

EDITORIAL

The present issue is composed of independently submitted articles that share particular themes. Both Bar-On Cohen and Gamliel, in their thorough groundedness in the detailed empirical description of practice (martial arts and Yemenite Jewish women's wailing, respectively) explore critically major conceptual theoretical concerns at the heart of contemporary anthropology. Cohen's article questions important aspects of certain approaches to the body and embodiment that are widely anthropologically current. Much of her discussion is relevant to anthropological analyses of ritual. This is also the direction of Gamliel's wonderfully complex analysis of 'wailing cultures'. Conscious of the significance of reorientations in social anthropology developed in the context of postmodern debates, her argument opens new critical spaces that are reflexive on some key texts in postmodern anthropology. In the postmodern turn toward a stress on the subject, unwarranted psychologisms have often crept in that paradoxically introduce essentializing motivational arguments that contradict an emphasis on diversity, thus threatening a reintroduction of overdetermining universalist assertions. I note Gamliel's salient comments in this regard concerning too easily made assumptions of resistance and the undemonstrated presumptions of subject motivational intent in anthropological discussion of the emotional practice.

The articles by Gulbrandsen, Reyna, Ravi Raman, Khlinovskaya Rockhill, and Babidge et al. all contribute toward an understanding of contemporary state formation, which of course is of increasing concern for social anthropologists. Gulbrandsen's essay opens with a consideration of Tswana kingdoms, whose population densities would appear to contradict the evolutionist position still potent in some regions of anthropological discussion. This often assumes that large settlement size is dependent on particular ecological and productive conditions. Effectively, the argument also has bearing on those materialist positions reinvigorated in a postmodern neo-rationalism that reissues a 'scientific' objectivist comprehension as preferable to and more 'explanatory' than a social anthropological (sociological) understanding of socio-cultural and political processes. Examples might be the recent ecological perspective of Diamond or the new wave of biological/cognitivist approaches in anthropology and beyond concerning the exploration of ritual and religious processes. Gulbrandsen shows how the political and social orders of Tswana states contributed to their high population densities relatively independently of such factors as environment or productive dependency. His argument also has major importance for an understanding of modern states and the particularity of their processes within globalizing circumstances (see, e.g., Gulbrandsen, *Social Analysis* 46, no. 3 [2002]). The state in too much anthropology is becoming homogenized in conception.



It is in the foregoing context that Reyna's essay is fascinating, although this is so on many other levels as well. He explores not only some of the distinct aspects of the situation in Chad (a country at the forefront of much international concern) but also the way its internal processes are complicated by its embeddedness in external state not to say imperialist forces under the contemporary conditions of Empire. There is every indication in Reyna's analysis of the importance of new postmodern configurations of the state. Development, the expanding phenomenon of NGOs, and above all interest in controlling scarce resources—all indicate new lines of control and power, new imaginings of state order that are contributing to dimensions of the global crisis that particular states are manifesting. This is excellently pursued in Ravi Raman's discussion of the intervention of Coca-Cola in India and specifically in the state of Kerala. Corporations have major effects on states that often dwarf the power of states. The ideological notion of corporate social responsibility is of course part of the demise of the notion of the state as being in a social contract with its population (e.g., the modern nation-state). It is key to the deterritorialization of erstwhile nation-states and a corporate reterritorialization that is giving rise to what could be regarded as new kinds of state formation. This shift, as Ravi Raman demonstrates, is integral to situations of despair, especially in already impoverished regions, and perhaps demonstrates the deep-seated paradox at the heart of the corporatization of power.

Shifts in state orders and the new dynamics of corporatization involve restructurings in the techniques of control, bureaucratic and otherwise. There is a move from the bureaucratic to what is often described as the managerial. Authority and power are engaged in reconfigurations noticeable in what may be regarded as both state and non-state, but often connected, practice. Khlinovskaya Rockhill's admirably detailed ethnography and highly suggestive analysis of UK Genetics Knowledge Parks show some of the key dynamics of the shift and how this affects research practice. There is an indication of important disruption of research autonomy that can obstruct the production of scientific knowledge. As well as indicating aspects of the kind of paradox that Ravi Raman points to, there are implications for managerialization in other perhaps more political arenas. This is of significance in current discourse relating to democratization and liberalization, wherein managerialization may involve a rehierarchialization and centralization of power and a further obstruction of autonomy and freedom.

These prospects receive sharp commentary in the essay by Babidge et al. Australian Aborigines have constantly been exposed to the blunt end of the state. They are a population who have routinely been the intense subject of territorializing and re-coding state practices; indeed, they have been thoroughly imprisoned in the state, inhabitants of its iron cage. In many ways, the Aboriginal experience of state practice throws into relief what might be grasped as the excess of the state, revealing critical dimensions of its paradoxes. Babidge et al. show how one relatively famous Aboriginal community in northern Australia reveals the dilemmas at the center of the new managerialization of power and how this can contribute further to the destruction of Aboriginal interest—a possibility of which Aborigines are acutely aware.