

Some political aspects of craft specialization

Peter Peregrine

Introduction

The question I address in this paper is why there appears to be a relationship between advances in craft specialization and the emergence of powerful elites. As Service (1962: 148) points out: 'One of the most striking things about the evolution of culture is the rapid improvement in the products of craft specialization at the point of the rise of chiefdoms.' Although not a universal phenomenon, this rapid improvement in craftsmanship is often dramatic among personal ornaments used by elites to display status: in China, for example, ornaments of bronze and finely worked jade made their first appearance with the Lung-shan (Longshan) cultures (Chang 1986: 363–4); in Egypt, the Gerzean period saw not only the appearance of complex social and economic institutions, but also of craft specialists producing ornaments of gold, silver, lapis, and cast copper (Trigger 1983: 32–4); in Peru, the emergence of the Chavin cult also saw the beginnings of craft specialization in the production of sophisticated personal ornaments from precious metals and semi-precious stones (Lumbreras 1974: 79–80).

The relationship between advances in craft specialization and the emergence of powerful elites has often been seen as a product of environmental risk management coordinated through elites (Service 1962; Sanders and Price 1968; cf. Flannery 1968), or of entrepreneurial activity fostered by an expanding economic system (Engels 1972; Jacobs 1984). I suggest, however, that this relationship is more directly rooted in strategies elites use to maintain or increase their political authority. I argue that elites actively employ craftsmen and their products to further their own political agendas, and that in many cases, particularly where personal ornaments are used extensively as symbols of status and authority, craft specialists act as much as political personnel as they do entrepreneurs or artisans (Friedman and Rowlands 1977; Blanton and Feinman 1984; Brumfiel and Earle 1987).

Several terms need to be defined before proceeding with this discussion. Following Miller and Tilley (1984: 5), I define power as the capacity to modify or transform, enabling individuals to alter the conditions of their existence and the outcomes of determinate situations. I define authority as the ability for individuals to exercise power by virtue of office, and I assume that offices are maintained through ideology, which legitimates the offices by making their presence seem part of the natural order of things (Shanks and Tilley

1982: 130–2; Miller and Tilley 1984). I also argue that material objects may be used symbolically to display and reinforce ideology, and as reflective of ideology, they can be used by individuals to legitimize their possession of an office (Bourdieu 1979; Shanks and Tilley 1982: 132–3).

Exotic goods and political power

I take Earle's (1987) essay on the political aspects of exotic goods production and consumption as a starting point for this discussion. Earle (1987: 89) argues that exotic personal ornaments in many early states 'acted as a highly visible symbol of status, meant not as abstract prestige but as a status position the holder of which had explicit rights . . . in the sociopolitical hierarchy, especially the rights of subsistence support'. Elites in all societies use personal ornaments to display status to some extent (Clark 1986). But in societies where elite status and political authority are not firmly backed up by a code of laws or a police force, elite symbols can become fundamental objects of power (Marcus 1974: 83–4). Elite personal ornaments in these societies represent political authority physically, and elites who possess these ornaments gain legitimation through their possession (Hodder 1982: 10).

An example is Shang China, where bronze appears to have been uniquely associated with elites (Chang 1983: 108). Chang (1986: 365–6) explains that bronze ritual objects decorated with sacred symbols 'were not only the trappings but also the instruments of political power'. These objects linked Shang elites with ancestral spirits and acted as a potent display of wealth, and both functions served to legitimize their political authority (Chang 1983: 95–106). The historic Kafa Kingdom of Ethiopia presents a more direct relationship between the possession of specific personal ornaments and the legitimation of political authority. There gold could be worn only by the king, some sub-kings, and by those to whom the king had granted the privilege (Huntingford 1955: 118). By simply wearing gold in the Kafa Kingdom, an individual made a direct and forceful statement of his political authority and closeness to the king.

In societies such as Shang China and the Kafa Kingdom, where specific elite goods manifest political authority, we can expect that elites will attempt to maintain a monopoly control over these items (Miller 1982). As Shennan (1982: 156) tells us 'once such items [prestige-goods and ritual symbols] became important for elite legitimation, then control of them, and competition for that control, would have become a significant part of social life'. Sumptuary laws may assist elites in controlling access to these goods, but in the absence of a strong police force, it is advantageous for elites to employ symbols of status that have inherent qualities that make them amenable to monopolistic control. Helms (1979; also Goldman 1970) argues that objects manufactured from rare or non-local materials are inherently powerful as well as readily controllable. As she explains,

efforts could be made [by elites seeking power] to extend exchange systems and other, related forms of chiefly contact into more distant territories whose remoteness, and thus relative infrequency of contact, would both restrict the amount of goods that could be exchanged and create an aura of esoterica for those acquired. (Helms 1979: 76)

Personal ornaments manufactured out of these materials, however, would not necessarily

require craft specialists to be produced (although as Helms [1979: 77] suggests, even goods obtained from distant locations are often decorated with ritual and sacred designs to give them an additional aura of power). Although Helm's argument is certainly valid, and has support in both the archaeological and ethnohistorical record (Flannery 1968; D'Altroy and Earle 1985), it does not help to explain the tendency for craft specialization to expand alongside powerful elites.

An alternate means for elites to monopolize access to personal ornaments is to use objects that require extremely labor intensive or technologically sophisticated methods to produce. By supporting the craft specialists and production facilities necessary to create these items, elites gain effective control over the items themselves. As Earle (1987: 89) puts it: 'Wealth, made by specialists, can be controlled by controlling the production process.' If emergent elites commonly use personal ornaments that are labor intensive and technologically sophisticated to legitimate their increasing political authority, this could explain the apparent relationship between advances in craft specialization and the evolution of powerful elites. This hypothesis assumes that labor input and technological sophistication are correlated with specialization, as particular individuals spend increasing amounts of their time either producing elite personal ornaments or mastering production techniques. Seen in this framework, craft specialization develops out of political strategies, not out of the economic or environmental forces often linked to the emergence of craft specialists (Service 1962; Sanders and Price 1968).

Statistical analyses of craft production and consumption

Evaluating this idea requires an examination of the way exotic personal ornaments are produced and consumed in societies with varying degrees of political centralization. The analyses presented here rely on a data set I collected for testing the material record of Mississippian chiefdoms in North America to determine if they are consistent with that expected from a type of political economy I refer to as a prestige-good system (Peregrine 1990). Prestige-good systems are societies in which political power is based on the control and purposeful distribution of exotic personal ornaments, legitimated through the elder/juvenile structure of a lineage hierarchy (Peregrine 1990: 66–7). In prestige-good systems exotic personal ornaments are used to pay for ceremonies of social reproduction, such as brideprice, initiation and funerary fees, punitive damages, and the like (Ekholm 1972; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978; Friedman 1982; Welch 1986). Since these goods are needed by all members of the society, but are controlled by elders, they are a means by which elders maintain political authority (Meillassoux 1978). Elders are able to control the ability of their subordinates to reproduce socially by controlling their access to prestige-goods. Because the control and manipulation of exotic personal ornaments is a fundamental political activity in prestige-good systems, they provide an excellent test-case for looking at the political aspects of craft production and consumption.

In order to provide a basis for analyzing archaeological materials, I coded the goods used in ceremonies of social reproduction for twenty-seven ethnographically-known prestige-good systems that are part of the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample on a total of forty-six variables concerning their manufacture, appearance and use (the codebook and raw data are included in Appendices A and B of Peregrine 1990). I then performed a series

of cluster analyses to identify general categories of prestige-goods of which the presence and distribution could be compared against the material record for Mississippian chiefdoms (Peregrine 1990: 140–59).

The cluster analyses identified four basic categories of prestige-goods: (1) furs and other raw material; (2) shell beads, and particularly strings of shell beads; (3) small, simple personal ornaments, often of durable and precious materials; and (4) larger, more complex personal ornaments, often highly decorated and made of plant and animal materials such as feathers, furs, plants fibers, and the like (Peregrine 1990: 157–8). I compared these four basic categories of prestige-goods between societies of differing political centralization, and found a significant difference (Table 1). The less ornate categories of prestige-goods (generally requiring little labor input and no sophisticated methods to produce) were associated with societies of lower political centralization while categories of more ornate prestige-goods (generally requiring more labor input and more sophisticated methods to produce) were associated with societies of greater political centralization (Peregrine 1990: 163–78). Further analysis showed that a significant difference is present even within the group of non-state societies (Blanton and Peregrine n.d.). These analyses provide an objective confirmation that advances in craft specialization are related to increases in political centralization. The more centralized societies tend to employ more complex personal ornaments (having a greater number of elements, designs, or production steps than less complex ornaments), many of which require significant labor investments and sophisticated techniques to produce – labor and technical knowledge that would require, or at least foster, craft specialization.

However, the cluster analyses tell us little about the factors behind this relationship. Earlier I hypothesized that it might stem partially from elites commissioning ornaments to display status that are readily monopolized. I suggested that the control of production facilities and labor would be a major factor in exercising control over access to the goods themselves, and that increased labor inputs would be related to increased levels of specialization in the production of these goods. Given these assumptions, personal ornaments used in societies of greater political centralization should require more

Table 1 Cross-tabulation of political centralization by the four categories of prestige-goods (from Peregrine 1990).

| | <i>Count exp. val.</i> | <i>Categories of goods</i> | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | <i>Furs 1</i> | <i>Shell/bead goods 2</i> | <i>Small ornament 3</i> | <i>Ornate ornament 4</i> |
| Political centralization | 1 | 12 | 5 | 23 | 11 |
| | Low | 8.5 | 4.5 | 21.5 | 16.4 |
| | 2 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 18 |
| | High | 6.5 | 3.5 | 16.5 | 12.5 |

Chi-square: 7.812

D.F.: 3

Significance: .05

Table 2 Cross-tabulation of political centralization by the manufacturing labor needed to produce personal ornaments.

| | Count <i>exp. val.</i> | Manufacturing labor | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| | | Low 1 | High 2 | Row total |
| Political centralization | 1 | 17 | 19 | 36 |
| | Low | 13.2 | 22.8 | 60.0% |
| | 2 | 5 | 19 | 24 |
| | High | 8.8 | 15.2 | 40.0% |
| Column total | 22 | 38 | 60 | 100.0% |
| | | 36.7% | 63.3% | |

Chi-square: 4.32

D.F.: 1

Significance: .04

labor-power to create. This hypothesis can be tested with several variables coded for the study described above. All statistics presented here were computed with the SPSS/PC+ software package (SPSS, Inc. 1988), and only personal ornaments were analyzed.

Manufacturing labor and political centralization

The most direct way to test this hypothesis is to compare the amount of labor going into the manufacture of personal ornaments in societies of differing degrees of political centralization. The cross-tabulation of political centralization with the amount of labor needed to manufacture a given ornament is presented in Table 2. Political centralization was computed using coded variables available in the World Cultures database (White 1985). Variables used were numbers 76 (Community Leadership), 77 (Local Political Succession), 83 (Levels of Sovereignty), 85 (Executive), 89 (Judiciary), 90 (Police), and 91 (Administrative Hierarchy). Each variable was coded so that as its value increased the general level of centralization also increased. The values for each variable were summed across each society, and those with totals less than the mean (18.5) were classified as being less politically centralized than those with totals greater than the mean. In general, using this method, chiefdoms and states are coded as (2) more centralized, while other societies are coded as (1) less centralized (the process of determining political centralization is described in more detail in Peregrine 1990: 164–9).

The values for manufacturing labor presented in Table 2 were coded for each object based on inference about the difficulty of producing the object, and are therefore not objective measures. The original code had three levels of manufacturing labor: (1) low, (2) moderate, and (3) high. In general, items that were used with little or no modification from their raw form were coded as having a low level of manufacturing labor; items that required simple modifications (such as being tied together, shaped into a gross form, and the like) and which were easily worked (not of stone, marine shell, or hard metal) were coded as having a moderate level of manufacturing labor; items that required gross

modifications to be made into personal ornaments (having a complex form or intricate designs), or which required labor-intensive methods to create (including weaving, smelting, and working stone and thick shell), were coded as having a high level of manufacturing labor. Some of the prestige-goods used in Fiji can serve to illustrate this coding scheme: whale's teeth are used as a simple wealth item, and these were coded as requiring a low labor investment, for they are used in basically a gross, unmodified form; pandanus mats and bark-cloth are also used as wealth items, and since these require sophisticated weaving and design techniques, as well as many hours of labor, they were coded as having a high labor investment; between these two extremes are hair ornaments used by chiefs and priests, such as feather frontlets and tortoise-shell combs and pins, and these were coded as requiring a moderate labor investment, for they do require some work to produce, but not as much as pandanus mats or bark-cloth. For the analyses presented here, low and moderate were combined into the single category of (1) low. The statistics presented in Table 2 suggest that there is a significant increase in the amount of manufacturing labor going into personal ornaments used in societies of greater political centralization.

Confirmation of this increase in manufacturing labor is presented in Table 3, which shows the cross-tabulation of political centralization with a computed measure of the amount of decoration present on a given ornament. Decoration is defined as work done to an object in addition to creating its gross form. In the original data set, primary, secondary and tertiary decorations were coded (if present) by the type of decoration performed: painting, incising, carving, and the like. The decoration measure used here, however, simply notes whether there is a primary, secondary, or tertiary decoration applied to the object. In the analysis objects having no decoration applied to them were defined as (1) low, and objects with decoration were defined as (2) high. The statistics presented in Table 3 suggest that personal ornaments used in societies of greater political centralization receive more decoration than those used in less centralized societies, and this is again directly related to manufacturing labor. It appears from these tables that the trend towards

Table 3 Cross-tabulation of political centralization by the amount of decoration given to personal ornaments.

| | | <i>Decoration</i> | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | <i>Low</i> <i>1</i> | <i>High</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Row</i> <i>total</i> |
| Political centralization | <i>Count</i> | 33 | 3 | 36 |
| | <i>exp. val.</i> | 30.2 | 5.8 | 58.1% |
| | 1 | 19 | 7 | 26 |
| | High | 21.8 | 4.2 | 41.9% |
| | Column | 52 | 10 | 62 |
| | total | 83.9% | 16.1% | 100.0% |

Chi-square: 3.86

D.F.: 1

Significance: .05

the use of more complex personal ornaments in more politically centralized societies is directly related to an increase in the amount of labor put into their production.

Acquisition labor and political centralization

Regardless of this conclusion, it is still reasonable to hypothesize that manufacturing status goods out of materials derived from distant sources would provide a great amount of potential control to elites; therefore, personal ornaments used by elites to display and maintain status should also tend to come from more remote or distant locations as elites increase their political authority (Helms 1979; 1988; Renfrew and Shennan 1982). However, this hypothesis is not supported by this data set. For example, the cross-tabulation of political centralization by the amount of labor needed to acquire raw materials presented in Table 4 shows no apparent relationship. Acquisition labor, like manufacturing labor, was inferred from the nature of the object’s raw material, and is not an objective measure. In the original coded data set, acquisition labor had three values: (1) low, (2) moderate, and (3) high. Items were coded as having low acquisition labor if the raw material they were constructed from could be found readily in the society’s geographic area, and could be gathered easily (such as shells, cotton, reeds, and the like); materials that were found in a society’s geographic area but that required some effort to obtain (cutting down a tree, hunting, and so forth) were coded as requiring moderate acquisition labor; materials traded from other societies, or found locally but which required intensive effort to obtain (particularly mining) were coded as requiring high acquisition labor. Once again using Fiji to illustrate, whale’s teeth were coded as requiring high acquisition labor for they were obtained almost exclusively through trade; the pandanus reeds used to produce mats were coded as requiring low acquisition labor, for they could be gathered easily; the bark used to make bark-cloth, although readily obtainable locally, had to be carefully stripped from trees, and so was coded as requiring moderate acquisition labor.

Table 4 Cross-tabulation of political centralization by the amount of labor needed to acquire raw materials to produce personal ornaments.

| | | <i>Acquisition labor</i> | | |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>Count</i> | | <i>Low</i> | <i>High</i> | <i>Row</i> |
| <i>exp. val.</i> | | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>total</i> |
| Political centralization | 1 | 5 | 31 | 36 |
| | Low | 5.3 | 30.7 | 59.0% |
| | 2 | 4 | 21 | 25 |
| | High | 3.7 | 21.3 | 41.0% |
| Column | | 9 | 52 | 61 |
| total | | 14.8% | 85.2% | 100.0% |

Chi-square: 0.05

D.F.: 1

Significance: .82

Table 5 Cross-tabulation of political centralization by the point of origin of raw materials used in personal ornaments.

| | <i>Count exp. val.</i> | <i>Material origin</i> | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | | <i>Local 1</i> | <i>Non-local 2</i> | <i>Row total</i> |
| Political centralization | 1 | 16 | 14 | 30 |
| | Low | 19.1 | 10.9 | 54.5% |
| | 2 | 19 | 6 | 25 |
| | High | 15.9 | 9.1 | 45.5% |
| | Column total | 35 | 20 | 55 |
| | | 63.6% | 36.4% | 100.0% |

*Chi-square: 3.03**D.F.: 1**Significance: .08*

For this analysis, the low and moderate values were combined into a single (1) low value. The statistics presented in Table 4 suggest that acquisition labor is almost randomly associated with political centralization.

Perhaps a more interesting pattern is presented in Table 5, the cross-tabulation of political centralization by the origin of the ornament's primary material. Raw materials were assumed to be of (1) local origin if they could be found locally and it was not specifically mentioned in the sources used for coding that they were from (2) non-local sources. Although there is a trend present, it is not statistically significant. Indeed, it appears that raw materials for personal ornaments are more likely to come from a local source than a non-local one as societies become more politically centralized. Again, it appears that access to non-local raw materials is not as important a factor in the production of personal ornaments as is labor investment in societies of greater political centralization.

Conclusions

The relationship between the emergence of powerful elites and advances in craft specialization appears to be associated with a significant increase in the amount of labor put into the manufacture of personal ornaments. It has been argued that elites often promote increases in the labor and technological sophistication needed to produce certain ornaments in order to more readily control access to them. The need to control these items is related to a political strategy in which they are used to legitimate political authority. The relationship between craft specialization and political centralization in the societies analyzed here appears to be correlated with a political strategy in which increasingly powerful elites employ specialist artisans to produce exotic personal ornaments that the elites use, in turn, to further differentiate themselves from the rest of society. Craft specialization, seen in this way, is as much a political activity as it is an economic or artistic one.

Acknowledgements

Research presented here was partially supported through the David Ross Grants program of the Purdue Research Foundation. Statistical analyses were supported by the Purdue Anthropology Laboratory, the Social Research Institute, and the President's Fund for Computing. I must thank Robert Fry, Jack Waddell, and particularly Richard Blanton for their comments, suggestions, and criticisms. Any omissions or errors remain solely my own.

12.x.90

*Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
Juniata College
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652*

References

- Blanton, R. E. and Feinman, G. 1984. The Mesoamerican world system: a comparative approach. *American Anthropologist*, 86: 673–82.
- Blanton R. E. and Peregrine, P. N. n.d. Toward a social theory of the evolution of Neolithic society in the Near East. Manuscript.
- Bourdieu, P. 1979. Symbolic power. *Critique of Anthropology*, 4: 77–86.
- Brumfiel, E. M. and Earle, T. K. 1987. Specialization, exchange, and complex societies: an introduction. In *Specialization, Exchange and Complex Societies* (eds E. M. Brumfiel and T. K. Earle). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–9.
- Chang, K. 1983. *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chang, K. 1986. *The Archaeology of Ancient China*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Clark, G. 1986. *Symbols of Excellence: Precious Metals as Expression of Status*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Altroy, T. and Earle, T. K. 1985. State finance, wealth finance, and storage in the Inka political economy. *Current Anthropology*, 26: 187–206.
- Earle, T. K. 1987. Specialization and the production of wealth: Hawaiian chiefdoms and the Inka empire. In *Specialization, Exchange, and Complex Societies* (eds E. M. Brumfiel and T. K. Earle). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–75.
- Ekholm, K. 1972. *Power and Prestige: The Rise and Fall of the Kongo Kingdom*. Uppsala: Scriv Service.
- Engels, F. 1972. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. New York: International Publishers.
- Flannery, K. V. 1968. The Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca: a model for inter-regional interaction in formative times. In *Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec* (ed. E. P. Benson). Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, pp. 79–110.
- Frankenstein, S. and Rowlands, M. J. 1978. The internal structure and regional context of Early Iron Age society in south-western Germany. *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology of London*, 15: 73–112.

- Friedman, J. 1982. Catastrophe and continuity in social evolution. In *Theory and Explanation in Archaeology* (eds C. Renfrew, M. J. Rowlands and B. A. Segraves). New York: Academic Press, pp. 175–96.
- Friedman, J. and Rowlands, M. J. 1977. Notes towards an epigenetic model of the evolution of 'Civilization'. In *The Evolution of Social Systems* (eds J. Friedman and M. J. Rowlands). London: Duckworth, pp. 201–76.
- Goldman, I. F. 1970. *Ancient Polynesian Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Helms, M. W. 1979. *Ancient Panama*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Helms, M. W. 1988. *Ulysses' Sail*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hodder, I. 1982. Theoretical archaeology: a reactionary view. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology* (ed. I. Hodder). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–16.
- Huntingford, G. W. B. 1955. *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kafa and Janjero*. London: International African Institute.
- Jacobs, J. 1984. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Random House.
- Lumbreras, L. G. 1974. *The Peoples and Cultures of Ancient Peru*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Marcus, J. 1974. The iconography of power among the Classic Maya. *World Archaeology*, 6: 83–94.
- Meillassoux, C. 1978. The economy in agricultural self-sustaining societies: a preliminary analysis. In *Relations of Production* (ed. D. Seddon). London: Frank Cass, pp. 127–57.
- Miller, D. 1982. Structures and strategies: an aspect of the relationship between social hierarchy and cultural change. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology* (ed. I. Hodder). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 89–98.
- Miller, D. and C. Tilley. 1984. Ideology, power and prehistory: an introduction. In *Ideology, Power and Prehistory* (eds D. Miller and C. Tilley). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–16.
- Peregrine, P. N. 1990. The evolution of Mississippian societies in the American midcontinent from a world-system perspective. Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.
- Renfrew, C. and Shennan, S. (eds). 1982. *Ranking, Resource, and Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sanders, W. T. and Price, B. J. 1968. *Mesoamerica: The Evolution of Civilization*. New York: Random House.
- Service, E. R. 1962. *Primitive Social Organization*. New York: Random House.
- Shanks, M. and Tilley, C. 1982. Ideology, symbolic power and ritual communication: a reinterpretation of Neolithic mortuary practices. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology* (ed. I. Hodder). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 129–54.
- Shennan, S. 1982. Ideology, change and the European Early Bronze Age. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology* (ed. I. Hodder). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 155–62.
- SPSS, Inc. 1988. *SPSS/PC+ V2.0 Base Manual*. Chicago: SPSS, Inc.
- Trigger, B. G. 1983. The rise of Egyptian civilization. In *Ancient Egypt* (eds B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–70.
- Welch, P. A. 1986. Models of chiefdom economy: prehistoric Moundville as a case study. Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.
- White, D. 1985. The World Cultures database. *World Cultures*, 1(1).

Abstract

Peregrine, Peter

Some political aspects of craft specialization

Scholars have noted that craft specialization becomes more common as societies become more politically centralized. The relationship between craft specialization and political centralization is investigated using ethnographic data on the production and consumption of personal ornaments used in societies of varying degrees of political centralization. Craft specialization in these societies appears to be linked to strategies employed by elites to maintain political authority, and is not strictly an economic or artistic activity.