

# ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

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## Week 6

# Social categories, ties, and economic activities

## 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

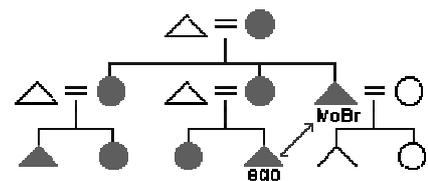
- Divide between the private and the public:
  - modern Western political and economic model posited as a universal one: bread winning man and the woman caring for children
  - biological metaphors, explanations
- Invisibility of women:
  - passive and unnoticed roles
  - Malinowski ignored the banana 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 ⇒ 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
- 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 and 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

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