

Anth. 3 types of rewards



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There are three types of rewards that may or may not be equally distributed within a society. These rewards include wealth, power and prestige.

Furthermore, there are three basic types of societies identified by Morton Fried in which the equal or non-equal distribution of these rewards may occur. These societies include that of an egalitarian society, a ranked society, and a stratified society. Egalitarian societies do not rely on wealth or power. Instead, people in this type of society do gain prestige through age, valuable skills, and an attractive personality.

Everything is shared equally within this society and there is no reason for wealth because they tend to be a mobile type of society such as the hunter gatherers, and they are not able to bring many possessions with them.

Therefore, there is no accumulation of wealth among the people of this society. The ! Kung are an example of a egalitarian society. They have little possessions, which usually denotes wealth in Western culture. They are an extremely mobile people who travel to find food. Therefore, they have no need for possessions because they are not able to bring them with them.

They also work on a system of reciprocal sharing. Therefore, this prevents people from gathering wealth or power over others. As a result of being foraging people they have the option of leaving if one person within the band tries to take power over others. In ranked societies, there are a limited number of social positions which grant authority over others in the society. These positions are mostly always gained through heredity. Power and prestige are given to those in high social rank, which usually falls upon the eldest in the lineage. Wealth is usually distributed among the society equally through redistribution.

The Tikopia society is an example of a ranked society. The 1200 people of the island were divided into 4 patriclans and each patriclan had its own chief. There are also clan chiefs who have the most authority over others.

However, they did not have great power over others within the society because they believed that each had rights to the land and ocean resources within the clan. They were honored but their wealth and power was not great, seeing as they used the system of redistribution. In stratified societies, the rewards of wealth, power, or prestige are not equally distributed within the society.

There are two distinguishing characteristics in stratified societies. The first characteristic being inequalities between strata in access to rewards such as wealth power and prestige because they may be obtained through heredity. Secondly, there may be unequal access to resources. There are two types of stratified systems in the world today. The first of these is the caste system. The course text defines a caste system as a “ stratification system in which membership in a stratum is in theory hereditary, strata are endogamous, and contact or relationships among members of different strata are governed by explicit laws, norms, or prohibition. A widely used example of a caste system is in place today in India. Those who are born into the highest caste can look forward to a very promising future filled with wealth and prestige. Those born into the lowest caste have a life of hard labor and no chance of advancement. There are strict laws to enforce marriage between people of different caste, and even social relationships among people of different castes. The second type of social system is known as a class system. A class system is defined in the text as, “ a system in which membership in a

stratum can theoretically be altered and intermarriage between strata is allowed. An example of a class system would be that of our own western culture. The easiest way to determine class for our culture is through wealth. The more wealth you have the higher your class, but it differs from that of the caste system because you are able to have social relations with people outside of your own class and you are able to move up in class. Even if born into a “ lower” class you are able to gain access to schools, have access to resources, and are able to marry outside of you