
CHAPTER 1

Prehistoric Communal Institutions in the Middle East

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Comprehend the genesis of human beings and early societies.
- List and explain the four basic institutions of human society.
- Describe the six ways in which the four basic institutions of society interacted in prehistoric society.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

- I. The Very Beginning
- II. The Features of Prehistoric Communal Society
- III. Economic Institutions and Technology
- IV. Social Institutions and Economic Institutions
- V. Social Institutions and Technology
- VI. Social Institutions and Ideology
- VII. Technology and Ideology
- VIII. Economic Institutions and Ideology

KEY TERMS

communal Society

A family-based collective

direct democracy

government by the entire population, usually through elected representatives

economic institutions

sets of relations between people doing economic activities and the ways that people interact in the economy

Economy

the process through which a society provisions itself with the goods and services that it needs to survive and grow

Ideology

a more or less coherent system of ideas about how society works and how we should behave

within a given society

Institutions

sets of customs, laws, and norms that influence, enable, or constrain human behavior

natural selection

process whereby nature selects from the existing individuals the ones best suited for survival under particular conditions; eventually this type of individual has the highest reproduction rate, and over a long period of time that fact leads to changes in the species

Prehistoric

before written history

Productivity

the amount of output produced by each input

racist discrimination

differential treatment of people based on prejudices or myths about differences in physical characteristics or ethnicity

sexist discrimination

differential treatment of people based on prejudices or myths about their gender

social institutions

all the noneconomic settings in which people interact, such as the political process, the family, or religious organizations

Technology

the way in which human beings produce goods and services (1); the existing level of knowledge, techniques, and types of tools available for the production of goods and services

ANSWERS TO END OF CHAPTER REVIEW QUESTIONS

Comprehend the genesis of human beings and early societies.

1. How was natural selection important in the development of early humanoids?
Natural selection refers to the process in which nature selects those individuals best suited for survival under particular conditions. These individuals will have the highest reproduction rate, and over a long period, that fact leads to changes in the species. Human beings with a larger brain and an erect stance had a greater ability to use tools and weapons and had a higher survival rate.
2. What is the definition of a prehistoric society and why is it so difficult to learn about these early communities?
A prehistoric society is one that existed before written history. Information about a prehistoric society depends on archaeological evidence including dwellings, weapons, tools, ornaments, graves and skeletons.
3. What are some characteristics of early human society?
The four features of early human society include: 1) technology based on the use of early stone tools and used in hunting and gathering; 2) nonmarket society with common ownership by the extended family; 3) social institutions were collective and family-based; and 4) ideology valuing cooperation.
4. What evidence is used to substantiate claims about early humans and early society?

Our understanding of early humans and early society is based on a large amount of archaeological evidence that has accumulated over the past two centuries.

List and explain the four basic institutions of human society.

5. List and describe the four basic features of society used as a framework for analysis in this text. Using this framework, what are the basic features of prehistoric society?
The four basic features of society are:
 - 1) *Technology;*
Technology is the way that human beings produce goods and services.
 - 2) *Economic institutions;*
Economic institutions are sets of relations between people doing economic activities and the ways that people interact in the economy.
 - 3) *Social institutions;*
Social institutions are all the non-economic ways that people interact, such as the political process, the family, or religious organizations.
 - 4) *Ideology.*
Ideology refers to a more or less coherent system of ideas about how society works and how we should behave within a given society.
6. What is an institution?
Institutions are sets of customs, laws and norms that influence, enable or constrain human behavior.
7. What is an economy?
An economy is the process through which a society provisions itself with the goods and services that it needs to survive and grow.
8. What is technology? What are examples of technology in early communal societies?
Technology is the way that human beings produce goods and services. The technology of early communal societies was based on knowledge about simple stone, bone, or wood tool making and was used for hunting, fishing, and gathering fruits and vegetables.
9. What are economic institutions? What is the key economic institution in prehistoric society?
Economic institutions are sets of relations between people doing economic activities and the ways that people interact in the economy. The key economic institution in prehistoric society was an extended family of brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, parents and grandparents.
10. Explain the importance of the communal group and the role of its members for ensuring the survival of all its members.
The communal group worked collectively to obtain food and gather resources for tools to make clothing and shelter. Since the entire group was needed to provide basic necessities, any individual who left the communal group would not survive.
11. Can there be more than one way a society could organize to produce and allocate what it needs to survive and grow?
Yes. Economic and social institutions, ideology and technology vary from one type of society to another.
12. What are social institutions?

Social institutions are all the non-economic ways that people interact, such as the political process, the family, or religious organizations.

13. What is ideology as used in this text?

Ideology refers to a more or less coherent system of ideas about how society works and how we should behave within a given society

14. Give examples of ideas or systematic beliefs in early communal society.

Early societies had a set of superstitious beliefs centered on animals and natural forces such as lightening.

15. We usually do not think of ideology as necessary for our day-to-day survival. In what ways is it necessary for the survival of the members of the communal society?

The ideology of the extended family and cooperation and collective action was necessary to survival. Individuals could not survive on their own.

16. How could prehistoric societies survive so long with little change and without major technological advancements?

Prehistoric societies did not look for new technology, but learned how best to use the technology they had.

Describe the six ways in which the four basic institutions of society interacted in prehistoric society.

17. List the six possible interactions of the four basic institutions of society. Give brief examples of each interaction in prehistoric society.

1. *Economic institutions with technology.*
2. *Social institutions with economic institutions.*
3. *Social institutions with technology.*
4. *Social institutions with ideology.*
5. *Technology with ideology.*
6. *Economic institutions with ideology.*

18. What is productivity? Why was productivity so low in prehistoric communal societies?

Productivity is the amount of output produced by each input. Productivity was low because of the simple technology. The technology of prehistoric communal societies consisted of bone, stone, and wooden tools. This simple technology required every member of society to work all day to produce enough food, clothing and shelter for basic survival.

19. What is a direct democracy? How does that differ from democracy as practiced in the United States today?

Direct democracy means government by the entire population usually through elected representatives.

20. What is sexist discrimination? Why was it not practical in a prehistoric society?

Sexist discrimination refers to the differential treatment of people based on prejudices or myths about their gender. The work that women did was roughly equal to that of men in importance to the survival of the family. Economic necessity and institutions shaped the egalitarian ideology of men and women.

21. What is racist discrimination? Why was it not a factor in prehistoric society?

Racist discrimination refers to the differential treatment of people based on prejudices or myths about differences in physical characteristics or ethnicity. All members of

prehistoric communal societies were part of their extended family. Contact with outside groups was limited.

22. What is the importance of the extended family?

The extended family was the main economic institution in prehistoric communal societies as well as the most important social institution. The extended family determined one's survival as well as early training, outlook and beliefs.

23. Why is cooperation and collective action within the extended family so crucial for survival?

Productivity was low due to simple technology in prehistoric communal societies. Thus, cooperation and collective action was necessary to obtain and produce adequate food, clothing and shelter and to provide for protection from outside threats. The lack of cooperation and collective action could lead to death.

CHAPTER 2

Communal Equality to Slavery in the Middle East

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Comprehend the components and process of the Neolithic revolution.
- Explain the role that increasing productivity played in changing social and economic institutions.
- Understand the composition of a slave society.
- Comprehend the changing ideologies.
- Explain how the four institutions of society changed in the evolution from communal to slave-based society.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

- I. Change in Prehistoric Communal Societies
- II. Collective Labor to Division of Labor
- III. Communal Equality to Slave-Based Economies and Class Divisions in Society
- IV. From Collective to Private Ownership
- V. Skirmishes to War and Communal Equality to Slavery
- VI. Masters and Slaves
- VII. Women: From Equals to Pieces of Property
- IX. Racist Myths and Slavery