

ANTH 112.21 Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology
Winter 2019

I acknowledge that St FX is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

January 29, 31, Feb. 5: How do political and economic systems affect how people live their lives?

Part one: Production

READ: *Perspectives*: Isaac Shearn, "Subsistence"

Ekers, Michael. 2018. "The Curious Case of Farm Interns: on the Populism and Political Economy of Agro-ecological Farm Work." *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Early view online.

Midterm test: Feb. 7

Modes of production and the limitations of the models

Political and Economic Structures

- Shearn's description of subsistence patterns mostly follows a cultural ecology framework, but occasionally uses the idea of "mode of subsistence"
 - in the next section, Sarah Lyon uses the concept of "mode of production" (a Marxist concept)
 - what are the implications of these two theoretical perspectives?
- standard terminology of economic forms of subsistence are foragers, pastoralists, horticulturalists, agricultural societies (intensive cultivators), and industrial societies (subsumed by Shearn under agricultural society).
- standard terminology of political forms are band societies, tribes, chiefdoms and states (Service 1963).
- some political terms:
 - egalitarian
 - rank
 - stratification

Note that, with the exception of foraging, none of the following activities have ever been the exclusive base of an economy. Currently, all people live within complex state political economies.

Foragers (or hunter-gatherers) :

- bands or chiefdoms
- flexible division of labour, few political differences among people (tend to egalitarianism)
- usually nomadic, but not always (e.g. Kwakwaka'wakw)
- "anthropocene" (built environment)
- usually little acknowledgement of private property; more common to have general collective rights
- "original affluent society"
- mostly engage in reciprocal exchanges (we'll look at exchange more in the next section)
- usually bands but sometimes chiefdoms
- how well does this stereotype really work? The !Kung or Ju/'hoansi have been taken as "typical" foragers: <https://vimeo.com/272600763> – trailer from A Kalahari Family, film by

John Marshall. Note that there are disturbing images in this trailer.

- how isolated were the Ju/'hoansi really in the 1950s when Marshall first started filming?
- how do contemporary foragers live, in concert with tourism, production for markets, etc?

Horticulturalists

- division of labour flexible, but perhaps with more emphasis on gender and age than among foragers
- semi-sedentary
- collective rights or no concept of private property
- generalized, balanced reciprocity and redistribution. (we'll look at exchange more in the next section)
- bands, chiefdoms or tribes
- tend to be egalitarian or ranked
 - again, note that the actual ways that contemporary horticulturalists achieve subsistence is embedded in political and economic processes beyond their localities"
 - e.g. a project to facilitate market sales for horticulturalists in Papua New Guinea <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ydXswNffEI>
 - what might be the effects on private property, inequality, etc. of this project? How might it make the people more dependent on what they can buy and sell, rather than on what they can produce and eat? – note that the content indicates that they already are engaged in market production and purchasing.

Pastoralists

- division of labour flexible, but perhaps with more emphasis on gender and age than among foragers
- transhumant or nomadic
- collective/private rights to property
- generalized and balanced reciprocity (we'll look at exchange more in the next section)
- tribes
 - tend to be egalitarian
 - example: some current issues facing the Maasai:
<https://ccafs.cgiar.org/blog/maasai-filmmakers-win-award-shooting-their-climate-reality#.XFHQnFz0mUk>
 - note new consumption habits, tourist camps, divisive effects of fencing

Agriculturalists

- division of labour tends to be firmer and based on multiple characteristics: age, gender, status, class, rank, etc.
- sedentary
- there may be private property
- balanced reciprocity, redistribution, market exchange (as well as generalized and

- balanced reciprocity) (we'll look at exchange more in the next section)
- tend to be chiefdoms or states
 - thus ranked or stratified

Industrial and post-industrial society

- complex division of labour: age, gender; status; class; religion; education; etc .
- formal economy and informal economy.
- sedentary
- private property is usually important
- dependence on market exchange (but all the other forms are also present)
 - long commodity chains (we'll look at exchange more in the next section)
- state, therefore stratified

Current complexities: Ekers' case study of a specific type of agriculture within an industrial state society

- what are agro-ecological farms?
- should they be understood as idealistic movements against alienating and environmentally destructive agro-industry and the capitalist society at large?
- or should the ways that they exploit unpaid interns and build their own capitalist businesses be the focus?
- what is the process of social reproduction of these farms?
 - what are the social relations on which they depend? How do they get access to needed land and other inputs? What do they do with their product – consume, sell, trade? How do they plan for the future?
- who becomes an intern? Are interns exploited? Which farms use unpaid interns?
- what does Ekers conclude?