

Dominance and Power

Primate Origins

- Baboons: hierarchical power structure w/ alpha male
- based on physical dominance (embodied wealth) - individually earned
- female power inherited from matriline

Human Origins

- survival requires cooperative hunting + scavenging + breeding
- decades of training required to maximize embodied wealth + knowledge \Rightarrow long lifespan
- invention of weapons \Rightarrow evolve new form of dominance
 - \rightarrow control of group by leader = dominance (evolved 72-my in primates, 1-2 mya in humans)
 - \rightarrow control of leader by group = reverse dominance (e.g. voting)
 - \rightarrow social control of deviants \Rightarrow invention of capital punishment
 - punishment often meted out by kin (transgressors are dangerous, but don't want inter-family conflict)
- \rightarrow lethal weapons are a uniquely human invention
 - recent adaptations for projective weaponry: good aim, throwing power from homo erectus shoulder

Human Aggression

Human aggression is unique - increased proactive aggression, reduced reactive

- Proactive aggression: deliberate, planned
 - enforces norms (policing)
 - prestigious men in small cultures decide punishment
 - more stratified societies \Rightarrow more extreme
- Reactive aggression: emotional, spontaneous

Prestige and Power

Egalitarian Leveling

- anti-hierarchical sentiment (desire for less extreme division)
- in chimps: constant acting out against high-ranking / bullying males
- in human band-level societies: replacement of leaders with reverse dominance

Two paths to power: prestige vs dominance

• persuasion

- deference
- lots of imitation
- self deprecation
- others congregate to interact

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• coercion, threat

- only imitate to flatter
- verbal intimidation
- others avoid to reduce aggression

Credibility Enhancing Displays

expensive, honest display of sacrificial actions for beliefs
higher cost = more convincing

Age Sets

Ritual-based integration of kin-based groups

Everyone goes through painful rituals to increase prosociality

↳ bound by common experience

Aranda, Warramunga, Ilahita tribes: painful ceremonies for men

• purpose: accumulate CREDs

Semai: prestige-based culture, individualistic: seniors have power by persuading juniors, not because of force; anyone can reject advice

Why Prestige?

- build collective brain
- intergenerational stability (requires social learning, high fidelity transmission)
- humans have evolved imitation, theory of mind, intentional gaze, direct active teaching
- best method: identify + copy best models
 - ↳ to extract knowledge, must become polite + deferential
 - ↳ more clients that want information ⇒ target gains more prestige
 - ↳ rapid progressive to cumulative culture
- can be maladaptive: celebrity suicide

