

CHAPTER 6

MAKING A LIVING (ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Adaptive Strategies

- A. The term *adaptive strategy* intends to describe a group's system of economic production.
- B. There is a typology of cultures using this distinction, referring to a relationship between economies and social features, arguing that the most important reason for similarities between unrelated cultures is their possession of a similar adaptive strategy.

II. Foraging

- A. Human groups with foraging economies are not ecologically dominant.
- B. The primary reason for the continuing survival of foraging economies is the inapplicability of their environmental settings to food production.
- C. Correlates of Foraging
 1. Band-organization is typical of foraging societies, because its flexibility allows for seasonal adjustments.
 2. Members of foraging societies typically are socially mobile, having the ability to affiliate with more than one group during their lifetimes (e.g., through fictive kinship).
 3. The typical foraging society gender-based division of labor has women gathering and men hunting and fishing, with gathering contributing more to the group diet.
 4. All foraging societies distinguish among their members according to age and gender, but are relatively *egalitarian* (making only minor distinctions in status) compared to other societal types.

III. Cultivation

- A. Horticulture
 1. Horticulture is non-intensive plant cultivation, based on the use of simple tools and cyclical, non-continuous use croplands.
 2. Slash-and-burn cultivation and *shifting* cultivation are alternative labels for horticulture.
- B. Agriculture
 1. Agriculture is cultivation involving the continuous use of cropland, and is more labor-intensive (due to the ancillary needs generated by farm animals and cropland formation) than horticulture.
 2. Domesticated animals are commonly used in agriculture, mainly to ease labor and provide manure.
 3. Irrigation is one of the agricultural techniques that free cultivation from seasonal domination.
 4. Terracing is an agricultural technique which renders land otherwise too steep for most forms of cultivation (particularly irrigated cultivation) susceptible to agriculture (e.g., the Ifugao of Central Luzon, in the Philippines).
 5. The Costs and Benefits of Agriculture
 - a. Agriculture is far more labor-intensive and capital-intensive than horticulture, but does not necessarily yield more than horticulture (under ideal conditions) does.
 - b. Agriculture's long-term production (per area) is far more stable than horticulture's.

C. The Cultivation Continuum

1. In reality, non-industrial economies do not always fit cleanly into the distinct categories given above, thus it is useful to think in terms of a cultivation continuum.
2. A baseline distinction between agriculture and horticulture is that horticulture requires regular fallowing (the length of which varies), whereas agriculture does not.

D. Intensification: People and the Environment

1. Agriculture, by turning humans into ecological dominants, allows human populations to move into (and transform) a much wider range of environments than was possible prior to the development of cultivation.
2. Intensified food production is associated with sedentism and rapid population increases.
3. Most agriculturalists live in states because agricultural economies require regulatory mechanisms.

IV. Pastoralism

- A.** Pastoral economies are based upon domesticated herd animals, but members of such economies may get agricultural produce through trade or their own subsidiary cultivation.

B. Patterns of Pastoralism

1. Pastoral Nomadism: all members of the pastoral society follow the herd throughout the year.
2. Transhumance or Agro-pastoralism: part of the society follows the herd, while the other part maintains a home village (this is usually associated with some cultivation by the pastoralists).

V. Modes of Production

- A.** Economic anthropology studies economics in a comparative perspective.

1. An economy is a study of production, distribution, and consumption of resources.
2. Mode of production is defined as a way of organizing production--a set of social relations through which labor is deployed to wrest energy from nature using tools, skills, organization, and knowledge.

B. Production in Nonindustrial Populations

1. All societies divide labor according to gender and age, but the nature of these divisions varies greatly from society to society.
2. Valuation of the kinds of work ascribed to different groups varies, as well.

C. Means of Production

1. Means of production include land, labor, technology, and capital.
2. Land: the importance of land varies according to method of production — land is less important to a foraging economy than it is to a cultivating economy.
3. Labor, tools, and specialization: nonindustrial economies are usually but not always characterized by more cooperation and less specialized labor than is found in industrial societies.

D. Alienation in Industrial Economies

1. By definition, a worker is alienated from the product of her or his work when the product is sold, with the profit going to an employer, while the worker is paid a wage.
2. A consequence of alienation is that a worker has less personal investment in the product, in contrast to the more intimate relationship existing between worker and product in nonindustrial societies.
3. Alienation may generalize to encompass not only worker-product relations, but coworker relations, as well.

VI. Economizing and Maximization

- A. Classical economic theory assumes that individuals universally acted rationally, by economizing to maximize profits, but comparative data shows that people frequently respond to other motivations than profit.

VII. Distribution, Exchange

A. The Market Principle

1. The market principle obtains when exchange rates and organization are governed by an arbitrary money standard.
2. Price is set by the law of supply and demand.
3. The market principle is common to industrial societies.

B. Redistribution

1. Redistribution is the typical mode of exchange in chiefdoms and some non-industrial states.
2. In a redistributive system, product moves from the local level to the hierarchical center, where it is reorganized, and a proportion is sent back down to the local level.

C. Reciprocity

1. Reciprocity is exchange between social equals and occurs in three degrees: generalized, balanced, and negative.
2. Generalized reciprocity is most common to closely related exchange partners and involves giving with no *specific* expectation of exchange, but with a reliance upon similar opportunities being available to the giver (prevalent among foragers).
3. Balanced reciprocity involves more distantly related partners, and involves giving with the expectation of equivalent (but not necessarily immediate) exchange (common in tribal societies, and has serious ramifications for the relationship of trading partners).
4. Negative reciprocity involves very distant trading partners and is characterized by each partner attempting to maximize profit and an expectation of immediate exchange (e.g., market economies, and silent barter between Mbuti foragers and horticulturalist neighbors).

D. Coexistence of Exchange Principles

1. Most economies are not exclusively characterized by a single mode of reciprocity.
2. Even industrial economies have all three types of reciprocity.