

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.

Feb. 14, 26: How do political and economic systems affect how people live their lives? Part two: Exchange

READ: *Perspectives*: Sarah Lyon, "Economics"

MacCarthy, Michelle. 2015. "'Like Playing a Game Where You Don't Know the Rules': Investing Meaning in Intercultural Cash Transactions Between Tourists and Trobriand Islanders." *Ethnos*, 80(4): 448-471.

Formalist-Substantivist Debate

- formalist view: individuals strategize to achieve maximum satisfaction in a context of scarce resources (*homo economicus*)
- substantivist view: that there is wide cross-cultural diversity in how societies pursue livelihoods.

Note how Lyons' view of different production systems differs from that of Shearns; why does it matter to pay attention to these different theoretical frameworks?

- Shearns focuses on the technology and main material requirements of each system (his **modes of subsistence**)
  - similar to a cultural ecology theoretical framework
  - Lyons focuses on the social relations that govern production, exchange and consumption in each system (i.e. a political economy or Marxist theoretical framework)
    - domestic (kinship), tributary and capitalist **modes of production**
    - what are the basic characteristics of each?
- the informal economy, again: Hansen's work on *salaula*

Modes of exchange:

- reciprocity: generalized; balanced, negative
  - emphasis on social relations
- redistribution
- market exchange
  - general purpose money (legal; portable; anonymous; general; standard of value; medium of exchange)
  - special purpose money: has only one or two of the basic characteristics of general purpose money
  - use values versus exchange values; what is a commodity?
- examples of special purpose money:
  - Tiv (Bohannans)
  - Ithaca HOURS
  - Canadian Tire money, etc.

Is general purpose money really a value-neutral, universal, anonymous, standard of exchange?

- MacCarthy

- who are the Trobriand Islanders?
- how do Trobrianders use cash? What do they believe about it?
- what do the tourists who visit them believe about using cash in their exchanges with Trobrianders?
- what does MacCarthy argue?

Consumption:

- what is a global commodity chain?
- what is the impact on those who produce goods of different trading systems?
  - fair trade versus capitalist trade;
- what are the social meanings of consuming different items?

Aid and structural violence in Haiti

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[Lyons p. 2-3: Domestic: kin-ordered; egalitarian; foragers and small scale subsistence farmers (i.e. horticulturalists and petty commodity producers - Lyons has a section on fair trade coffee farmers in Guatemala that are pcp, somewhat similar to Ekers' agro-ecological farms);

Lyons p4: Tributary: precapitalist, state-level societies (earlier in feudal Europe, medieval Japan; Inca Empire; Imperial China); "1) the dominant units of production are communities organized around kinship relations; (2) the state's society depends on the local communities, and the tribute collected is used by the ruling class rather than exchanged or reinvested; (3) relationships between producers and rulers are often conflictual; and (4) production is controlled politically rather than through the direct control of the means of production."

Lyons p 4-5: Capitalist: private property; owners, workers, ...]

- the informal economy, again: Hansen's work on *salaula*

Modes of exchange:

- reciprocity: (Lyons p. 9: "gifts are about social relations" – seems to emphasize "gift" idea"
  - generalized; balanced (mentions Kula; reciprocity at Christmas), negative (scams, e.g. Nigerian 419 studied by Daniel Smith)
  - emphasis on social relations

- redistribution (potlatch – pre-European gives the arg that it was balancing surpluses and deficits in a region)
- market exchange
  - general purpose money (legal; portable; anonymous; general; standard of value; medium of exchange)
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Consumption:

- what is a global commodity chain?
  - what is the impact on those who produce goods of different trading systems?
    - free trade versus capitalist trade; e.g. Lyons' example of Fair Trade coffee in Guatemala versus Besky's study of Darjeeling tea
  - what are the social meanings of consuming different items?
    - E.g. bread among Zumbagua people of Ecuador (Weismantel); elite consumption patterns in China; fair trade items; "ethnic" Barbies

Aid and structural violence in Haiti