

ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY





NEW

SZÉCHENYI PLAN

ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

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ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

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Week 6

Social categories, ties, and
economic activities

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Introduction

- Initial assumption: economy is embedded in social relations
- Connections between economic practices and social relations:
 - economy dominates
 - economy is shaped by other practices
 - mutual relations
- Other social relations:
 - religion, culture
 - kinship
 - gender
 - ethnicity
 - environment

Gender

- Relations between women and men
- Sex v. gender
- Different historical models:
 - one-sex or two-sex (Laqueur 1990)
- Gender is not necessarily binary:
 - hidjras, transsexuals, intersexuals
- Gender roles, gender stereotypes
- Gender inequalities:
 - economic inequalities
 - power imbalance
- Decisive factor: gendered division of labour

Feminist critique

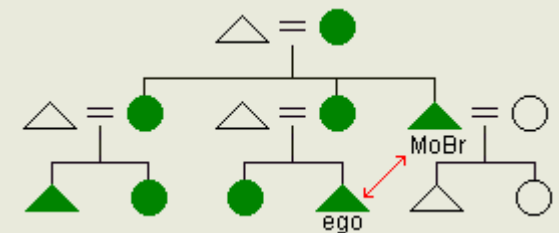
- Divide between the private and the public:
 - modern Western political and economic model posited as a universal one: bread winning man and the woman caring for children
 - biological metaphors, explanations
- Invisibility of women:
 - passive and unnoticed roles
 - Malinowski ignored the banana leaves exchange conducted by women (Weiner 1976)
- Exchange of women:
 - Lévi-Strauss: exchange of women between families (tribes) to avoid incest is the foundation of culture
 - objectification and commodification of women (Hartsock 1998)

Gendered division of labour

- Widespread in different societies yet it cannot be explained by biological properties: diverse patterns of the division of labour
- The notion of labour:
 - paid? performed outside of the household?
 - caring for children and household duties are often excluded
- Production ↔ reproduction (Meillassoux 1981)
 - capitalist production relies on a non-capitalist (domestic) reproduction of labour
 - oppression of women, double exploitation:
 - husbands control their wives' productive and reproductive capacities

Kinship systems

- All people belonging to an extended family
 - based on: descent, marriage, other social convention
 - Ju/'hoansi: kinship based on similarity of names
- Kinship systems:
 - diversity:
 - patri-, matri-, bilateral lineages
 - nuclear family ↔ extended clan
 - kinship terminology
 - complex systems: intertwined (and often contradicting) system of obligations and entitlements
- Decreasing importance of kin relations based on descent, increasing importance of kins of choice (Strathern 1992, Weston 1997)



Kinship and reciprocity

- Economic relations between member of kin groups follow different logic: reciprocity is dominant
- Correlation between kin distance and form of reciprocity (Sahlins 1972)
 - the closer the kin, the more general (\Leftrightarrow negative) the reciprocity
- Pooling resources: household as an economic unit
 - does not mean no inequality within the household (inequality in decision making, work and consumption)
- “Kaláka”: working for other members of the community as a favour or based on reciprocity
 - 1980s Hungary: decrease in state provided services, increase in informal economy \Rightarrow increase in kaláka

Strengthening kin relations

- Strengthening kin relations and sense of community through gifting
- Often linked to rites of passage (birth, becoming adult, marriage, or death)
- Bridewealth
 - goods from relatives of groom to relatives of brides
 - transferring control over women, validating marriage agreement
 - most prestigious goods
 - Nuers (Southern Sudan)
 - ~40 cows
 - Evans-Pritchard 1940



Gift giving among relatives

- Christmas gift
 - Carrier (1995)
 - emergence of modern capitalism: alienation
 - impersonal world of work (exchange) ↔ personal world of household (gift)
 - problem: gifts come from the market, from exchange
 - appropriation: converting commodities into personal gifts:
 - only objects without obvious use value (nothing that would be bought)
 - packaging
 - moralizing discourses



Inheritance

- Intergenerational transmission of cumulated wealth
- High variety, but strongly regulated:
 - matri- ↔ patrilineal
 - impartible ↔ partible
 - primogeniture ↔ ultimogeniture
- Reproduction of status, power and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1972)
- Diverging devolution linked to monogamy and advanced agriculture (Goody 1976)
- Possibility of last will:
 - inheritance relationships are based on, but rather constitutive of kinship relationships (Finch & Mason 2000)
 - “negotiated relationships”

Ethnicity

- System of relationships between culturally different groups
 - language, religion, descent
- At the same time:
 - identity and social organisation
 - cultural difference and structural factors (class position)
 - individual agency and systemic processes
- Categorization:
 - by people outside of the group (out-group) (stigma, stereotypes)
 - by members of the group (in-group)
- Changing, dynamic phenomenon (social construction)

Ethnic division of labour

- Different ethnic groups are concentrated to different occupations
- They specialise because of ethnic differences or occupational specialization produces / reproduces ethnicity
- Swat Valley, Pakistan (Bart 1956)
 - three ethnic groups, three ecological niche
 - 10 years later: intergroup competition, ethnic boundaries transgressed
- Samis, Norway (Thuen 1995)
 - Norwegian fishermen v. Sami reindeer herders
 - industrialization of reindeer herding, territorial mixing
 - ethnic separation remains: territorial claims

Ethnicity as a resource

- Migrant workers:
 - role of ethnic networks is crucial
 - information, reference for jobs, lodging, financial help
 - urban ecology: migrants arriving to Chicago (Park 1952)
 - segregation \Rightarrow acculturation
- Ethnic entrepreneurs:
 - ethnic groups with “entrepreneurial spirit”
 - commodification of ethnic codes: tourism, restaurants (Halter 2000)
 - exploitation of those belonging to their ethnic community

Ethnic entrepreneurs

- Kebab sellers in Berlin (Caglar 1995):
 - Turkish migrants, considerable industry
 - food developed for local market: does not exist in Turkey
 - guild-like structure: standardization, price cartel, supplier monopoly
 - 1960s: strong Turkish ethnic symbols
 - 1990s: McDöner, SuperDöner
 - explanation: change in ethnic mobility patterns



Ethnic entrepreneurs

- Chinese buffets in Budapest (Magyar 2003):
 - “domesticated Chineseness”
 - migration chains
 - apprenticeship (learning Hungarian taste)
 - ⇒ own business
 - cooperation and coordination:
 - eliminating adverse competition
 - spreading information
 - access to supplier networks
 - economic interdependence
 - mixture of Chinese cultural codes and neutral interiors



Religion

- System of symbols formulating conceptions of a general order of existence (Geertz 1966)
- Evolutionary theories (Tylor 1871):
 - animism \Rightarrow polytheism \Rightarrow monotheism
- Rationalization (Weber 1904)
 - modernity brings about secularization:
“Disenchantment”, “iron cage”
 - critiques:
 - United States: developed capitalism, strong religion
 - strengthening of religious fundamentalism
 - occult economies (Comaroff és Comaroff 2005)
 - can model of rational decision maker be applied outside of modern Western culture?

Religion and entrepreneurial ethic

- Max Weber (1904): *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*
 - protestant ethos was necessary precursor to emergence of capitalism
 - debate with Marx: it was not capitalism that brought the capitalist spirit, emergence of capitalist spirit needed for capitalism to be formed
 - worldly asceticism, temperance, work ethic, rationalization
- Geertz (1963)
 - lively trader city in Java ↔ traditional Bali city
 - explanation: Muslim ↔ Hindu religion