

Modes of Production

KARL MARX DEFINED modes of production in *Das Kapital* (1867) as the means (e.g., labor and materials) and relations (e.g., property and power) that when combined enable people to change their environment into useful objects (e.g., food and transportation). Marx defined several modes of production (kin-ordered, Asiatic, slave, tributary, capitalist, socialist, and communist). Of these modes of production, three (kin-ordered, tributary, and capitalist production) have been most useful in understanding the political economy of current cultures around the world.

In kin-ordered production, kinship relations are the basis of labor, which is categorized by marriage and/or other kinship relationships between individuals. For example, husbands may hunt with other men of their patriline while wives work in gardens with their sisters. Use is the basis of production rather than exchange. In these classless societies, there is a reutilization of social control. Sharing is a norm and surpluses are not stored, but consumed. Eric Wolf identified two subtypes of kin-ordered production. The first is the equivalent of a band society, which does not modify the landscape, but gathers resources and consumes them. The second subtype is where the environment is subject to transformation through social labor; the environment itself becomes a means of production, an instrument on which there is expenditure of labor.

Tributary production occurs when peasants produce their own food, but rulers extract tribute politically or militarily. The state usually owns the property and the peasants have little, if any, political power. Rulers maintained their elite status by exploiting the peasants, accumulating wealth, controlling the exchange systems and using force to keep peasants in their subordinate position.

The tributary mode of production most often occurs in societies with chiefdom political organization. There are two subsets of the tributary mode: civilizations and mercantile wealth. Civilizations use politics to provide a mode of production within a hegemonic society based on supernatural origins and validation. Mercantile wealth uses merchants to control the profit from the trade of products and goods.

In the capitalist mode of production the means of production (e.g., land and factories) is owned by capitalists (elite class/bourgeoisie). This type of production occurs in modern industrial states. The proletariat (working class) cannot own the means of production and must sell their labor to the capitalists. Capitalists use the sale of surplus commodities to increase their means of production, which increases the divide between the classes.

Of kin-ordered, tributary, and capitalist modes of production, the latter has been most useful in understanding how large states affect indigenous peoples around the world. According to Marx, the continuing repression of the proletariat (people who work but do not own the means of production) occurs when the capitalists control government and make the rules of the society (laws). Members of the capitalist class select representatives who pass laws that serve their own interests. For example, societies such as the United Kingdom and the United States have enacted laws that required people who are not property owners (proletariats) to work for wages and prohibited workers from organizing into labor unions. The police protected the capitalists and suppressed any protest of unfair working conditions.

By controlling the distribution of information, the capitalists can create, for their own benefit, an ideology of their superiority. According to Marx, if the capitalists control institutions that transmit information and ideas, they influence how proletariats view the world. Through institutions such as churches, schools, and newspapers, the capitalists promote the view that the capitalist dominance of society is in the best interests of all. The church, for example, encourages the proletariat to accept its fate because it is "God's will," and/or it teaches proletariats that their poverty is not the fault of the capitalists but is due to the proletariat's "fall from grace."

Similarly, through control of educational institutions and mass communications media, the capitalists convince proletariats that the capitalists use their power to the net benefit of everyone in society. The capitalists use the media to popularize the view that the society would perish without them. In short, the aim of an ideology of class is to convince the proletariat that its position in society is as it should be.

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SEE ALSO: Capitalism; Colonialism; Communism; First Nations; Indigenous Peoples; Industrialization; Livelihood; Marx, Karl; Mass Media; Subsistence.

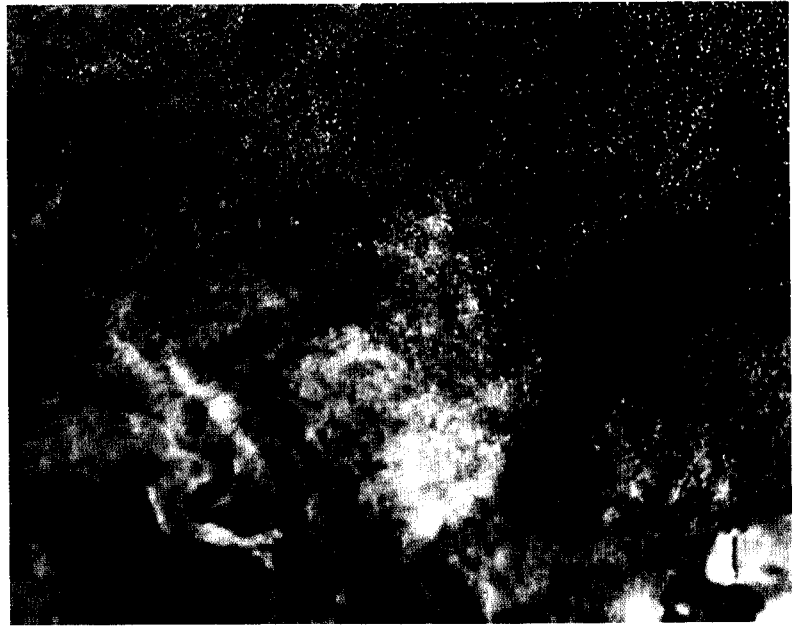
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Mold

MOLD BELONGS TO the fungi group and is closely related to mildew, rusts, and mushrooms. As it does not produce chlorophyll, it does not conduct photosynthesis, and so lives on matter made by other plants, by animals, or on decaying matter, as do bacteria and other fungi. Mold develops from a spore, which is a tiny particle broadcast as its seeds. Mold requires a damp or wet organic surface upon which it can feed and grow. When a mold spore lands on a surface, such as a piece of bread in a damp climate, it begins to grow by producing tiny fibers (hyphae). The roots of the mold are the hyphae that become rhizoids. Stolons are the hyphae threads that spread on the surface of the organic material that is host to the mold. If the mold is able to grow to maturity, it will grow hyphae that stand upright and become spore casings. Spores are released from the hyphae that can be carried off by air currents or water to new locations.

Mold can be helpful to human beings. Blue mold, which often appears greenish in color, is familiar to humans as the mold on French Roquefort cheese, Stilton cheese, and many other natural blue cheeses. These cheeses are aged in places where the mold is allowed to grow on the cheese rounds or blocks so that it can give the cheese its flavor naturally. Blue cheese is made artificially by injecting the cheese in a manufacturing process so that the mold grows on the cheese more rapidly. The mold of blue cheese produces a chemical that aided the development of antibiotics. Sir Alexander Fleming (1881–1955)



Toxic mold is a major problem in buildings that have been flooded and has been the subject of growing litigation.

developed penicillin from the mold *Penicillium notatum*.

Mold can be harmful to humans or their possessions. In areas of high humidity mold can grow on shoes, clothes, or other surfaces causing damage. It can grow in closed containers where there is no light, such as in the near freezing damp of a refrigerator. Mold can also destroy food. Green mold is familiar to most people as the mold that grows on bread; humans cannot eat this mold. The great Irish Famine (1845–49) was caused by the water mold *Phytophthora infestans*. It produced a late blight of potatoes, destroying the crop and causing millions of the Irish to starve to death or emigrate.

Breathing mold spores may harm human health. If mold can grow in the respiratory tract it can cause allergies. Or powerful toxins may be released and a weakening of the immune system or other major health problems may result. Air conditioning systems may develop mold that causes illnesses. The presence of toxic mold is a major problem in buildings or houses that have been flooded. It has also been the subject of growing litigation against owners who sold houses or buildings to buyers without disclosing the presence of a toxic mold problem.

SEE ALSO: Air Conditioning; Famine; Fungi; Microbes.