

9. State formation: from word of mouth to the modern state

‘For though the society we have described seems to me to be the true one, like a man in health, there’s nothing to prevent us, if you wish, studying one in a fever.’

Plato

Synopsis: *State formation (1–4); The transactional and territorial state, (5–6); Is there order in the state? (7).*

1. *

The state was born naturally in humans’ minds as soon as they gained self-consciousness and started speaking to each other, and it materialised immediately in the analogue world through the spoken word.³⁵¹ For ages (for hundreds of thousands of years) this was the only form the state took in the analogue world, a verbal-only presence. However, at some point this was not enough for humans, it no longer met their information processing needs. There is only so much information processing that humans can do, even collectively, when unassisted by any tools. As the number of individuals within the first tribes or extended families increased (presumably, when agriculture was invented), names had to be recorded for practical reasons (taxation and military records). Writing was invented. States took shape, taking on the form that is basically still with us today, in the analogue world.

2.

States were not artificially created by humans for the purpose of individualisation (or for any other purpose for that matter—for example, under social contract theory, for security purposes or for the protection of property). Humans did not create them consciously, deliberately or intentionally to

351 See Chap. 1.1, pars. 1 and 5 on information materialisation.

serve a specific purpose, as is the case for all other organisations.³⁵² On the contrary, states emerged naturally, first through human communication and spoken language and then, once writing was invented, as the administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms still known to us today.

3. *

It was writing, therefore, that made it possible for the state to take the functional, administrative and bureaucratic form known to us in the analogue world.

Once writing was invented and up until the present, the state took the form that was possible in relation to the information processing capabilities of humans. At first, only names were processed, for tax and military purposes. Family information was quickly added to the list; however, it took states several centuries to reach the point of keeping professional, academic or medical records for each of their citizens. From that point on, however, things accelerated at a feverish pace, to reach today's wealth of record-creation and -keeping on their citizens that is performed by the information platforms that are states.

Nevertheless, in the digital world, the next milestone in humanity's development after the invention of writing,³⁵³ the state's final form is yet to be seen.

4.

State formation, in terms of information processing on³⁵⁴ its citizens, should not be confused with the creation of the information processing environment suitable for its citizens to live in by the information platform that is the(-ir) state.³⁵⁵

The processing environment was created immediately, as soon as humans developed language and identified each other with names. Presumably they then continued to name³⁵⁶ the Things and Beings around them, at first verbally and then in writing. The more humans processed information

352 See Chap. 2, pars. 6 and 9.

353 See the Prologue, par. 6.

354 See Chap. 7, par. 6.

355 See Chap. 11, par. 3.

356 See Chap. 8.1, par. 4.

in the analogue world, the more they added to the information platform that was their state, expanding their information processing environment—a process that has not stopped since and will not stop in the future because of humans' need to augment their information processing, that is, to constantly keep processing new information.

5. The transactional and territorial state*

State formation as an administrative mechanism in the analogue world, which occurred after the advent of writing, had two consequences that remain with us today.

First, the state became transactional. It was no longer only a human individualisation mechanism (materialised through the spoken word) that created an information processing environment suitable for individuals to live in, but, having expanded its information processing capacity exponentially, it took on a form that individuals could, and had to, transact with.

Second, the state became territorial.³⁵⁷ It no longer only resided in the minds and (spoken) words of its citizens, but from that point on occupied a territory, which was the area in which the information processing infrastructure was installed. Accordingly, as soon as an infrastructure was created (given also the crude means it employed, meaning clay tablets etc.) it could no longer be moved around. States could no longer be nomadic.³⁵⁸ From that point on states occupied specific places in the analogue world, their territory.³⁵⁹

6. *

Both of the above consequences have been challenged by the advent of the digital world. As regards the transactional state, in ever-increasing parts of their lives, individuals are no longer obliged to transact through their states: today they can work, buy things, or acquire services and study

357 Meaning, physically installed in a specific location; on how state territoriality actually works, see Chap. 17, par. 4.

358 No longer nomadic, but not, however, necessarily meaning not movable (see, for example, the Mongol empire – obviously, for the Mongols themselves, not for the conquered peoples who continued to live in the, conquered, states of their own, see also note 7/1/1).

359 On state territory, see Chap. 17.

entirely in the digital world, avoiding any state involvement if they wish—a proposition unheard of since humans first walked the earth.³⁶⁰

As regards territoriality, for the first time since writing was invented, state records do not necessarily reside in the territory of a state. Digital-born information on their citizens may be stored, and processed, by states anywhere on the planet.³⁶¹ This is a unique, unheard of challenge to (the traditional notion of) state sovereignty.³⁶²

7. Is there order in the state? *

The increase of states' information processing capacities once writing was invented and thereafter meant that the application of an organisational system for all this processing, a specific way for it to be carried out, became necessary.

Clarifying first and foremost that this has nothing to do with a state's government,³⁶³ this system was (for the vast majority of cases that we are familiar with, at least) hierarchical, because hierarchy is the basic human organisational principle, that is, it is natural to humans.³⁶⁴ From this point of view, there is order in the state—and, therefore, the state can be characterised as an 'organisation' (after all, states are Beings (organisations)³⁶⁵).

Nevertheless, the fact that some order exists in the state's information processing says nothing about that order's efficiency or sufficiency for any purpose. In other words, while hierarchy may come naturally to humans, it is not certain (and this is not examined in this book) that it is the best option (assuming, of course, that alternatives were possible).

In the same vein, there is no pre-ordained, imagined order that states have striven to reach historically, through linear development.³⁶⁶

360 See also Chap. 12, par. 10.

361 See also Chap. 17, par. 8.

362 See Chap. 16.

363 See Chap. 12, par. 1.

364 See note 6/7/1.

365 See Chap. 2, par. 9.

366 See Chap. 11, pars. 9 and 5.