

STATE AND STATE FORMATION

The main difference between pre-modern and modern states (drawing from the European experience first) is found in the overall structure of institutions that constitutes the state; in the particular relation those institutions have with the population and the territory that are under the control of the state.

The modern state cannot function properly without the successive inclusion of the following (a sort of check list to keep in mind):

- **A long-standing army** that has incorporated all other paramilitary groups (tribes, clans, militias, guerrillas, etc.). A security system which is the monopoly of the state represented by an efficient police and other affiliated security services.
- **An oligarchy** (a minority of rich people that need the state to protect their wealth and businesses) with interests that does not conflict greatly. They can be considered as the economic backbone of the state. The financial sector (which is most of the time in the hand of a few) is a good example. Sometimes it can be landowners, traders (although these groups' interests can be in conflict depending on the particular economic and social structure of the country). This oligarchy can also be referred to as the top "bourgeoisie".
- **The incorporation** (relatively) **of all parochial groups** (group that had their own small political organization like tribes, clans etc.) into parliament, and/or the state's bureaucracy (such as the army, ministries, etc made of competent technocrats with some basic public culture).
- **A strong legal system** that defines property as well as other rights that guides the construction of a healthy market. The legal system cannot be strong without an enforcer, or a source of authority to make sure everybody follows the rules. So a clear delineation of who is to take executive orders. But this has diverse formulations throughout different countries.
- **No major opposition from outside strong powers** to the existence of the state. Sometimes, the sponsorship of an outside power can be greatly instrumental, as in the case of postcolonial states.

You can use this as a check list to judge any particular state's development stage.