

Southern africa until the early 1800s: encounters and transformations



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What were the three main economies that existed in southern Africa during the precolonial period, and in what sequence did they emerge? (2)

Three main economies that existed in southern Africa during precolonial period and they are namely hunter-gathering, hunter-herding of the Khoesan people and the mixed farming economies practised mainly by the Bantu speaking people, in that order of sequence

How did rainfall determine what kind of economy would be viable in the north- western as opposed to the north-eastern part of precolonial southern Africa? (2)

Rainfall is a crucial determinant of whether a community is going to survive or not and what type of economy can exist in the region, for dwelling, livestock, cultivation etc. Due to low rainfall in the North-western region, this limits vegetation to sparse karoo shrubs and succulents. Which is the contrary in the North-eastern part which consists of higher rainfall and therefore allowed for crop cultivation and even better vegetation; namely savannah, thorn bush and grassland.

How did the precolonial San ensure that their diet was balanced?

Hunting for meat and game ensured that they got their main source of protein, gathering then helped them get a wide variety plant based foods that encompassed fruits, nuts, roots, bulbs etc

Identify two strategies which the precolonial San used to ensure survival during periods of food scarcity.

The San incorporated two main strategies to ensure survival during harsh conditions. One main strategy being that they developed a nomadic lifestyle, gravitating to where resources are available, which required flexible and small group structures. This then being the next strategy, as having social structures that are flexible meant adaptability to the availability of food resources and being able to spread themselves over the landscape where necessary instead of depleting resources in one area.

Mention two functions of shamans (medicine people) in precolonial San society other than causing or healing illnesses. (2)

One function of a Shaman in precolonial San society is to be able to enter into a state of a trance and offer spiritual and ritual guidance to the San groups. Acting as a link between the physical and the supernatural worlds. Another was to provide healing and medicine and lastly they captured and told history of the San people in the form of the paintings on the rocks.

Give one economic similarity and one political difference between the roles of women in precolonial San and Khoekhoe society. (2)

One economic similarity of the roles of the women in the San and Khoekhoe is the division of labour and that both women roles comprised of being gatherers. However politically their women roles are different in that the San were relatively egalitarian whereas the Khoekhoe structure was more hierarchical. Therefore politically having women being considered inferior to their men, where they're not even admitted into the council of elders, unlike the San women who were allowed to be a part of the political organisation and decision making process.

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Provide two examples that indicate that precolonial Khoekhoe chiefs did not have unlimited political power. (2)

For starters, they were restricted to not owning land but just owning and managing herds. Moreover that they required the assistance of the Council of Elders to resolve disputes and needed to increase their political influence to ensure their position.

Identify two major differences between the economy of the mixed farming communities and that of the precolonial Khoekhoe and San. (2)

Crop cultivation and the farming (mining) and processing of minerals such as iron, not just vegetation

Provide two reasons for population growth in mixed farming communities after 200 AD. (2)

First reason for population growth is that there was a better supply of food which allowed for a balanced diet that could accommodate more people and raise healthier individuals and sustain them longer as a larger community. Also cause they were more stable and settled in their lifestyle, which meant no migration, this too allowed the population to grow without pressure to move.

Identify two differences between the political organisation of the late mixed farming communities and that of the early mixed farmers. (2)

Population put pressure on the early mixed farmers who required a form of a formal political structure however the late mixed farmers had an even larger

population which then required that political organisation was highly stratified, making apparent division between poor and old. But this also trickled over to the political and social structures where chiefdoms became a basic requirement and often this position was given to the wealthiest men.

Briefly explain why both the San and the Khoekhoe practised migration during the precolonial period. (10)

Based on the differing economies that each group practised, they migrated for different and sometimes similar reasons. The San being hunter gatherers, would migrate based on the availability of animals and food resources. If one area would be saturated or depleted, then there would be a systematic attempt to find another area elsewhere. Moreover not just animal or vegetation availability, but weather would also put pressure on this community to migrate and look for greener pastures. Sometimes it would also be a point of not putting pressure on the current area if there was a large band of them, then migration would be an option to spread out the food resources amongst the people.

The Khoekhoe being namely hunter-herders and as pastoralism became their main economy, their reasoning for migration would be to mostly to ensure that there was plentiful grazing are for their livestock, which would also require plenty water. Therefore when they were practising migration it was to avoid harsh weather conditions such as a drought. Moreover environmental stress would also push them to disperse and migrate elsewhere to ensure sufficient food for themselves as a group and their growing livestock.

Briefly discuss the response of the early mixed farming communities to the presence of hunter-gatherers and hunter-herders living in the areas in which they settled. (10)

The response of the early mixed farming communities moving into the habitation and presence of the hunter-gatherers and hunter-herders would've been that of hostility. It would have taken time for the San and Khoesan community to see the opportunity that could arise from living together and the possible mutual benefit. Instead they would have resorted to seeing it as competition for what would be considered already scarce resources and differing way of living. However the early mixed farming community approached this move somewhat delicately or strategically in that they were not aggressive in their inhabitation and didn't displace or take over the lands of the previous communities. They instead encouraged some form of co-habitation as for the hunter-herders, their settlement pattern would be very similar. Therefore for the Khoesan there was an opportunity for a mutually beneficial relationship as crop cultivation gave greater emphasis to livestock herding, which eventually saw the trade of skills and knowledge between the two communities. With the San people, there grew to be a great admiration for their knowledge of the regions and skills in making tools or even rain making. Later, all three communities were able to co-habit and transfer skills and knowledge between amongst each other, some even adopting new farming techniques etc.

Use your OWN words to explain why plagiarism is an unacceptable academic practice. (10)

Plagiarism has never been acceptable as it is the stealing and owning and/or using of another person's thoughts and ideas without correctly acknowledging the contribution of this. It is considered theft, as it's the stealing of another person's property. This can be avoided by following a referencing style and correctly annotating