

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The human experience of social transformation: Insights from comparative archaeology

Michelle Hegmon^{1*}, Matthew A. Peeples^{1,2}, on behalf of the LTVTP-NABO collaboration³

1 School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, United States of America, **2** Center for Archaeology and Society, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, United States of America

3 LTVTP-NABO (Long-Term Vulnerability and Transformation Project–North Atlantic Bio-cultural Organization) collaboration contributing members are listed in the Acknowledgments.

* mhegmon@asu.edu



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Data Availability Statement: The numerical data used in this analysis are summarized in [Table 3](#), in the text. The analyses and information used to derive these data are presented in the Appendix, included as Supplement 1. The R computer code used to generate the analyses, the data in format readable by R, as well as a copy of Appendix 1, are also deposited in the Digital Archaeological Record (dAR) at <https://cdor.idr.org/collection/69115/> the human experience of social transformation: cross-cultural insights from qualitative-comparative analysis.

Abstract

Archaeologists and other scholars have long studied the causes of collapse and other major social transformations and debated how they can be understood. This article instead focuses on the human experience of living through those transformations, analyzing 18 transformation cases from the US Southwest and the North Atlantic. The transformations, including changes in human securities, were coded based on expert knowledge and data analyzed using Qualitative Comparative Analysis techniques. Results point to the following conclusions: Major transformations, including collapses, generally have a strong and negative impact on human security; flexible strategies that facilitate smaller scale changes may ameliorate those difficulties. Community security is strongly implicated in these changes; strong community security may minimize other negative changes. The relationships among the variables are complex and multi-causal; while social transformation may lead to declines in human securities, declining conditions of life can also push people to transform their societies in negative ways. Results show that some societies are better able to deal with difficulties than others. One important policy implication is that community security and local conditions can be instrumental both in helping people to cope with difficulties and in staving off some of those difficulties. A multi-scalar approach is essential as we face the increasing problems of climate change in the decades ahead.

Introduction

Bad news is also often big news. Of all the subjects investigated by archaeologists, few garner as much interest from the general public as the end of civilizations. Former President Obama is reported to be a fan of Jared Diamond's *Collapse* and discussed climate policies in response to a question about the collapse of civilizations [1,2]. Columnist Nicholas Kristof recently used Easter Island as an example in his column on the parable of self-destruction and climate

Structure And Social Transformation In Archaeology

Ludomir R Lozny



Structure And Social Transformation In Archaeology:

Time, Process and Structured Transformation in Archaeology James McGlade, Sander E. van der Leeuw, 2013-10-16 In a discipline which essentially studies how modern man came to be it is remarkable that there are hardly any conceptual tools to describe change. This is due to the history of the western intellectual and scientific tradition which for a long time favoured mechanics over dynamics and the study of stability over that of change. Change was primarily deemed due to external events in archaeology mainly climatic or environmental. Revolutionary innovations in the natural and life sciences often erroneously referred to as chaos theory suggest that there are ways to overcome this problem. A wide range of processes can be described in terms of dynamic systems and modern computing methods enable us to investigate many of their properties. This volume presents a cogent argument for the use of such approaches and a discussion of a number of its aspects by a range of scientists from the humanities, social and natural sciences and archaeology.

Archaeology of Households, Kinship, and Social Change Lacey B. Carpenter, Anna Marie Prentiss, 2021-11-25 Archaeology of Households, Kinship and Social Change offers new perspectives on the processes of social change from the standpoint of household archaeology. This volume develops new theoretical and methodological approaches to the archaeology of households pursuing three critical themes: household diversity in human residential communities with and without archaeologically identifiable houses; interactions within and between households that explicitly considers impacts of kin and non-kin relationships; and lastly change as a process that involves the choices made by members of households in the context of larger societal constraints. Encompassing these themes, authors explore the role of social ties and their material manifestations within the house dwelling or other constructed space; how the household relates to other social units; how households consolidate power and control over resources; and how these changes manifest at multiple scales. The case studies presented in this volume have broader implications for understanding the drivers of change, the ways households create the contexts for change, and how households serve as spaces for invention, reaction, and/or resistance. Understanding the nature of relationships within households is necessary for a more complete understanding of communities and regions as these ties are vital to explaining how and why societies change. Taking a comparative outlook with case studies from around the world, this volume will inform students and professionals researching household archaeology and be of interest to other disciplines concerned with the relationship between social networks and societal change.

The Limits of Settlement Growth Roland Fletcher, 1995-09-29 In this study Roland Fletcher argues that the built environment becomes a constraint on the long-term development of a settlement. It is costly to move settlements or to demolish and rebuild from scratch, so the initial layout and buildings and the forms of communication that result may come to shackle further development and also to place constraints on social and political change. Using this theoretical framework, Dr Fletcher reviews worldwide settlement growth over the past 15 000 years and concludes with a major discussion of the great transformations of human settlements from mobile to sedentary, sedentary to

urban and urban to industrial This book is an ambitious contribution to archaeological theory and the questions it raises also have implications for the future of urban settlement

Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity Ian Morris,1992-10-22 In this innovative book Dr Morris seeks to show the many ways in which the excavated remains of burials can and should be a major source of evidence for social historians of the ancient Graeco Roman world Burials have a far wider geographical and social range than the surviving literary texts which were mainly written for a small elite They provide us with unique insights into how Greeks and Romans constituted and interpreted their own communities In particular burials enable the historian to study social change Ian Morris illustrates the great potential of the material in these respects with examples drawn from societies as diverse in time space and political context as archaic Rhodes classical Athens early imperial Rome and the last days of the western Roman empire

Global Social Archaeologies Koji Mizoguchi,Claire E Smith,2019-06-27 Global Social Archaeologies contributes to the active engagement of contemporary social archaeology through addressing issues such as postcolonialism community heritage and Indigenous rights It addresses the major challenge of breaking down global divides especially in relation to fundamental human rights inequality and inequities of wealth power and access to knowledge This authoritative volume authored by the current and past presidents of the World Archaeological Congress introduces readers to the various theoretical and methodological tools available for the investigation of the past Taking into account the implications for contemporary societies it offers a new framework for social archaeologies in a globalised world By combining new data from their research with an innovative synthesis and analysis of leading research by others the authors have developed fresh conceptualisations and understandings of archaeology as a social practice and of the ways in which it simultaneously straddles the past present and future Exploring a range of case studies and enhanced by a wealth of illustrations Global Social Archaeologies highlights a new approach to archaeology one that places human rights at the core of archaeological theory and practice

Agency in Archaeology Marcia-Anne Dobres,John Robb,2014-06-11 Agency in Archaeology is the first critical volume to scrutinise the concept of agency and to examine in depth its potential to inform our understanding of the past Theories of agency recognise that human beings make choices hold intentions and take action This offers archaeologists scope to move beyond looking at broad structural or environmental change and instead to consider the individual and the group Agency in Archaeology brings together nineteen internationally renowned scholars who have very different and often conflicting stances on the meaning and use of agency theory to archaeology The volume is composed of five theoretically based discussions and nine case studies drawing on regions from North America and Mesoamerica to Western and central Europe and ranging in subject from the late Pleistocene hunter gatherers to the restructuring of gender relations in the north eastern US

Petrification Processes in Matter and Society Sophie Hüglin,Alexander Gramsch,Liisa Seppänen,2021-08-13 Petrification is a process but it also can be understood as a concept This volume takes the first steps to manifest materialize or petrify the concept of petrification

and turn it into a tool for analyzing material and social processes The wide array of approaches to petrification as a process assembled here is more of a collection of possibilities than an attempt to establish a firm law generating theory Divided into three parts this volume's twenty plus authors explore petrification both as a theoretical concept and as a contextualized material and social process across geological prehistoric and historic periods Topics connecting the various papers are properties of materials preferences and choices of actors the temporality of matter being and becoming the relationality between actors matter things and space landscape urban space built space and perceptions of the following generations dealing with the petrified matter practices and social relations Contributors to this volume study specifically whether particular processes of petrification are confined to the material world or can be seen as mirroring following triggering or contradicting changes in social life and general world views Each of the authors explores for a period or a specific feature practices and changes that led to increased conformity and regularity Some authors additionally focus on the methods and scrutinize them and their applications for their potential to create objects of investigation things people periods in order to raise awareness for these or to shape or invent categories This volume is of interest to archaeologists geologists architectural historians conservationists and historians

Complexity and Co-evolution Elizabeth Garnsey, James McGlade, 2006-01-01

in my opinion readers should find in this book both several remarkable insights concerning basic statements of evolutionary theorising and concrete results that can be acquired by applying such basic statements in computer simulation models and in various fields of analysis Mauro Lombardi The Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation Complexity theory first emerged three decades or so ago but only recently has its potential relevance for the study of social and economic phenomena really begun to be recognised This timely collection of essays clearly demonstrates both conceptually and empirically how complexity theory ideas can provide considerable insight into how socio economic systems cities societies industries technologies and economies evolve and adapt over time It is essential reading for anyone interested in how order and evolution emerge out of the seemingly chaotic socio economic world around us Ron Martin University of Cambridge UK I read Complexity and Co Evolution with real pleasure These authors have done the near impossible they have made the concepts of a new and evolving science accessible to people who can apply it in practical ways The clarity of writing reflects the sort of confidence only the truly informed can muster for they need no jargon to cover confusions Their mastery allows them to present the essentials in simple unadorned forms and through genuinely illustrative examples Any manager or director trying to navigate dynamic markets can use this book to learn new ways of thinking explore new possibilities and study historical experiences Robert Artigiani United States Naval Academy Current thinking about evolutionary dynamics increasingly relies on co evolution and co evolution increasingly implies complex dynamics of one sort or another This volume brings together a capable and well balanced group of thinkers on these topics who explore these deeply related concepts with up to date and advanced tools and concepts For anyone wishing to learn about the latest developments in these rapidly

developing areas this book is highly recommended J Barkley Rosser Jr James Madison University US This book applies ideas and methods from the complexity perspective to key concerns in the social sciences exploring co evolutionary processes that have not yet been addressed in the technical or popular literature on complexity Authorities in a variety of fields including evolutionary economics innovation and regeneration studies urban modelling and history re evaluate their disciplines within this framework The book explores the complex dynamic processes that give rise to socio economic change over space and time with reference to empirical cases including the emergence of knowledge intensive industries and decline of mature regions the operation of innovative networks and the evolution of localities and cities Sustainability is a persistent theme and the practicability of intervention is examined in the light of these perspectives Specialists in disciplines that include economics evolutionary theory innovation industrial manufacturing technology change and archaeology will find much to interest them in this book In addition the strong interdisciplinary emphasis of the book will attract a non specialist audience interested in keeping abreast of current theoretical and methodological approaches through evidence based and practical examples

Eventful Archaeologies Douglas J. Bolender, 2010-09-17 What is the role of events when evaluating the long term significance of the archaeological record Given that the event is a key mechanism for structural change are historical transformations always eventful And what is the relationship between specific events and other temporalities of change In this notable volume researchers from Germany to Iceland to New York from across the sweep of European and North American prehistory and history explore the promise and challenges of events the potent intersections of history and archaeology Of special interest are the potential of events for better understanding volcanic disasters the Neolithic argonauts of the western Mediterranean Roman provincial archaeology early Neolithic southern Britain change during the Paleolithic era the Iron Age Heuneburg Mud brick Wall colonial New York and households Indispensable for historians archaeologists and those ethnohistorians and anthropologists working within a long term historical framework Eventful Archaeologies offers a more holistic and richly textured approach for comprehending cultural change

Sculpture and Social Dynamics in Preclassic Mesoamerica Julia Guernsey, 2012-07-23 This book examines the functions of sculpture during the Preclassic period in Mesoamerica and its significance in statements of social identity Julia Guernsey situates the origins and evolution of monumental stone sculpture within a broader social and political context and demonstrates the role that such sculpture played in creating and institutionalizing social hierarchies This book focuses specifically on an enigmatic type of public monumental sculpture known as the potbelly that traces its antecedents to earlier small domestic ritual objects and ceramic figurines The cessation of domestic rituals involving ceramic figurines along the Pacific slope coincided not only with the creation of the first monumental potbelly sculptures but with the rise of the first state level societies in Mesoamerica by the advent of the Late Preclassic period The potbellies became central to the physical representation of new forms of social identity and expressions of political authority during this time of dramatic change

Burial and Social Change in First

Millennium BC Italy Elisa Perego, Rafael Scopacasa, 2016-11-30 In the first millennium BC communities in Italy underwent crucial transformations which scholars have often subsumed under the heading of state formation namely increased social stratification the centralization of political power and in some cases urbanization Most research has tended to approach the phenomenon of state formation and social change in relation to specific territorial dynamics of growth and expansion changing modes of exploitation of food and other resources over time and the adoption of selected socio ritual practices by the ruling elites in order to construct and negotiate authority In contrast comparatively little attention has been paid to the question of how these key developments resonated across the broader social transect and how social groups other than ruling elites both promoted these changes and experienced their effects The chief aim of this collection of 14 papers is to harness innovative approaches to the exceptionally rich mortuary evidence of first millennium BC Italy in order to investigate the roles and identities of social actors who either struggled for power and social recognition or were manipulated and exploited by superior authorities in a phase of tumultuous sociopolitical change throughout the entire Mediterranean basin Contributors provide a diverse range of approaches in order to examine how power operated in society how it was exercised and resisted and how this can be studied through mortuary evidence Section 1 addresses the construction of identity by focusing mainly on the manipulation of age ethnic and gender categories in society in regions and sites that reached notable power and splendor in first millennium BC Italy These include Etruria Latium Campania and the rich settlement of Verucchio in Emilia Romagna Each paper in Section 2 offers a counterpoint to a contribution in Section 1 with an overall emphasis on scholarly multivocality and the multiplicity of the theoretical approaches that can be used to read the archaeological evidence

Archaeological Method and Theory Linda Ellis, 2003-12-16 This Encyclopedia brings together the most recent scientific information on a collection of subjects that are too often and inconveniently treated in separate publications It provides a survey of archaeological method and theory as well as the application of physical and biological sciences in archaeological research Every aspect of archaeological work is represented from the discovery process to the ultimate disposition of materials Thus the reader will find entries on subject matter covering disciplinary theory legislation affecting the work of archaeologists pre excavation surveying excavation methodology on site conservation techniques post excavation analysis The rapid evolution of analytical technology is often superficially treated or not covered at all in textbooks or other commonly available sources Here the latest refinements in techniques such as radiometric dating stable isotopic analysis and the PCR technique of DNA analysis are presented clearly and authoritatively The discussion of these techniques is amplified by including results of the work of professionals conducting interdisciplinary research and by covering the methodological enhancements provided by the physical and natural sciences Cultural property legislation regardless of its country of origin has affected how archaeologists conduct their work This encyclopedia covers all major U S legislation developed for the protection of cultural property including the recent Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and offers a

substantial article on worldwide legislation concerning the reburial of human remains and its effects on the present and future practice of archaeology Without some sort of conservation program at the point of excavation valuable materials may be inadvertently contaminated or destroyed Many simple and low cost techniques to promote both sample integrity and long term preservation for major classes of materials are described in this volume Traditional treatments of method and theory usually focus on prehistoric periods and are limited in their geographic range This volume includes discussions based on various historical periods on different continents as reflected in entries such as Historical Archaeology Industrial Archaeology Medieval Archaeology and Classical Archaeology **Local Identities** Fokke Albert Gerritsen, 2003 Gerritsen's study investigates how small groups of people households or local communities constitute and represent their social identity by shaping the landscape around them Examining things like house building and habitation cremation and burial and farming and ritual practice Gerritsen develops a new theoretical and empirical perspective on the practices that create collective senses of identity and belonging An explicitly diachronic approach reveals processes of cultural and social change that have previously gone unnoticed providing a basis for a much more dynamic history of the late prehistoric inhabitants of this region

Encyclopedia of Historical Archaeology Charles E. Orser Jr, 2002-09-11 The Encyclopedia of Historical Archaeology is a ground breaking compendium of information about this ever growing field Concentrating on the post 1400 period as well as containing generic explanations of historical archaeology where needed the encyclopedia is compiled by over 120 experts from around the world and contains more than 370 entries covering important concepts and sites *Archaeological Perspectives on Burial Practices and Societal Change* Frida Espolin Norstein, Irene Selsvold, 2024-11-07 Archaeological Perspectives on Burial Practices and Societal Change examines the relationships between burial practices and societal transformations in the past This book highlights the centrality of burials as archaeological material for the understanding of societal change It critically reassesses past approaches and suggests new ways of understanding the relationship between burial practice and change in archaeology Particular attention is given to archaeological periods where change was especially intense so called transition periods The volume has a wide chronological and geographical scope spanning the Early Bronze Age to the present day and ranging geographically from Cyprus to Scandinavia Recent developments within archaeological methods and theory have sparked discussions about the mechanisms and reasons behind societal changes in the past This book aims to revive interest in understanding and explaining these changes which are fundamental questions to the discipline of archaeology The volume is organised into three thematic parts The first Practices Communities and Agents of Change examines the roles individuals and communities play in transforming burial customs highlighting the non linear and often chaotic nature of these changes The second theme Migration Identities and Narratives of Change challenges traditional narratives of migration and identity formation proposing more nuanced understandings of how burial practices encapsulate these complex processes The final theme Transitions Tempos and Complexities explores the multifaceted nature

of societal transitions emphasising the importance of diverse tempos and scales in understanding these shifts Archaeological Perspectives on Burial Practices and Societal Change is for students and researchers in archaeology primarily mortuary archaeology and archaeological theory

'Isaac went out to the field': Studies in Archaeology and Ancient Cultures in Honor of Isaac Gilead Haim Goldfus, Mayer I. Gruber, Shamir Yona, Peter Fabian, 2019-04-30 Isaac went out to the field Genesis 24 63 presents 28 articles honouring Professor Isaac Gilead on his 71st birthday Papers on prehistoric and proto historic archaeology reflect the focus of the honoree s teaching and research while other subjects including Biblical and Near Eastern studies explore Gilead s other areas of interest

Comparative Archaeologies Ludomir R Lozny, 2011-04-06 Archaeology as with all of the social sciences has always been characterized by competing theoretical propositions based on diverse bodies of locally acquired data In order to fulfill local regional expectations different goals have been assigned to the practitioners of Archaeology in different regions These goals might be entrenched in local politics or social expectations behind cultural heritage research This comprehensive book explores regional archaeologies from a sociological perspective to identify and explain regional differences in archaeological practice as well as their existing similarities This work covers not only the currently dominant Anglo American archaeological paradigm but also Latin America Western and Eastern Europe Asia and Africa all of which have developed their own unique archaeological traditions The contributions in this work cover these alternative archaeologies in the context of their own geographical political and socio economic settings as well as the context of the currently accepted mainstream approaches

Marriage Gifts and Social Change in Ancient Palestine T. M. Lemos, 2010-03-31 In Marriage Gifts and Social Change in Ancient Palestine T M Lemos traces changes in the marriage customs of ancient Palestine over the course of several hundred years The most important of these changes was a shift in emphasis from bridewealth to dowry the latter of which clearly predominated in the Hellenistic and Roman periods Whereas previous scholarship has often attributed these shifts to the influence of foreign groups Lemos connects them instead with a transformation that occurred in Palestine s social structure during the very same period In the early Iron Age Israel was a kinship based society with a subsistence economy but as the centuries passed it became increasingly complex and developed marked divisions between rich and poor At the same time the importance of its kinship groups waned greatly Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach that draws heavily on anthropological research cultural theory archaeological evidence and historical critical methods Lemos posits that shifts in marriage customs were directly related to these wider social changes

Gathering Hopewell Christopher Carr, D. Troy Case, 2005-07-25 Among the most socially and personally vocal archaeological remains on the North American continent are the massive and often complexly designed earthen architecture of Hopewellian peoples of two thousand years ago their elaborately embellished works of art made of glistening metals and stones from faraway places and their highly formalized mortuaries In this book twenty one researchers in interwoven efforts immerse themselves and the reader in this vibrant archaeological record in order to richly reconstruct the

societies rituals and ritual interactions of Hopewellian peoples By finding the faces actions and motivations of Hopewellian peoples as individuals who constructed knowable social roles the authors explore in a personalized and locally contextualized manner the details of Hopewellian life leadership its sacred and secular power bases recruitment and formalization over time systems of social ranking and prestige animal totemic clan organization kinship structures and sodalities gender roles prestige work load and health community organization in its tri scalar residential symbolic and demographic forms intercommunity alliances and changes in their strategies and expanses over time and interregional travels for power questing pilgrimage healing tutelage and acquiring ritual knowledge This book is useful to scholars graduate students and advanced undergraduates interested in the workings and development of social complexity at local and interregional scales recent theoretical developments in the anthropology of the topics listed above the prehistory of eastern North America its history of intellectual development and Native American ritual symbolism and belief *Buddhist Landscapes in Central India* Julia Shaw, 2016-08-12 The monumental bias of Buddhist archaeology has hampered our understanding of the socio religious mechanisms that enabled early Buddhist monks to establish themselves in new areas To articulate these relationships Shaw presents here the first integrated study of settlement archaeology and Buddhist history carried out in the area around Sanchi a Central Indian UNESCO World Heritage site Her comprehensive data rich and heavily illustrated work provides an archaeological basis for assessing theories regarding the dialectical relationship between Buddhism and surrounding lay populations It also sheds light on the role of the introduction of Buddhism in changing settlement patterns This volume was originally published in 2007 by the British Association of South Asian Studies

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