

Chapter 5

The Dimensions of Social Organization

Humans are social creatures. We have evolved to live with and depend on other of our species

This behavior has created society which is a minimum a group of human beings living together whose interactions with one another are patterned in regular ways

What is social organization?

Each person inhabits a variety of social positions which is known as status

Each status has a unique role (a bundle of rights and obligations appropriate for occupants of the status in question

Should an adult discipline another person's child?

The two social statuses that anthropologists recognize are:

1. ascribed – the status you have little control over
2. achieved – a status you assume once you have met certain criteria graduation!

Regularized and patterned social interactions make a social structure

High structured of a group is called an institution so, yes I suppose you could say you are all currently institutionalized!

Dimensions of Social Organization

One of the first influential models of social organization by proposed by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) She believed societies were held together by:

1. Mechanical solidarity – tasks for survival are carried out on a family level
2. Organic solidarity – tasks for survival become specialties of different subgroups in a complex division of labor People become very depend on the setting

The most basic classification of societies is:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Political | Economic |
| 1. Band | 1. Foragers |

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Tribe | 2. Herders |
| 3. Chiefdom | 3. Extensive agriculturalists |
| 4. State | 4. Intensive agriculturalists |

Anthropologists also break down groups into:

1. egalitarian – people in the group have roughly the same social status
2. stratified – some members have greater access to resources than others

Even egalitarian societies may develop sodalities where people are bond together at a more inclusive level examples being age sets or secret societies

Caste and Class

In stratified societies internal divisions may be arranged by hierarchy

Caste are something a person is born into India is the best example of a caste system though it was officially outlawed in 1950

Often conflicts related to caste occur for economic reasons who has access and control of resources

Class is a term used to describe rank primarily in economic terms

A key difference between caste and class is social mobility

How much mobility is there in the United States?

How much do different classes interact in the US?

As the population grows and a greater complex of division of labor develops a state is created

Within the state is the bureaucracy which is a hierarchically organized set of formal statuses associated with a highly specific role

There are other categories within both caste and social structures

Race

We have already looked at the development of race though here it is important to understand the concept of social race where so called racial labels are used to refer to cultural rather than physical differences

Ethnicity

Ethnic groups usually are distinguished from other social groups based on attributes related to cultural traits such as shared language, religion, customs and shared history

There are gray areas between ethnic groups and race

The question becomes how much of these identities are internal and/or external definitions?

Ethnicity and race were not as much of an issue until the nation-state developed into its modern form within the past few centuries

The ruling elite did not want their rule challenged by groups which in some cases has led to genocide

Also, think about indigenous rights within the nation-state as with the San