Miscellanea

Generalia

The Place of Non-Groups in the Social Sciences (JEREMY BOISSEVAIN). – Social anthropology and sociology are more than "groupology". By reversing the conceptual order of precedence and making it possible for the individual as well as the group to become the central point of sociological analysis, it is possible to construct a conceptual framework that accords an equal importance to all forms of social activity. This is attempted by using a sociological continuum of which the individual is one pole, and society, the other one. Between them range interactional networks, quasi-groups, groups and institutional complexes. The social forms between the individual and formal groups may ultimately prove to be the basic components of social life and, thus, of greater importance than the groups and institutions which have so far monopolised the attention of sociologists. (Man. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute [London] 3. 1968, pp. 542–556.)

Individual Ownership and the Sharing of Game in Hunting Societies (JOHN H. DOWLING). – In most hunting societies there occur together two patterns of behavior that seem incompatible: on the one hand, there are precise formulae for ascribing ownership of an animal to one person when many contribute to acquiring it; and on the other hand, there are patterns for community wide distribution of such animals. Why should such explicit property rules exist if the animals will be distributed anyway? The seeming paradox becomes resolved when these patterns are viewed in the context of the dynamics of reciprocal distributive systems and patterns of esteem acquisition through superiority in contributing to the community subsistence. The pattern of ownership involved appears to have the function of suppressing conflict among those who contribute to acquiring an animal, since all would like to own it and thus be able to share it. Support for this conclusion derives from social situations in which the pattern of property ascription is absent and conflict is present. (American Anthropologist [Menasha/Wis.] 70. 1968, pp. 502–507.)

Elite Groups in Peasant Communities: A Comparison of Three Middle Eastern Villages (HARVEY GOLDBERG). – Analyses of a Lebanese community and a Turkish community have suggested eight factors that influence, both positively and negatively, the rigidity of stratification. These factors concern (1) symbol systems of elite unity, (2) religious legitimation, (3) norms of recruitment to elite status, (4) education and literacy, (5) elite endogamy, (6) inheritance patterns, (7) effects of prestige on participation in agricultural labor, and (8) control of administrative positions. A community of Tripolitanian immigrants in Israel is examined in the light of these factors. This comparison suggests yet another factor, viz., the degree of elite orientation to the outside world as compared to the nonelite. This factor is crucial in understanding the intergenerational perpetuation of elite status in the Israeli community. (American Anthropologist [Menasha/Wis.] 70. 1968, pp. 718–731.)