

Working Hours in Hunter-Gatherer and Other Premodern Societies

Anthropologic studies of hunter-gatherer and subsistence cultivation societies show that labor inputs are small. This can be seen from the table below taken from Clark (2008).

The author is surprised by the short work days especially because some societies, as the Hiwi from Venezuela often suffer from hunger and although they achieve 'high returns from each hour of work' they still generally forage for less than 2 hours.

Generally the work time in hunter-gatherer societies is lower than in agrarian societies.

| Group or location | Group or activity | Hours |
|--------------------------|---|-------|
| Tatuyo (a) | Shifting cultivation, hunting | 7.6 |
| Mikea (b) | Shifting cultivation, foraging | 7.4 |
| Ache (c) | Hunting | 6.9 |
| Abelam (d) | Subsistence agriculture, hunting | 6.5 |
| !Kung (e) | Foraging | 6.4 |
| Machiguenga (f) | Shifting cultivation, foraging, hunting | 6.0 |
| Xavante (g) | Shifting cultivation, hunting | 5.9 |
| Aruni (h) | Subsistence agriculture | 5.2 |
| Mekranoti (g) | Shifting cultivation, foraging, hunting | 3.9 |
| Shipibo (i) | Subsistence agriculture, fishing | 3.4 |
| Bemba (j) | Shifting cultivation, hunting | 3.4 |
| Hiwi (k) | Hunting | 3.0 |
| Yanomamo (a) | Shifting cultivation, foraging, hunting | 2.8 |
| Britain, 1800 (l,m) | Farm laborers, paid labor | 8.2 |
| | Building workers, paid labor | 8.2 |
| London, 1800 (n) | All workers, paid labor | 9.1 |
| United Kingdom, 2000 (o) | All workers aged 16–64 | 8.8 |

- Clark, Gregory (2008). *A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World*. Princeton University Press.

- Max Roser (2015) 'Working Hours'. *Published online at OurWorldInData.org*. Available at: <http://ourworldindata.org/data/economic-development-work-standard-of-living/working-hours/>