

# **State and Society**

Economics, Politics, and African Societies: TA 07

---

Vincent Tanutama

Spring 2021

University of Chicago

Harris School of Public Policy

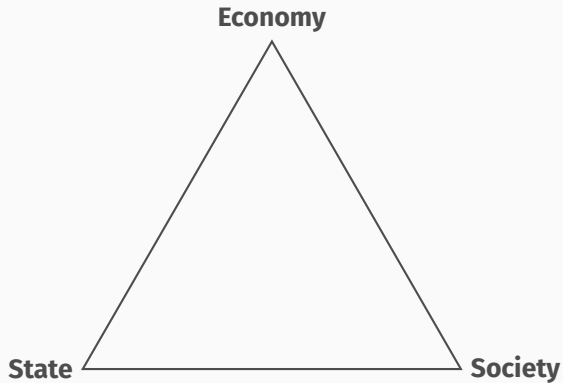
## **Discussion Section**

Pre-colonial African societies were organized in ways which made it very difficult to create centralized political authority.

- Illustrate with examples or counterexamples from the course so far
- Discuss their consequences for current economic or political outcomes.

# **State into Society**

# Complex six-way streets



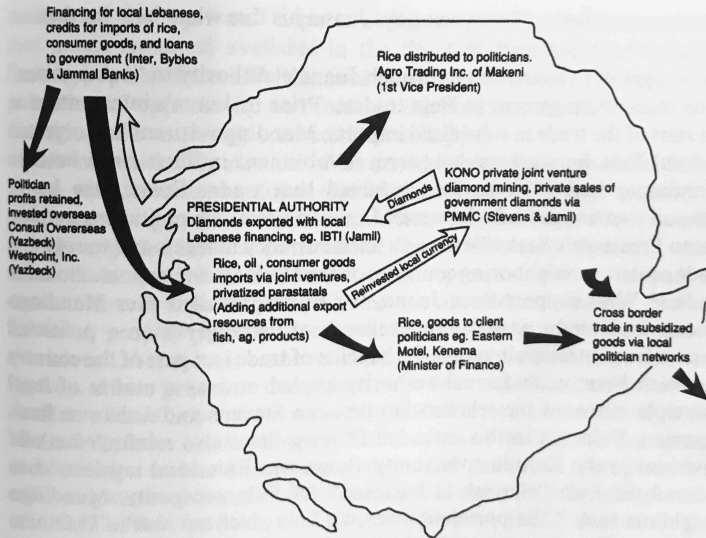
- Many examples on how society is embedding into state.
- Relationships sustain exchange between drivers and DRC traffic police (consequence of “debrouillez-vous” and power-struggle between the two actors of state).
- The logic of patron-client relationship sustaining illegal exchanges with Nigerian governments.
- Akan matrilineality into Ashanti appointment system.
- **Ubuhake** (cattle clientship) in Nyiginya Kingdom.
- Social embeddedness undermines state's ability to centralize/hegemonize, messing up state capacity because it undermines rules and basic procedures that are necessary for bureaucracy to function.

- State institution crowds out intrinsic preferences for good behavior, undermining norms of rule-following.
- Many-generation motivational-crowding: state (presumably through legal infrastructure) reduces parenting. “Parents know that their children will be prevented from cheating by the state whether or not they invest in instilling such preferences themselves.”
- Similar story to RSdIS contracts paper?

## Another corrupt organization: The Shadow State in Sierra Leone

- Instead of suppressing informal networks of diamond producers in Kono, Siaka Stevens deliberately moved resources and authority out of the state into parallel informal structures, called the “shadow state” (Reno, 1995).
- The current thinking about economics of illegality (Dixit, 2004) is that individuals smuggle resources because they are hiding from the state, but here Reno suggested that the state (Stevens) encouraged smuggling because it was easier for him to control.
- The state absorbs social control of resources.
- Reno’s argument the state was not informalized, but sidelined.
- Use of private network to buttress wealth and patronage but the actual state is an important label for legitimacy.





Map 3 Trade and Stevens's patrimonial network

## My guess for next week

1. **Monday:** Forging of a Rebel
2. **Wednesday:** Weigel's paper and slides

- Dixit, Avinash.** 2004. *Lawlessness and economics : alternative modes of governance*. Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press.
- Lowes, Sara, Nathan Nunn, James A Robinson, and Jonathan L Weigel.** 2017. "The evolution of culture and institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom." *Econometrica*, 85(4): 1065–1091.
- Reno, William.** 1995. *Corruption and state politics in Sierra Leone*. Cambridge England New York:Cambridge University Press.