

## Making a Living

Lee Chapters 1-4 and Eating Christmas in Kalahari ch. 5

Cultural ecology and cultural materialism-research  
subsistence-how one makes a living, gets food  
how one adapts

**SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS:** the ways societies transform the material resources of the environment into food, clothing and shelter  
aka modes of production

respond to: seasonal variation in environment and environmental variations like drought, flood or animal diseases

Each subsistence strategy

- supports a level of population density
- productivity or yield per person per unit of land
- efficiency( yield per person per hour of labor invested)
- involves some form of trade and exchange

**ECOLOGICAL MODEL:** a model that views a culture as part of a larger global ecological system with each aspect of the system interacting with all of the other parts

- culture meets biological needs first
- cultural ecology studies how a society adapts to its environment
- adaptation is the relationship of an organism to its environment
  - human adaptations mostly cultural not biological
  - cultural ecology is both bio and cultural

cultural materialism is adaptation to the environment in order to survive(environment-subsistence practice-social organization-cultural practices)  
material explanation for why cultures practice what they do

## TYPES OF SUBSISTENCE

**FORAGING:** fishing, hunting and gathering  
relies on food resources naturally available  
does not involve food production  
supports lower population densities b/c requires large areas and promotes nomadic lifestyle  
people generally eat themselves out of an area  
limits population growth  
puts a limit on social complexity  
has been strategy for 99% of the time humans have been on earth( paleo diet based on this part of human history)  
foraging allowed humans to spread throughout the world that thus allowed humans to find alternative forms of feeding themselves.

## SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES

about 10,000 years ago, human groups in the Old World, and 4,000 years later in the New World, began to domesticate plants and animals  
the domestication of plants and animals supported increased populations and sedentary village life became widespread  
not sudden took very long time

## HORTICULTURE

based on crop production without soil preparation, fertilizers, irrigation, or use of draft animals  
domesticated plants and animals  
hand tools no plows or draft animals  
Swidden/ slash and burn: clearing fields by felling trees and burning the brush  
sedentary lifestyle: requires people to stay in one place for long time until the soil is exhausted

increases carrying capacity as compared to foraging but still requires large surface area

poorer nutrition, food is not as diverse reducing vitamins and minerals

### PASTORALISM

a food producing strategy based on herding

requires extensive knowledge about environment breeding and maintaining animals

caring for domesticated animals which produces meat and milk

complex interaction among animals land and people

found along with cultivation and trading relations with food cultivators

raise carrying capacity of the land- taking exhausted land and increase how many people can live off of it

### TRANSUMANT PASTORALISM

found mostly in east africa

men and boys move the animals throughout the year as pastures become available at different altitudes or in different climatic zones

women and children and some men remain at a permanent village site

Maasai of Kenya

### NOMADIC PASTORALISM

the whole population moves with the herds throughout the year

there are no permanent villages

Ex tuareg of Mali Niger, algeria libya

due to national borders climate change environmental degradation and other factors nomadic movements have greatly decreased

Pastoralists can support larger carrying capacities for humans in INFERTILE land

improved nutrition

HIGH ENERGY BUDGET