position). As you can see these ideas exist in a continuum and share some fundamental characteristics: namely influencing peoples' behaviors. However, as detailed below, how power or authority is expressed differs greatly from one sociopolitical organization to another.

Anthropological analysis also details the ways each type of political organization exhibits some pattern of social differentiation. This differentiation might be rooted in **egalitarianism**—where individuals have recognition for their particular skills or qualities (perhaps one is wise, fair, and tempered in their resolution of social conflict), but they are not subject to the control of others and wealth and status are not inherited between generations. Or perhaps the organization reflects a **ranked society**—where formal differences exist in status or prestige between people and groups (which can be inherited from one generation to the next). Yet, importantly, all members of that society retain basic access to the material resources needed to live, such as land, water, or food.

Most of us know a **stratified society** (since we generally live in such a system). Here socioeconomic and political inequalities are formal and (at structural levels) permanent, with wealth and status frequently being passed down family lines. While class mobility is possible and there is no shortage of examples one could point to showing someone from humble beginnings rising through the ranks in that society to accrue greater wealth and status, broad inequities still exist within a stratified society. Additionally, some people and groups also lack basic access to the material resources needed to live a good life (e.g., food, health care, or potable water, perhaps in Flint, Michigan or the Appalachian region of Kentucky). Stratified societies are commonly seen in state-level societies: Argentina, the United States, Turkey, the Philippines, and the list continues. The differences that exist between people can be dramatic. One's birth into a given class position, in a particular region of a country, as a particular ethnic group, and so on can greatly facilitate or delimit the possibilities of fulfilling one's potential. While modern capitalist economies promote ideas on class mobility (which we discuss in greater detail below), some people experience greater friction in their efforts to climb upward.

Types of Sociopolitical Organizations

In most cases we see that degrees of egalitarianism characterize bands and tribes, ranked societies are seen in chiefdoms, and states exist as stratified societies. Each type of society determines the best way to exercise social control over those in that society. The archaeological record reveals the vast majority of our evolutionary prehistory occurred within band-level societies. Such an organization is resilient, stable, flexible, and egalitarian. Only in the past few thousand years (a relatively small portion of our history) have humans shifted into more complex, bureaucratic, stratified, and arguably unstable state-level societies. Though these different sociopolitical organizations may exhibit some shared characteristics, more commonly they have notable differences that can dramatically shape people's lives and the types of opportunities and constraints people face.

Bands

The sociopolitical system known as **bands**, or foraging groups, relies upon hunting and gathering techniques and demonstrates immense flexibility in their organization and adaptability to environmental constraints. A band society usually numbers anywhere between 30-60 individuals and rarely exceeds more than 100. Size constraints partially correlate with methods of conflict resolution and kinship (more below), but also with techniques of food acquisition. Given that bands primarily rely upon hunting and gathering (or foraging) in their local vicinities—exploiting wild plant and animal resources available without human interference (that is, bands do not domesticate plants and animals or grow food through agricultural practices)—foraging territories have a carrying capacity on the number of people that can sustainably utilize naturally occurring food stocks. If a foraging group becomes too populous for a given area, they will likely fission into smaller groups, usually along kinship lines (it is also possible that population pressure and exceeding the environmental carrying capacity could lead to a shift in subsistence strategy, such as pursuing horticulturalism).

Due to limitations imposed by local environmental capacities, bands exploit incredibly diverse foodstuffs within their foraging territory. Typically, bands employ what Lewis Binford (1968) and Kent Flannery (1969) helped explain as **broad-spectrum foraging**, where one's diet is based on a variety of foodstuffs and is not necessarily tied to staple items. As noted by Binford and Flannery (see also Stiner 2001), technologies that emerged during the neolithic revolution allowed for a dramatic expansion in foraging societies' dietary breadth. In this case, subsistence diversification and intensification of food acquisition activities allow bands to adapt to changing environments and food availability, which accounts for the resilience of this sociopolitical organization. Bands hunt for small and large game (individually or communally), exploit riverine systems and coastal areas, harvest deep sea fish and mammals, and gather wild plants such as nuts, fruits, tubers, and roots. As you can imagine, an impressive amount of environmental knowledge is necessary to know where to acquire foods, which foods are edible (or

poisonous), when is the best time to harvest particular items, how to store or dry foods, and how to process foods for easier digestion. This type of sociopolitical organization is likely the first organizational system to emerge outside of the family unit (see figure 1). How or why it emerged is a matter of debate. Men could have cooperated with other men during communal hunts, which helped cement sociocultural bonds, or women could have cooperated with other women during small-scale hunts and gathering vegetable foods. Ultimately, people found support and safety by connecting with others and building alliances that extended beyond one's immediate family.

Figure 1: *The band-level society of the San peoples are spread throughout portions of southern Africa (e.g., Botswana or Namibia) and rely upon hunting and gathering subsistence strategies. As noted below, while the San hold deep ecological understandings of natural resources, their subsistence is complicated by governments that have taken their lands and forced them to resettle in compromised landscapes.*

Photograph by Dann Harp.



Cooperation, Informality, and Tensions

Thomas Hobbes famously posited that people living in bands (and tribes)—outside of what he viewed as civilized sociopolitical organizations with formal government and legal systems (essentially, ‘in a state of nature’)—would lead ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’ lives. However, anthropological research shows how people in bands live full, healthy, content, and stable lives. Starvation is extremely rare. Warfare is rare, if present at all (there is conflict, but not sustained warfare). Inequities minimally exist. Work is only done a few hours a day, leaving time for other activities such as household reproduction, cultivating kin networks, raising children, reinforcing cultural values, or engaging in play. People have relatively equal access to the material resources needed for survival. Formal leadership positions are absent and anyone that has garnered support within the community because of their knowledge, skills, or other valued characteristics must still work to obtain societal consensus when resolving a dispute (that is, they cannot force someone to follow an order). Infectious diseases are largely absent. While it might be hard for someone that has grown up in a state-level society to see the attraction of such a livelihood strategy, all things considered bands experience healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives.

This does not mean bands do not face any difficulties. Like any society, tensions, conflicts, or problems of reproducing families exist. However, the ways in which conflict or violence are managed and resolved differ greatly compared to other sociopolitical systems. Given that no formal leadership positions exist within bands, they do not experience sustained warfare. Violence and conflict can erupt, but usually it is interpersonal in nature or perhaps between neighboring bands (for example, due to a territorial dispute). While rare, there are documented cases of homicides as men may fight with other men, often over women. Yet, in most instances of violence or conflict, these are handled through **informal mediation**, or techniques such as gossip, family pressure, social ridicule, or public contests that seek to resolve the dispute through non-coercive and agreed upon guidelines. This might involve delivering verbal assaults, taunting someone in public, engaging in boxing, or demonstrating other acts of physical prowess.

Should disputes remain unresolved, it is possible that some might leave or be forced to leave the group. Similarly, due to the informal nature of social control, once bands become too large to effectively manage conflict resolution, large bands may fission into smaller societies, usually along kinship lines. Ultimately, the small size, informal resolution practices, and flexible nature of bands create a resilient sociopolitical structure that continues to this day and characterizes most of human prehistory.

Tribes

Whereas political identity and affiliation is largely absent or ephemeral in bands, tribe-level societies demonstrate durable complex sociopolitical organizations even while lacking centralized political institutions. **Tribes** are more complex in nature, larger in size (from several thousand members to tens of thousands [more if considering, for example, Native American tribes in the US and Canada]), build membership based on a shared understanding of descent from the same ancestor, exhibit some political integration, and engage in food production activities. Tribe descent can be traced through matrilineal or patrilineal lineages (see the chapter *Kinship and Family Structures* for more information on kinship). While anthropologists have debated the role of men and women in different descent systems—whether one sex exhibits greater control over another, whether men take on different roles in matrilineal societies, whether masculinity equates to a denial of traits considered feminine, or whether women take on subordinate roles in tribes where hunting constitutes a large portion of peoples' diets—continuing research (e.g., Starkweather and Keith 2019) notes that all sexes have important roles in the maintenance and reproduction of the family and tribal unit, including their important cultural traditions (see figure 2).

Figure 2: *The BriBri tribe living in Costa Rica and Northern Panama numbers around 12,000 members and is a matrilineal clan system, where land is handed down from the mother to her children. Women also hold positions of spiritual significance in that they prepare a sacred (Theobroma cacao) drink central to ritual practice.*

Photograph by AFP/Getty Images.



Certainly, these characteristics differentiate tribes from bands. Yet, some commonalities exist, such as exhibiting degrees of egalitarianism, lacking formal and centralized political institutions, and expressing power or social control through kinship, religion, or other culturally salient activities (gossip, shunning, joking, and the like [what was discussed above as informal mediation]).

Given that tribes engage in food production, territorial use rights take a prominent role in controlling natural resources and lands necessary for survival. By establishing group membership within unilineal kin networks, tribes create clear socio-spatial boundaries on who has ‘legitimate’ rights to a given territory and its resources for food production. The two dominant modes of subsistence among tribes are horticulture and pastoralism. Commonly, **horticulture** is the garden plot cultivation of plants, often relying upon the use of human labor and performed without draft animals. Tribes also periodically move from one parcel of land to another through a system referred to as shifting cultivation to prevent soil exhaustion. However, food produced does not match that grown in more intensive agricultural production and may only generate yields sufficient to sustain those in the tribe (of course, any possible surpluses can be sold at markets to support the tribe as a whole). The other livelihood strategy is **pastoralism**, or the care and maintenance of domesticated livestock such as goat, cattle, camels, llamas, or sheep (also referred to as animal husbandry). Similar to horticulture’s shifting plot rotation, pastoralists will move livestock to different territories to ensure that one area is not overexploited or to follow water availability under seasonal rain patterns. Each livelihood strategy provides more food per unit of land compared to bands’ hunting and gathering techniques. As tribes adopt intensified food production and more complex food management, processing, and storing techniques, greater numbers of people can be supported on a given parcel of land.

As noted by Nadia El-Hage Scialabba (2022), pastoralism often thrives on landscapes that have low biological productivity or cannot support intensive production of fruits and vegetables (e.g., different types of roots, tubers, cruciferous plants, or leafy greens). “While some pastoral systems have adopted

aspects of intensification (such as supplementary feed crops), most pastoralism remains characterized by low input/multiple output systems (transport, manure, milk, fiber, leather, meat) uniquely adapted to local climate variability” (ibid: 17). Similarly, horticultural practices reflect the unique ecological conditions of a given tribe’s territory, cultivating foods best suited to local growing conditions. Grounding both types of food production systems is refined ecological knowledge of how to care for plants and animals, which is honed through direct observation and measurement as well as adaptations to new sociopolitical or socioecological environments.

Leadership and Conflict Resolution

Similar to bands, conflict resolution in tribes may rely upon informal resolution and careful mediation between aggrieved parties. Not wanting to alienate oneself from the rest of the tribe, there can be a show of apology or sorrow about the offending action, in the hopes that others will also forgive someone for some slight or damage they caused. The goal, as in most societies, is to find a balance of harmony between various groups and individuals. If some conflict goes unresolved (if someone ruined a communal hunt for the tribe, if someone ran off with another person’s spouse, if someone took another’s livestock, if someone questioned another’s honor, or any number of reasons as to why people fight), the tensions can escalate into violence. In such instances, tribal societies may turn to tribal leaders to help resolve the issue. While there are no formal and centralized government offices, individuals in tribal societies can move into tribal headman positions (such as a big-man and big-women leadership position in Melanesia) because they hold qualities and traits respected by others: being diligent, honest, fair, compassionate, generous, or wise. Anthropologists refer to such traits as one’s **achieved status**, or the way in which someone’s identity is based on qualities or characteristics they have earned through actions and work (the inverse is **ascribed status**, which refers to the qualities or characteristics placed on someone due to their birth into a given family or lineage). Despite being held in high regard by other tribespeople, leaders may not rely upon power to enforce a decision. They persuade people to abide by what they say due to their overall level of standing, authority, and influence with the community.

Of course, how one gains such prestige can have negative consequences. Certainly, a leader can gain status based on their selfless generosity or support offered to others. However, leaders such as bigmen may attempt to acquire more goods and foods to share during elaborate feasts. These grand gestures allow them to publicly display their generosity. In so doing, they may create inter- and intra-tribal competitions and aggression as they seek to obtain more goods for distribution. Therefore, while tribal leaders serve central roles in minimizing and resolving conflict, some leaders may actively contribute to its formation.

Importantly, tribes can have multiple leaders whose roles vary based on their unique skillsets: one may be adept at warfare, another skilled in medicine, and someone else may exhibit talents for smoothing social friction. When considering disputes, if it is unclear who is at fault, tribes may rely upon supernatural elements and the guidance of particular tribal leaders to help determine one’s guilt or innocence. Here,

shamans can take a central role since they are regarded as special individuals that have access to the supernatural and may be ‘called’ into this life. As such, anybody with the ability to enter into trances or demonstrate other capacities to communicate with the spiritual world may become a shaman. For example, among Hmong hilltribe communities in Southeast Asia, children that experience epileptic seizures can be viewed as having special abilities to interact with the spiritual realm (Fadiman 2012), perhaps in adulthood becoming shamans themselves. While shamans may occupy authoritative positions, they may also live on the margins of society due to their perceived abilities of moving between the natural and spiritual worlds, existing in a liminal ambiguous state (Vitebsky 2001).

In a classic piece of ethnographic research conducted in Southern Sudan among the Azande, E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1976) explored the ways in which human suffering and misfortune can be traced back to other’s malevolent actions. Additionally, among the Azande, witchcraft serves as a constant threat, whether one is purposeful or unknowing in the harm they cause others. To understand both the origin of social disorder and precisely who should work to correct the situation, the Azande regularly use oracles to repair the situation at hand. Of the different oracles explored by Evans-Pritchard, the poison oracle piqued most people’s interest. In determining whether witchcraft is responsible for someone’s suffering or who is at fault in a given conflict (e.g., perhaps someone is accused of sleeping with another man’s wife [see *additional resources* below for a documentary on Azande witchcraft]), the poison oracle will feed *benge* (a toxic mixture) to a chicken. Depending on the case, whether the chicken lives or dies will determine who is guilty and what processes of reconciliation must be pursued to reestablish order. Ultimately, tribal leaders take on varying roles during inevitable societal tensions, serving as religious authorities, medical specialists, war strategists, counselors, or mediators. In all, their purpose is to maintain social cohesion, internal consolidation, and smooth emergent frictions within a sociopolitical system that lacks centralized, formal governance structures.

Bands and Tribes within Nation-States

As noted above, bands and tribes each demonstrate high degrees of resiliency and adaptability to changing sociopolitical and environmental contexts. However, these societies face notable difficulties since they reside within nation-state boundaries (states are discussed in detail below). As such, their techniques of food acquisition, livelihood strategies, social organization, or household reproduction all face challenges created through their (forced) engagement with states and their citizenries. For example, while bands require sufficient foraging territories and tribes need land to sustainably practice horticulture and pastoralism, their mobility is often constrained. States forcibly relocate bands and tribes to marginal lands or encroach on their territories through development activities (e.g., constructing roads, mining for precious metals, expanding agricultural, or building industrial estates). Under such pressures, conflicts certainly emerge with state authorities, but tensions *within* bands and tribes can be exacerbated. Natural resources become constrained and conflict resolution strategies may lose effectiveness as social orders break down under external pressures. Essentially, bands and tribes have normal internal issues that must

be addressed, along with substantial disruptions caused by state-level societies that often seek to constrain their mobility or assimilate their cultures.

Figure 3: *Processes of illegal mining and logging have contributed to the destruction and degradation of hundreds of thousand acres of Kayapo territories. An aerial view demonstrates the way such operations carve into the land and significantly alter its ecological integrity. As noted by an NGO official: “The Kayapo provide a good example of how conservation is an actual war”.* Photograph by Mauricio Lima.



For example, Jon Lee Anderson (2019) considers the hostilities that emerge when the Kayapo tribe in Brazil is forced to interact with the Brazilian government headed by then President Jair Bosonaro. As tribal and state-level societies intersect, the competing agendas and differing levels of power in those relations are revealed. We see how those aligned with Bosonaro’s government seek to harvest resources in the rainforest for short-term economic profits (primarily through mining operations, cattle production, or timber harvesting), while indigenous populations that live in and rely upon rainforests struggle to retain rights to their lands and use the region’s natural resources in ways that do not map to the government’s vision of economic expansion, resource extraction, and becoming a modern, developed country (see Figure 3). The result is that tribes must contend with and resist the actions of a state backed by greater numbers of people, police forces, militaries, and other powerful institutions. As noted by Anderson (2019):

“The destruction of Kayapo land is just part of ... the “sacking” of the Amazon. In addition to the mining and logging, soy farmers and cattle ranchers have cleared huge tracts of forest, mostly by fire. Brazil’s National Institute of Space Research, ... calculates that one-fifth of Brazil’s Amazonian rain forest—the world’s largest remaining “green lung,” which absorbs billions of tons of carbon dioxide—has been destroyed since the nineteen-seventies. Indigenous reserves serve as a bulwark against destruction, green islands amid industrial soy fields and clear-cut ranchlands. But the closer indigenous people live to whites the more vulnerable they are. In these places, all that stands in the way of the destruction of the Amazon is the ability of a few thousand indigenous leaders to resist the enticements of consumer culture” (ibid 2019).

Situations such as these are further complicated by the constrained livelihood options available to citizens of a given nation-state. In the context of Brazil, those employed as miners, loggers, ranchers, among others know the destruction their work causes. According to one of the miners, “All of us here realize we’re fucking the environment. It’s not like we want to—it’s that we haven’t found any alternative means to survive” (ibid 2019).

Chieftdoms

The ideal type of chieftdom represents several notable shifts compared to sociopolitical organization within bands and tribes. In particular, coercive power, centralized authority, and intensified subsistence strategies characterize chieftdoms. In its most basic, Robert Carneiro (1981: 45) defines a **chieftdom** as “an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief”. Unlike bands and tribes, populations are ranked within lineage and economic systems. Those more closely related to the chief enjoy higher status compared to commoners and those that are distantly related. While chieftdoms generally operate under the assumption that everyone in the chieftdom is descended from the same ancestor and shares some lineage, the status differences still operate to create a hierarchical system that places some in prestigious, elite positions and others existing as commoners. These socioeconomic and political hierarchies directly shape people’s experiences and access to land, water, food, or other resources. In some cases, chieftdoms may exhibit rankings akin to a caste system, whereby individuals that fall into different social strata would be disallowed from marrying outside their positions. To a degree, such endogamous forms of stratification serve to maintain power within the chief’s immediate lineage. Similarly, regulation and the maintenance of social control is conducted by those that fill certain political offices. As offices are permanent in nature and must be filled upon a vacancy or death, such an organizational system allows chiefs to place close descendants into those offices, thereby ensuring tight political integration over successive generations.

This is distinctly different than what occurs when a tribal leader dies, whose position does not require replacement. However, chiefs and those aligned with their work must be replaced due to their

roles and responsibilities. For example, chiefs must manage economies, ensure societal order, correct or punish improper behavior, and distribute food, commodities, goods, and wealth. Because the office of the chief continues across generations, accurate understandings of lineage are central. Close attention to genealogical records determines who will inherit the chiefly office. Regardless of who occupies the office, a central action of the chief is **redistribution**. The chief will acquire foods, commodities, or goods by taxation, collection, or coercion. They then engage in a redistributive exchange system, sharing items with everyone in the chiefdom. Certainly, social ranking and genealogical proximity to the chief affects the amount or quality of goods one might receive during a ritual or exchange. But everyone receives or expects to receive something. By sharing commodities, goods, and wealth with the populace, this helps ensure continued support from those in the chiefdom. Of course, the expectation of redistribution also creates a sociopolitical environment where the chief must acquire more material and economic resources for those in the chiefdom. Retention of power therefore sees a chief applying pressure to increase food or goods production, leading to higher levels of productivity than in tribes. If production or contributions to the chief do not meet certain standards, then coercion or punishment can be applied. In this case, chiefs have a coercive ability to enforce their rules or expectations on collective contributions.

Chiefdom in Archaeological Analysis and Contemporary Expressions

This type of sociopolitical system has led many to argue that chiefdoms would eventually expand in size, bringing more people and communities under the control of a chief (or creating necessary alliances, where several chiefs form a confederacy that is headed by a big chief, or a *chief of chiefs*). Under such expansionist systems, the size and geographic distribution of a chiefdom would inevitably require new sociopolitical arrangements and bureaucratic offices to handle societal challenges (see figure 4). Given that few chiefdoms remain as extant sociopolitical systems, anthropologists have debated their precise role in the cultural evolution of complex sociopolitical systems. For example, do they represent tribes that coalesced into a centralized system in response to an external threat? Does the organization and maintenance of social control lead to the inevitable development of state-level societies, thereby making chiefdoms ephemeral and transitional in nature? Given that some chiefdoms had many of the same attributes as states, should they have been categorized in the archaeological record as 'archaic states' instead of complex chiefdoms? These questions remain debated and continue to preoccupy anthropologists and archaeologists (e.g., Jones and Kautz 2011). As considered within the works of Carneiro, Grinin, and Korotayev (2017), while chiefdoms are commonly associated with archaeological investigations on the evolution of complex sociopolitical systems, the conceptual organization offered within chiefdoms could be applied by cultural anthropologists to understand contemporary systems that exist outside of the state, such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Mexican drug cartels, or other non-state organizations (extremist movements, separatist insurgencies, or warlord networks). In effect, such systems can be understood as modern chiefdoms, which are tightly controlled, monitored, and punished by powerful actors that in essence mimic many of the same attributes of a chief (ibid: 309-332). Such research

demonstrates the continued relevance of chiefdoms and more importantly, the way in which power is acquired, maintained, and (coercively or violently) applied to those under the control of a chiefly office.

Figure 4: The pre-Colombian archaeological site of Monte Albán is significant in that it represents an expansionist Zapotec socio-political and economic polity that flourished for nearly a thousand years (founded ca. 500 BC). Given the rapid rise in population at Monte Albán, it is likely that elites in the San José Mogote chiefdom and others were involved in founding the future Zapotec capital.

Photograph by Gregory Gullette, 2008.



States

The sociopolitical organization of states is where a majority of the world's population lives. As noted above, even bands and tribes live within state borders and must contend with the pressures of a vastly different organizational system. Foundationally, **states** represent heavily centralized political units that bring disparate populations under their control through formal bureaucratic institutions and political leaders that have coercive power. State power is expressed in various ways—through militaries, police forces, government offices, regulatory systems, and so forth. While states have wide-ranging authorities and responsibilities, anthropologists have noted that states have four central features: states have clearly defined territories that delineate their land from any neighboring states; states have governments that fully or partially exist outside other forms of sociopolitical control (such as religious or educational institutions) and operate to enforce the laws and rules through bureaucratic institutions such as court systems or police; states have a population to govern and extract resources from through taxation; and states must have sovereignty, which includes the authority and power to act.

The issue of sovereignty can be further subdivided into the **principle of state sovereignty**, or the rights of governments to regulate, control, and monitor their own territories and people without interference from other states or external entities. As considered below, this expression of sovereignty often maps to the **principle of national sovereignty** within the context of a nation-state. That is, since government is by the people and for the people (it belongs to them), they have the right to govern themselves. As you might imagine, how such governing and regulation unfolds, and by whom, creates

opportunities for conflict between diverse and disparate communities within states (this will be explored in greater detail below).

While the above constitute the primary characteristics of states, they have other responsibilities. For example, keeping political economic and demographic records obtained through central banks or census systems, determining who is eligible for citizenship, detailing what rights and protections are granted to residents and citizens, creating a legal and judicial systems to help resolve conflicts, maintaining protective forces such as the military or a national guard, building international relationships and trade alliances with other states, providing expanded employment opportunities within national political economies, caring for communities during acute or chronic crises, among many others.

As this list demonstrates, the bureaucratic features of the state prominently figure into people's daily lives. As states govern diverse communities and exert control over those people, political anthropologists have sought to understand the ways in which states and their bureaucratic entanglements shape people's lived experiences (e.g., Nugent and Vincent 2007; Schatz 2009). However, the question emerges as to how one conducts ethnographic research on a state—something so amorphous and yet all-encompassing, what A.R. Radcliffe-Brown described as a fiction and better conceptualized as 'complex system of relations among a collection of individuals.'

Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001) argues that to understand how states operate and how they shape people's abilities to find work, create a family, avoid imprisonment, pay taxes, obtain a license, and any number of things that make up people's varying interactions with the state, we must examine the *effects* of the state. Instead of conducting research on the institutions of government (what sociologists or political scientists might study), anthropologists often "focus on the multiple sites in which state processes and practices are recognizable through their effects" (ibid: 126). In particular, Trouillot posits that to see the fullness of a state, anthropologists must analyze four effects: an *isolation effect*, or the ways that governments create individualized subjects that are subject to and shaped by state power; an *identification effect*, or the way that states also create individuals within its citizenry as belonging to the broader national community (that is, promoting a sameness across heterogeneous populations through shared sociocultural or political economic variables [e.g., language, class, political affiliation, or religion]); a *legibility effect*, or the ways that governments categorize and reduce the complexity of a society down to statistical figures; and a *spatialization effect*, or the creation of state boundaries and the internal maintenance of its territories. By considering the expressions of power by states, anthropologists can detail how state sociopolitical and economic institutions become entangled in our daily lives.

Each of the effects outlined by Trouillot connect to historical and contemporary trends in the discipline. Economic and political anthropologists, along with allied disciplines, have considered how states exert control over the disparate populations integrated into the sociospatial area that we think of as a country. How does a state ensure that people remain under the control of the state and accept its deployment of sovereign power? This question most directly maps to isolation and identification effects. Therefore, it is important to note that these effects are layered and interrelate with one another. For example, if someone applied for welfare support or unemployment during an acute crisis in their life

(perhaps they lost a spouse or a job and faced financial hardships), the state would go through calculations to determine their eligibility for assistance (Dubois 2017). Are they part of the 'bad poor' that chooses welfare over work? What funds exist in state coffers to support such an application? Do they meet all the criteria for assistance? Did they apply for assistance multiple times in the past, thereby demonstrating a 'culture of dependence'? In this case, the state compresses the complex sociocultural and political economic variables of one's life into numbers (the legibility effect), instead of considering the complex, messy nature of their existence. In so doing, the state subjects them to state calculations and decision-making, their power (the isolation effect). Additionally, the state might consider someone ineligible for support based on the zip code where they live (the spatialization effect). Given the myriad ways that state bureaucratic systems shape societal experiences, we must essentially take a holistic view to capture the subtle and overt ways that the state becomes enmeshed in people's lives.

The Creation of Nation-States

As noted above, the state is most easily understood as a centralized system of political, military, and socioeconomic rule over a given territory. However, maintaining control over expansive areas and diverse peoples presents notable challenges for states. How do you govern territories that might be distantly located from capitals or city centers (for example, the medieval mandala governance systems in Southeast Asia)? How do you quash a rebellion in a mountainous region, where it is difficult to transport military personnel and equipment? How do you govern people that do not want to be governed? How do you assimilate those that want to live outside of the state? James Scott (2009) considered many of these issues within the Zomia region of greater Asia, focusing on the ways that hilltribes would use the friction of terrain and the remoteness of their settlements as a way to avoid control. State leaders generally represent their form of sociopolitical organization as the high point in cultural evolution—the most complex and 'civilized' of all types—and bands or tribes that would encounter such a system would naturally assimilate. However, Scott demonstrates through his analysis of hilltribe communities that they actively avoid living under state control, using their remoteness, subsistence practices, and social organization to frustrate state efforts of capture. Rather than view people living outside of states as residue of nation-building, Scott argues that such people choose to live in ways that help them avoid the negative effects of living within states: taxes, military conscription, warfare, slavery, poverty, or disease. For example, considering the early Thai kingdom of Nan Chao (650-1253 AD), which began in the present-day Yunnan province of China, Thais were subject to slavery and debt bondage under a system known as *sakdina*. In this state system land was owned by the king and commoners were allotted land to use, only if they paid taxes and corvée service to lords and elite patrons. If they were unable, they would be enslaved and forced into debt bondage. While King Rama V abolished these practices in 1905, the remnants of the *sakdina* system persist to this day in different forms of social hierarchy and modern slavery (see Taylor 2005: 412-413).

Given the challenges of integrating people into the state and controlling them once there, governments have sought to create a cohesiveness among its citizenry, in the hopes that people *want* to belong to a given country and will abide by the rules and laws established. As such, states have effectively become **nation-states**, or a state that is governed in the name of a people that identify with the nation and share a national identity. This idea of sharing a national identity builds from an assumed sameness (to a degree), where people identify salient sociocultural characteristics that they share with others. People feel they belong to a national community because of those traits, which can include national markers such as language, religion, ethnicity, heritage, culture, or political affiliations. In essence, the nation-state attempts to create a feeling of unity and connection among incredibly diverse people across wide geographic areas. Benedict Anderson (1983) referred to this as an **imagined community**. People feel as though they belong to a given nation-state and in so doing exist within that community of citizens because of the traits they share. It is imagined in the sense that while people might feel they share certain traits and characteristics and are bound together through those identity markers, they often have no actual connection with one another. Furthermore, profound societal divisions such as class, education, politics, or religion may separate them (see figure 5). Yet, if nation-state building is successful, people look to their imagined connections to others and their collective responsibility to the country, while diminishing or ignoring the traits or markers that separate them.

Nation-states also create unity and devotion to one's country through the **citizenship** category (that is, the legally recognized relationship between a person and a state, granting citizens certain rights, duties, and responsibilities). Creating symbolic distinctions between citizens and non-citizens, native and foreign, us and them, the state intensifies internal consolidation against some external population. In essence, the state identifies who belongs in the community of citizens and who is or should be excluded from this privilege. By identifying some as worthy of belonging and others as unworthy (or a threat to national identity) this can create exclusionary and marginalizing effects for ethnic minorities or other subaltern communities. For example, if a majority group in a nation-state believes it is under threat from arriving migrants or from an ethnic or religious minority that increasingly gains power and influence, nationalistic rhetoric can target minority populations as a menace to the homeland, a threat to its cultural traditions. As noted in the chapter on culture, a fine line can exist between healthy ethnocentrism and xenophobic tendencies. While nation-states fundamentally attempt to create unity and cohesion across disparate groups and promote degrees of sameness among their citizenries so they will align themselves with the identity of the nation-state, the prevalence of ethnic conflict, anti-immigrant sentiment, assaults on minorities, or other violent and exclusionary actions demonstrate that the sociocultural and political organization of nation-states also creates fertile ground for social conflict.



Figure 5: *Downtown Bangkok, Thailand—one of the largest cities in Southeast Asia—has a population that nears 10 million. With a population density of approximately 15,000 people per square mile and significant ethnic diversity, cities such as these highlight the challenges associated with maintaining order, security, and peace as people with varying interests and levels of power attempt to pursue their own agendas and livelihoods.* Photograph by Gregory Gullette, 2019

Stratification and Instabilities in Nation-States

Compared to other sociopolitical organizations, nation-states face various threats to their long-term stability: integration of diverse citizenries, consolidation of power in bureaucratic offices, warfare and conscription, provision of necessary services such as food and water, challenges for infrastructural development and maintenance, emergent crowd diseases and plagues, pollution in dense urban centers, ecological degradation due to intensified food production strategies, inabilities to govern and police some areas, high taxes and extracting goods and services from people, and any number of events and processes that lead to social disorder (e.g., violent assaults against others or criminal and illicit activities). This is not to imply that no benefits exist for those living in nation-states. Technological access, medical care, food availability, diverse communities, travel and leisure, global information and media, and the list continues. Essentially, people experience trade-offs living in states. Of course, while there are benefits enjoyed as citizens, these benefits are not equally shared or experienced.

When considering why nation-states face dysfunctionalities not seen in bands or tribes, researchers note that social tension and conflict become exacerbated under pressures of stratification, inequities, or exploitations by ruling classes. Two of the more prominent forms of state stratification are class and caste systems. As an ideal type, **class** represents a hierarchical ordering of people based on one's wealth, prestige, occupation, or education that they acquire through work and effort. As such, class systems have potential for mobility as someone achieves successes and upwardly integrates into the socioeconomic hierarchical system. In contrast, a **caste** system assigns someone their power or status in that society based on their birth into a particular (ethnic) group, which makes upward mobility improbable. While fundamentally different, each system is rooted in socioeconomic and cultural stratification, which can lead to social tension and disorder.

In the context of India's caste system, while many have pushed for its ending and argued that it minimizes the full value of individuals, the system persists through political ruling classes and the affluent that work to maintain a social order that privileges them over others. Considering the durability of class, Jennifer Sherman (2021) analyzes stratification in the US and finds that rural-urban divides further the social distances between classes, making the divisions that exist between leisure and working classes, the affluent and the poor, seem inevitable in a capitalist system. In particular, Sherman argues that many feel the American Dream is slipping from their grasp as class inequality deepens and hardens, which impedes "our abilities to understand and care about one another" (ibid: 3). (The theme of inequality is revisited in our considerations of flexible accumulation or economic Global Souths discussed in *Globalization, Migration, and Economic Inequalities*.)

Such division and stratification create patterns of instabilities that states must manage through different forms of social control. States may attempt to use more direct forms of power such as deploying military and police forces, imprisoning people, or enacting death penalties when violence upsets the social order (what we think of as **domination**, or coercive rule). While states may selectively use such power, the widespread use of suppression, fear, or coercion can be costly and provoke popular revolts against the state (e.g., the Arab Spring movement or the Tiananmen Square protests). As such, nation-states and political leaders may use subtle forms of control. Drawing from the work of Antonio Gramsci, scholars have noted that state leaders and the affluent class can establish social control by providing some material benefits to different classes (decent work, good roads, healthcare, housing, and the like). But more importantly, control can be achieved by exerting sociocultural, economic, and ideological influence over *how* and *what* people think (what Gramsci referred to as **hegemony**). Ruling classes achieve this influence by persuasively spreading their ideologies through important cultural institutions, such as government, news outlets, film studios, or schools. By spreading propaganda and filtering news shared with the public or legitimating certain norms and ideas (e.g., individualism, self-sufficiency, competitiveness, strength, or sacrifice), they become taken as truth, and in so doing, people may not question the societal order or offer alternatives to the system in place. Importantly, hegemony is an ongoing, incomplete process. Elites must justify and explain why the social order should continue and what people in subaltern positions enjoy within such a system. Of course, social inequities can deepen to the point of facilitating other types of societal disfunction (revolutions, coups, or genocides), which can destabilize state societies to the point of collapse (e.g., Anderson 2019; Diamond 2011).

Power and the Value of Life in Nation-States

While the above discussion explores the way that nation-states may coercively or subtly control people, states may also strip away certain rights and protections people enjoy. Two concepts introduced by Giorgio Agamben (1998) have proven influential: *state of exception* and *spaces of exception*. The **state of exception** concept explores the ways in which nation-states declare emergencies to suspend people's rights, while at the same time placing the weight of state power onto an individual (e.g., declaring martial

law, a health epidemic, or a foreign invasion). Efforts to control people become justified through exceptional events and the exceptional measures that must be taken to ensure societal order and stability (see figure 6). While the full weight of the state may come down on people in densely populated places—think of a national guard being deployed to suppress a riot or health officials backed by police powers ensuring compliance with national health mandates in a dense city center—the state may also use its powers in spaces that exist outside of normal view and ideas of moral, humane uses of power. This is referred to as **spaces of exception**, the physical or extraterritorial spaces where individuals' rights are ignored or purposefully diminished.



Figure 6: The prevalence of masks during the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand was the result of government policies as well as broader societal pressure to align with national health orders.

Photograph by Gregory Gullette, 2022

These concepts have applicability in understanding the diverse ways states diminish people's rights. One can think of how freedoms can be removed or skirted in a Palestinian refugee camp, a terrorist detention center such as Guantánamo Bay, a re-education camp for Uyghurs in China, or a migrant detention center in Atlanta, Georgia (e.g., Carter-White and Minca 2020; Gregory 2006; Warsi 2023). The suspension of rights and the deployment of state power often combine in tragic ways, devaluing the lives of those experiencing state power and reducing them to what Agamben referred to as '**bare life**' (or "subjects who are abandoned by the law and its protection, and yet exposed to the violence of the legal sovereign" [Carter-White and Minca 2020: 329]). In this context, someone's death may mean very little to the state, but more importantly it speaks to a shift in *how* the state understands life. Priority is given to the simple biological fact of life but does not attend to how that life is lived (its potentialities) or the circumstances surrounding a person's life or death. In effect, someone is reduced to a biological entity (whose life might not matter as a state controls or abuses that body); they are not understood as a full, complex existential being with their own hopes, aspirations, flaws, and everything that makes them valuable as a human. This erasure of people's freedom and dignity is a central concern among anthropologists working in the field of human rights.

Ethnographic Vignette: *Afghanistan as a Failed State and Collective Trauma*

The idea of failed states traces back to the 1990s when Somalia collapsed into chaos after a coup d'état removed the country's dictator and the political vacuum was filled with varying actors and institutions vying for control over the country. The political crises that followed characterized what many would call a **failed state**: a country plagued by internal violence, a government that cannot deliver needed resources and infrastructure to its people, a citizenry that no longer supports governing institutions, and a country seen as a pariah on the international stage. In the case of Afghanistan, researchers have noted the ways in which the country exhibits many of these characteristics—precipitated through external pressures of US and Russian interference (the Afghan–Soviet War from 1979 to 1989 and the US War in Afghanistan from 2001–2021) and unquestionably through internal pressures and abuses exacted under Taliban rule (see additional resources below and Barfield 2010).

Certainly, women and girls, but also men and young boys, have been surrounded by state-level violence over the past several decades and more acutely since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 hastened the Taliban back into power (Murtazashvili 2022; see also Finely 2011 for how US service members deal with the war in Afghanistan, its aftermath, and the traumas surrounding PTSD). In this extended excerpt taken from Parin Dossa's (2014) ethnography *Afghanistan remembers*, we see how people subjected to prolonged violence create a collective memory of the trauma experienced by fusing the past and the present ("We do not eat because our garden was burned". "I got married early to the wrong man because my father was killed by the Taliban". [ibid: 43]). By sharing stories of grief and trauma—telling, remembering, and recalling—such events endure over time and women work to ensure that past injustices are not forgotten (and ideally, not repeated).

War and displacement are phenomena that cause untold harm; the effects are felt poignantly in the inner recesses of life, where they are rendered socially invisible and therefore remain unacknowledged. Insensitivity to suffering and pain in the weave of life results from the distinction we make between lives that are grievable and others that are devalued and ungrievable... To blur this dis-tinction, [Judith] Butler... calls for recognition of the precariousness of all lives. Only then will we realize that "there is no life without the need for shelter and food, no life without dependency on wider networks of sociality and labour, no life that transcends injurability and mortality"...

*Drawing upon data from my ethnographic research in [Afghanistan and Canada] my intent... is to make violence in the inner recesses of life knowable through the **memory work** of women [or engaging with the past's ethical, political, and sociocultural dimensions through action] ... I would like to emphasize that women's memory work rarely took place in the context of one-to-one conversation with the anthropologist; it constituted a part of women's everyday lives. For example, the death of a person triggered a conversation that invariably included a continuum*

of the past and the present and at times an unknown future. When Bibi Gul passed away, the women remembered her storytelling skills attracting the attention of the children from the neighbourhood. She had play-acted some of the incidents recalling her family's hiding place in the cellar when the Russians bombed her village. As Farida explained, "It is through her that the children came to know how their lives have changed because of the war (jang). Bibi Gul had a swing in the house. It was broken and there was no one to fix it as she lost her husband and her son during the civil war." Her losses made other women recall the violent deaths of their loved ones. Mehrun and Fatima would wash their clothes at the same time. On such occasions, they exchanged stories of hardship and struggles that I was privy to (e.g., the shortage of water and food). They belonged to two ethnic groups: Pashtun and Tajik, respectively. Their acts of remembering created a special bond between them. Leila put it this way: "We share memories of violence and perhaps this is why we get along with all the 'new' people (other ethnic groups) who live in our neighbourhood. We have to work together if we have to build this country." Memory work does not merely evoke the past; it impacts the present.

There were other occasions when memory was invoked collectively. As I walked with the women on their way to visiting kith and kin, they would point to a produce store under construction and relay information on the family that had occupied it in the past. The family had left for Canada. The women then exchanged news on how they were faring and the number of people who had left the country. Many times the walks entailed figuring out who used to live where, their relationships with other families, activities they were engaged in (e.g., work, leadership, and acts of generosity, not excluding conflicts and frictions). Often the conversations revolved around particular places and buildings in terms of what was destroyed during the bomb blasts. A child who had contracted malaria would give rise to a conversation on the potholes—breeding grounds for the mosquitoes. An elderly lady recalled how easy it was to navigate the neighbourhood streets in pre-war times. Now she has a fear of falling; she does not go out very much, stating how this constraint has made her life less joyful. Her comment made other women express concerns about the unrepaired roads, potholes, and rubble—a form of potential mobilization. Second, survivors of the violence of war recreate normalcy to the extent possible—otherwise I would not have seen women cooking with minimal ingredients, or seeking a cure for a sick family member despite the lack of a support system. As Nafisa put it, "Everybody is poor but we help each other whenever we can." The women sustain their families in the face of great odds in both Afghanistan and Canada. It is through the mundane details of everyday life that the breadth and the depth of harm and suffering caused by violence are revealed. Making it knowable requires an understanding of... "precarious lives," fundamentally a shared condition of human life...

Research in a war-ravaged country evokes key questions: How does violence translate into the everyday lives of people? What does it mean to lose one's world? How do people reoccupy spaces of devastation? What role can anthropologists play in uncovering everyday violence (khushunate rozmarah) that otherwise remain unknown and, therefore, unacknowledged? These

questions are interrelated... I argue that memory work—an active and fluid process—as a construct can address these questions not in the form of definitive answers, but more in the way of initiating a conversation between research participants and the stakeholders, and among the stakeholders, transnationally... Knowledge of the past, and the process of recounting it, are connected in space and time through such means as narratives... Anthropologists, with their penchant for documenting thick description, can become part of this flow of remembrance; anthropologists can bring to light memories that otherwise remain buried...

At the centre of my study are ordinary women whose acts of remembrance are barely known to the outside world. They remember what the world has forgotten, namely, that violence has a long history embedded in external forces not of their making. In the case of Afghanistan, the complicity of Russia, the United States, and its allies must be brought to light if we are to write a different kind of history – one where issues of social justice and human dignity are given central space...

Through the bottom--up memory work of women, rendering the past into the present, we come to understand how violence weaves itself into everyday life. We may then be motivated to work towards creating a more peaceful and just world—a project that forms the core of engaged anthropology. Hopefully this project will also help us to see that the socially constructed boundaries (epistemological, territorial, and cultural) between Afghanistan and Canada are blurred—global recognition of which can lead to a paradigm shift towards a more equitable distribution of resources that can come about through “forging links among those who refuse to participate in the either/or projects of ‘us’ and ‘them’”... (Dossa 2015: 6-23).

Chapter Summary

Anthropological attention to power, social organization, and ideas on cultural evolution have profoundly changed over the past several decades. While the majority of the human experience has been situated within bands due to their flexibility, adaptability, and resilience, the vast majority of people live within state-level societies. Even people in bands, tribes, and chiefdoms experience constraints and pressures created by state-level societies. Acute and chronic conflicts emerge as people in other forms of sociopolitical systems attempt to pursue livelihood strategies, social control measures, kinship systems, or political economic structures that do not neatly align with the organization (and aspirations) of nation-states. The result is frictions within and between different types of sociopolitical organizations. Given the immense influence of state-level societies and the number of people living within these sociopolitical systems, anthropologists have highlighted the many characteristics unique to nation-states. By

foregrounding issues of power and control, anthropologists draw attention to the various ways that nation-states manage their citizenries (and deny citizenship to others). These forms of control include both subtle and coercive forms of power. Importantly, the way nation-states manage highly diverse and disparate communities—often across wide geographic areas—requires that those in government rely upon forms of domination, but also hegemonic processes that can result in people supporting the institutions that may diminish people’s potentialities. Relatedly, anthropological research has focused on how states may also strip people of their rights and protections, while simultaneously subjecting them to the full power and weight of the state. These types of sociopolitical conflict can engender distrust and antagonism within nation-states—both between groups of people attempting to live side by side in nation-states as well as between people and their governments. In all, these types of societal disfunctions can ultimately destabilize state societies to the point of collapse. While many may view states as the high point in cultural evolution (and there are many benefits of living within some nation-states), compared to other forms of sociopolitical organization, state-level societies exhibit numerous problems in need of further anthropological research.

Key Terms

Achieved status	Legitimacy
Ascribed status	Memory work
Authority	Nation-states
Bare life	Pastoralism
Broad-spectrum foraging	Power
Caste	Principle of national sovereignty
Chieftdom	Principle of state sovereignty
Citizenship	Ranked society
Class	Redistribution
Domination	Shamans
Egalitarianism	Spaces of exception
Failed state	State of exception
Hegemony	States
Horticulture	Stratified society
Informal mediation	Tribes
Imagined communities	

Comprehension Questions

1. Why are bands one of the most resilient sociopolitical organization systems?

2. What characteristics do bands and tribes share? What things differentiate these sociopolitical systems?
3. Why are chiefdoms thought of as a 'transitional' form of sociopolitical organization?
4. What characteristics do chiefdoms share with states?
5. What are the four central characteristics of states?
6. What are the four main effects of states as considered by Trouillot?
7. What are the differences between state of exception and spaces of exception? In what ways do these concepts interrelate?

Critical Thinking and Engagement Questions

1. How do you imagine yourself surviving in a foraging or tribe-level society? What skills, attributes, and values would you need? And what attributes do you currently possess living in a state-level society that might not help you in this new societal context?
2. Considering the main effects of state power as identified by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, how have your own interactions with the state illustrate some of those 'effects'?
3. People's relationships to nation-states are complex. While we often think about the rights we enjoy as citizens of a given country, what types of duties and responsibilities do you believe people owe to their country?
4. Compared to other sociopolitical organizations, states show greater vulnerability to collapse and disorder. What main threats do you see to nation-state stability? What do you see as workable solutions for the issues you identified?
5. As seen in Parin Dossa's analysis of war and trauma in Afghanistan, she uses the concept of memory work to demonstrate how people's pasts continue to shape their present. Considering your life or those close to you, how might past experiences continue to linger in the present?

Resource Links

Given the nuances of how societies are maintained, controlled, and reproduced across generations, political anthropologists conduct wide-ranging research that attempts to illuminate how people's lives are influenced by the societies in which they live. Some of these sources might prove useful as you explore this ever-expanding area of anthropological inquiry.

- For research and current issues explored in political anthropology, please visit the following: [Association for Political and Legal Anthropology](#)
- John Ryle and filmmaker André Singer's documentary [Witchcraft Among the Azande](#)
- To explore more of the nuances of citizenship, please visit the [Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology's entry on citizenship](#)

- For more information on the Taliban and human rights abuses in Afghanistan, the following resources may prove useful:
 - [Amnesty International's 2022 report on Afghanistan](#)
 - [United States Institute of Peace's analysis on Taliban abuses](#)
 - [Council on Foreign Relations' analysis of the Afghanistan War](#)

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