

Interaction Paper - Rynkiewich Chapter 4 “Self, Society, and Behavior”

To understand a people, we have to look at a people from a cultural perspective, a social perspective, an ecological perspective, and a historical perspective. A person's status is the person's position in society, a role is the expected behavior of a person with a certain status. All societies have ascribed (not earned) statuses and achieved statuses. A simplex relationship is one that involves only one social status (position or role) for each participant. A multiplex relationship occurs when there is more than one kind of link between the participants. In a guilt society, control is maintained by creating and continually reinforcing the feeling of guilt for certain condemned behaviors. In a shame society, the means of control is the instilling of shame and the complementary threat of exclusion. The shame/honor worldview seeks an "honor balance." As Benedict explained: "True shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behavior, not, as true guilt cultures do, as an internalized conviction of sin. Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism...it requires an audience. Guilt does not."

In Chinese culture 'saving face' is deemed as primary value. No matter how many shortcomings within a family, all the family members should not expose any of it publicly. In terms of social engagement, people suppose praise the merits of people, for others or for one self's. Sometimes people like to express a faulty humility but actually to express pride. To redeem the family's status is more important than keeping the convention's rules. Therefore, even a robber can be treated as a saint if his behavior is deemed righteous.

Two questions for further engaging this topic: 1. What are examples of honor/shame culture in Western society? 2. What is the difference between status and social status?