



State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives (Anthropology, Culture and Society)

By Christian Krohn-Hansen, Knut G. Nustad

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What is the 'state' and how can we best study it? This book investigates new ways of analysing the state.

The contributors argue that the state is not a fixed and definite object. Our perceptions of it are constantly changing, and differ from person to person. What is your idea of the state if you are a refugee? Or if you are living in post-apartheid South Africa? Our perceptions are formed and sustained by evolving discourses and techniques -- these come from institutions such as government, but are also made by communities and individuals.

The contributors examine how state structures are viewed from the inside, by official state bodies, composed of bureaucrats and politicians; and how these state manifestations are supported, reproduced or transformed at a local level. An outline of theoretical approaches is followed by nine case studies ranging from South Africa to Peru to Norway.

With a good range of contributors including Cris Shore, Clifton Crais, Ana Alonso and Bruce Kapferer, this is a comprehensive critical analysis of anthropological approaches to the study of state formation.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is fascinating material, a kind of anthropology of state formation which supplements and broadens what social historians have been writing about states and state formation. -- Professor Richard A. Wilson, University of Connecticut This book presents a novel approach to the state (seeing it both from above and below), the cases are geographically wide-ranging and the book would be relevant for a number of courses in political anthropology, development studies and human geography. -- Thomas Hylland Eriksen

About the Author

Iain Bruce is a British journalist and film-maker. He has made documentaries for Channel 4 and the BBC. During 2004 and 2005 he was BBC correspondent in Caracas, Venezuela. Currently he is an adviser to Telesur, the Latin American news channel based in Venezuela. He is also author of the *The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action* (Pluto Press, 2004).

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