

SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION CAUSES MORAL DISINTEGRATION

A shared moral code contributes to keeping the social group and lasts as long as the latter. When the social group starts to break down without breaking up or disbanding, mores and morals fall apart: reciprocal solidarity, sharing, tolerance, and kindness disappears, and every family, or even every individual, starts to fend for itself in as mean a way as needed to survive. The story of the Ik people--in the corner between Uganda, Kenya and Sudan--as told by Turnbull (1972) exemplifies that eloquently. As long as they could eat they were just as kind to one another as any other hunting-and-gathering people; they became mean to one another as soon as they were deprived of their habitual livelihood.

Turnbull, C. M. (1972) The Mountain People. N.Y.: Simon and Schuster.

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