Introducing Cultural Anthropology

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Chapter 10

Political Order, Disorder, and Social Control
Who Decides?
Political Order, Disorder, and Social Control: Who Decides?

Voters in the Philippines choose their political leaders through election.
Political Order, Disorder, and Social Control: Who Decides?

- Politics
- Power and Authority
- Forms of Political Organization and Leadership
- Rank and Stratification
- Disorder and Social Control
- External Relations: War and Peace
- Summary
Politics

What Exactly is Politics?
- Defining what is meant by the word *politics* is a difficult problem because people tend to define it based on their own perspective—what their culture considers political.

The Anthropological View
- Anthropologists study the same issues and concepts as political scientists (government, power, authority, etc.) but *across cultures*. 
Power and Authority

**Power** = the ability to influence people or cause them to do things they would not do otherwise
- Coercive Power
- Persuasive Power

**Authority** = the exercise of legitimate power; the right to rule invested by members of the community in its leaders
Forms of Political Organization and Leadership

- Band Societies
- Tribal Societies
- Chiefdom Societies
- State Societies

Britain’s Queen Elizabeth delivers a speech to Parliament. Heads of state in many societies use speeches to wield their power.
Organizational Bases of Societies

- Bands
  - Egalitarian
  - Simple kin units

- Tribes
  - Egalitarian
  - Complex kin units
  - Sodalities

- Chiefdoms
  - Centralized Authority
    - Hereditary chief
    - Rank
    - Sodalities
    - Kinship

- States
  - Stratified Layers of Authority
    - Institutions
    - Rank
    - Classes
    - Sodalities
    - Kinship
Band Societies

- Egalitarian Social Structure
- Informal leaders
  - Persuasive power, but no authority
- Leadership Based on Individual Skills and Earned Respect
- Found among foraging societies
- Group size varies
Tribal Societies

- Egalitarian Social Structure
  - Based on horticulture & pastoral economies
- Informal Leaders
  - Persuasive power, but no authority
  - Headmen and Big Men
- Various Types of Kinship Organizations
- Various Types of Sodalities
  - Sodality = A group that crosscuts a society and whose membership is based on common interest rather than kinship or residence.
Displays of generosity help Big Men, such as this one in Papua New Guinea, gain prestige.

The face of this Bobo chief in Burkina Faso carries tribal scars. Such scars denote membership in age-set sodalities throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa.
Chiefdom Societies

- Non-egalitarian; Social ranking is present
- Formal Leaders
  - Hereditary chief with authority
  - Often the chief is thought to have a direct connection to the supernatural
- Redistributive economy
State Societies

- Non-egalitarian
- Political structure with authority that is legally constituted
- Formal leaders and laws; Policing is institutionalized
- Stratified
- Tremendous variety
  - Parliamentary, Democratic, Authoritarian, Communist, etc.
Rank and Stratification

Egalitarian Societies
- A society in which individuals within the same category of age and gender have equal access to wealth, prestige, and power.

Rank Societies
- A society in which the individual’s access to prestige and wealth is limited by the number of positions available.

Stratified Societies
- A society with unequal access to resources within the same gender and status group.

Stratified State Societies
- A society in which institutions are based on coercive power and authority. Inequality exists within social groupings.
Disorder and Social Control

Social Control = A process involving a structure and mechanisms to ensure that people do not violate the society’s accepted forms of behavior.

- Informal Means of Social Control
  - Social Pressures (ridicule, gossip, ostracism)

- Formal Means of Social Control
  - Laws; Consistent system of sanctions
Police in state societies are clearly identifiable by their attire and are part of formal systems of social control.
External Relations: Conflict, War and Peace

War is one form of conflict resolution that has been used by humans throughout history, and it likely occurred in prehistorical times as well.

Two main types of warfare:
- Internal Warfare
- External Warfare
Summary

Leadership in bands and tribes is informal and is based on personal qualities of the leaders.

In chiefdoms, authority is vested in the office of chief.

Authority is the exercise of legitimate power.

Inequities in access to wealth, power, and prestige result in rank and stratified societies.