Chapter 9
Politics

Cooperation, Conflict & Power Relations
Overview

• Anthropology looks at political systems more broadly than political science, way beyond Western democracy to every form of political organization that’s ever been tried.
  • As a result the “political headlines” of an anthropology text are quite different from those of an American newspaper.
  • To encompass these “headlines,” anthropologists define politics as those relationships and processes of cooperation, conflict, and power that are fundamental aspects of human life.
• We can’t understand diverse expressions of power if we focus exclusively on the formal political institutions of states.
  • Cooperation, conflict, and power are rooted in people’s everyday social interactions, belief systems, and cultural practices.
  • This chapter focuses on the question, **How is power acquired and transmitted in a society?**
• For anthropologists, politics is not simply formal state institutions but how people manage their everyday social relations through persuasion, force, violence, and control over resources.
Does Every Society Have a Government? 1

- Not all societies have a government
  - Some societies, including ours, have centralized political authority in the form of a government: A separate legal and constitutional domain that is the source of law, order, and legitimate force.
  - Others, such as the !Kung San (Ju/'hoansi) Kalahari hunter–gatherers, have historically lived in egalitarian bands of fifteen to twenty people and are an acephalous society: A society without a governing head, generally with no hierarchical leadership.
    - Prior to changes instituted by the Namibian and South African governments, the Ju/'hoansi did not recognize a separate political sphere; decisions were made by group consensus.
    - Food sharing was the major organizational principle, and failure to share could result in shaming, ostracism, or banishment.
    - Ju/'hoansi hunters would go to great lengths to avoid appearing arrogant, even ridiculing their own hunting successes (called insulting the meat).
      - Read the article by Richard Lee, called *Eating Christmas in the Kalahari*.
      - These informal social controls regulated !Kung behavior without a need for laws: a set of rules established by some formal authority.
    - Leadership in such societies, if any, is also informal—elders may be looked to for guidance based on their experience. Some cultures, such as the Batek of Malaysia, are egalitarian enough to allow female leadership (a relative rarity).
The idea of “politics” and the problem of order

The idea of “politics” as contemporary Westerners tend to think of it emerged during the Enlightenment (1650–1800). Enlightenment intellectuals had a dismal view of human nature.
- Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) called life without formal political control “nasty, brutish, & short.”
- John Locke (1632–1704) argued that chaos is avoidable through social contract, recognizing individual rights.

During the early twentieth century, Britain’s global empire spurred the rise of British anthropology.
- Colonial authorities relied on anthropologists to explain local forms of governance or their “lack”.
  - This need contributed to the advent of colonial anthropology.
  - The harm done at that time remains alive in the minds of many non- anthropologists.
  - This colonial “problem” presented anthropologists with opportunities to study the maintenance of order in societies without formal governments and political leaders.

Structural-functionalist models of political stability

During the early twentieth century, Britain’s global empire spurred the rise of British anthropology. Colonial authorities relied on anthropologists to explain local forms of governance or, seemingly, the lack thereof.
- This colonial “problem” presented anthropologists with opportunities to study the maintenance of order in societies without formal governments and political leaders (Figure 10.2).
- Colonial studies produced structural-functionalism: An anthropological theory that the different structures or institutions of a society (religion, politics, kinship, etc.) function to maintain social order and equilibrium. ways were used to maintain order
• Structural-functionalist models of political stability (continued)
  • In Africa, structural-functionalist identified many ways societies maintained order, without formal political organizations:
    1. Kinship was one.
    2. Associations such as secret societies and age-grades: Groupings of age-mates, who are initiated into adulthood together.
    3. Religion also functions as a powerful form of social control among groups with shared beliefs.
  • Often colonizers thought that “custom" or "customary law" governed social behavior or “folkways“, but did not see these as legitimate.
  • Structural-functionalist insisted these practices represented a “rudimentary” criminal justice system.
  • Today, we use more neutral terms when talking about law (we use the term cultural norms and note these range on a continuum):
    • Vary from most **explicit norms** to most **implicit norms**.
    • Can be absolute principles or based on circumstances.
    • May be formally written or verbally transmitted.
    • May be legislate proclaims, or "traditional“
    • May define behavior precisely or loosely
  • **Legal pluralism** developed from the disconnect between Western and local systems.
    • Dual set of rules made up of local customary law and formal European law.
    • One more example of **syncretism**: Blending of cultural practices.
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Does Every Society Have a Government?

- **Neo-evolutionary models of political organization**
  - In the 1940s and 1950s, American anthropologists began to apply the neo-evolutionary theories of Leslie White and Julian Steward to classifying political systems. Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service (1960) developed a sociopolitical typology of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states.

- **Non-centralized political systems**
  - Bands and tribes in this typology are non-centralized political systems: a political system in which power and control over resources are dispersed between members of the society.
  - **Band**: A small, nomadic, and self-sufficient group of anywhere between 25 and 150 individuals with face-to-face social relationships, usually egalitarian.
    - Least complicated form of political organization, according to Service and Sahlins.
    - Probably oldest of political systems, since it is connected to oldest of food subsistence patterns.
    - Politically independent group of households, tend to be related. Tend to marry within the group (endogamy).
    - Stay together as long as the carrying capacity and density of social relations stays stable.
    - Population density typically does not exceed one person per square mile.
  - **Ju/'hoansi of the Kalahari** *(from Haviland)*
    - Purely a symbolic position; the *kxau* (“owner”) symbolizes the people when interacting with others.
    - When *kxau* leaves or dies, a new one simply takes his/her place.
    - His only benefit is the right to choose first spot for his fire in a new campsite.
    - His only duties are to choose the campsite and to represent the band in inter-band negotiations.
    - Does not organize hunting, arrange marriages, distribute goods.
• Neo-evolutionary models of political organization (continued)
• Non-centralized political systems (continued)
  • Tribe: A type of pastoralist or horticulturist society with populations usually numbering in the hundreds or thousands in which leadership is more stable than that of a band but usually egalitarian, with social relations based on reciprocal exchange.
    • Nominally independent communities occupying a specific region and sharing a common language and culture integrated by some unifying factor.
    • Factors that unify: kin groups, age grades, common-interest associations
    • Typically, horticultural or pastoral.
    • Because the tribe will be more productive, will have surplus, it will be able to support more (carrying capacity).
    • Typically larger than bands (pop. exceeds 1 person/square mile, sometimes as much as 250 people/square mile).
  • Tribes will have several smaller groups within that form subordinate groups.
  • These are informal, temporary, usually based on common interests, but autonomous.
  • Like bands, tribal leaders have very little actual authority. Social control comes more from social mechanisms like gossip, withdrawal of cooperation from other tribal members, and the association of disease (through sorcery) with wrong-doing, in order to maintain order.
  • Two examples are the Nuer and the Kwa Kwaka’ Wakw.
    • Between them they illustrate the breadth of what is called a tribe.
    • In fact, the term can be confusing as it is so broader used, often incorrectly, outside of anthropology.
• Neo-evolutionary models of political organization (continued)
  • Centralized political systems
    • Chiefdoms and states are **centralized political systems**: A political system in which certain individuals and institutions hold power and control over resources.
    • **Chiefdom**: A political system with a hereditary leader who holds central authority, typically supported by a class of high-ranking elites, informal laws, and a simple judicial system, often numbering in the tens of thousands with the beginnings of intensive agriculture and some specialization.
      • Chiefdoms can be multilayered: chiefdoms under superior chiefdoms.
      • Typically, associated with redistributive systems in that resources become centralized.
      • An hereditary office (**ascribed status**), but is an unstable political system. Lesser chiefs continually trying to take power from greater chiefs.
        • Lack of stability was the case in pre-colonial Hawaii:
          • Included many levels of *ali’i* (chiefs)
          • The right of an ali’i was by **mana** (more later).
        • The Kpelle of Liberia has a chiefdom system that is fairly stable
          • Includes a paramount chief, clan chief, town chief and quarter elder
          • This is typical of West African chiefdoms
      • A chief is an authority figure. Has power to:
        • Control people as opposed to bands or tribes, where the head is typically fairly powerless.
        • Conscript people into military service.
        • Distribute land.
        • Adjudicate, typically between tribes under its control.
Does Every Society Have a Government?

• Neo-evolutionary models of political organization (continued)
  • Centralized political systems (continued)
    • State: The most complex form of political organization, associated with societies that have intensive agriculture, high levels of social stratification, and centralized authority
    • Nation-states are a mixture of two components:
      • State: The most complex form of political organization, associated with societies that have intensive agriculture, high levels of social stratification, and centralized authority
      • A nation can be defined as the communities of people who see themselves as "one people" on the basis of common ancestry, history, society, institutions, ideology, territory, language, and (often) religion
        • Nation-states are the most formal of political organizations and political power is centralized in a government.
        • According to Haviland (2002), a government is "an administrative system having specialized personnel that may or may not form a part of the political organization, depending on the complexity of the society" (p. 326).
  • City-states came first
    • States began about 5,000 years ago.
      • Have shown a tendency toward instability, although the official doctrine is permanence
      • Impermanent because of competing state structures. Minimum institutions of the state: a bureaucracy, a military, a religion.
      • With increased populations have increased surplus (=wealth) to such an extent that the wealth itself wielded power for the owners.
    • Nation-states are a modern invention.
Challenges to traditional political anthropology

Not surprisingly, there has been much debate about whether all human societies can be accurately categorized with a simple four-type system.

The terms are still widely used today. Two major problems with the typology are that:

- **Problem 1**: Many cases blur the boundaries between types
- **Problem 2**: The typology tends to downplay historical change except in a broad evolutionary sense.
  - One way this is of note: Many of the African and Oceanic peoples were already colonized by the time the descriptions were created.
  - **Indirect rule** was typical: Local leaders acted as go-betweens for the colonialists.

Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service (1960) acknowledged that different societies follow individual evolutionary paths but also noted a general correlation between greater population density and centralized leadership.

I prefer John Bodley’s **scale of culture** which is located under your lecture notes.

- It still suffers from Problem 1, but it does try to take into account historical change (Problem 2)
- Further, it adds the idea of transition without a hierarchy as is found in the band-tribe-chiefdom-state typology.
- Also, it bring in a discussion of commercial scale societies which the band-tribe-chiefdom-state typology tends to ignore.
What is Political Power?

Beginning in the 1960s anthropological emphasis shifted from typology (ordering societies) to exploring how individuals acquire and use power within societies. As used in anthropology, power is the ability to make people think or act in certain ways, through a range of techniques.

Defining political power

Not all power is political. But, political power is defined as the processes by which people create, compete, and use power to attain goals that are presumed to be for the good of a community.

For political power to be legitimate, it must be based on a culturally recognized source: deities, ancestors, hereditary transfer, legal inheritance, or elected office. Power may also be drawn from material resources, human resources, symbolic resources, or ideological resources.

Four basic questions about power:

1. How is it acquired?
   - It can be drawn from an independent source (i.e.; gods or ancestors)
   - It can be drawn from dependent sources:
     - It can be granted from one leader to another
     - It can be delegated from a leader for a specific purpose
     - It can be allocated by the community to the leader.

2. What kinds of people get it and what kinds do not?
   - Some power is inherited (ascribed)
   - Some power is acquired.

3. How strong is it? Actual power versus influence (a continuum)
   - Actual power implies force or the threat of such (strong power).
   - Influence implies the ability to talk people into things (weak power).

4. For what is it used?
What is Political Power? 2

- **Big Men and chiefs**
  - The case of influence as compared to actual power can be seen by a comparison of Big Men (Melanesia) and chiefs as types of leaders.
  - The term “Big Man” is a metaphor for a person who has influence, holds his office temporarily, and achieves his power through mana: Sacred power allocated by deities.
  - Elsewhere in the Pacific (and many places around the world) chiefs wield true power for one’s lifetime and the position is inherited (ascribed).
  - These categories are not rigid, but do give a glimpse of the differences in access to power.
  - Easy to recognize the leaders at the powerful end of the continuum
  - Harder to see the influence of leaders at the ‘weaker’ end, where influence of leaders is often concealed by subtlety and deviousness.
  - One way in which, Ongka, the most famous in anthropology, gained and held power was to link himself to Andrew Strathern, an anthropologist.
  - Other ways he used were his ability to orate, to gather advocates, and his care for the community.
  - Unlike most Big Men, he keep his position for the rest of his life.
What is Political Power?

- Political power is action-oriented
  - Political life, in its broadest sense, is a story of power. Includes ways that:
    - Leaders of groups channel and exercise power.
    - Noting that power of all sorts serves is used to command conformity to cultural norms.
    - There are methods by which power is brought into play to reestablish harmony if norms are broken.
    - Power can lead to conflicts between societies escalate into war.
    - Persons in power is expected to introduce strategies for achieving peace between societies.
  - By the 1960s, the many processes involved in wielding power were addressed by action theory: A theory that follows the daily activities and decision-making processes of individual political leaders, emphasizing that politics is a dynamic and competitive field of social relations in which people are constantly managing their ability to exercise power over others.
- Within politics, there are normative rules and pragmatic rules.
  - F. G. Bailey suggests that normative rules are like playing a game:
    - Normative rules include those printed on the box.
    - They also are those not written, 1) Do not cheat; 2) Be both a fair winner and a fair loser.
  - Pragmatic rules are the ones you use to win.
  - in the United States normative political rules require a candidate to, at least, maintain the appearance of honesty. But this conflicts with the pragmatic rules required to actually win elections and govern.
  - Action theory focused on the self-aggrandizing behaviors and power of individual actors.
Political power is structural

By the 1980s and 1990s, cultural anthropologists recognized the additional need to investigate structural power: Power that not only operates within settings but also organizes and orchestrates the settings in which social and individual actions take place.

From the perspective of Eric Wolf and other followers of world systems theory, global capitalism is a primary source of structural power in the world today because it can easily constrain, inhibit, and promote economic and political choices.

World systems theory provides one framework for understanding global inequality.

It is the theory that capitalism has expanded on the basis of unequal exchange throughout the world, creating a global market and global division of labor, dividing the world between a dominant nation, the core, and a dependent nation, the periphery.

According to this theory:

- Core nations develop their economies at the expense of periphery nations. (i.e.; Japan and canned tuna)
- The role of the periphery is to provide labor and raw materials (i.e.; Solomon Islands) for the core’s consumption, resulting in the periphery’s poverty, underdevelopment, and dependency on the core.
What is Political Power?

- Political power is gendered
  - Gender plays a role in political power.
  - In some societies, women exercise leadership and political power. In others, women have very little formally recognized power but are able to assert various types of informal power to shape events.
    - For example, in Papua New Guinea (PNG), an abused or shamed woman’s act of revenge suicide shifts the burden of shame to her abuser and can even motivate the victim’s relatives to seek violent revenge.
    - It may be difficult for Westerners to view suicide as an expression of power, but, again, power comes in many culturally specific forms. In fact, revenge acts are common in PNG, not just seen in suicides.
- Islam, women and power in Iran and in Indonesia
  - Restrictive rules imposed on Islamic women, such as prohibitions on revealing clothing, public interaction with males, and driving automobiles, provoke outrage in much of the Western world—which is dealing with its own long history of gender inequality. In many Islamic communities, male clerics justify these with sharia, or customary Islamic law.
  - Erika Friedl (1994) describes the many subtle ways that Iranian women exercise power and subvert these rules: wearing headscarves in a modern stylish way or escaping repressive males by making women’s pilgrimages.
  - In Indonesia, it was women of the elite classes that began the wearing of headscarf (jilbab) and this practice has expanded greatly in the last two decades or so.
  - By 2009, the issue of whether to wear the scarf took on a political slant.
Political power in non-state societies
- The exercise of political power differs between state and non-state societies.
  - In non-state societies, leadership, if any, tends to be temporary, informal, and based on personal attributes (rather than heredity or rank).
  - For example, the power of an Amazon headman (“a first among equals”) is based on personal charisma and persuasiveness, as it is with Big Men.
  - Big Men cannot transfer their status and power through inheritance when they die.
- In contrast, power in states and chiefdoms is controlled by officials and hierarchical institutions. Formalized laws determine who may hold office, for how long, and the power that may be legitimately wielded by an official.

Political power in the nation-state
- Today, all of the world’s territory is under the control of nation-states: independent states recognized by other states, composed of people who share a single national identity.
  - Of those contemporary societies classified as bands, tribes, or chiefdoms, most exist within the geographic borders of a state.
  - In other words, membership in a nation-state is not always voluntary, and nation-states use many techniques of social control and coercive force to maintain power.
  - Many of the world’s peoples live in nation-states formed by conquest and colonialism.
  - Like Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, and Amazonian natives, these conquered people often become ethnic minorities in their own territory (called internal colonialism).
What is Political Power?

- **Power differentials** are the unequal allocation of power.
  - All societies have this.
  - No truly egalitarian society
- **Resistance**
  - Found where power differentials are great.
  - For example, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.
    - 1800s: Missionaries groups converted the native Hawaiians at the same time that disease decimated the locals.
    - 1893: Hawaiian Queen Liliuokalani was forced by the U.S. government to cede her power (at the threat of a gunboat aimed at her palace).
    - 1974: Native Hawaiians gained partial recognition as Native Americans. In 1978, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs was instituted in an attempt to provide some autonomy.
    - 1993: President Clinton apologized for the role of Americans in the overthrow of Hawaii.
    - 2000: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that non-Hawaiians could be elected to their Board of Trustees.
    - 2009: The U.S. Supreme Court (2009) stated that Clinton’s apology was not binding.
- **Colonialism**
  - One society establishes overwhelming control (economic, political, social) over another.
  - Today often is neo-colonialism: On surface the country is politically independent, but is socially and economically linked to the colonizing nation-state.
- **Slavery**
  - Absolute power over another, though, is at one end of the continuum: Slavery, serfdom and indentured servitude. Slavery is not a thing of the past or non-Western countries. TedTalk
  - Anthropologists have not documented ethnographically; have looked at ‘guest workers’ and migrant workers.
Why More Violent? 1

- By the 1960s, many cultural anthropologists who were working in postcolonial settings observed the breakdown of social order and subsequent rise in violent conflict.
- They sought to understand why some societies experience more violence than others and what can be done to prevent it. In the process, anthropologists have learned that violence, like any form of power, is rooted in cultural processes and meanings.
- What is violence?
  - First, what exactly is violence?
    - **Violence**: The use of force to harm someone or something.
    - This is a simple working definition, and violence may mean very different things to different people.
  - Culture shapes what people consider “legitimate” violence and how, why, and when they use it as a form of power relations.
- Violence and culture
  - Anthropologists challenge the Hobbesian view that human violence is natural (innate).
    1. Violence and nonviolence are learned in particular cultural contexts.
    2. Violence is not primal, arbitrary, or chaotic. It tends to follow cultural patterns, rules, and ethics.
  - Violence is articulated in specific cultural and historical contexts.
- The Yamomamo
  - Napoleon Chagnon (1968) published a famous ethnography of the Yanomamo of Brazil called *The fierce people*, in which he documents Yanomamo aggressiveness and violence.
    - The most famous example of Chagnon was actually prompted by him: the Ax Fight.
    - Other anthropologists think this emphasis on fierceness overshadows the more peaceful attributes of Yanomamo culture.
• **The Semai**
  • A cultural ideal of nonviolence pervades most aspects of Semai life.
  • On the surface, these egalitarian Malaysian farmers might appear to be “nonfierce people.”
  • However, in times of warfare, Semai males have been recruited for military service and, contrary to their pacifist enculturation, engaged in acts of violence.
  • The most important point illustrated by these examples is that violence and nonviolence are not absolute or static conditions but a result of cultural, social, and historical conditions. The potential for violence and nonviolence exists within all cultural groups.

• The rise of violence
  • Anthropologists have clearly demonstrated that:
    1. Interethnic violence is not an inevitable product of human nature
    2. Violence is not senseless but a highly meaningful and even calculated political strategy.
  • For example, the Bosnian civil war included acts of horrifying brutality and interethnic cooperation.
    • This reality undermines any simplistic narrative of seething tribalism. Conflict between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims was not inevitable.
    • In the case of Bosnia, it was manufactured to serve the political and ideological interests of political leaders.
  • When people refer to violent acts as meaningless and barbaric, they interpret violence as an emotional response without rational purpose.
    • In truth, violence is often used as a strategic political tool.
    • For example, Daniel Goldhagen has analyzed why genocides occur and produced a film called, “Worse than war” where this is his central tenet.
Let's begin with a basic question: What do people fight about?
Disputes may arise over many things: political power, material goods, property, decision-making, social relations, etc.

What are disputes about?
- North Americans are culturally primed to view disputes (and sporting events) in terms of winners and losers.
  - We often use war-like vocabulary in our discussion of sports.
  - Eric Dunning wrote a book, *Sport matters: Sociological studies of sport, violence and civilisation*, in which he noted that:
    - Sports is intended to create conflict
    - Sports reinforces male dominance.
  - Brutal body contact: Legal, and often encouraged, such as body checks or tackles
  - Borderline violence: Not legal, but widely accepted by the players
  - Quasi-criminal violence: Violations of the type that result in penalties or suspensions.
  - Criminal violence
- In other cultures the emphasis is on repairing strained relationships or maintaining social harmony.
  - Cricket matches among Trobriand Islanders (PNG) are a classic example.
  - For them, the goal of the game is to end with a tie, or for the hosting team to win by a slightly higher score.
  - The match is not about winning or losing but, rather, lessening tensions between villages. A tie allows both teams to assert that they played the better game.
How people manage disputes

Three variables are of importance when discussing attempts for resolution of disputes:

- **Power**
  - Is the power to settle between the rivals (negotiation)?
  - Is their power from personal influence (mediation)?
  - Do third parties have legitimate social a settlement (adjudication)?

- **Degree of formal procedure involved.** People manage disputes using informal and formal means.
  - Informal techniques include avoidance, competition, ritual, and play.
  - Formal techniques involve institutions or specialists: negotiation, and mediation and adjudication.

- **Intended outcome**
  - To find fault and punish the guilty?
  - To re-establish the situation pre-transgression?
  - To demand payment of restitution?

- **Negotiation**: A form of dispute management in which the parties themselves reach a decision jointly.
  - Example: Tanzanian land and water rights negotiations “setting to right”.
  - While one rival was better liked and better connected, he was willing to settle
  - The concern was that the issue would be taken up by the colonial court or result in witchcraft.
  - Example: My cargo was taken at the start of my fieldwork in the Solomon Islands. I used the threat of the police to get a repayment.
Avoiding Aggression, Brutality, and War 3

- How people manage disputes (continued)
  - **Mediation**: Entails a third party who intervenes in a dispute to help the parties reach an agreement and restore harmony.
    - Third party relies on personal power to enforce judgments and resolve disputes.
    - Aim is for reconciliation.
  - Examples:
    - **The Ju’/hoansi of the Kalahari Desert**
      - Use mediation to resolve conflict but leaders did not have the kind of power allowing them to easily resolve disputes.
      - Recent ethnographies reveal stories of fights and killings over recent years.
    - **The Dani**
      - Have more means of conflict resolution than the Ju’/hoansi Important men do not have power, but if everyone involved is from the same area and it is minor theft, repayment is enforced.
      - If the offense is major (killing a person), there is no means to a peaceful solution
      - Dani often resort to withdrawal (not resolution).
    - **Native Hawaiians**
      - The native Hawaiian mediation is called *ho’oponopono* (*hoh-oh-poh-no-ppoh-no*) or “setting to right”.
      - Disputes are spiritually negative and lead to negative entanglements
      - A leader of high status is usually involved in the attempt to fix, as well as all immediate family members.
      - Forgiveness and harmony are the goals
Avoiding Aggression, Brutality, and War 4

• How people manage disputes (continued)
  • **Adjudication**: The legal process by which an individual or council with socially recognized authority intervenes in a dispute and unilaterally makes a decision.
  • It is more formal than mediation.
  • In adjudication, third party has power to impose a judgment.
  • Example: Mexicans in Oaxaca and Americans in small claims court
    • The video called *Little Injustices*, by Laura Nader compared Oaxacan cases with American cases (full version in our library):
      • Zapotecs (Mexican state of Oaxaca) -- *The case of the damaged chilies*.
        • Local courts deal with easy cases.
        • Concerned with restoring harmony.
        • Third party hears grievances; decides on fines or compensation.
        • Seeks balance not punishment.
      • Also the film deals with small claims courts in the U.S. and how ineffective they are.
        • They were created to remove such cases from the formal, larger court system.
        • Soon became overwhelmed by the number of cases.
    • Example: the *moot court* among the Kpelle of Liberia.
      • Kpelle people live in Liberia and Guinea in west Africa and number about 2000 persons.
      • They try to avoid the government court as they see the results as coercive as arbitrary.
      • An elder leads the moot court, where the goal is reconciliation.
      • There may be harsh results for both rivals; in part, this is a message to avoid conflict.
Avoiding Aggression, Brutality, and War

- Is harmony always the best result?
  - It’s easy to romanticize the ideal of harmony, but this too is a cultural ideology.
  - One harmony-based form of conflict resolution adopted in the West beginning in the 1970s is alternative dispute management.
    - Many anthropologists welcome this development.
    - Some, like Laura Nader (1990), counter that many disputants prefer fairness, justice, and rule of law to harmony.
    - In some cases, conflict may be the only feasible way to promote change for the greater good.
  - There is not necessarily a ‘best way’ to solve a dispute. If there were, there would be no more disputes!
- Today there is the ICC (International Criminal Court) of which the United States is not a part.