

Theoretical Comparison Of Anthropological Studies On The Origin Of Societies

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Introduction:

The state's origin is still imperfectly understood; many anthropological theories have been presented in this regard. Traditional theories regarding the state's origin have been declared null and void because the philosophers from the classic area tended to think of the state due to the natural process and were unaware of the modern political organization.

The modern anthropological concept provides various grounds on which the theories on the state's origin can be merited or demerited. The theories having a racial bias foundation are not applauded by modern anthropological concepts. Likewise, the theories that reflect the origin of the state as a paranormal activity are also depreciated.

The essay focuses on the comparative study of the two articles and their supported theories on state origin.

The Origin Of The State By Robert L. Carneiro

In the article "The Origin of the State" by Robert L. Carneiro, the author significantly highlights the notion that the state's origin was a recurrent and determinate cultural phenomenon. The authors also discredit theories that exhibit the state's origin as the product of a genius or an outcome of metaphysical activity. Carneiro believes that wherever the conditions were favourable, states appeared as autonomous political units. According to him, the modern theories on the state of origin can be broadly classified as either voluntarist or coercive. The voluntarist theories are based upon the notion that people voluntarily gave up on their sovereignties, and their groups merged with other communities to sustain the state's concept at certain times in history.

The author has presented the automatic theory as the most efficient among modern theories regarding voluntarist theories. According to the state origin's automatic theory, the advancement of humanity from hunting to agriculture yielded surplus food. This spare from the food hunt proved beneficial as humankind employed its expertise in other professions, and the concept of division of labour arose. This compelled the integration of various independent societal units as they tend to be more interdependent. The author has further strengthened his stance with the hydraulic hypothesis presented by Karl Wittfogel. According to Karl, the individual farmers from the arid and semi-arid areas worldwide struggled to maintain their livelihood. The struggle compelled the integration of

smaller units into large states for the common interest of all, and a more extensive irrigation system could be developed and sustained. However, this theory has been subjected to significant backlash. The critics argue that irrigation is not the only causal contributor of state origin by quoting states like Mesopotamia and Mexico. The coercive theories elaborate on the states' evolution from small autonomous village bodies as the coercive theories appear to be more realistic than history.

These theories present the idea that the foundation of the origin of the state lies in war. Heraclitus supports the concept as he wrote, "War is the father of all things." However, the idea of inculcation and analysis of the role of warfare in the modern state origin theories happened only a century ago. Oppenheimer contributed to the coercive approaches by presenting the states' idea of when the agricultural productive capacity was enough. There was a struggle for power between locals and pastoral nomads. Oppenheimer's theory justifies a few states' origins; however, it fails to answer the origins of aboriginal American states where there was nomadism (Oppenheimer, F, 1926). Edward Jenks presented a similar coercive theory regarding the northern European states and the German kingdom, where successive warfare for political power gave birth to states. Thus, in light of these theories, war can be regarded as an integral mechanism for states' formation.

State Origins In Anthropological Thought By Nikolay N. Kradin

The other article in this regard is "State Origins in Anthropological Thought" by Nikolay N. Kradin. Like Carneiro, trading also emphasized that modern theories on the states' origin remarkably differ from the classical approaches. Kradin also ascertained that the state genesis is not a supernatural event; instead, it is a progressive one. Many factors contribute to the state genesis, among which Kradin has explained the integrative theory and class theory. Both theories are interrelated to each other. The integrative theory states that integrating the various societal groups is mandatory due to society's complexity. Moreover, the society grew in complexity, and the interdependence of the individuals also increased; this served as the basis of state genesis. The other theory quoted is the class theory; it is often referred to as the conflict approach. As the name suggests, the conflicting situations' regulations urged for the need for a centralized state. Thus, states appeared as political units. Other theories on the origin of the states discussed by Kradin are bilinear theories. Karl Wittfogel formulated the theory, and He suggested two ways of origin of the state, one being the Asiatic and the other Western ancient. Many anthropologists have presented different state origin models, such as Marx and Engels, who extended the bilinear theory and gave models for state formation in the European and Asiatic regions. The origin of the state in the European region started with social classes' developments from the exploited slaves. This stratum of social class was purely selected from among the slaves and had nothing to do with the community.

The state alone was accountable for managing the slaveholding. In parallel to this way of development, non-European societies have adapted the gradual usurping approach for state genesis.

The initial servants in the social classes were given the transformed roles of masters. Engels also provided a single-line- structure for the state origin. Where each predecessor in the chain behaves as the cause and the successor is the effect. The presented model had these stages, and the economic development yielded surplus resources. The increased resources served as the basis of the inequality in the social classes and attracted the nomads. Property guarding and slaveholding issues lead to feudalism and the formation of independent states. However, contrary to the article discussed earlier, the author has taken the reference from the theory presented by Robert Lowie in his book "Origin of the State Lowie," The idea negated the theory that war is the basis of the origin of the state. The author Robert Lowie quoted the example of the State of Lowie and presented the theory that war is not only the major contributor of the state genesis; the State Lowie is the testimonial that states can be originated without conquests.

Conclusion:

Thus, the comparative analysis of both articles presented some cohering and contradicting approaches to the state's origin. In anthropology, the concept of the origin of the state has experienced different schools of thought. The cohering ideas appear in the negation of the classical theories. However, the war as the basis of the state genesis showcases the contradicting approaches of both authors.

References

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