

Mbuti culture

[Art & Culture](#)



Mbuti Culture Micheal Smith ANT 101 Prof. Tracy Samperio September 24, 2012 Mbuti Culture Mbuti primary mode of subsistence is Foraging. A forager lives as hunter and gatherer. The Mbuti hunt and gather food from the forest, and they trade as well for survival. They are referred as hunter-gatherer. They are a small band of kinship groups that are mobile. All foraging communities value their lifestyle. The Mbuti show how their kinships, beliefs and values, and economic organization are the key for their forager culture. In the forager societies kinship is one of the key importance of the lifestyle.

Mbuti are called the people of the forest, who believe they are the children of the forest. Their beliefs and values are very important to their culture also. The forager beliefs are that every living thing has a spirit (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The Mbuti beliefs are that the forest is for helping and giving thanks through their ritual ceremonies (Mosko, pg. 897). Forager see working together and sharing is the way to economic organization. The Mbuti has the same way to keep their economic organization working right. The Mbuti way of living shows team work instead of individual wealth.

The foraging societies believe family, marriage and kinship, gender, and age are the key principle of social organization (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The Mbuti are forest people. Their kinship is small and have different one throughout their band. They look to choose a partner, than start a family. The most common type of family in foraging societies is nuclear family (Nowak and Laird, 2010), which the Mbuti have also. In choosing a partner, there are some rules and understanding they have to meet. With the foraging societies, choosing a partner, they have to understand; they cannot have sexual intercourse until married and cannot marry within certain

kin. That means intermediate family. Once the Mbuti culture has chosen a partner and got marry; sexual intercourse can occur also. Ideally, marital love-making should take place in the forest, but it may also occur in the couple own hut (Mosko, pg. 899). The women that is married should have intercourse during menstruate cycle. This is how they conceive and start a family. The Mbuti common type of family is the nuclear family, just like most foraging societies. A nuclear family is composed of a mother and father and their children (Nowak and Laird, 2010).

The forager societies feel nuclear family adaptive to various situations that is why it is common (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The Mbuti are composed of bands which are multifamily groups. The bands are small groups of nuclear family, which changes every time they move. Sometime the bands are composed of a few extended families, each consisting of a nuclear family with married children, their spouses, and offspring (Nowak and Laird, 2010). Such a band composition works best in terms of cooperation and sharing (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The Mbuti bands establish a camp in the forest.

The nuclear families of the bands arrange their separate huts roughly in a circle around a central hearth (Mosko, pg. 903). The bands are what make up the Mbuti kinship. The forager society's beliefs and values may be different but have the same meaning. Like stated before, they believe that every living thing has a spirit (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The Mbuti main beliefs and values are the forest, avoiding violence, and their leisure time. The Mbuti see the forest as a symbol of their beliefs and values. The forest is a thing that has a spirit which helps them. They give thanks to the forest by ritual ceremonies.

The forest also plays an important part in the Mbuti pregnancy. “ Forest” itself, for virtually everything in Mbuti culture is related to the one idea (Mosko, pg. 897). The Mbuti do not believe the forest is a simple idea; they describe it as “ lover”, “ God of the Hunt”, and “ God of the Forest”, for some examples (Mosko, pg. 897). The forest is what the Mbuti base their lifestyles on. Foraging Societies try to avoid violence by working hard and dealing with other cultures like them. They work hard to feed their families. They value the idea of a family and working together. That is why their leisure time is so important.

Leisure time is used to spend time with the kin and friends, the foraging societies believe (Nowak and Laird, 2010). They work hard to find food and hunt for a couple of days and rest of the time is for leisure activities. The Mbuti have ritual that they do during their leisure time. They have a ceremony called molimo. It is performed by the men and is associated with singing and the use of a trumpet called the molimo (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The molimo ceremony used the molimo, a strictly forest institution, which young men are initiated after they have become successful hunters (Lee, pg. 44). This is how most of the leisure time goes to, the family. The forager culture has high value for working together and sharing (Nowak and Laird, 2010). Those values show how their economic organization works wells. They see economic importance as cultural tradition. This is how they survive also. It is easy for forager to move place to place because they don't have many material items. That is what makes the exchange process so easy also. The reciprocal economic systems are a form of exchange of goods and services that occurs between members of a kinship group (Nowak and Laird, 2010).

Foraging societies has a similar way of using this system. The amount of food and other resources occur immediately because they are mobile (Nowak and Laird, 2010). The exchange process is what keeps them going. Even though they are mobile, they can use the environment to storage material. The Mbuti are forager and show most of the forager society's way of living. The Mbuti has showed how their kinships, beliefs and values, and economic organization is the key for their forager culture. Reference Nowak, B. & Laird, P. (2010). Cultural Anthropology. Bridgepointeducation, Inc. Retrieved from: <http://content.ashford.edu>

The Symbols of " Forest": A Structural Analysis of Mbuti Culture and Social Organization Mark S. Mosko American Anthropologist , New Series, Vol. 89, No. 4 (Dec. , 1987), pp. 896-913 Published by: Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Anthropological Association Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/677863> The Mbuti Pygmies: An Ethnographic Survey by Colin M. Turnbull Review by: Richard B. Lee American Anthropologist , New Series, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Apr. , 1967), pp. 243-244 Published by: Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Anthropological Association Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/669466>