

3.986 The Human Past: Introduction to Archaeology

The classification of social organization

Anthropologists and archaeologists use several different, partially cross cutting, systems for describing levels of social organization in human societies. Fried's terminology focuses on power and authority relations between individuals and groups in society. Service's terminology focuses on the overall level of "political" organization in groups. Redman's terminology is the most archaeologically focussed, emphasizing the material and economic correlates associated with successively more complex levels of social organization.

Alternative classifications of social organization

M. Fried's terminology	E. Service's terminology	C. Redman's terminology
State society	State organization	National states
Stratified society		City -states
Ranked society	Chiefdom organization	Temple towns
		Advanced farming villages
Egalitarian society	Tribal organization	Sedentary village agriculture and mobile husbandry
		Sedentary and mobile intensive hunters and gatherers
	Band organization	Mobile hunters and gatherers

Concepts - nature of status of individuals

- achieved - status achieved by individual during lifetime by virtue of his/her actions
- ascribed - status ascribed to an individual by virtue of birth
- rank - hereditary status - may be associated with privileges or obligations
- authority - ability to channel behaviors of others without use of threat or sanctions - "expert" - leadership based on authority - "charismatic" leadership
- power - ability to channel behavior through use of force or threat - removal of access to resources

In early civilizations - rank, authority and power all are combined in same folk in central leadership