

The Origin of Inequalities in Early Societies: An ABM Model

Pawel Sobkowicz¹ 

¹*National Centre for Nuclear Research, Poland*

Abstract

We present results of an agent based model, describing the origins of inequalities and social stratification in certain class of affluent hunter-gatherer societies. These societies, defined in the anthropological literature as transegalitarian, are characterized by availability of surplus resources and emergence of social inequalities, predating more complex structures found in sedentary agricultural communities. The relative simplicity of social structure allows to create a model, which focuses on a few key drivers of the process. These are: variability of certain individual characteristics (skills and talents, luck, greediness) and effects of the tendency for assortative matching. Our results provide insights into the relative importance of these individual and societal conditions in the appearance of stable stratification in initially egalitarian societies. Depending on the choice of which individual characteristics are more prized by the society (skills and contributions versus accumulated and used surplus wealth), the resulting structure may be more meritocratic or oligarchic

Keywords

Agent based model, Inequality, Meritocracy, Greed

Current status of the research is: Under-review in a journal