

## ***Political Systems***

A political organisation is a social organisation specifically related to the individuals or groups that manage public policy affairs. (Fried 1967). Elman Service (1962) listed four political organisation types or levels: band, tribe, chiefdom, and state.

***A band*** is a small, kin-based group found primarily among foragers, usually consisting of fewer than a hundred people. They have a mobile life, and individuals can shift their membership from one band to another, often due to kinship or marriage. Most of these societies are egalitarian, where older people are respected for their wisdom and knowledge of rituals and history. More recently, these bands are seen as groups forced into marginal environments or even suffering the loss of cultural identities. Examples include the Waata Oroma of Kenya and the San people, considered the first peoples of South Africa. This resulted in the virtual extinction of the former group through translocation owing to British colonial wildlife conservation laws, and the San peoples were systematically marginalised and impoverished (Wilmsen, 1989).

***Tribes*** are slightly more complex where, whilst maintaining an egalitarian society, economies are based more on horticulture and pastoralism. Even so, where tribal populations increase, integration may be made by pan-tribal associations or sodalities. These are often groups of older men or women of the same age set to serve as counsellors and create order and unity in the tribe. Although egalitarian, some have another form of Tribal leadership, often by the “Village Head”. For instance, in Melanesia, these leaders are called “big men” who achieve their status from their characteristics and thus gain responsibility for officiating in rituals and redistributing wealth.

**Chiefdom** is a transitional form of organisation that often has a permanent full-time leader with authority to make decisions for their communities. Carneiro (1970) defines the state as a political unit with many communities in its territory, with the power to collect taxes, organise men for labour or armed service, and make and enforce laws. Chiefdoms are considered, therefore, to administer a permanent regional political system; this may include thousands of people living in many villages. One of their key attributes is that they can create a sufficient military force to protect their geographic region in severe conflict. For instance, the Chibcha of Columbia defended themselves against the Spanish conquistadores. Still, unfortunately, by the 18th century, this community were vanquished and had its population and language assimilated into the rest of the population (Glassner, 2015).

**State Systems**, such as that of Spain, have large populations that have evolved from societies with large-scale agriculture. According to Carneiro's (1970) coercive theory of state formation, owing to intense competition for resources, a large population gave the greater ability to wage war and, in conquest, control conquered peoples and extract further wealth.

Political organisations can be seen as ranging from simple to complex. Anthropological studies of these systems may assist in better communication between groups and more significant opportunities for personal inclusion.