

70

This paper shows some great independent thinking in going through ethnographies covered in the course and spotting the varied ways by which order is maintained among the Mbuti, the Sambia and the Nuer. The paper displays some excellent research on Sambia secret talk and maintenance of gender differences, with careful and detailed analysis. The point about Nuer maintenance of order through their political segments was highly original, particularly the point about segmentation providing social order as it is a means to counter the opposing group.

The paper could have benefitted from engaging with the readings covered during the week in order to develop the arguments further. For example, the Mbuti ways of maintaining order could have been mentioned in relation to reverse dominance (Boehm) or Nuer land-sharing could have been linked with immediate and delayed returns (Woodburn). The conclusion had some vagueness, it could have been made clearer by listing again the different methods used by the societies in question.

Overall a highly interesting paper to read!

In up to 1500 words, offer 4 different examples of how social groups maintain order. Explain how these methods maintain order.

The maintenance of social order is paramount in nearly every social group, the methods are what vary. A social group can maintain order through a complex system of written and unspoken law such as the order currently in place within Britain, or through what might be considered to the 'western' world a much simpler system whether that's unspoken rules or simply lack of disturbance means there are no such rules in place more a knowledge of what is acceptable in their culture.

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An example of a society that possess very few 'rules' in the 'western' sense, are the Mbuti. This tribe, as Turnbull sets out in the *Forrest People* (1961), has no particular hierarchy or political system and as a result of this the responsibility for maintaining order is not placed onto a single individual. This system also prevents an individual or individuals from gaining too much power within the group. When an individual commits an act that requires punishment the Mbuti begin a form of solitary confinement, Turnbull states on one occasion where this occurred, "to have been refused a chair by a mere youth, not even one of the great hunters; to have been laughed at by women and children; to have been ignored by men" (1961, p. 102), this actions taken by the group against the individual who committed the wrong doing maintain social order because within this society, social interaction is the basis of daily life, there are very few times when an individual is alone, these actions taken serve as both an insult to the wrong doer and also as a method of reminding the individual of the norms of the group. The Mbuti have several different methods for settling disputes, depending on the severity of the crime, punishment could vary from "supernatural retribution", the attacking of the guilty party's hut during the morning rampage of the molimo, thrashing for the more serious offences and for the mild offense either arguing or engaging in a fight (Turnbull, 1961, p. 103). These

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methods again show that in the absence of a political system a society can still function and maintain social order, the responsibilities of maintaining order are with the people and the punishments are carried out by them. The Mbuti are a good example of how a society can maintain social order without the extravagance of 'western' society.

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Within the Sambia the community maintain social order through variations in the conversation style. The Sambia maintain separation between gender and ritual through three different styles of speech, private public and secret (Herdt, 1987). Herdt explains that the public form of conversation is used in "domestic situations in women's houses, casual gatherings on the plaza of a hamlet, work teams, and formal public meetings." (p. 72) The public talk is the most used of the three styles, it is not restricted to general day to day life, it covers many things such as warfare. The use of public talk is not restricted by the limits of the other two forms of speech, the other forms are limited by the context and content of the conversations. The distinction between each form of conversation means that members are excluded from parts of the social activities and this prevents the members from breaking the constructs that are made to separate the genders and ages. The secret talk is the main division that maintains social order and separation. Herdt explains "secret talk is hushed and sexually segregated. Talk concerning ritual secrets forbidden to the uninitiated characterizes this mode." (p. 72). This deepens the belief of the Sambia that women pollute, they alongside young children are the uninitiated and therefore are excluded from such talk. Although within the Sambia this form of verbal interaction is used to maintain the secrecy of the sexual rituals from the young and women, both of these sections of the society are aware of the rituals in some form, and so from an outside perspective the act of secret talk seems obsolete but the fact that they still use it suggest the knowledge of how this maintains the social order. The private talk is the more intimate of verbal communication, it "concerns a person's innermost thoughts and desires, some of which may be idiosyncratic and forbidden. Valuable magical knowledge passed from parent to child is private talk." (p. 73). The use of private talks makes the distinction between the public communication and the intimate, it creates a sense of protection against the entire community from finding out the most intimate and personal information about an individual. This allows a sense of individuality to form among a family that prevents rebellion against the norm and allows the maintenance of general order.

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The Sambia also use strict beliefs about gender and how they must remain separate. The Sambia believe that women are polluting, and this belief is what leads to the homosexual behaviour and rituals performed by the males. The homosexual rituals separate the young adolescent and childless males from the women and the men who are fathers, the rituals ensure that the males are ready to become the next parents and ensure they become masculine (Herdt, 1987). There are very few rituals that the women must go through in order for them to be considered adult that compare to the level and time consumed for the men. This method of distinguishing between male and female is continued through the menstruation hut, this is where the women must go during menstruation, the Sambia believe that women the most polluting during this time. The separation of huts such as the menstruation and the ritual men's hut shows how the group maintain the gender roles within the community and maintain social order in that particular manner.

The Nuer provide another example of social order in the segmentation within the tribes. These divisions are complex and often many in number, Evans-Pritchard explains that often the divisions were too complex for most to understand (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Evans-Pritchard also explains that each segment of a tribe is usually separated by large amounts of land or by a water body such as a river. The different segments often partake in violence against one another and this opposition maintains a sense of individuality for each segment, as it allows them to have a sense that they are

autonomous and fighting off other segments gives them a feel of pride and accomplishment as well as social standing. The segmentation provides social order because despite the individuality of each segment in relation to others within the tribe the segments become united when facing another tribe, this prevents issues occurring within tribes regarding land sharing. This also encourages the maintenance of hostility and violence in general. The political system of the Nuer is based heavily on land and such the segmentation of it and the tribes. The maintenance of this in itself ensures some level of social order.

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In conclusion, no matter the social group there are always methods of maintaining social order. The most common methods of maintaining order stem from the beliefs of gender and the environment, such as the Sambia (Herdt, 1987) and the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Despite the commonality of the maintenance of social order, the methods always differ. No two social groups contain the same method used in exactly the same context, thus giving an individuality through this. Individuality and social order in context are perhaps some of the foundation blocks for some if not most societies in some form as a result.

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References

Evans-Pritchard, E., 1940. *The Nuer*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herdt, G., 1987. *The Sambia, Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. Orlando: Harcourt College Publishers.

Turnbull, C., 1961. *The Forest People*. London: The Bodley Head.