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This paper analysed how social order was maintained among the Mbuti and the Sambia. It describes with some brilliant ethnographic examples the way by which the Mbuti maintain social order through respect for elders, forming bands and humour. Gray's theory of play is well sustained in relation to the ethnographic examples. It then describes how the Sambia maintain order through the use of ritual, displaying good knowledge of the ethnography in question and the approach taken by Herdt.

The example of the Sambia could have been made slightly more explicit, for example by inserting some sentences explaining that the use of ritual was a means of maintaining a separation between genders, and hence the order of the society that was divided into two genders, male and female. The conclusion did not really sum up the paper but introduced a new theme of discussion (trust). You need to work on your conclusions; they entail interesting points that need to come up earlier in the paper. The conclusion does not introduce new things but sums up the paper. Some of the sentence structures were slightly unclear. This can be improved for example by reading your sentences out loud.

Overall a very nice paper to read! Well done

How do social groups maintain order?

Introduction

In the essay I shall be describing how social groups maintain order, I describe a social group as a group of people who regularly interact and share a sense of community or unity and a common identity. Therefore, I describe these tribes as social groups as they all share a sense unity and a common identity. Order in the way how I will be using the word in this essay, will mean normality of the tribe or the time when the tribe runs smoothly. Order being the social hierarchy in the tribe or other means of control to make sure people are doing what they are supposed to, for example hunting. In this essay I shall talk about the ways the Mbuti and the Sambia maintain control in their environments.

The Mbuti

The Mbuti are a people in what was when Turnbull was writing Belgian Congo in modern day Zaire, who hunt and live in the forest of the Congo. Turnbull describes how the Mbuti maintain order. With regards to the child parent relationship, order is maintained through a respect of elders. Children in Mbuti camps call everyone in their parents age group "father" or "mother" respectively. Furthermore, people older than their parents are called "grandparent" and other children are called "brother" or "sister." (Turnbull C., 1961 p 126-127) This relationship with the rest of the camp fathers a unifying sense of family which will help maintain order as they regard each other as relatives.

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When raising Children, the Mbuti share responsibilities. Turnbull describes a scene where a child has wandered off toward some hot ashes or army ants. Members of Mbuti who collect the child will take it back to a hut. He goes on to say "It does not matter much which hut, because as far as the child is concerned all adults are his parents or grandparents. They are all equally likely to slap him for doing wrong" (Turnbull C., 1961 p 127-128) This is a further example how order is maintained in the Mbuti as the camp is seen as one large family. The Pygmies seeing each other as family means that they are less likely to focus on their immediate family focus on the greater good of the overall camp because they are all considered family.

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Cephu's crime was considered the greatest in the forest "Cephu had refused to contribute to the molimo basket, and that morning he had been heard to call out, in his loudest voice, that he was fed up with the molimo of "chat camp over there." Even though he always made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought of as the same camp" (Turnbull C., 1961 p 97-98) the molimo is a religious festival in which people pass and add their contributions (Turnbull C., 1961 p 19)

When Cephu in the forest people was seen by the people in the camp as making the "camp into a bad camp" (Turnbull C., 1961 p 106) and he was also seen as making the hunt a "bad hunt" (Turnbull C., 1961 p 106) Cephu was treated as if he wasn't part of the camp any longer the youths where they would have usually offered him a seat ignored him. Furthermore, Turnbull later describes a scene where Cephu walks up to Amabosu who was sat down to shake him and get told "Animals lie on the ground." (1961 p 105) when a member of the camp displeases the camp they are ignored and not included this is a way of maintaining order as removing the person in this case Cephu from the camp is a form of punishment as alone in the forest you will die.

Commented [J3]: There are some small words missing in this sentence making the structure unclear. A good way to check your sentences is to read your paper out loud.

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Commented [J6]: explain this example more, it's not clear here what Amabosu meant.

Gray sees hunter gatherers as akin to a band, you have to keep the other members of the band pleased in order for the band to make music together. (2009 p 490) Furthermore pleasing the band means granting them autonomy (Gray P., 2009 p 490) Ties into Cephu's story well, as Cephu when he didn't look after his net and went off hunting on his own lighting sacred fires alone (Turnbull C., 1961 p 104-106) Cephu removed some of the camp members autonomy as he stopped them from working effectively this broke up Gray's analogy of the band and as such he was punished. Furthermore, Gray uses Turnbull to continue on how humour is an important thing in such societies as it can be used as punishment "[The Mbuti] are good-natured people with an irresistible sense of humour; they are always making jokes about one another, even about themselves, but their humour can be turned into an instrument of punishment when they choose." (Turnbull C., 1961 p 114) This can be seen with Cephu in the forest people when Kenge makes a remark about Cephu's virility and the other Pygmies laugh. (Turnbull C., 1961 p 114) When two brothers had a fight when they had a falling out over a broken tobacco pipe which was replaced by one pulled out of the rubbish when the victim tried to bring up the quarrel to the rest of the camp "He declared that it was a matter for serious action; Masalito (one of the brothers) should be thrashed. Everybody thought this was a great joke, and burst into laughter Only children and youths get thrashed, and Masalito was a father." (Turnbull C., 1961 p 117) laughing at people who try to cause tension in the camp is a way the Mbuti pygmies maintain order as people stop their arguments in order to stop people from laughing at them.

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The Sambia

The Sambia of Papua New Guinea use cosmology to control their populous, their use of "ritual fellatio" (Herd G., 1987 p 78) is used to initiate boys into adulthood separating the young from the old and the young from the techniques used by the older part of the tribe in this way is a method to

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maintain control in the tribe. This is because such practices instil a hierarchy within a society as the initiated males hold a higher status in society than the boys. A young boy in the Sambia are associated with females which the Sambia believe are polluting (Herdt G., 1987 p 71) Even going as far as sending their females to a "menstruation Hut" when they are menstruating. The menstruation hut is situated lower than the rest of the tribe. (Herdt G., 1987 p 63) This patriarchal way of running the society, seeing females as polluting and treating them as lower. Means that as young boys are feminised, they are masculinised "by the acquisition of semen." (Herdt G., 1987 p 73) and being initiated by "ritual fellatio." (Herdt G., 1987 p 78)

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Commented [J15]: This description displays good knowledge of Herdt's ethnography. But please continue to make the link with maintaining order. It feels that the paragraph was cut off short.

Summary

The hunter and gathering communities of the Sambia and the Mbuti pygmies use various methods of maintaining control. Each of these methods are still similar to how western societies maintain control. Through a system of encouraging guilt and shame the same is quite similar in the case of the Mbuti particularly as the people fear the punishment in a similar way to western cultures. For example, people will tend to not commit crimes when they know they will be punished so order is maintained. While in western societies punishment will probably be exile from certain places and activities or even prison time, in these hunting and gathering societies punishment tends to be more based on humiliation and the fear of punishment which itself is very similar to the way people are punished in western societies. Without the prison times means that punishment is on a more personal level as they don't have a state to take care of the punishment for them. Western societies and these hunter gatherer communities work on a system of trust

Commented [J16]: Really? How would the Sambia relate to that? And Western societies in general would not seem to place that much emphasis on sharing, although joking about too arrogant people occurs. But it doesn't really ostracise them from a group – hence, inequalities run deep.

Commented [J17]: Ok I see your point. It remains slightly speculative though.

Commented [J18]: This is speculative, it reads as your own assumption, and would need to be backed up by literature.

Commented [J19]: This is an interesting point! Again, as with your last assignment, you introduce very interesting points in the conclusion, they should appear earlier in the paper.

Commented [J20]: This is not a valid statement. Whereas Hunter Gatherer societies might work on a system of trust, the same cannot be said from Western societies, that have complex institutions like the prisons you mentioned to address punishment. So trust doesn't need to be enforced by social norms and sanctions. I do agree however that there are general rules under which people operate in Western societies that are similar to those of the Egalitarian societies. We are not generally as selfish as we are portrayed to be, it is rather the system of institutions that enhances competitiveness and aggressiveness. So the logic of the statement is understandable.

Bibliography

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