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# Cultural Anthropology

**SOC401**

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# Cultural Anthropology SOC401

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Lesson 01

# WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

**Lesson Overview:**

- Definition of Anthropology
- Activities of an Anthropologist
- Branches of Anthropology
- Cultural Anthropology
- Areas of Specialization in Cultural Anthropology
- Common Responses to Cultural Difference
- Relevance of Cultural Anthropology

Anthropology can be best defined as the study of the various facets of what it means to be human. Anthropology is a multidimensional subject in which various components are studied individually and as a whole to develop a better understanding of human existence. In this lecture we will not only be developing an understanding of the definition of anthropology, we will also be looking at what an anthropologist does. In addition to this we will also be looking at the various branches of anthropology with a focus on cultural anthropology.

## Definition of Anthropology

Anthropology is derived from the Greek words *anthropos* for human and *logos* for study, so if we take its literal meaning it would mean the study of humans. In one sense this is an accurate description to the extent that it raises a wide variety of questions about the human existence. However this literal definition isn't as accurate as it should be since a number of other disciplines such as sociology, history, psychology, economics and many others also study human beings.

What sets anthropology apart from all these other subjects? Anthropology is the study of people, their origins, their development, and variations, wherever and whenever they have been found on the face of the earth. Of all the subjects that deal with the study of humans, anthropology is by far the broadest in its scope. In short anthropology aims to describe, in the broadest sense, what it means to be human.

## Activities of an Anthropologist

As we already know, anthropology is the study of what it means to be human. So the study of the influences that make us human is the focus of anthropologists. Anthropologists study the various components of what its means to be human.

## Branches of Anthropology

**A** **Physical Anthropology** – Is the study of humans from a biological perspective.

Essentially this involves two broad areas of investigation.

a. **Human paleontology -**: this sub branch deals with re-constructing the evolutionary record of the human existence and how humans evolved up to the present times.
b. **Human variation -**: The second area deals with how/ why the physical traits of contemporary human populations vary across the world.

**B** **Archeology** – study of lives of people from the past by examining the material culture they have left behind

**C** **Anthropological Linguistics** – the study of human speech and language

**D** **Cultural Anthropology** – the study of cultural differences and similarities around the world

Now that we have briefly defined the various branches of anthropology, lets us now take an in-depth view of cultural anthropology.

**Cultural Anthropology**:
As we have discerned above, cultural anthropology concerns itself with the study of cultural differences as well as the similarities around the world.
On a deeper level the branch of anthropology that deals with the study of specific contemporary cultures *(ethnography)* and the more general underlying patterns of human culture derived through cultural comparisons *(ethnology)* is called cultural anthropology.
Before cultural anthropologists can examine cultural differences and similarities throughout the world they must first describe the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible. These detailed descriptions (*ethnographies*) are the result of extensive field studies in which the anthropologists observes, talks to and lives with the people under study. On the other hand ethnology is the comparative study of contemporary cultures, wherever they are found. The primary objective of ethnology is to uncover general cultural principals/rules that govern human behavior.

**Areas of Specialization in Cultural Anthropology**

I **Urban Anthropology** – studies impact of urbanization on rural societies and the dynamics of life within cities
II **Medical Anthropology** – studies biological and socio-cultural factors that effect health or prevalence of illness or disease in human societies
III **Educational Anthropology** – studies processes of learning of both formal education institutions and informal systems which can use story telling or experiential learning
IV **Economic Anthropology** – studies how goods and services are produced, distributed and consumed within different cultural contexts
V **Psychological Anthropology** – studies relationship between cultures and the psychological makeup of individuals belonging to them

**Holistic and Integrative Approach**
Cultural anthropologists consider influences of nature and nurture, across all locations and across different periods of time.
When various specialties of the discipline are viewed together, they provide a comprehensive view of the human condition

**Common Responses to Cultural Difference**:

**A** **Ethnocentrism** – a belief that one's own culture is not only the most desirable but also superior to that of others.
**B** **Cultural relativism** – looks at the inherent logic behind different cultures and practices in the attempt to understand them

**Relevance of Cultural Anthropology**
Cultural anthropology enhances understanding of differences and prevents oversimplified generalizations. It increases self-knowledge about our own thinking, values and behavior and helps develop cognitive complexity through integration (interconnectedness) and differentiation (different aspects of a singular

entity). Cultural anthropology is also useful in facilitating meaningful interaction with other cultures and sub-cultures.

**Useful Terms**

**Components:** parts
**Paleontology:** specialized branch of physical anthropology that analyses the emergence and subsequent evolution of human physiology
**Variation:** degree of difference
**Archeology:** sub field of anthropology that focuses on the study of pre-historic and historic cultures through the excavation of material remains.

***Urban:*** city based
**Ethnocentrism:** the practice of viewing the customs of other societies in terms of one's own.

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 1 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 13 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

How do Anthropologists Work?
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=J1SEC782998

Braches of Anthropology
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=J1SEC782999

Lesson 02

# THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND THE APPLICATION OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**Lesson Overview:**

- Examining Culture
- Culture is learned
- Cultural Universals
- Adaptive and Maladaptive Features of Culture
- Applied versus Pure Anthropology
- Specialized Functions for Applied Anthropologists
- Ethical Implications

**Examining Culture**

We began this course by defining anthropology and its various branches. We also looked at the chief duties of an anthropologist. In this session we will be taking a more detailed look at cultural anthropology and its application. We will also be dissecting the phenomena of culture and looking at the special functions of applied anthropology. Last but not least, as we all know all human occupations have their own set on ethical implications, in this lecture we will be analyzing what an anthropologist owes to their profession and to society at large.

Before we take a more in-depth look into cultural anthropology, we must take a moment to first define what exactly is meant by culture. In a non-scientific way culture refers to such personal refinements as classical music, the fine arts, cuisine, and philosophy. So an example of this theory, a person is considered more cultured if he listens to Bach rather than Ricky Martin or to make this example more nationalistic, a person is said to be cultured if he listens to Nusrat Fateh Ali rather than Abrar-ul-Haq. However anthropologists use this term in a much broader term than the average man. Anthropologists don't differentiate between the cultured people and un-cultured people. All people have culture according to the anthropological definition.

We will define culture as every thing people have, think, and do as members of a society. This definition can be most useful since the three verbs correspond to the three major components of culture. That is, everything people have refers to material possessions, everything people think refers to the things they carry around in their heads, such as ideas, values, and attitudes; and everything people do refers too behavior patterns. Thus, all cultures compromise material objects, ideas, values, and attitudes; and patterned ways of behaving.

Just to give you better understanding of culture, let us look at some of its main attributes:

- Culture includes everything that people have, think and do as members of a society.
- All people have a culture
- Culture comprises material objects; ideas, values and attitudes; and patterned ways of behaving
- Culture is a shared phenomenon

For a thing, behavior or idea to be classified as being cultural, its must have a meaning shared by most people in a society. Because people share a common culture, they are able to predict, with-in limits, how others will think and behave. Cultural influences are reinterpreted and thus do not yield uniform effects.

**Culture is learned**

One very important factor to remember about culture is that it's learned. If we stop to think about it a loot of what we do during our waking hours is learned. Brushing our teeth, eating three times a day, attending

school, tying our show laces, these are all actions that we had to learn and yet they are an integral part of our culture.

While humans do have instincts, culture is not transmitted genetically. The process of learning culture is called enculturation, which is similar in process but differs in terms of content. Culture is necessary for our survival and effects how we think and act. People from the same culture can predict how others will react due to cultural conditioning.

**Cultural Universals**Cultural universals include economic systems; systems of marriage and family; education systems; social control systems; and systems of communication. Some cultural systems are seemingly invisible, such as insurance in the form of family based social safety nets (many people in the developing world do not have insurance, instead they rely on their families for support. While it seems that these people have no one to help them in times of need, they in fact do have social safety nets in the form of family support). The versatility of cultural systems illustrates how flexible and adaptable humans are.

**Adaptive and Maladaptive Features of Culture**

Human beings rely more on cultural than biological adaptation to adjust to different types of environments including deserts and very cold areas. The clothing habits of Eskimos in the North Pole, allows them to live in a place which is naturally very inhospitable. Biologically, they are the same as us, but they have learned to wear more appropriate clothing with lots of fur to keep the cold out. These items of clothing have become a cultural trade-mark with them. Whenever we think of Eskimos, we think of them laden with furs. Humans can now even live in outer space or under water for limited periods of time.

Maladaptive or dysfunctional aspects of culture such as pollution can threaten or damage human environments. The consumption of leaded petrol is bad for the environment, yet given our reliance on automobiles, it is difficult to do without them. So what started of as an adaptive aspect allowing us to travel great distances has no become a maladaptive aspect of culture, due to the sheer number of cars to be found around the world.

**Integrative Aspects of Culture**Cultures are logical and coherent systems shaped by particular contexts. Various parts of culture are interconnected. Yet culture is more than a sum of its parts.

**Culture and the Individual**Although culture influences on the thoughts, actions and behavior of individuals, it does not determine them exclusively. There is a diverse range of individuality to be found within one culture. Most cultures are also comprised of subcultures, for example, artists in most societies have a slightly different way of dressing, talking and thinking that mainstream people in their communities.

**Applied versus Pure Anthropology**Pure anthropology is concerned refining methods and theories to obtain increasingly accurate and valid anthropological data. On the other hand, applied anthropologists' aims to understand and recommend changes in human behavior to alleviate contemporary problems.

**Problem-Oriented Research**

Anthropologists can apply anthropological data, concepts and strategies to the solution of socio-economic, political problems facing different cultures.
Anthropologists can focus on development, research or advocacy, to help improve the human condition

**Specialized Functions for Applied Anthropologists**

a **Policy Researcher**: provides cultural data to policy makers to facilitate informed decisions
b **Evaluator**: use research skills to determine how well a policy or program has succeeded in its objectives
c **Impact Assessor**: measuring or assessing the effect of a particular project or policy.
d **Needs Assessor**: use research skills to determine particular needs of a community of people
e **Trainer**: impart cultural knowledge about certain populations to different groups

**Ethical Implications**

**Responsibility to the People Studied***:* Anthropologists have an ethical responsibility to the people they are studying; they need to present their finding in an unbiased way so that the true picture of their culture/ way of life can be presented.

**Responsibility to the discipline***:* The chief concern of all anthropologists should be to their discipline. They must conduct their research in such a way that their findings play an integral part in consolidating their discipline.

**Responsibility to Sponsors***:* Most research that is done in the field is sponsored by one organization or another or in some cases some individuals are carrying out the burden of sponsorship, the anthropologists must ensure that he carries out his duties with the utmost sense of responsibility.

**Responsibility to Own and Host government***:* Most researchers conduct research internationally where they have to respect the laws of their own country and that of the host country.

**Useful Terms**

**Implications***:* results
**Dissection***:* to take apart
**Enculturation**: the process by which human infants learn their culture
**Versatile***:* different/ having a varying range
**Ethical:** moral

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapters 2 and 3 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 13 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Applied Anthropology
http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/applied.htm

Lesson 03

# MAJOR THEORIES IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**Lesson Overview:**

- What is a theory?
- Cultural Evolutionism
- Diffusionism
- Historicism
- Psychological Anthropology
- Functionalism
- Neo-Evolutionism

A theory suggests a relationship between different phenomenons. Theories allow us to reduce the complexity of reality into an abstract set of principles, which serve as models to compare and contrasts different types of realities.

Theories are based on hypotheses, which provide a proposition that needs to be tested through empirical investigations. If what is found is consistent with what was expected, the theory will be strengthened; if not, the theory will be either abandoned or some more time will be spent on it to revise it.

Anthropological theory changes constantly as new data comes forth. Anthropological theories attempt to answer such questions as, why do people behave the way they do? And, how do we account for human diversity? These questions guided the early nineteenth attempts to theorize and continue to be relevant today. We will explore the in chorological order, the major theoretical schools of cultural anthropology that have developed since the mid-nineteenth century. Some of the earlier theoretical orientations such as diffusionism no longer attract much attention; however others such as evolutionism have been modified and re-worked into something new.
It is easy in hindsight, to demonstrate the inherit flaws in some of the early theoretical orientations. However, we should keep in mind, however, that contempary anthropological theories that may appear plausible today were built on what we learnt from those older theories.

**Cultural Evolutionism** According to this theory, all cultures undergo the same development stages in the same order. To develop a better understanding of these various development stages it is important to briefly review these various stages and their sub stages. Savagery, barbarism and civilization were three classifications that classical anthropologists used to divide culture.

However in 1877 Lewis Henry Morgan wrote a book titled *Ancient Society*, in it the three stages of cultural anthropology were further classified into 7 stages, which are as follows:

- **Lower Savagery*:*** From the earliest forms of humanity subsisting on fruits and nuts.
- **Middle Savagery:** Began with the discovery of fishing technology and the use of fire.
- **Upper Savagery:** Began with the invention of bow and arrow.
- **Lower Barbarism:** Began with the art of pottery making.
- **Middle Barbarism:** Began with the domestication of plants and animals in the old world and irrigation/ cultivation in the new world.
- **Upper Barbarism:** Began with the smelting of iron and the use of iron tools.
- **Civilization:** Began with the invention of the phonetic alphabet and writing (1877:12)

Evolution is unidirectional and leads to higher levels of culture. A deductive approach used to apply a general theory to specific cases. Evolutionists were often ethnocentric as they put their own societies on top of the evolutionary ladder. Yet, it did explain human behavior by rational instead of supernatural causes.

**Diffusionism** Like evolutionism, diffusionism was deductive and rather theoretical, lacking evidence from the field. It maintained that all societies change as a result of cultural borrowing from one another.

The theory highlighted the need to consider interaction between cultures but overemphasized the essentially valid idea of diffusion.

**Historicism** Any culture is partially composed of traits diffused from other cultures but this does not explain the existing complexity of different cultures. Collection of ethnographic facts must precede development of cultural theories (inductive approach).

Direct fieldwork is considered essential, which has provided the approach a solid methodological base emphasizing the need for empirical evidence. Each culture is, to some degree, unique. So ethnographers should try to get the view of those being studies, not only rely on their own views.
Historicists emphasized the need for training female anthropologists to gain access to information about female behavior in traditional societies. Their anti-theoretical stance is criticized for retarding growth of the anthropological discipline.

**Psychological Anthropology** Anthropologists need to explore the relationships between psychological and cultural variables according to this theory. Personality is largely seen to be the result of learning culture. Universal temperaments associated with males and females do not exist in practice, based on research conducted by psychological anthropologists (for example, it was noticed that there are no universally consistent personality traits like being hard working on the basis of being a male or a female).

**Functionalism** Like historicism, functionalism focused on understanding culture from the viewpoint of the native. It stated that empirical fieldwork is absolutely essential. Functionalists stressed that anthropologists should seek to understand how different parts of contemporary cultures work for the well being of the individual and the society, instead of focusing on how these parts evolved.

Society was thought to be like a biological organism with all of the parts interconnected. The theory argued that change in one part of the system brings a change in another part of the system as well. Existing institutional structures of any society are thought to perform indispensable functions, without which the society could not continue.

**Neo-Evolutionism** Neo-Evolution states that culture evolves in direct proportion to their capacity to harness energy. The theory states that culture evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year increases or as the efficiency of the means of putting energy to work increases" (Leslie White,1900-1975).

Culture = Energy x Technology

Culture is said to be shaped by environmental and technological conditions. Therefore, people facing similar environmental challenges, are thought to develop similar technological solutions and parallel social and political institutions.
Cultures evolve when people are able to increase the amount of energy under their control according to this theory. Given this emphasis on energy, the role of values, ideas and beliefs is de-emphasized.

**Useful Terms**

**Theory:** a general statement about how two or more facts are related to one another.
**Hypotheses:** an educated hunch as to the relationship among certain variables that guides a research project.
**Evolutionism:** the 19th century school of cultural anthropology, represented by Morgan and Tyler that attempted to explain variations in cultures by the single deductive theory that they all pass through a series of evolutionary stages.
**Savagery:** the first amongst the three basic stages (savagery, barbarism and civilization) of cultural evolution.

**Barbarism**: the middle of the three basic stages of the 19th century theory developed by Lewis Morgan that all cultures evolve from simple to complex systems.
**Civilization:** a term used by anthropologists to describe any society with cities.

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 4 in '*Cultural Anthropology*: *An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro* and/or Chapter 14 in '*Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
Anthropological Theories
http://www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/murphy/436/anthros.htm

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following theories for today's lecture:

Social Evolutionism
Diffusionism and Acculturation
Historicism
Functionalism
American Materialism
Cultural Materialism

Lesson 04

## GROWTH OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- French Structuralism
- Ethno-Science
- Cultural Materialism
- Post Modernism
- Interpretive Anthropology

**French Structuralism** French Structuralism focused on identifying the mental structures that underpin social behavior, drawing heavily on the science of linguistics. Structuralism thought that cognition (based on inherent mental codes) is responsible for culture.
Structuralism focused on underlying principles that supposedly generate behavior at the unconscious level rather than observable empirical behavior itself. It focused more on repetitive structures rather than considering reasons for cultural change or variation. Cultural alterations and variation are explained by reference to external environmental and historical influences.
Structuralism is criticized for being overly theoretical and not easily verifiable through empirical evidence

**Ethno-Science**Ethno-science describes a culture using categories of the people under study (**emic** approach) rather than by imposing categories from the ethnographer's culture (**etic** approach).
This theory tires to minimize bias and make ethnographic descriptions more accurate by focusing on underlying principles and rules of a given context.
Due to the time consuming nature of this methodology, ethno-science is confined to describing very small segments of given cultures. It is difficult to compare native data collected by ethno-scientists, since there is no common basis for comparison.
Despite its impracticality, the theory draws attention to the relativity of culture and its principles are useful for other theorists as well.

**Cultural Materialism**Cultural materialists rely on supposedly scientific, empirical and the **etic** approach of an anthropologist, rather than relying on the viewpoints of the native informant.
Cultural materialists argue that material conditions and modes of production determine human thoughts and behavior. Material constraints that arise from the need to meet basic needs are viewed as the primary reason for cultural variations. For cultural materialist the importance of political activity, ideology and ideas is considered secondary, since it can only retard or accelerate change, not be the cause for it.

**Post Modernism**Post modernism refutes the generalizing tendency in anthropology and does not believe that anthropologists can provide a grand theory of human behavior. Instead, it considers each culture as being unique. Post modernism is influenced by both cultural relativism and ethno-science. Post-modernists want anthropology to stop making cultural generalizations and focus on description and interpretation of different cultures. They consider cultural anthropology to be a humanistic not a scientific discipline.

Post-modernists argue that ethnographies should be written collaboratively, so that the voice of the anthropologist co-exists alongside that of local people.
**Interpretive Anthropology**Emerging out of post-modernism, interpretive anthropology focuses on examining how local people themselves interpret their own values and behaviors. Using an **emic** approach, interpretive anthropologists focus on the complexities and living qualities of human nature.

**Useful Terms**

**Structural functionalism:** a school of cultural anthropology that examines how parts of a culture function for the well being of society.
**Confined:** limited

**Cultural materialism:** a contemporary orientation in anthropology that holds that cultural systems are most influenced by such material things as natural resources and technology.
**Etic:** Relying on the views of the researcher or the cultural anthropologists
**Emic:** Relying on views of local people

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 4 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 14 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Anthropological Theories
http://www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/murphy/436/anthros.htm

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following theories for today's lecture:

Ecological Anthropology
Cognitive Anthropology
Structuralism
Symbolic & Interpretive Anthropologies
Postmodernism & Its Critics

Lesson 05

# METHODS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**Lesson Overview:**

- Fieldwork
- Stages of Fieldwork
- Difficulties in Fieldwork

**Fieldwork**

A distinctive feature of Cultural Anthropology is its reliance on experiential fieldwork as a primary way of conducting research.

Cultural Anthropologists collect cultural data and test their hypothesis by carrying out fieldwork in different parts of the world. The areas where this fieldwork is conducted can include both urban and rural areas in highly industrialized rich countries or poor developing nations of the world. Detailed anthropological studies have been undertaken to study the way in which people belonging to different cultures and sub-cultures think and behave.

**Comments on Fieldwork**

Since the credibility of ethnographic studies rests on their methods of research (often termed the methodology), so cultural anthropologists have begun focusing on how to conduct fieldwork.

While every fieldwork situation is unique, there are a number of issues in common, like the need to prepare for fieldwork or to obtain permission from the country's government where this research is to be conducted. Even if a researcher is doing research within his/her own country, often permission from the concerned level of the local government is required, particularly if thee research is considering how government structures/institutions (like schools or health clinics for example) effect the lives and behavior of a particular group of people.

**Stages of Fieldwork**

1. Selecting a research problem
2. Formulating a research design
3. Collecting the data
4. Analyzing the data
5. Interpreting the data
6. Selecting a Research Problem

Cultural Anthropologists have moved away from general ethnographies to research that is focused, specific and problem oriented

The problem oriented approach involves formulation of a hypothesis which is then tested in a fieldwork setting

**Formulating a Research Design**

The *independent variable* is capable of effecting change in the *dependent variable.* The dependent variable is the one that we wish to explain, whereas the independent variable is the hypothesized explanation. If we want to look at the effect of urbanization on family interactions, the independent variable will be urbanization.

**Defining Dependent Variables**

Dependent variables must be defined specifically so they can be measured quantitatively.

To ascertain family interaction, the following issues deserve attention:

- Residence Patterns
- Visitation Patterns
- Mutual Assistance

- Formal Family Gatherings
- Collecting and Analyzing Data

Once the hypothesis is made concrete, the data is collected through an appropriate data collection technique. Once collected, the data is coded to facilitate analysis. For example, if a questionnaire is being used to get views of 100 people in a given community, all those people who say yes to a given question could be identified using a code to obtain a statistical number. Then, a similar questionnaire in another community could identify people responding positively to the same question. In this way, a researcher could compare how many people in both communities responded positively to the same question. In addition to surveys, other research techniques can also be coded (even ethnographies can be coded) to enable comparison of peoples' attitudes and behavior in different communities.

**Interpreting the Data**
Interpretation is the most difficult step in research, which involves explaining the findings to refute or accept the hypothesis. A researcher could hypothesize that there is a link between urbanization and increasing poverty and then go into a community to see if increasing poverty is responsible for more people shifting into the city, based on these findings the hypothesis could either be rejected or accepted.
Findings of a particular study can be compared to similar studies in other areas to get more extensive information about a particular problem or how different communities with different cultures deal with similar problems. The problem of poverty and how different people react to this problem is a good example of a research problem that can be examined by different researchers and their findings compared to see how different cultures respond when they are faced by poverty.

**Need for Flexibility**
A technique originally mentioned in the research proposal can prove to be impractical in the field. Cultural anthropologists need some options and remain flexible in choosing an appropriate technique given surrounding circumstances.

**Difficulties in Fieldwork**
Research in remote locations, carries risks such as exposure to diseases or different forms of social violence
Researchers can encounter psychological disorientation, commonly termed *'culture shock',* when they have to live and deal with circumstances completely alien to their own surrounds.
Researchers must also try to find a balance between subjectivity and objectivity, if they want to assure the quality of their research and to prevent its criticism on the basis of being biased by the researcher's own viewpoints. Many anthropological studies have been criticized for being biased or ethnocentric in their attempt to look at how other people live.

**Useful Terms**

**Ethnography:** detailed anthropological study of a culture undertaken by a researcher
**Ethnocentric:** the view that one's own cultural is superior
**Data:** collection of facts
**Biased:** prejudiced, holding an unfair view
**Culture shock:** psychological disorientation brought on due to cultural difference

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 5 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 14 and 28 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Cultural Anthropology: Methods
http://www.qvctc.commnet.edu/brian/methods.html

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following Methods of Research in Cultural Anthropology for today's lecture:
Participant observation
Survey research

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Lesson 06

## METHODS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Participant Observation
- Guidelines for Participant Observation Fieldwork
- Advantages of Participant Observation
- Disadvantages of Participant Observation
- Interviewing
- Guidelines for Researchers
- Census Taking
- Document Analysis
- Genealogies
- Photography
- Undertaking Cross-Cultural Comparisons

**Participant Observation**
Anthropologists use this technique more extensively and frequently than other social scientists. Participant Observation means becoming involved in the culture under study while making systematic observations about what goes on in it.

**Guidelines for Participant Observation Fieldwork**
Before approaching the field, it is advisable to obtain clearance from all appropriate levels of the political/administrative hierarchy. Local people at the grassroots level know their own culture better than anyone else and their views need to be given due respect.

**Advantages of Participant Observation**
It allows distinguishing between what people say they do and what they actually do. The greater the cultural immersion is, the greater is the authenticity of cultural data. It allows observation of non-verbal behavior as well.

**Disadvantages of Participant Observation**
There are problems of recording observations while using this technique. The technique has an intrusive effect on subject of study. Also, a smaller sample size is obtained through this technique than through other techniques and the data obtained is hard to code or categorize, making standardized comparisons difficult.

**Interviewing**
Enables collection of information on what people think or feel (*attitudinal data*) as well as what they do (*behavioral data*).

Ethnographic interviews are often used alongside other data gathering techniques.

**Structured and Unstructured Interviews**
In structured interviews, interviewers ask respondents exactly the same set of questions, in the same sequence.
Unstructured interviews involve a minimum of control, with the subject answering open-ended questions in their own words.

**Guidelines for Researchers**
To minimize distortions in collected data, researchers can check the validity of their findings by either asking cross check information given by respondents or repeat the same question at a later time.

It is important to frame the questions neutrally. Instead of asking "You don't smoke, do you?" ask "Do you smoke?"

**Census Taking**
Collecting basic demographic data at the initial stages of fieldwork is the least intrusive manner to begin investigating the state of a given community.

**Document Analysis**
Documentary analysis of administrative records, newspapers and even popular culture like song lyrics or nursery rhymes is often surprisingly revealing about the circumstances, aspirations and values of different people.

**Genealogies**
Mapping relations of informants, particularly in small-scale societies is very revealing, since they tend to interact more closely with their families than people in more complex societies, which have a greater number of institutions and professionals.

**Photography**
Cameras and video recorders allow researchers to see without fatigue, without being selective and provide a lasting record of cultural events and physical surroundings. Some local communities, however, can object to the use of cameras due to their conservative values or they consider it an intrusion on their privacy.

**Choosing a Technique**
Choice of technique depends on the problem being studied. Choice of a technique also depends on the receptiveness of the community in question, to a particular technique. For example, if a given community does not allow the anthropologist undertaking research to use cameras, the researcher will have to respect the wishes of the community in question and document descriptions of relevant events instead of being able to take a photograph, by which this information could have been captured more easily.

**Undertaking Cross-Cultural Comparisons**
For undertaking such comparisons, particular with the help of statistics, the following issues deserve attention:

- Quality of data being compared must be consistent and based on the same methodology (information based on interviews conducted in one culture cannot be compared with information obtained from questionnaires in another culture)

- Units of analysis must be comparable, it's not possible to compare different levels of social systems (a village cannot be compared to a city for example)

- Contrasting cultural traits out of context from their remaining culture is problematic but useful in identifying similarities across different cultures (which is an important objective for cultural anthropology)

**Useful Terms**
**Attitudinal:** based on how people think or feel about something
**Receptiveness:** response to a particular action
**Participation:** being a part of something
**Perspective:** point of view
**Cultural traits:** particular features of a culture
**Cross-cultural:** comparison of differences between cultures

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 5 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 14 and 28 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:
Cultural Anthropology: Methods
http://www.qvctc.commnet.edu/brian/methods.html

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following Methods of Research in Cultural Anthropology for today's lecture:
Participant observation
Survey research
Interviews
(Document Analysis)
Archival research
Media analysis
Historical analysis

Lesson 07

# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

**Lesson Overview:**

- What is Economic Anthropology?
- Differentiating Economics from Economic Anthropology
- Economic Universals
- Examining the Issue of Land Rights
- Division of Labor
- Gender Roles and Age Specialization
- Is Nepotism Always Bad?

**What is Economic Anthropology?**
Economic Anthropology involves examining how different cultures and societies produce, distribute and consume the things they need to survive. All cultures need to be able to manage these processes, in accordance with their given circumstances, to ensure the survival of their people.

**Differentiating Economics from Economic Anthropology**
While economists assume that people are preoccupied by the need to maximize profits and this is the basic impulse due to which they produce goods and services. Economic anthropologists do not believe profit maximization is equally important for all cultures. They point out that there are several other processes besides profit maximization, which exist in different cultures of the world by the allocation (distribution) of resources need to produce goods and services, and the distribution of the goods and services takes place. For example, these economic anthropologists look at how different cultures distribute land, which is an important resource needed for production of agricultural goods, and have noticed that different cultures have different ways in which this distribution takes place.

However, economic anthropologists realize that like economists they too must answer some basic questions concerning basic economic needs of human beings, which all cultures around the world face, given that some human needs are universal and must be met no matter what type of culture people belong to.

**Economic Universals**
Economic anthropologists have to consider the following economic universals, which are of vital importance to human beings, no matter what their cultural systems are like:

a) **Regulation of Resources:** How land, water and other natural resources (like minerals) are controlled and allocated

b) **Production:** How material resources (sugarcane) are converted into usable commodities (sugar)

c) **Exchange:** How the commodities, once produced, are distributed among the people of a society

**Examining the Issue of Land Rights**
Free access to land is found in environments where water and pasturage is scarce. Land rights are more rigidly controlled among horticulturalists and agriculturalists than among foragers and pastoralists.

**Division of Labor**
*Durkheim* (the famous sociologist, responsible for establishing this branch of study in the early twentieth century) had distinguished between two types of societies, those based on *mechanical solidarity* and others based on *organic solidarity.*

Societies with a minimum specialization of labor are held together by mechanical solidarity, based on commonality of interest. In these societies, people are more self-reliant, therefore, they need other people to a lesser degree than people in societies where people focus on production of a very specific good or service and then rely on others to provide them other necessities of life in exchange for their specialized product.
Highly specialized societies are held together by organic solidarity, based on mutual interdependence. Such societies emphasize the need for specialization and people depend on other people in order to obtain the different things that they need.

**Gender Roles and Age Specialization**
Generally, many cultures allocate specific responsibilities on the basis of age and gender. Ole people and those very young are given lighter tasks in most cases, where circumstances permit (in cases of extreme poverty, child labor can also take place).

Similarly, women are usually allocated tasks which allow them to maintain flexible timings so that they can look after their homes as well. There are exceptions to this rule however, since many educated women do work as long as men, often leaving their children to the care of day centers.
In many countries around the world, the process of urbanization has led men to move away to the cities in order to earn more cash, often leaving women behind to undertake agricultural work, which was previously done by men. Circumstances also compel poor women to take on heavy work burdens, like their men folk, to ensure the survival of their families.

Moreover, the same type of activity (weaving) may be associated with the opposite gender in different cultures; the division of labor by gender is seen as being arbitrary.

**Is Nepotism Always Bad?**
In many societies people relate to each other based on the principle of particularism (family and kinship ties) rather than on universalistic terms (using standardized exams, interviews).
Nepotism is not necessarily a sign of corruption, since consideration of ground realities like kinship ties can often help determine how people will adjust to specific work environments.

**Useful Terms**

**Allocation of resources:** the distribution of resources.
**Barter:** the direct exchange of commodities between people that does not involve a standardized currency.
**Division of Labor:** the set of rules found in all societies dictating how the day to day tasks are assigned to the various members of a society.
**Reciprocity:** the practice of giving a gift with an expected return.
**Globalization:** the world wide process dating back to the demise of the Berlin wall, which involves a revolution in information technology, opening of markets, and the privatization of social services.
**Labor specialization:** a form of having command over one activity.

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 8 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 17 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Economic Anthropology
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_anthropology

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following aspects of Economic Anthropology for today's lecture:

Anthropological theories of value

The Anthropological view of Wealth

Lesson 08

## ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY (continued)
## THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES

**Lesson Overview:**

- Modes of Distribution
- Types of Reciprocity
- Globalization

**Modes of Distribution**

Economic Anthropologists categorize the distribution of goods and services in three modes; reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange. Based on these three forms of exchange, cultures around the world distribute the goods and services produced by them, in order to ensure the survival of the various people which belong to that particular culture.

1. **Reciprocity** implies exchange of goods and services of almost equal value between two trading partners.

2. **Redistribution**, most common in societies with political bureaucracies, is a form of exchange where goods and services are given by a central authority and then reallocated to create new patterns of distribution.

3. **Market exchange systems** involve the use of standardized currencies to buy and sell goods and services.

**Types of Reciprocity**

The idea of reciprocity can be divided into the following distinct types of practices evident in cultures around the world:

1. **Generalized reciprocity** involves giving gifts without any expectation of immediate return. For example, the parents look after their children and these children, when they grow older look after their aging parents. This is an unsaid rule or obligation towards one family, which people undertake willingly out of love and concern and without any external compulsion or the idea of getting something back in return for their caring attitudes.

2. **Balanced reciprocity** involves the exchange of goods and services with the expectation that the equivalent value will be returned within a specific period of time. For example, if a neighbor's son or daughter is getting married, the neighbors will take gifts to the wedding, and then expect the same courtesy when their own child's wedding. The notion of birthday gifts is even more time specific, and thus serves as a good example of balanced reciprocity.

3. **Negative reciprocity** involves the exchange of goods and services between equals in which the parties try to gain an advantage, in order to maximize their own profit, even if it requires hard-bargaining or exploiting the other person.

**Redistribution**

Whereas reciprocity is the exchange of goods and services between two parties, redistribution involves a social centre from which goods are redistributed. Often this redistribution takes place through a political or bureaucratic agency (e.g. the revenue collection or tax department which is found in most countries or even the *zakat* system in Pakistan, based on a religious ideology, which is meant to redistribute wealth to those who are destitute).

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**Market Exchange**
Market exchange is based on use of standardized currencies or through the *barter* (exchange) of goods and services. This system of exchange is much less personal than either reciprocity or redistribution. People trade in a marketplace to maximize their profits. The greater the specialization of labor that exists in a society, the more complex is the system of market exchange to be found in that society.

**Globalization**
Globalization involves the spread of the free-market economies to all parts of the world based on the assumption that more growth will take place when free trade and competition becomes a universal phenomenon.

Globalization has begun to show visible impacts on the cultures and lives of people around the world. There are people who favor globalization, thinking it will help remove poverty across much of the world, but they are also those who think that globalization will do the exact opposite.

**Useful Terms**

**Organic Solidarity:** a type of social integration based on mutual inter-dependence.
**Particularism:** the propensity to be able to deal with people according to one's particular relationship to them rather than according to a universal standard.
**Production:** a process where by goods are taken from the natural environment and then altered to become consumable goods for society.
**Property Rights:** western concept of individual ownership.
**Standardized Currency:** a medium of exchange with well defined and an understood value.
**Universalism:** the notion of awarding people on the basis of some universally applied set of standards.

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 8 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 17 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Economic Anthropology
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_anthropology

Use the hyperlinks on the above website to read up on the following aspects of Economic Anthropology for today's lecture:
Non-market economics

Lesson 09

# FOCUSING ON LANGUAGE

**Lesson Overview:**

- An Anthropological Perspective
- The Nature of Language
- Languages of the World
- Communication – Human versus Nonhuman
- Open and Closed Communication Systems
- Structure of Language

**An Anthropological Perspective**

Language is a unique phenomenon, which allows human beings to communicate meaning to others and express our thoughts and feelings to other people.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of being human is our capacity to create and use language. Many anthropological linguists would agree that without language, human culture could not exist beyond a very basic level.

**The Nature of Language**

The meaning we give to language is arbitrary (random). It is due to this arbitrary nature of language, there is such a diversity of languages.

**Languages of the World**

Almost 95 percent of people speak fewer than 100 languages of the approximately 6,000 languages that are currently found in the world. Due to this, many languages face the threat of extinction, with an increasingly small number of people who know the language.

This evident dying out of rarely spoken languages is an issue of concern to cultural anthropologists since the extinction of a language also means the death of a way of thinking and expressing human thought.

Of the more widely spoken languages, Mandarin (Chinese dialect) is spoken by almost 1 in 5 people in the world. Hindi is also spoken by multitudes of people. Yet, English is the most popular second language spoken by people all around the world.

**Communication – Human versus Nonhuman**

Humans are not the only species that communicate. Animals use calls to mate, find food and signal danger.

Human communication amongst humans is however much more complex than that of animals. We can combine words in unique ways, to express our innermost feelings or even very complicated ideas which can be understood by others who can speak the same language.

**Open and Closed Communication Systems**

Animal sounds are mutually exclusive (Closed Communication systems), they cannot be combined to express new meanings. A warning sound of an animal is always the same and this sound is used to convey the same message always, it cannot be combined with other sounds to convey different types of meaning. Only humans can put different meanings together (through using of an Open Communication system, which is the language they speak).

This categorization of Open and Closed communication systems has been questioned by anthropological linguists, based on research conducted using sign language. A chimpanzee for example can in fact combine two words to create a third word. Researchers have trained a chimpanzee to learn the sign language for 'water' and for 'bird' but not shown it how to say 'duck' using sign language. This chimpanzee has however been able to create the two known words, 'water' and 'bird' to refer to a 'duck', indicating that other species could also use open communication systems like humans.

However, no linguist has yet made the claim that any animal species has evolved language to a degree which can express the complexities of meaning that human beings can.

**Displacement**
Humans can speak of purely hypothetical and abstract things, of things which happened in the past or may happen in the future. Whereas animals only communicate in the present about things concerning their immediate surroundings, animals cannot express abstract thoughts.

**Learning to Communicate**
Imitating adult speech is partially responsible for acquisition of language. Linguists (like Noam Chomsky at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) think that children are born with a universal grammatical blueprint, which helps them pick up the rules of the language being spoken around them so quickly, and that this is a biological gift that only the human species seems to possess, since no other species has such complex communication abilities.

**Structure of Language**
All languages have logical structures or rules, which are followed by all those who can speak, read and write that particular language.

- **Phonology:** provides the sound structure to a language so it can be commonly understood when spoken.

- **Morphemes:** the smallest units of speech that convey meaning (art-ist-s) by standing alone or being bound to other words

- **Grammar:** provides the unique rules of a language, which help give a logical structure to a language. Grammar also provides rules by which words are arranged into sentences (*syntax*).

Consider the words: Adam apples likes eating, which make no sense since the verb 'eating' and the adjective 'likes' are not in their grammatically correct position. Correcting the mistake will make the sentence clear: Adam likes eating apples. The underlying structure of sentences which enables us to correct such a mistake and speak in a clear manner is due to the grammatical rules of syntax.
The fact that we can even say this sentence is due to phonology and morphemes help us create a sentence by providing us with different meanings in smaller words (eat-ing, like-s).

**Useful Terms**

**Displacement:** the ability that humans have to talk about things remote in time and space.
**Free Morphemes:** morphemes that appear in a language without being attached to other morphemes.
**Grammar:** the systematic way in which sounds are combined in any given language to send and receive meaning-full utterances.
**Phonology:** the study of language's sound system.

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 6 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 15 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Anthropological Linguistics
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropological_linguistics

Lesson 10

## FOCUS ON LANGUAGE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Changes in Language
- Language Families
- Levels of Complexity
- Cultural Emphasis
- Language and Culture
- The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
- Linking Language to Culture
- Socio-Linguistics
- Diglossia
- Language and Nationalism

### Changes in Language

Language evolves over time. Linguists can undertake a *synchronic analysis* to understand language structures and its underlying rules at a given point in time. Undertaking a *diachronic analysis,* however, means looking at how a given language changes over time.

### Language Families

Language families include languages derived from a proto-language. Linguists began clustering languages upon finding similarities between Sanskrit and classical Latin and Greek in the 1880s. From the perspective of language families, Germanic is mother tongue of English. French and Spanish are its sister languages. They all belong to the Indo-European language family.

All languages have internal dialects as well as sharing features with other languages as well, particularly with those belonging to the same language family as them.**Levels of Complexity**

Linguists have proven that languages of less technological societies are as capable of communicating abstract ideas as advanced societies. For example, the Navaho do not have singular and plural nouns, like English does, but their verbs contain much more information than English.

Instead of merely saying 'going' the Navaho say how they are going, if they are going on a horse, they must further indicate how fast the horse is going, which is a lot more information than a phrase in English, which just mentions 'I am going'.

### Cultural Emphasis

The vocabulary of languages emphasizes significant words in a given culture. This is known as a 'cultural emphasis'. Technologically related words show emphasis on technology in highly industrialized countries. There are numerous new words to describe computer technology in various languages, which did not even exist a few decades ago.

### Language and Culture

Some ethno-linguists suggest that language is more than a symbolic inventory of experiences from our physical world experiences. According to them, language even shapes our thoughts and provides a standardized way to react to experiences.

### The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

According to this hypothesis, different cultures see the world differently due to their different languages. Language influences and channels our perceptions and thus shapes our resulting behavior as well. The hypothesis has conducted several tests in the attempt to validate its claim.

### Linking Language to Culture

It is difficult to establish causation to prove either that language determines culture or that culture influences language. Language does mirror values of a culture, consider for example the emphasis on self in individualistic societies. On the other hand, in more traditional societies like Japan the use of collective words like 'we' is much more evident.

**Socio-Linguistics**

Socio-linguistics examines links between languages and social structures. While earlier cultural linguists focused on language structures, there is now greater focus on the situational use of language, i.e. how the same language is used to speak in different manners depending on the context of the conversation.

**Diglossia**

Often two varieties of the same language are spoken in different social situations. High forms are associated with literacy and education, and the elite whereas the lower forms (for example, Pidgin) are considered to be less sophisticated.

**Language and Nationalism**

Language has important implications for ethnic identities. To forge national unity, political leaders have often suppressed use of local languages in favor of standardized national languages to provide a sense of unity to the nation and to develop a common means of communication.

**Useful Terms**

**Evolve:** Develop
**Synchronic Analysis:** the analysis of cultural data at a single point in time, rather than through time

**Diachronic Analysis:** the analysis of socio-cultural data through time, rather than at a single point in time
**Derived:** taken from
**Abstract:** Not clear or vague
**Emphasis:** To lay importance on
**Perceptions:** Viewpoints
**Suppressed:** concealed or covered up
**Dialect:** form of speech peculiar to particular region

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 6 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 15 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**

In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following website for this lecture:

Anthropological Linguistics
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropological_linguistics

Lesson 11

# OBTAINING FOOD IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

**Lesson Overview:**

- Major Food Obtaining Strategies
- Food, Environment and Technology
- Optimal Foraging

**Strategies for Obtaining Food**

Food obtaining strategies vary from culture to culture. Food obtaining strategies are developed in response to particular environments. There are five major food obtaining strategies found in different cultures of the world. These five forms of obtaining food are not mutually exclusive and within each category there are evident variations due to technological and environmental differences. Therefore, often one form of obtaining food predominates within a given culture.

While food obtaining strategies vary widely around the world, none is necessarily 'superior' then another.

**Major Food Obtaining Strategies**

**Food Collection:** collecting wild vegetation, hunting and fishing.

**Horticulture:** cultivation, using simple tools and small and shifting plots of land.

**Pastoralism:** keeping livestock and using its produce for food.

**Agriculture:** cultivation using animals, irrigation and mechanical implements.

**Industrialization:** producing food using complex machinery. Most developed countries and an increasing amount of developing countries rely on industrialized processes to obtain food.

**Food, Environment and Technology**

Some environments enable a number of modes of food acquisition, while others permit limited number of adaptations. Technology provides the advantage of adaptation to a given environment. It can be said that specific food obtaining modes are influenced by the interaction of a people's technological and environmental conditions.

The extent, to which any society can procure food, depends on sophistication of tools used and the abundance of plant and animal life in a given area. Productivity of agriculturalists not only depends on technology but also availability of natural resources like water and fertile soil.

Anthropologists agree that while the environment does not set limits on food obtaining patterns, it does place a limit on the adaptations possible and on the ultimate productivity of an area. People with simple technologies also cope well with their environments and are intelligent given their circumstances and surroundings.

The environmental capacity of a given area is referred to as 'carrying capacity'. The natural consequence of exceeding carrying capacity is to harm the environment.

**Optimal Foraging**

Many foraging societies spend extra time and effort to obtain a particular food. Ethnographic studies of the Ache in Paraguay for example have revealed that this is not irrational behavior but due to caloric returns of these food sources despite the energy expended in killing, collecting and preparing it. This reveals that optimal foraging is a calculated strategy not a irrational whim.

**Useful Terms**

**Foraging:** collecting or gathering
**Optimal:** best or most feasible
**Expended:** spent

**Environmental capacity:** carrying capacity of the environment, i.e. the amount of productive pressure the air, water and soil can take without being damaged

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 7 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 16 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Anthropology of Food
http://www.archaeolink.com/anthropology_of_food_general_res.htm

Lesson 12

# FOOD AND CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Food Collection
- Contemporary Food Collectors/Foragers
- Food Production
- Changes Resulting From Neolithic Revolution

**Food Collection**

Food collection involves (systematic exploration) of natural plants and animals available in given natural environments. People have been foragers for an overwhelming majority of time, and have only developed other options to secure food in the last 10,000 years or so.

**Food Collectors**

Most societies prefer to produce food, but half a million people in different cultures live by foraging even today. There are considerable variations in the life patterns of current foragers but it is possible to make some generalizations about them.

**Contemporary Food Collectors/Foragers**

Food collecting societies have low population density. They are usually nomadic or semi-nomadic rather than sedentary since their prey often migrates. The basic social unit amongst food collectors is a family or a band, a loose federation of families. Contemporary food collectors occupy remote and marginal habitats, due to pressure from food processing people with their dominating technology and thirst for more land

While food collectors hunt as well as collect wild plants, vegetation provides almost 80% of their food intake. Food collecting people live in a wide variety of environments including deserts, tropical forests, mountains and the polar regions of the Artic and Antarctic circles.

Unlike food producers, food collectors possess inbuilt mechanisms (low population and little use of technology), which prevents it from becoming too efficient and completely destroying their own source of food.

**Do Foragers Live Well?**

Despite inhabiting the most unproductive parts of Earth, foragers are well off and dubbed 'the original affluent society' by anthropologists. They enjoy leisure time, have enough food and use remarkable intelligence and ingenuity in securing their food.

Most contemporary foraging societies remain small scale, unspecialized, egalitarian and non-centralized. The Khung in the Kalahari Desert in Namibia and the Inuit in the Artic region, provide good examples of hunting and gathering peoples today.

**Food Production**

About 10,000 years ago, humans made a transition from collecting to producing food by cultivating crops and keeping herds of animals. The earliest cultivation occurred in the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East.

Archeologists think this transition was due to demographic and environmental pressures. Early farmers paid a high price for this new food strategy. They did not switch convinced by the superiority of agriculture, which was more monotonous, less secure and required more labor and time. Evidence reveals early cultivators also experienced a decline in nutritional and health standards because they had to shift from collecting to growing food.

**Changes Resulting From Neolithic Revolution**

Food production resulted in the first population explosion. Fertility rates also increased since children could make an economic contribution. People became sedentary and civilizations began to develop. As farming became more efficient, people had more free time and began making farm implements and pottery, leading to the division of labor and specialization. The egalitarianism of foraging societies was replaced by social inequalities and the thirst for private ownership.

**Useful Terms**

**Population:** number of people in a given area
**Sedentary:** settlement, or settled down in one place
**Strategy:** a thought out method to obtain some objective or goal
**Monotonous:** boring
**Nutritional value:** amount of energy

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 7 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 16 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Anthropology of Food
http://www.archaeolink.com/anthropology_of_food_general_res.htm

Lesson 13

## OBTAINING FOOD IN DIFFERENT CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Horticulture
- Pastoralism
- Agriculture
- Industrialization

### Horticulture

Horticulture is the simplest form of farming, using basic tools, no fertilizer or irrigation, and relying on human power. Horticulturists use shifting cultivation techniques, also referred to as 'slash and burn' cultivation.

### Horticultural Crops

Crops growth by horticulturists can be divided into three categories: tree crops, seed crops and root crops. Common tree crops include bananas, figs, dates and coconuts. Major seed crops are high in protein. Wheat, barley, rice, millet, oats and sorghum are all seed crops. Major root crops are high in starch and carbohydrates. Yams, sweet potatoes, potatoes are all root crops.

The Lacondon Maya of Chiapas, Mexico, are more productive than mono-crop agriculturalists. They achieve three levels of production from the same land and do so by maintaining (by imitating the dispersal patterns found within ecological systems of tropical rainforest) rather than displacing them.

### Slash and Burn Technique

In unused areas of vast land, slash and burn can be a reasonably efficient form of production. Ash fertilized soil resulting from slashing and burning wild vegetation must lie fallow to restore fertility.

Under drought conditions of Al Nino (during the 1990s), horticulturists were severely criticized for destroying large tract of grasslands and forests in Madagascar, Brazil and Indonesia, since the fires they lit for clearing land often raged out of control.

### Pastoralism

Keeping domesticated livestock as a source of food is widely practiced in areas where cultivation is not possible. Pastoralism involves a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle within small family based communities. Pastoralists also maintain regular contact with cultivators to help supplement their diets.

### Agriculture

More recent than horticulture, agriculture uses technologies like irrigation, fertilizers and mechanical equipment to produce high yield and large populations

Agriculture is associated with permanent settlements and high levels of labor specialization. Intensive agriculture leads to even further specialization and use of technological inputs. It also leads to social stratification, political hierarchies and administrative structures.

### Industrialization

Since several centuries, people have used industrialized food getting strategies. There is increasing amounts of mechanical power available for the purpose of obtaining, storing and processing food.

Industrialization also uses a mobile labor force and a complex system of markets, which has led to the increasing commercialization of food. Therefore, food is grown not only for consumption but also for exporting to other countries of the world.

Biotechnology provides a current example of industrialized food getting, as does laser leveling or use of GPS transmitters on grain harvesters. All these technological innovations have been incorporated into the food production process and helped to increase food output.

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Yet there are environmental costs resulting from exceeding the carrying capacity of land and from overuse of technological innovations such as pesticides and fertilizers. The use of biotechnology in food production is also a much debated topic.

**Useful Terms**

**Horticulture:** A form of small-scale crop cultivation characterized by the use of simple technology and the absence of irrigation
**Carbohydrates:** energy source found in particular types of food group
**Tropical:** humid
**Drought:** lack of rainfall
**Criticize:** disapprove of
**Supplement:** add on

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 7 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 16 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Anthropology of Food
http://www.archaeolink.com/anthropology_of_food_general_res.htm

Lesson 14

# RELEVANCE OF KINSHIP AND DESCENT

**Lesson Overview:**

- Kinship Defined
- Functions of Kinship
- Cultural Rules Regarding Kinship
- Rules of Descent
- Comparing Descent Groups

**Kinship Defined**
Kinship is the single most important social structure in all societies. Kinship is based on both consanguineal (blood) and affinal (marriage) relations or even fictive ties (adoption, godparents).

**Functions of Kinship**

**Vertical Function:** Kinship systems provide social continuity by binding together a number of generations

**Horizontal Function:** Kinships provide social solidarity and continuity within the same generation as well.

**Cultural Rules Regarding Kinship**
Kinship systems group relatives into certain categories and call them by the same name and behave with them in a similar manner. Yet how particular cultures categorize relatives varies according to different principles of classification.

**Kinship Criteria**
Different societies use different rules in formulating kinship ties. Some of these are:

**Generation** - uncles are in one generation, cousins in another
**Gender** - cousins do not occupy gender determined kin categories
**Lineality** – kin of a single line, i.e. son, father, grandfather **Consanguineality** – kin through a linking relative (wife's brother)
**Relative Age** – one kinship term for father's older brother another for his younger brother (e.g. taya and chacha)
**Gender of Connecting Relative** – using different kinship terms for the father's brother's daughter his sister's daughter
**Social Conditions** – different kinship terms for a married or an unmarried bother
**Side of the Family** – different kinship terms for father's and mother's sides of the family (e.g. phupho and khala)

**Rules of Descent**
Rules of descent enable the affiliation of people with different sets of kin, for example:

**Patrilineal descent** affiliates a person with the kin of the father

**Matrilineal descent** affiliates a person with the kin of the mother

**Ambilineal descent** permits an individual to affiliate with either parent's kin group

**Consanguineal versus Affinal Kin**
Some societies make a distinction in kinship categories based on whether people are related by blood (*consanguineal kin*) or through marriage (*affinal kin*). For example, take the difference between a sister and a sister-in-law or a brother and a brother-in-law.

**Comparing Descent Groups**
Patrilineal descent groups are most common around the world. The relations between man and wife tend to be more fragile in matrilineal societies.

**Useful Terms**

**Unilineal descent:** tracing descent through a single line (such as matrilineal or patrilineal) as compared to both sides (bilateral decent|)
**Bilateral:** able to accommodate two-sides simultaneously
**Matrineally:** mother's side of the family
**Patrineally:** father's side of the family
**Prevalent:** common amongst many
**Kinship:** relationship
**Merging:** integration

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 10 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 21 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Kinship Terms
www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/kinship/terms.html

Lesson 15

## KINSHIP AND DESCENT (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Tracing Descent
- Kinship Organization
- Bilateral Descent
- Double Descent
- Primary Kinship Systems

### Tracing Descent

In societies that trace their descent unilineally, people recognize that they belong to a particular unilineal descent group or series of groups. Sixty percent of cultures in the world are unilineal. Unilineal groups are adaptive and clear-cut social units, based on birthright, which in turn influence inheritance, marriage and prestige issues

### Kinship Organization

**Kinship** is organized on the basis of different groups of varying sizes:

**Lineages** are based on a set of kin who can trace their ancestry back through known links

**Clans** are unilineal groups which claim descent but they are unable to trace all their genealogical links

**Phratries** are groups of related clan

**Moieties** are two halves of a society related by descent

### Bilateral Descent

A person is related equally to both sides of the family on the basis of bilateral descent. This form of descent is prevalent in foraging and industrialized societies. Bilateral systems are symmetrical and result in the formation of kindred, which are loose kinship networks rather than being permanent corporate functioning groups.

### Double Descent

A double unilineal descent system is one where descendents are traced matrineally and patrineally. As a result, both sides of the family have a useful social function such as enabling inheritance. Under this system, it is possible for moveable property such as livestock or agricultural produce to be inherited from the mother's side, whereas non-moveable property (land) may be inherited from the father's side. This system is found in only 5% of world cultures (for e.g. the Yako in Nigeria).

### Primary Kinship Systems

There are six basic types of kinship systems used to define how cultures distinguish between different categories of relatives.

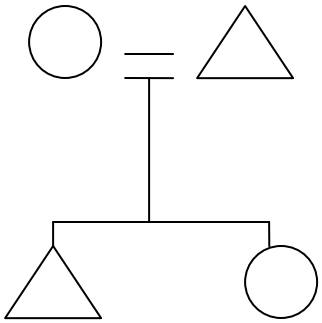
**Eskimo** are found in one-tenth of the world societies, this system involves bilateral descent, focusing on nuclear relations and lumping external relatives (cousins, uncles and aunts).
**Hawaiian** are found in a third of world societies, this system uses the same term for all relatives of the same gender and generation, so the term *mother* is used not only for the mother but also for her sisters and the father's sisters. Cousins are termed brothers and sisters. This is an ambivalent system, which submerges the nuclear family into a larger kinship group.

**Iroquois** are a less prevalent system which emphasizes the importance of unilineal descent groups by distinguishing between members of one's own lineage and those belonging to other lineages.

**Sudanese** are the system is named after the country where the system was first identified. It is the most pluralistic system since it makes the most terminological distinctions.

**Omaha** emphasizes patrilineal descent, the father and his brothers are referred to by the same term and the paternal cousins are called siblings, but cross cousins are referred to by separate terms. On the mother's side there is a merging of generations, all her male relatives are called mother's brother.
**Crow** is the exact opposite of the Omaha system, as it emphasizes maternal relations which are all important for determining the descent group of children.
**Kinship Diagrams**
Cultural Anthropologists often use kinship diagrams to help explain family structures, which use simple symbols for males and females, and to indicate what their relationships are to each other.

The diagram below depicts a married couple and their two children (a son and a daughter):



**Useful Terms**

**Descent:** established linage
**Ambivalent:** unclear
**Influence:** power
**Social function:** the particular purpose served for society
**Prestige:** Social honor or respect within a society

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 10 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 21 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Descent: Terms and Concepts
http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/D/descent.html

Lesson 16

# THE ROLE OF FAMILY AND MARRIAGE IN CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Family and Marriage
- Functions of Families
- Marriage Restrictions
- Types of Marriage
- Economic Aspect of Marriage
- Types of Marriage Transactions

**Family and Marriage**

The family is a social unit in which its members cooperate economically, manage reproduction and child rearing, and most often live together. Families can be based on lineage and marital ties.

Marriage, the process by which families are formed, is a socially approved union between male and female adults. Marriage is based on the assumption that it is a permanent contract. Yet there is a discrepancy between real and expected behavior within marriages, given the high rates of divorce in many countries of the modern world.

**Functions of Families**

Families reduce competition for spouses. They also regulate the division of labor on the basis of gender. Families also meet the material, educational and emotional needs of children.

**Marriage Restrictions**

Cultures restrict the choice of marriage patterns by *exogamy*, which means marrying outside a given group. *Endogamy* on the other hand implies marrying within a given group. Conservative Hindus are mostly endogamous, as are Rwandans in Central African.

It is important to note that endogamous groupings can be based on lineage or even ethnic or economic similarities.

Moreover, it is possible to simultaneously have an endogamous marriage (within an ethic group) that is also exogamous (outside one's lineage).

**Types of Marriage**

**Monogamy:** a marriage arrangement that implies having one spouse at one time.

**Polygamy:** a marriage arrangement that implies a man marrying more than one woman at one time.

**Polyandry:** a marriage arrangement that implies a woman marrying more than one husband at one time.

**Economic Aspect of Marriage**

Marriages involve transfer of some type of economic consideration in exchange for rights of union, legal rights over children and rights to each other's property.

There are many cultures in the world which consider marriage as more than a union of man and wife but instead an alliance between two families.

**Types of Marriage Transactions**

**Bride-wealth:** transfer of wealth from a groom's family to that of the bride's (approximately 47%).

**Bride service:** labor in exchange for a wife, common in small scale societies, lacking material wealth (approximately 17%).

**Dowry:** transfer of wealth from a bride's family to that of the groom's. This practice was popular in medieval Europe and may still prevail in several parts of Northern India (approximately 3%).

**Woman Exchange:** two men exchanging sister's as wives. This practice is limited to a small number of societies (approximately 3%) in Africa and the Pacific region.

**Reciprocal Exchange:** a roughly equal exchange of gifts between bride and groom families. Found amongst traditional Native Americans and islands in the Pacific region (approximately 6%).
(Note: These above statistics are not very recent and should not be taken literally but rather as an indication of the popularity of the above types of transactions).

**Useful Terms**

**Discrepancy:** difference
**Reciprocal:** equal
**Groom:** husband
**Reproduction:** process of giving birth to children
**Transaction:** exchange

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 9 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 20 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**

In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Family
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family

Lesson 17

## ROLE OF FAMILY AND MARRIAGE IN CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Residence Patterns
- Family Structures

**Residence Patterns**
Residence patterns are influenced by kinship systems. For e.g. patrilocal residence is common in patrilineal cultures. Residence patterns can be disrupted due to events such as droughts, famines, wars or even due to economic hardship.

The most common types of residence patterns evidenced around the world are:
**Patrilocal:** the couple can live with or near the relatives of the husband's father (most prevalent)

**Matrilocal:** the couple can live with or near the relatives of the wife's father

**Avunculocal:** the couple can live with or near the husband's mother's brother

**Ambilocal or bilocal:** the couple can live with or near the relatives of either the wife or the husband

**Neolocal:** Where economic circumstances permit, the couple can also establish a completely new residence of their own.

Residence patterns are not static. The Great Depression in America, during the 1930s, for example compelled neolocal residents to shift back to living with one of their parents again due to economic reasons. Similar circumstances keep recurring in different societies of the world and result in changing residence patterns.
In many traditional societies, joint-family systems are also very common. The dynamics of a joint-family system differ from widely from living independently, implying a shared responsibility for household responsibilities, often under the charge of the oldest member of the household.

**Family Structures**
Cultural Anthropologists distinguish between two types of family structures: the nuclear family and the extended family.
Nuclear families are based on marital ties, whereas the extended family is a much larger social unit, based on blood ties among three or more generations.

**Nuclear Family**
A two generation family formed around the marital union. While a part of bigger family structures, nuclear families remain autonomous and independent.
Nuclear families are often found in societies with greatest amount of geographic mobility. Nuclear family patterns were encouraged by industrialization and technology but also have remained evident in foraging societies.
Where resources are scare, it makes sense for people to remain in nuclear families, whereby retaining a certain level of mobility, independence. Nuclear families are therefore called the basic food collecting unit in addition to being the most dominant mode of family life in many modern-day families around the world.

**Extended Families**
Blood ties are more important than ties of marriage, which form the basis of extended families. Extended families can be matrilineal or patrilineal. The Anthropological Atlas of 1967 noted 46% out of 862 societies

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as having some form of extended family organization. These numbers have no doubt increased over the past few decades, given the increasing world population.

**Modern-Day Families**
Modernization and urbanization have seen progressive movement towards nuclear family structures. In developing countries, this correlation is not necessary.

The lack of employment security makes extended families serve as social safety nets. Migrant families also hold onto traditional family structures even after having gone to live abroad. In western societies, even nuclear families are not so common, given high divorce and separation rates.

**Useful Terms**

**Prevalent:** commonly found in different places
**Migrant:** refugee
**Correlation:** association between two entities
**Scarce:** in short supply
**Evident:** obvious

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 9 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 20 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Family
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family

**Lesson 18**

## GENDER AND CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Meaning of Gender
- Gender Roles
- Status of Women
- Gender Stratification

**Meaning of Gender**

Gender refers to the way members of the two sexes are perceived, evaluated, and expected to behave. It is not possible to determine the extent to which culture or biology determines differences in behaviors or attitudes between males or females.

Although biology sets broad limits on gender definitions, there is a wide range of ideas about what it means to be feminine or masculine. Margaret Mead demonstrated this gender based variation in her classical study of sex and temperament in New Guinea

**Gender Roles**

In some cultures, gender roles are rigidly defined, in other cultures they can overlap. In general terms, however, there is considerable uniformity in gender roles found throughout the world.

Men engage in warfare, clear land, hunt and trap animals, build houses, fish, and work with hard substances. Women, on the other hand, tend crops, prepare food, collect firewood, clean house, launder clothes, and carry water (tasks compatible with child rearing).

Yet there are many exceptions to the rule. For example, in parts of Eastern Africa and in other parts of the developing world, women carry enormous amounts of firewood on their backs. For the foraging Agta of the Philippines, hunting is not an exclusively male activity.

**Status of Women**

The status of women is multidimensional, involving such aspects as the division of labor, the value placed on women's contributions, economic autonomy, social and political power, legal rights, levels of deference, and the extent to which women control the everyday events of their lives.

The status of women varies around the world, but it is unfortunate that in most cases it continues to remain below that of men.

**Gender Stratification**

Gender stratification contrasts the status assigned by different cultures on the basis of gender. It is important to release that status is itself a multidimensional notion involving issues of economic, social and political empowerment. Stratification on the basis of gender is a common phenomenon.

The relationships between men and women vary in both degree and in extent across different cultures of the world. Many cultures in Asia for example are very stratified along gender lines. On the other hand, foraging societies, like the Mbuti Pygmies of Central Africa, possess a very egalitarian gender approach (all their elders are called 'tata').

Gender stratification need not be static. However, in most critical areas, women tend to be subordinate to men in most societies of the world. It is difficult to measure the comparative status of men and women in different societies since there are various components of stratification, which can vary independently of each other

**Useful Terms**

**Status:** social ranking
**Acquisition:** gaining

**Interaction:** communication
**Abundance:** profusion or great quantity
**Multidimensional:** many sided
**Stratification:** hierarchical division
**Irrational:** without logic

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 11 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 19 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Gender and Cultural Anthropology
http://vlib.anthrotech.com/Cultural_Anthropology/Gender/Feminism/

Lesson 19

## GENDER ROLES IN CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Gender Ideology
- Negative Impact of Biased Gender Ideologies
- Women Employment
- Occupational Segregation
- Feminization of Poverty

**Gender Ideology**
Gender ideology is used in most societies to justify the universal male dominance. Deeply rooted values about the superiority of men, the ritual impurity of women, and the preeminence of men's work are used to justify subjugation of women.
However, it has been demonstrated in recent years that women do not perceive themselves in the same ways that they are portrayed in largely male gender ideologies.

**Negative Impact of Biased Gender Ideologies**
In some societies, gender ideologies become so extreme that females suffer serious negative consequences such as female infanticide, female nutritional deprivation, honor killings and domestic violence.
These atrocities are due to the negative impact of gender ideologies as well as due to the disempowerment of females which is another simultaneous consequence of these ideologies.

**Women Employment**
Although the words 'breadwinner' and 'housewife' accurately described the middle-class western household around the beginning of the twentieth century, the separate gender roles implied by these two terms have become more myth than reality.
Over the past four decades the number of women in working outside the home has increased dramatically. This is true for not only industrialized but also developing countries, due to the ongoing phenomenon of globalization, which has led more and more women into the workforce.

**Occupational Segregation**
The economy of most countries is characterized by a high rate of occupational segregation along gender lines. Not only are occupations gender segregated, but women tend to earn considerably less than men.

**Feminization of Poverty**
There has been a trend in recent decades toward the feminization of poverty. Being disempowered, women fall victims to poverty much more easily then men. They also have less access to resources with which to fight against poverty. Women often are responsible for looking after their children, and their poverty results in declining health standards of both women and their children.

**Useful Terms**

**Segregation:** separation
**Resources:** means of production or more generally the (financial) means required to do something
**Ideology:** an established way of thinking
**Decade:** a period of ten years
**Disempowered:** without any say or without any authority or power

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 11 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 19 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Gender and Cultural Anthropology
http://vlib.anthrotech.com/Cultural_Anthropology/Gender/Feminism/

Lesson 20

## STRATIFICATION AND CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Stratification and its Manifestations
- Social Ranking
- Dimensions of Inequality
- Types of Societies

**Stratification and its Manifestations**
Individuals in different cultures and societies have varying amounts of access to wealth, power and prestige
This evident inequality leads to stratification, whereby groups or categories of people are ranked hierarchically relative to one another

**Social Ranking**
Social ranking is an important feature found to one degree or another in all societies
The degree to which societies rank individuals however varies and results in varying amounts of inequality to be found in the world

**Dimensions of Inequality**
According to Max Weber, stratification takes place on the basis of three reasons
People are distinguished from each other on the basis of wealth or economic resources they posses

Secondly, stratification takes place on the basis of differing levels of power
Power is the ability to achieve one's goals and objectives, even against the will of others. The amount of power often correlates to amount of wealth individuals possess.

**Types of Societies**

**Stratified societies**, which are associated with the rise of civilization, range from open class societies, which permit high social mobility, to more rigid caste societies, which allow for little or no social mobility

**Class societies** are associated with achieved status, the positions that the individual can choose or at least have some control over.

**Caste societies**, on the other hand, are based on ascribed statuses into which one is born and cannot change.

The United States is often cited as a prime example of a class society with maximum mobility Although its national credo includes a belief in the possibility of going from rags to riches, most people in the United States remain in the class into which they are born because social environment has an appreciable effect on a person's life chances.
The mobility in less developed countries is even more restricted. Hindu India is often cited as the most extreme form of caste society found in the world. Social boundaries among castes are strictly maintained by caste endogamy and strongly held notions of ritual purity and pollution.

**Useful Terms**

**Inequality:** unevenness
**Purity:** cleanliness
**Pollution:** environmental degradation or physical corruption/deterioration
**Social mobility:** ability to change one's status
**Ritual:** a social routine

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 13 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 18 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-pages for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Stratification
www.soci.canterbury.ac.nz/ resources/glossary/socialst.shtml

Lesson 21

# THEORIES OF STRATIFICATION (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

Prominent Theories of Stratification

- The Functionalists
- Conflict Theorists

**Prominent Theories of Stratification**

Theories of stratification try to explain the existing inequality of wealth in and between different cultures. The Functional Theory and the Conflict Theory provide two conflicting interpretations of social stratification evident around the world today.

**The Functionalists**

Functionalists adopt a conservative position and maintain that social inequality exists because it is necessary for the functioning of society. Functionalists emphasize the integrative nature of stratification, which results in stability and social order.

They point out that class systems contribute to the overall well-being of a society and encourage constructive endeavor. Functionalists argue that differential awards are necessary if societies are to recruit the best trained and most highly skilled people for highly valued positions. They maintain that highly skilled people need to be given greater rewards to act as an inventive for them to acquire the required skills. For example, a brain surgeon needs to spend enormous amounts of time and energy to develop his skills and help society and society must in turn reward him more than it does other people who do not have to make a similar investment in obtaining a skill.

Functionalists cannot account for non-functional success of pop icons for example. Famous personalities are often given enormous amounts of money to make public appearances due to their popularity rather than their exceptional amount of skill. Functionalists ignore the barriers to participation of certain segments of society.

**Conflict Theorists**

Conflict theorists assume that the natural tendency of all societies is toward change and conflict. Conflict theorists believe that stratification exists because the upper classes strive to maintain their superior position at the expense of the lower classes.

Conflict theorists do not view stratification systems as enviable or desirable. Lack of social mobility leads to exploitation, crime, revitalization, reform and even to revolution. Conflict theory is influenced by the wirings of Karl Marx.

**Functionalists versus Conflict Theorists**

Integrative aspects of stratification are beneficial for society but the exploitation of under-classes does cause tensions and conflict. Neither theory can alone explain the existing use and dysfunctional aspects of stratification.

**Useful Terms**

**Revitalization:** recuperation or revival
**Dysfunctional:** no longer able to function or have utility in the given circumstances
**Exploitation:** taking advantage of someone else sue to their inability to safeguard their own interests
**Differential Awards:** different remunerations or rewards
**Social Inequality:** a state of being where certain segments of society are more well off than others

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 13 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 18 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Stratification
www.soci.canterbury.ac.nz/ resources/glossary/socialst.shtml

Lesson 22

# CULTURE AND CHANGE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Cultural Change
- How Cultures Change

**Cultural Change**

Although the rate of change varies from culture to culture, no cultures remain unchanged. Small-scale cultures that are less reliant on technology are seen to change more slowly than industrialized cultures and societies.

However, nothing is as constant as change. There is no culture or society which can safeguard itself from the processes of change.

**How Cultures Change**

The two principal ways that cultures change are internally through the processes of invention and innovation and externally through the process of diffusion. It is generally recognized that the majority of cultural features (things, ideas, and behavior patterns) found in any society got there by diffusion rather than invention.

**Inventions**

Inventions can be either deliberate or unintentional. Although intentional inventors usually receive the most recognition and praise, over the long run, unintentional inventors have probably had the greatest impact on cultural change. Consider for example the common phrase, 'necessity is the mother of all invention', which implies that often circumstances are a more compelling factor inducing innovations in society than the declared intention to make something new.

Because they are not bound by conventional standards, many inventors and innovators tend to be marginal people living on the fringes of society. Anthropologists examine the backgrounds and psychological factors that influence innovative personalities. Some of them maintain that inventors are often amongst the well off segments of society, yet there are other anthropologists who present other arguments concerning innovators.

**Diffusion**

The following generalizations can be made about the process of diffusion:

Cultural diffusion is selective in nature (*selectivity*) – not all things diffuse from one culture to another at the same rate

Diffusion is a two-way process (*reciprocity*) – both cultures change as a result of diffusion

Cultural elements are likely to involve changes in form or function (*modification*) – a diffused cultural item will not remain exactly the same as it is to be found in its original culture. Consider for example the case of Chinese food or pizza, which are modified according to the taste of different countries. The idea of chicken *tikka* topping is an example of cultural modification.

Cultural items, involving material aspects, are more likely candidates for diffusion than those involving non-material aspects. Diffusion is affected by a number of important variables (duration and intensity of contact, degree of cultural integration and similarities between donor and recipient cultures).

**Useful Terms**

**Variables:** values which are subject to change
**Cultural items:** these include both material and non-material items ranging from clothing to ideas
**Donor:** a country or even an individual entity which is at the giving end of a relationship

**Recipient:** a country or even an individual entity which is at the receiving/taking end of a relationship
**Conventional:** standard or acceptable
**Intentional:** *being motivated by* an intention. Intentional innovators, for example clearly state that they are trying to deal with a particular problem and will attempt to identify a solution for it.

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 16 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 13 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**

In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Culture Change: An Introduction to the Processes and Consequences of Culture Change
http://anthro.palomar.edu/change/default.htm

Lesson 23

## CULTURE AND CHANGE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Acculturation
- Cultural Interrelations
- Reaction to Change
- Barriers to Cultural Change
- Change Agents

**Acculturation**

Acculturation is a specialized form of cultural diffusion that is a result of sustained contact between two cultures, one of which is subordinate to another.

Whereas diffusion involves a single or complex of traits, acculturation involves widespread cultural reorganization over a shorter period of time. There are events in history, like colonization, which have caused acculturation to occur in many parts of the world.

Some anthropologists have described situations of acculturation in which the non-dominant culture has voluntarily chosen the changes. Other anthropologists claim that acculturation always involves some measure of coercion and force.

**Cultural Interrelations**

Because the parts of a culture are interrelated, a change in one part of a culture is likely to bring about changes in other parts of the given culture. This is the reason why people are often reluctant to accept change since its consequences cannot be exactly predicted nor controlled. This insight of cultural anthropology should be kept in mind by applied anthropologists, who are involved in planned programs of cultural change.

**Reaction to Change**

In every culture there are two sets of opposing forces; those interested in preserving the status quo and others desiring change. The desire for prestige, economic gain and more efficient ways of solving a problem are reasons why people embrace change but the threat of loss of these can lead other people to oppose change as well.

**Barriers to Cultural Change**

Some societies can maintain their cultural boundaries through the exclusive use of language, food, and clothing. Some societies can resist change in their culture because the proposed change is not compatible with their existing value systems.

Societies resist change because it disrupts existing social and economic relationships. The functional interrelatedness of cultures serves as a conservative force discouraging change. Cultural boundaries include relative values, customs, language and eating tastes.

**Change Agents**

Change agents including development workers for example facilitate change in modern times. Change agents sometimes fail to understand why some people are resistant to change and should realize cultural relativity and barriers to change.

**Useful Terms**

**Facilitate:** to make easier or to promote
**Functional:** useful or practical aspects
**Cultural relativity:** the realization that cultural traits fit in logically within their own cultural environments and that since circumstances around the world differ, cultures are also different

**Status Quo:** The existing conditions or circumstances. There are always those who are interested in maintaining the status quo since they are doing well due to it and others who oppose the status quo since it tends to exploit them or puts them in a disadvantaged position
**Coercion:** An act of force rather than that based on the need or desire of a particular individual or society
**Interrelations:** interconnections
**Subordinate:** in an inferior or subordinated position
**Dominant:** in a position of power over others

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 16 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 13 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Culture Change[1]
http://anthro.palomar.edu/change/default.htm

Lesson 24

## CULTURE AND CHANGE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- The Complex Process of Change
- Planned Change
- Globalization

**The Complex Process of Change**

Accepting change in one part of a culture is likely to bring about changes to other parts of a culture. To understand socio-cultural aspects of urbanization, it is important to view the rural area, the urban areas, and the people who move between them as parts of a complex system of change.

Until some decades ago, anthropologists made differentiations between the mechanical solidarity of rural areas and the organic solidarity of cities. Recent research notes that there is not a simple flow of migrants from rural areas to urban areas but rather a circulation of people between these areas.

Urbanization or the process of rural development therefore needs to take into account the fact that there is a constant criss-crossing of people, ideas and resources from urban to rural areas.

Rural migrants rely on kinsmen for land purchase, dispute resolution or general household management, while they go to the cities in search for cash based employment. Conversely rural kinsmen may in turn obtain economic support from a urban wage earner, or seek his support in finding work or a place to stay in the city for other kinsmen.

**Planned Change**

Planned programs of change have been introduced into developing countries for decades under the assumption that they benefit the local people. Yet, a number of studies have shown that although some segments of the local population may benefit, many more do not.

**Globalization**

Globalization is a broad-based term which is used to describe the intensification of the flow of money, goods, and information across the world, which is seen to be taking place since the 1980s. Globalization has made the study of culture change more complex due to its varied effects on various cultural processes including that of change.

In some cases, globalization is responsible for an accelerated pace of change in world cultures. In other situations, the forces of globalization may stimulate traditional cultures to redefine themselves. Developing countries in the attempt to better deal with the forces of globalization, such as trade liberalization, have begun to revamp their own economic systems in order to make them more competitive internationally. This economic revamping has tremendous cultural impacts as well.

Globalization has resulted in diffusion of technology but also compounded existing inequalities. There are human and environmental costs associated with globalization.

For example, increased productivity has led to pollution and there are many theorists who argue that globalization has also increased the gap between the rich and the poor, with those with wealth doing even better and those without it, experiencing even worse poverty than before.

**Useful Terms**

**Globalization:** intensification of the flow of money, goods, and information across the world

**Urbanization:** the process of people moving from rural areas into the cities. This phenomenon is taking place in both developed and developing countries and cultural anthropologists are very interested in studying why and how urbanization takes place and the cultural changes it brings

**Revamping:** reforming or changing

**Competitive:** the process of trying to do better than those engaging in the same activity

**Environmental Costs:** the impact of a particular activity on land, water or air and on various other species which inhabit the Earth alongside human beings

**Impacts:** results or effects

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 16 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 13 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Culture Change[2]
http://anthro.palomar.edu/change/default.htm

Lesson 25

# POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

**Lesson Overview:**

- Need for Political Organization
- Studying Political Organization
- Types of Political Systems

**Need for Political Organization**
All societies have political systems that function to manage public affairs, maintain social order, and resolve conflict. Yet the forms of these political systems are diverse, sometimes embedded in other social structures.

**Studying Political Organization**
Political organization involves issues like allocation of political roles, levels of political integration, concentrations of power and authority, mechanisms of social control and resolving conflicts.
Anthropologists recognize four types of political organization based on levels of political integration, concentration, specialization. Political organization is found within bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. Nowadays, non-state forms of political organization have state systems superimposed on them.

**Types of Political Systems**
Societies based on bands have the least amount of political integration and role specialization (Kung in Kalahari).

**Bands**
Bands are most often found in foraging societies and are associated with low population densities, distribution systems based on reciprocity, and egalitarian social relations.

**Tribal Organizations**
With larger and more sedentary populations than are found in band societies, tribal organizations do also lack centralized political leadership and are egalitarian. Tribally based societies have certain pan-tribal mechanisms that integrate clan members to face external threats.
Clan elders do not hold formal political offices but usually manage affairs of their clans (settling disputes, representing clan in negotiation with other clans etc.).

**Chiefdoms**
Chiefdoms involve a more formal and permanent political structure than is found in tribal societies. Political authority in chiefdoms rests with individuals, who acts alone or with advice of a council. Most chiefdom tends to have quite distinct social ranks, rely on feasting and tribute as a major way of distributing goods.
In the late nineteenth and twentieth century, many societies had chiefdoms imposed on them by colonial powers for administrative convenience (for e.g. British impositions in Nigeria, Kenya and Australia). The pre-colonial Hawaiian political system of the 18th century was a typical chiefdom.

**Useful Terms**

**Public Affairs***:* issues concerning the public at large instead of specific individuals only
**Social Order***:* the state of being where society functions as per the expectations of people and can provide them with a sense of security
**Sedentary***:* settled
**Colonial powers***:* at different phases of history, different nations have been powerful enough to colonize other nations. In the 19th century Britain was a colonial power which was able to colonize many other countries located on the African and the Asian continents
**Pre-colonial***:* the period in history when a particular nation had not yet been colonized
**Allocation***:* distribution
**Integration***:* tied together or linked in a particular manner

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 12 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 23 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Political Organization[3]
http://anthro.palomar.edu/political/default.htm

Please use hyperlinks on the website to read the introductory materials and the information provided on bands, tribes and chiefdoms

Lesson 26

## POLITICAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- State Systems
- Nation-States
- Political Organization Theories
- Voluntaristic State Formation
- Hydraulic Theory of State Formation
- Coercive Theory of State Formation

**State Systems**

State systems have the greatest amount of political integration, specialized political roles and maintain authority on the basis of an ideology. States are associated with intensive agriculture market economies, urbanization, and complex forms of social stratification.

States began to be formed 5,500 years ago with the Greek city-states and the Roman Empire providing impressive examples of state based political organization.

States have a monopoly on the use of force and can make and enforce laws, collect taxes, and recruit labor for military service and public works, which differentiates them from other forms of political organization. States are now the most prominent form of political organization found around the world today.

**Nation-States**

A nation is a group pf people sharing a common symbolic identity, culture history and religion. A state is a distinct political structure like bands, tribes and chiefdoms.

Nation-state refers to a group of people sharing a common cultural background and unified by a political structure that they consider to be legitimate. Few of the world's 200 nation-states have homogenous populations to fit the description of a nation state.

**Political Organization Theories**

Theories explaining the rise of state systems of government have centered on the question of why people surrender some of their autonomy to the power and authority of the state.

There are theorists who argue that political organization is influenced by self interest and other theorists argue that self interest is not enough to give shape to political systems and that such organization often involves a certain amount of coercion.

**Voluntaristic State Formation**

Some theorists suggest that those engaging in specialized labor voluntarily gave up their autonomy in exchange for perceived benefits.

Political integration can mediate between and protect interests of varied groups and provide them an economic superstructure required for specialization (Chide, 1936).

**Hydraulic Theory of State Formation**

Small-scale farmers in arid or semi-arid areas also voluntarily merged into larger political entities due to the economic advantage of large-scale irrigation (Karl Wittfogel, 1957)

**Coercive Theory of State Formation**

Another explanation for state based political organization is that offered by Carneiro, hold that states developed as a result of warfare and coercion rather than due to voluntary self-interest.

**Useful Terms**

**Coercion***:* use of force

**Arid***:* dry
**Small-scale farmers***:* farmers possessing a little amount of land
**Irrigation***:* the channeling of water from its natural route for the purposes of agriculture
**Monopoly***:* dominating the production of a particular product
**Hydrauli***c:* water-based
**Homogenous***:* identical to others, opposite of heterogeneous
**Recruit***:* to include or to involve

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 12 in *'Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 23 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Political Organization[4]
http://anthro.palomar.edu/political/default.htm

[4] Please follow the hyperlink on the website to read about state systems

Lesson 27

## POLITICAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Need for Social Control
- Social Norms
- Maintaining Social Control
- Informal Mechanisms
- Formal Mechanisms

**Need for Social Control**
All forms of political organization must provide means for social control. Every culture has defined what are considered to be normal, proper or expected ways of behaving in society. These expected ways of behaving are referred to as social norms.
Social norms range from etiquette to laws and imply different forms of enforcement and sanctions. Breaking some social norms does not result in serious consequences whereas others can result in severe punishment. Consider for example the consequence of taking another person's life or of stealing something.

**Social Norms**
All social norms are sanctioned to varying degrees according to the values held by different cultures.
Positive social norms reward people for behaving in socially expectable ways (ranging from praise or social approval to awards or medals). Negative social norms punish people for violating the norms (ranging from disapproval to corporal punishment).

**Maintaining Social Control**
Band and tribal societies (Inuit and Kung) maintain social control by means of informal mechanisms such as socialization, public opinion, lineage obligations, age organizations and sanctions.
Societies control behavior by more formal mechanisms, such as through laws and law enforcement agencies, whose major function is maintaining social order and resolving conflicts.

**Social Control**
Band and tribal societies (Inuit and Kung) maintain social control by means of informal mechanisms such as socialization, public opinion, lineage obligations, age organizations and sanctions. Societies control behavior by more formal mechanisms whose major function is maintaining social order and resolving conflicts.

**Informal Mechanisms**
Socialization ensures that people are taught what their social norms are. Public opinion or social pressure often serves as an effective mechanism to avoid censure and rejection. Age organization provides distinct age categories with defined sets of social roles.

**Formal Mechanisms**

**Song Duets:** amongst the Intuits to settle disputes
**Social Intermediaries:** like the Leopard-skin Chief of the Neur in southern Sudan settles murder disputes by property settlements
**Moots:** are formal airings of disputes involving kinsmen and friends of litigants and the adjudicating bodies are ad hoc
**Courts and Codified Laws:** forbid individual use of force and provides legal frameworks established by legislative bodies, interpreted by judicial bodies and implemented by administrative systems like law enforcement agencies

**Useful Terms**

**Administrative systems***:* the system of government officials/bureaucrats who are responsible for running public affairs
**Judicial systems***:* the system of courts which interprets the laws
**Legislative systems:** systems which provide the laws for a particular society, often legislatures or legislative assemblies are elected by the people of a particular locality, i.e. province or a state
**Law enforcement agencies***:* agencies which enforce the law, like the police fro example
**Litigants:** aggrieved parties involved in a legal dispute
**Ad Hoc***:* arbitrary, not following any established procedure

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 12 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and/or Chapter 23 in 'Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:
Social Control
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_control

Lesson 28

# PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Psychological Development
- Anthropological Queries in Psychology
- Emotional Development
- Psychological Universals
- Cognition and Culture
- Cross-Cultural Variations

**Psychological Development**
Anthropologists are interested in the psychological differences and similarities between societies and cultures of the world
Cultural Anthropologists reject stereotypes based on hasty ethnocentric judgments

**Anthropological Queries in Psychology**
The major questions of relevance to cultural anthropologists attempting to understand the linkage between different cultures and what they can reveal about the human personality are:

- Do all human beings develop psychologically in the same way?
- What explains the psychological differences in personality characteristics from one society to another?
- How do people in different societies conceive of personality and psychological development?
- What types of cultural variations may be explained due to cultural factors?

**Emotional Development**
Early research in anthropology was concerned mainly with supposedly universal stages of emotional development which seems to be affected by cultural differences.

*Margaret Mead* found Samoan girls were much less rebellious or emotional turmoil than those in western societies. In western societies, adolescence is a time of turmoil that helps prepare emotionally for independence.

**Psychological Universals**
The ability to make binary contrasts, order phenomenon, plan for the future, and have an understanding of the world are universal psychological traits. All people have a concept of the self, they can empathize with others and feel and recognize emotions in others.

**Cognition and Culture**
Recent research on psychological universals focuses on cognitive, or intellectual, development. For example, it considers how different cultures acquire thinking habits such as formal-operation notions, which enable a person to think of the possible outcomes of a hypothetical situation
In looking for universals, many researchers have discovered some apparent differences. Yet most tests used in anthropological research favors thinking patterns taught in formal schools in Western cultures.

**Cross-Cultural Variations**
Instead of focusing on uniqueness, anthropologists look at psychological differences found within and between different cultures
Researchers focus on child rearing practices to account for observable personality differences.
Some anthropologists believe that child rearing practices are adaptive and societies produce personalities according to their requirements (obedience, self reliance, etc.)

**Useful Terms**

**Universal:** common in all cultures
**Formal schools***:* schools organized by the public or private sector, but with a standardized curriculum and professional teaching staff
**Variations***:* differences
**Rearing***:* bringing up
**Intellectual***:* concerning the intellect and the process of thinking

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 24 in '*Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Social Psychology[5]
http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/socpsy.html

[5] Please visit the hyperlinks on the website to read selectively on topics like the nature versus nurture debate

Lesson 29

## PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Socialization
- Direct and Indirect Socialization
- Origin of Customs
- Personality Types
- Abnormal Behavior
- Applied Perspective
- Projective Testing

**Socialization**
Socialization is the term that psychologists and anthropologists use to describe the development of, through the influence of parents and others, of patterns of behavior in children that conform to cultural expectations.

**Direct and Indirect Socialization**
Socialization takes place both directly and indirectly. Indirectly, the degree to which parents like children, the kinds of work children are asked to do and whether children go to school may at least partially influence how children develop psychologically.

**Origin of Customs**
Anthropologists not only seek to understand the link between personality traits and customs, but also how customs were themselves developed. Some anthropologists believe that societies produce the kind of customs best suited for undertaking activities necessary for the survival of society

**Personality Types**
Several anthropologists have tried to describe the influence of culture on personality. In the early 1950's, for example, David Riesman proposed that there are three common types of personalities around the world.

I The *tradition-oriented personality* places a strong emphasis on doing things the same way that they have always been done. Individuals with this sort of personality are less likely to try new things and to seek new experiences.

II Those who have *inner-directed personalities* are guilt oriented. That is to say, their behavior is strongly controlled by their conscience. As a result, there is little need for police to make sure that they obey the law. These individuals monitor themselves. If they break the law, they are likely to turn themselves in for punishment.

III In contrast, people with *other-directed personalities* have ambiguous feelings about right and wrong. When they deviate from a societal norm, they usually don't feel guilty. However, if they are caught in the act or exposed publicly, they are likely to feel shame.

**Abnormal Behavior**
Just as there are cross-cultural variations in 'normal behavior', there are also variations in 'abnormal behavior'. Abnormality is relative to a degree and a culture's ideas about mental illness and how to deal with it can also vary.

**Applied Perspective**
Anthropologists are interested in understanding the possible cause of psychological differences and the possible consequences of psychological variation.

Anthropologists are particularly interested in how psychological characteristics may help explain statistical associations between various aspects of culture.

**Projective Testing**
People tend to project their feelings, ideas and concerns onto ambiguous realities.
In Thematic Appreciation Tests subjects are shown vague drawings and asked to interpret them by projecting their own personalities. An aggressive person may see a weapon in a vague drawing, whereas a more industrious person may visualize a more productive tool in the same vague drawing.

**Useful Terms**

**Ambiguous***:* unclear or vague
**Variation***:* differences
**Socialization:** the process of learning behavior

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 24 in '*Anthropology' by Ember and Pergrine*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Social Psychology[6]
http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/socpsy.html

[6]Please visit the hyperlinks on the website to read selectively on topics like collective behavior

Lesson 30

# IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Ideology
- Ideology in Everyday Life
- Influencing Ideology
- Hegemony
- Epistemological ideologies

## Ideology

An ideology is a collection of ideas. An ideology can be thought of as a comprehensive vision, as a way of looking at things Ideology can also be seen as a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society.

For example, different types of gender ideologies would describe what roles are expected of women and men in a society. The ideology of economic liberalization could be seen to particularly promote the interests of the business classes.

## Ideology in Everyday Life

Every society has an ideology that forms the basis of the public opinion or common sense, a basis that usually remains invisible to most people within the society. This dominant ideology appears as 'neutral', while all others that differ from the norm are often seen as radical, no matter what the actual circumstances may be.

## Influencing Ideology

Organizations that strive for power influence the ideology of a society to provide a favorable environment for them. Political organizations (governments included) and other groups (e.g. lobbyists) try to influence people by broadcasting their opinions, which is the reason why so often many people in a society seem to think alike.

A certain ethic usually forms the basis of an ideology. Ideology studied as ideology (rather than examples of specific ideologies) has been carried out under the name systematic ideology. There are many different kinds of ideology: political, social, epistemological, ethical.

The popularity of an ideology is in part due to the influence of moral entrepreneurs, who sometimes act in their own interests. A political ideology is the body of ideals, principles, doctrine, myth or symbols of a social movement, institution, class, or large group that references some political and cultural plan. It can be a construct of political thought, often defining political parties and their policy.

## Hegemony

When most people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the current state of affairs, we arrive at the concept of Hegemony, about which the philosopher Antonio Gramsci wrote. The much smaller-scale concept of groupthink also owes something to his work.

The ideologies of the dominant class of a society are proposed to all members of that society in order to make the ruling class' interests appear to be the interests of all, and thereby achieve hegemony. To reach this goal, ideology makes use of a special type of discourse: the lacunar discourse.

A number of propositions, which are never untrue, suggest a number of other propositions, which are. In this way, the essence of the lacunar discourse is what is *not* told (but is suggested).

## Epistemological ideologies

Even when the challenging of existing beliefs is encouraged, as in science, the dominant paradigm or mindset can prevent certain challenges, theories or experiments from being advanced.

The philosophy of science mostly concerns itself with reducing the impact of these prior ideologies so that science can proceed with its primary task, which is (according to science) to create knowledge.

There are critics who view science as an ideology itself, called scientism. Some scientists respond that, while the scientific method is itself an ideology, as it is a collection of ideas, there is nothing particularly wrong or bad about it.
Other critics point out that while science itself is not a misleading ideology, there are some fields of study within science that are misleading. Two examples discussed here are in the fields of ecology and economics.

**Useful Terms**

**Discourse**: discussion or dialogue
**Proposition**: proposal or plan
**Paradigm**: standard, pattern or example
**Doctrine**: set of guidelines
**Comprehensive**: complete, all-inclusive
**Ecology:** concerning the species found in the natural environment
**Moral entrepreneurs:** those who make up new morals according to their cultural needs

**Suggested Readings**
Please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Ideology[7]
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology

7 Please visit the hyperlinks on the website to read more about topics mentioned in the lecture

Lesson 31

# IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE (Continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Political ideologies
- Economic Ideology
- Interaction between Legal and Economic Ideologies

## Political ideologies

In social studies, a political ideology is a set of ideas and principles that explain how the society should work, and offer the blueprint for a certain social order. A political ideology largely concerns itself with how to allocate power and to what ends it should be used.

For example, one of the most influential and well-defined political ideologies of the 20th century was communism, based on the original formulations of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Communism is a term that can refer to one of several things: a certain social system, an ideology which supports that system, or a political movement that wishes to implement that system.
As a social system, communism is a type of egalitarian society with no state, no private property and no social classes. In communism, all property is owned by the community as a whole, and all people enjoy equal social and economic status. Perhaps the best known principle of a communist society is "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

As an ideology, communism is synonymous for Marxism and its various derivatives (most notably Marxism-Leninism). Among other things, Marxism claims that human society has gone through various stages of development throughout its history, and that capitalism is the current stage we are going through. The next stage will be socialism, and the one after that will be communism. Therefore, it should be noted that communists do not seek to establish communism right away; they seek to establish socialism first, which is to be followed by communism at some point in the future.
Other examples of ideologies include: anarchism, capitalism, corporate liberalism, fascism, monarchism, nationalism, fascism, conservativism and social-democracy.

## Economic Ideology

Karl Marx proposed a base/superstructure model of society. The base refers to the means of production of society. The superstructure is formed on top of the base, and comprises that society's ideology, as well as its legal system, political system, and religions.
Marx proposed that the base determines the superstructure. It is the ruling class that controls the society's means of production - and thus the superstructure of society, including its ideology, will be determined according to what is in the ruling class' best interests. On the other hand, critics of the Marxist approach feel that it attributes too much importance to economic factors in influencing society.
This is far from the only theory of economics to be raised to ideology status - some notable economically-based ideologies include mercantilism, Social Darwinism, communism, laissez-faire economics, and "free trade".
There are also current theories of safe trade and fair trade calling for a revision in terms of trade which can be seen as ideologies. These ideologies call for a revision of rules based on which trade between developed and developing countries takes place.

## Interaction between Legal and Economic Ideologies

Ideologies often interact with, and influence, each other in the real world. Consider for example, the statement 'All are equal before the law', which is a theory behind current legal systems, suggests that all people may be of equal worth or have equal 'opportunities'. This is not true, because the concept of private property over the means of production results in some people being able to own more (much more) than

others, and their property brings power and influence (the rich can afford better lawyers, among other things, and this puts in question the principle of equality before the law).

**Useful Terms**

**Fair trade** – the notion that all countries should be given a fair price for the products they export through international trade
**Terms of trade** – the price which products of different countries fetch in international trade
**Means of production** – these include land, labor, capital investments required to produce something.
**Inevitable** - unavoidable
**Synonymous** – another term carrying the same meaning

**Suggested Readings**
Please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology

Lesson 32

# ASSOCIATIONS, CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

**Lesson Overview:**

- What Are Associations?
- Variation in Associations
- Qualifications for Associations
- Non-Voluntary Associations
- Age Sets

**What Are Associations?**

Associations are non-kin and non-territorial groups found amidst all types of societies and cultures around the world. Associations possess some kind of formal, organizational structure and their members also have common interests and a sense of purpose which binds the varied types of societies together.

Cultural anthropologists are interested in examining how different cultures give shape to different types of associations and in turn what functions different types of associations perform within particular cultures.

**Variation in Associations**

Associations can vary from society to society. They vary according to whether or not they are voluntary and whether the qualities of members are universally ascribed, variably ascribed or achieved.

**Qualifications for Associations**

Achieved qualities or skills are those acquired through one's own efforts, there may be hurdles in acquiring necessary skills, but by and large skills have to be learnt through personal effort as they are not biologically transferable.

Ascribed qualities are determined at birth because of gender or ethnicity or family background. A person does not need to make an effort to acquire ascribed qualities nor can effort do much in changing ascribed status since it is largely determined by forces beyond the control of individuals.

Universally ascribed qualities are found in all societies. Gender is an example of an ascribed quality.

Variably ascribed qualities are unique and thus vary across cultures, like ethnicity, social class differences etc.

**Non-Voluntary Associations**

In relatively non-stratified societies, associations tend to be based on universally ascribed characteristics like gender and age. An age set is a common form of non-voluntary associations, evidenced around the world, even today.

**Age Sets**

An age grade includes a category of people who fall into a culturally distinguished age category. An age set on the other hand is a group of people of similar age and the same sex who move through some or all of life's stages together.

Entry into an age set is usually through an initiation ceremony and transitions to new stages are marked by succession rituals.

In non-commercial societies, age sets crosscut kinship ties and form strong supplemental bonds. Age sets are prominent amongst the Nadi of Kenya for example. Young warriors were given spears and shields in the past and told to bring back wealth to the community, now they're given pens and paper by their elders and told to go out and do the same.

The Karimojong are predominantly cattle herders and number 60,000 people living in northeastern Uganda, who are organized via age and generation sets, including 5 age-sets covering 25 years.

The retired generation passes on the mantle of authority to the senior generation and the junior generation recruits members until ready to assume authority and thus the society continues to function in a seamless manner.

**Useful Terms**

**Recruit** – to admit or to actively enlist
**Supplemental** – added on, so as to help reinforce existing ties
**Characteristics** – identifying features
**Seamless** – continuous
**Organizational** – having features of an organization, like defined roles and responsibilities

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 22 in '*Anthropology*' by Ember

**Internet Resources**
Please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Voluntary Associations:
http://www.fathom.com/feature/122550/

Lesson 33

## ASSOCIATIONS, CULTURES AND SOCIETIES (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Regional and Ethnic Associations
- Examples of Regional Associations
- Ethnic Associations
- Rotating Credit Associations
- Multi-ethnic Associations
- Formation of Associations

**Regional and Ethnic Associations**

Regional and ethnic organizations are voluntary associations whose members possess variably ascribed characteristics.

Both forms of associations are usually found in societies where technological advance is accelerating, bringing with it numerous forms of economic and social complexities as well.

Despite a variety of types, regional and ethnic associations commonly emphasize helping members adapt to new conditions, particularly if they are migrants.

Many rural migrants keep members in touch with home area traditions by the help of regional associations. These associations promote improved living conditions for members who have recently migrated to urban areas in several countries where urbanization is taking place at a fast pace.

**Examples of Regional Associations**

Regional associations (*serranos*) help rural migrants adapt to urban life and Lima, Peru. The *serranos* have been seen to actively lobby the government on community issues, assist members with enculturation, organize fiestas, and act as clearing house for flow of information.

Chinatowns in major cities of the world have associations performing a similar function for Chinese immigrants.

**Ethnic Associations**

Ethnic Associations are based on ethic ties. Such associations are particularly prominent in urban centers of West Africa. Even tribal unions are commonly found in Ghana and Nigeria which superimpose the notion of ethnicity with that of tribal ties.

**Rotating Credit Associations**

Such associations are based on the principle of mutual aid. Each group member contributes regularly to a fund, which is handed over to one member on a rotation basis.

Such associations are common in East, South and southeastern Asia, in western Africa and the West Indies.

Default is rare in rotating credit associations due to social pressure and the incentive is reasonable since membership ranges from 10 to 30 contributors. Since no collateral is needed, trustworthiness is considered essential when letting people become members of such groups.

**Multi-ethnic Associations**

Associations with a common purpose of economic or socio-political empowerment are often multi-ethnic. Savings and loan associations in New Guinea often link women from different tribal areas.

**Formation of Associations**

Age sets arise in societies which have frequent warfare breaking out amidst them, or it is found amongst groups with varying populations, due to which kinship systems are not sufficient for alliance purposes.

Urbanization and economic compulsions (lack of access to credit) also form associations due to the need to cooperate out of self interest.

**Useful Terms**

**Collateral** – the act of pledging an asset in order to qualify from a loan from a lending institution like a bank
**Empowerment** –to empower or reinforce the capacity of individuals
**Multi-ethnic** – different ethnic groups coexisting within the same society
**Default** – being unable to pay back a loan.

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 22 in '*Anthropology' by Ember*

**Internet Resources**
Please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

http://www.fathom.com/feature/122550/

Lesson 34

# RACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

**Lesson Overview:**

- Ethnicity
- Minority versus Ethnic Group
- Ethnic Categorizations
- Race
- Similarity in Human Adaptations
- Safeguarding Against Cultural Biases

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity refers to selected cultural and sometimes physical characteristics used to classify people into (ethnic) groups or categories considered to be significantly different from others. Commonly recognized American ethnic groups include American Indians, Latinos, Chinese, African Americans, European Americans, etc.

In some cases, ethnicity involves merely a loose group identity with little or no cultural traditions in common. This is the case with many Irish and German Americans. In contrast, some ethnic groups are coherent subcultures with a shared language and body of tradition. Newly arrived immigrant groups often fit this pattern.

**Minority versus Ethnic Group**

It is important not to confuse the term minority with ethnic group. Ethnic groups may be either a minority or a majority in a population.

Whether a group is a minority or a majority also is not an absolute fact but depends on the perspective. For instance, in some towns along the southern border of the U.S., people of Mexican ancestry are the overwhelming majority population and control most of the important social and political institutions but are still defined by state and national governments as a minority. In small homogenous societies, such as those of hunters and gatherers and pastoralists, there is essentially only one ethnic group and no minorities.

**Ethnic Categorizations**

For many people, ethnic categorization implies a connection between biological inheritance and culture. They believe that biological inheritance determines much of cultural identity. If this were true, for instance, African American cultural traits, such as "black English", would stem from genetic inheritance. This is not true. The pioneering 19th century English anthropologist E. B. Taylor was able to demonstrate conclusively that biological race and culture is not the same thing.

It is clear that any one can be placed into another culture shortly after birth and can be thoroughly encultured to that culture, regardless of their skin color, body shape, and other presumed racial features.

**Race**

A race is a biological subspecies, or variety of a species, consisting of a more or less distinct population with anatomical traits that distinguish it clearly from other races.

This biologist's definition does not fit the reality of human genetic variation today. We are biologically an extremely homogenous species. All humans today are 99.9% genetically identical, and most of the variation that does occur is in the difference between males and females and our unique personal traits. This homogeneity is very unusual in the animal kingdom. Even our closest relatives, the chimpanzees have 2-3 times more genetic variation than people. Orangutans have 8-10 times more variation.

It is now clear that our human "races" are cultural creations, not biological realities. The concept of human biological races is based on the false assumption that anatomical traits, such as skin color and specific facial characteristics, cluster together in single distinct groups of people. They do not. There are no clearly distinct "black", "white", or other races.

**Similarity in Human Adaptations**

The popularly held view of human races ignores the fact that anatomical traits supposedly identifying a particular race are often found extensively in other populations as well. This is due to the fact that similar natural selection factors in different parts of the world often result in the evolution of similar adaptations.

For instance, intense sunlight in tropical latitudes has selected for darker skin color as a protection from intense ultraviolet radiation. As a result, the dark brown skin color characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa is also found among unrelated populations in the Indian subcontinent, Australia, New Guinea, and elsewhere in the Southwest Pacific.

**Safeguarding Against Cultural Biases**

We must not let our own cultural biases get in the way of understanding the lives of other people.
Avoiding cultural biases is a very difficult task given the emotionally charged feelings and deep beliefs that we have concerning race and ethnicity. However, suspending these attitudinal barriers in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena is well worth the effort.

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 13 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro*

**Internet Resources**

In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Ethnicity and Race: An Introduction to the Nature of Social Group Differentiation and Inequality
http://anthro.palomar.edu/ethnicity/default.htm

Lesson 35

## RACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- The Complex Nature of Human Variations
- Relevance of Nurture
- Inter-group Relations

**The Complex Nature of Human Variations**

The actual patterns of biological variation among humans are extremely complex and constantly changing.They can also be deceptive. All of us could be classified into a number of different "races", depending on what genetic traits are emphasized.

For example, if you divide people up on the basis of stature or blood types, the geographic groupings are clearly different from those defined on the basis of skin color. Using the B blood type for defining races, Australian Aborigines could be lumped together with most Native Americans. Some Africans would be in the same race as Europeans while others would be categorized with Asians.

Historically, human "races" have been defined on the basis of a small number of superficial anatomical characteristics that can be readily identified at a distance, thereby making discrimination easier.

However, focusing on such deceptive distinguishing traits as skin color, body shape, and hair texture causes us to magnify differences and ignore similarities between people.

It is also important to remember that these traits are no more accurate in making distinctions between human groups than any other genetically inherited characteristics. All such attempts to scientifically divide humanity into biological races have proven fruitless.

**Relevance of Nurture**

In the final analysis, it is clear that people, not nature, create our identities. Ethnicity and supposed "racial" groups are largely cultural and historical constructs. They are p rimarily social rather than biological phenomena. This does not mean that they do not exist.

To the contrary, "races" are very real in the world today. In order to understand them, however, we must look into culture and social interaction rather than biological evolution.

**Inter-group Relations**

How ethnic and racial groups relate to each other can be viewed as a continuum ranging from cooperation to outright exploitation and hostility.

- **Pluralism:** Two or more groups living in harmony while retaining their own heritage and identity
- **Assimilation:** when one racial or ethnic minority is absorbed into the wider society. Pacific Islanders assimilation into Hawaiian society provides a good example of assimilation.
- **Legal Protection of Minorities:** While such legislation cannot ensure that minorities have equal rights, they provide a measure of security against blatant forms of prejudice and discrimination.
- **Population Transfer:** physical removal of minority to another location. The ethnic Tutsi fleeing Rwanda to avoid prosecution by the Hutu government is an example of population transfer.
- **Long-termed Subjugation:** Political, social and economic suppression evident in political history. The example of the black majority's subjugation in South Africa under apartheid is a recent example from history.
- **Genocide:** Mass annihilation of groups of people in Nazi Germany or in Serbia for example.

**Useful Terms**

**Exploitation** – take undue advantage of another's weakness
**Subjugation** – political or social suppression
**Prosecution** – to accuse or take legal action against an individual or a group
**Minority** – a group with a lesser population in comparison to another groups within the same are

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 13 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Ethnicity and Race
http://anthro.palomar.edu/ethnicity/default.htm

*Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*
http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Ethnicity.html

Lesson 36

# CULTURE AND BELIEFS

**Lesson Overview:**

- Systems of Beliefs
- Anthropological Perspective on Beliefs
- Social Function of Religion
- Psychological Function of Beliefs
- Politics and Beliefs

**Systems of Beliefs**
Although all cultures have belief systems, the forms these beliefs take vary widely from society to society. It is often difficult to define belief systems cross-culturally because different societies have different ways of expressing faith

**Anthropological Perspective on Beliefs**
The anthropological study of belief systems does not attempt to determine which belief systems are right or wrong. Cultural anthropologists concentrate on describing various systems of belief, how they function, and influence human behavior across cultures.

**Social Function of Religion**
Belief systems fulfill social needs. They can be powerful, dynamic forces in society. Beliefs provide a basis for common purpose and values that can help maintain social solidarity.
By reinforcing group norms, they help bring about social homogeneity. A uniformity of beliefs also helps bind people together to reinforce group identity. Beliefs enhance the overall well-being of the society by serving as a mechanism of social control and also reduce the stress and frustrations that often lead to social conflict, whereby helping intensify group solidarity
In most societies, beliefs play an important role in social control by defining what is right and wrong behavior. If individuals do the right things in life, they may earn moral approval. If they do the wrong things, they may suffer retribution.

**Psychological Function of Beliefs**
Belief systems perform certain psychological functions by providing emotional comfort by explaining the unexplainable (for e.g. to confront and explain death).
A belief system also helps a person cope with stress, fears and anxieties about the unknown. Beliefs lift the burden of decision making from our shoulders because they tell us what is right and wrong, which is of tremendous help in times of stress or crisis.
Even prayers provide psychological comfort and solace. Moreover, beliefs help ease the stress during life crises such as birth, marriage, serious illnesses by providing appropriate guidelines and rituals.

**Politics and Beliefs**
Belief systems have played an important role in global social change through liberation theology (whereby believers for social reform and justice for the poor) and religious nationalism (whereby religious beliefs are merged with government institutions).

**Useful Terms**
**Liberation** – freedom
**Rituals** – standardized way for performing some vital social function.
**Retribution** – vengeance or payback
**Merged** – combined or put together

**Suggested Readings**

Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:
Chapter 14 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and Chapter 25 in 'Anthropology' by Ember*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:
Anthropology of Religion - Homepage:
www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/murphy/419/419www.htm or
http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/religion.htm

Lesson 37

# LOCAL OR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

**Lesson Overview:**

- What is Local Knowledge?
- Changing Definitions of Local Knowledge
- Element of Exclusivity in Local Knowledge
- Using Local Knowledge

**What is Local Knowledge?**

Local knowledge consists of factual knowledge, skills and capabilities possessed by people belonging to a specific area. Given that local knowledge is usually geared to real-life practices, it can usually only be understood with reference to the situation in which it is to be applied.

Local knowledge is local to the extent that it is acquired and applied by people with respect to local objectives, situations and problems.

Local knowledge may on the one hand comprise fixed and structured "knowledge" which can be defined, or on the other hand may by virtue of its combination with the performance of actions involve a more fluid process of "knowing".

Human beings exist in a continuous flux of experiences and practices, so local knowledge must include information concerning social management, have forms of learning and teaching, and decision-making routines.

Local knowledge and its respective knowledge systems are rooted in local or regional cultures, the respective social contexts and their economies. Therefore, it is important to consider these surrounding circumstances when one is considering the content of local knowledge itself.

**Changing Definitions of Local Knowledge**

Originally, "indigenous" was equivalent to "local" or "folk" or, when applied to knowledge, "informal knowledge".

In the 1960s and `70s, the word then took on a populist flavor of grass-roots politics, in the sense of "indigenous" as opposed to state or "high" culture.

In view of the marginalization and destruction of the eco-zones inhabited by ethnic groups, the term "indigenous knowledge" is being used in a context of "non-western" or "anti-western" knowledge.

Local knowledge also refers to knowledge of the minorities, contrasted with knowledge at the level of the nation state. There are therefore various types of local knowledge.

**Element of Exclusivity in Local Knowledge**

There are normally various types of public knowledge. Some information is shared by all locals, other information remains concealed from the majority. Some items of knowledge are known only to women or only to men.

Within a society, only a few specialists possess more in-depth knowledge extending beyond laypersons' knowledge in a particular field, for instance specific medical or cropping expertise.

**Using Local Knowledge**

Use of local knowledge for development should not be restricted to extracting information. The availability of local knowledge to multinationals carries the danger of delegating power to authorities, which are external to the local communities, and therefore restricts establishment of competent leadership and sustainable social structures in local communities.

There is an ongoing debate on intellectual property rights, equal benefit sharing and the role of local knowledge for development. Anthropologists investigate not only the behavior and the material products of people, but also their thoughts and feelings.

In all branches of anthropology, focus on the *emic* view and local knowledge has increased in the last thirty years. Many countries have taken political decisions to empower local institutions (union councils, districts etc.) based on the idea of giving more power to local authorities which have a closer contact with those at the grassroots level..
Decentralization should correspond with building local capacities. Therefore local knowledge on local natural and social environments (of local forest-dwellers, farmers) is often more detailed than that of formal institutions and can be used to assure sustainable development.

**Useful Terms**

**Anti-western-** against western values and or economic or political systems, mostly instigated by experiences of exploitation
**Indigenous** – rooted in a specific locality, native
**Decentralization** – delegation of authority to lower levels of administration

**Suggested Readings based on Internet Resources**
Students are advised to read the following paper (available in PDF format from the following web-site for this lecture), which provides useful and interesting information:

Local Knowledge and Local Knowing
http://www.uni-trier.de/uni/fb4/ethno/know.pdf

Lesson 38

## LOCAL OR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Scientific Knowledge vs. Local Knowledge
- Similarities between Local & Scientific Knowledge
- Distinctions between Local & Scientific Knowledge
- Potential for Anthropological Contribution
- The Need for Caution

**Scientific Knowledge vs. Local Knowledge**

Is local knowledge ultimately equivalent to knowledge gained through science, or is it structured entirely differently? This is an age-old topic of debate in anthropology; the debate concerned with rationality and so-called *alternative modes of thought.*

A corresponding practical question is if local knowledge can be utilized within the framework of scientifically-based measures? Or, is local knowledge a holistic counter-model to science (to be used to criticize measures founded on analytical science)?

Most characterizations of local knowledge are defined in complete contrast to scientific knowledge. But local and scientific knowledge are neither completely different nor entirely the same; they display both commonalities and differences.

**Similarities between Local & Scientific Knowledge**

Local knowledge and knowledge derived from science are similar primarily in having an empirical and a methodological basis. Both local knowledge and science use observations of the outside world which are in principle accessible and communicable.

While both forms of knowledge use experiments, local knowledge proceeds rather from observations gained through trial-and-error or so-called "natural experiments", i.e. inferences drawn from the impacts of natural changes in certain quantities. Scientific knowledge on the other hand relies on controlled experiments.

**Distinctions between Local & Scientific Knowledge**

Scientific knowledge seeks information which is transferable to any spatial or social situation, i.e. which is not context-bound. As a result, scientists know a great deal about small sections of reality. In contrast, local knowledge systems seek spatially, situation-bound or context-bound information.

The validity of items of local knowledge is locally restricted, i.e. they cannot be transferred to other local contexts. The potential for generalization and thus also mutual learning is in principle limited with local knowledge. Owners of local knowledge are often only inadequately aware of market mechanisms.

**Potential for Anthropological Contribution**

The inter-cultural perspective of anthropologists enables them to reflect on and integrate both ways of knowing, and for seeing where to draw the line. Local knowledge, out of its cultural situation, loses its frame of reference, and without the necessary skills to decipher it becomes meaningless.

**The Need for Caution**

While local knowledge increases people's empowerment, enhances the visibility of their problems, is geared to subsistence and risk minimization, leading to more sustainable solutions, a cautious approach has to be adopted.

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Practices which are based on local knowledge are not *per se* ecologically sound, necessarily socially just, or even democratic. Neither is local knowledge equivalent to "people's knowledge" in the sense that it would always be shared by most or even all members of a group.

**Useful Terms**
**Democratic** – a system based on sentiments of the majority
**Risk minimization** – measures taken to decrease given risks associated with a particular activity
**Subsistence** - survival

**Suggested Readings based on Internet Resources**
Students are advised to read the following paper (available in PDF format from the following web-site for this lecture), which provides useful and interesting information:

Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity conservation and development
http://www.ciesin.org/docs/004-173/004-173.html

Lesson 39

# ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

**Lesson Overview:**

- What is Development?
- Role of Anthropology in Development
- Comparing Development and Anthropology
- Who Undertakes Development?
- Influence of Development Notions

**What is Development?**

In the popular meaning of the term, development is a transition towards directed change, towards modernization, industrialization and capitalization.

However, major development agencies and multilateral organizations often interpret development in terms of poverty.

Poverty, defined in relation to the absence of basic services and in income terms (less than one dollar a day), becomes a proxy for the absence of development, and a justification for intervention. Poverty and development are measured by indicators and targets, some global, others national, which become standard devices for undertaking development.

But even focusing on poverty does not necessarily imply that poor people are more involved in the development planning process. Often the poor, cannot represent themselves, they are represented.

It has also been noticed by anthropologists that development is often defined in negative terms, not so much as the presence of something as the elimination of an unacceptable state, like that of poverty.

**Role of Anthropology in Development**

Anthropological studies focus on the processes of social transformation, positive and negative, conventionally associated with development.

Anthropology helps development initiatives realize the context in which their activities are to be introduced. The cultural insights and the kinds of understandings that anthropology offers enables social development professional to envision what kinds of impacts particular interventions may have on particular types of social relations and institutions.

**Comparing Development and Anthropology**

Development approaches and methods have much common with anthropology, but there are also substantial differences. What constitutes social development knowledge is determined by the need to meet policy priorities rather than the pursuit of knowledge. Social development presents itself as a technical discipline, using social analysis as a precondition for social transformation.

Like anthropological methods, development is people focused and uses qualitative techniques. But unlike anthropological methods requiring extended fieldwork, social development methodologies are designed to fit into short timeframes.

**Who Undertakes Development?**

Development Organizations include multilateral agencies like the World Bank and UN agencies, bilateral agencies, national and international NGOs. Typical partner organizations include national governments, national NGOs and the lower tier community based organizations.

**Influence of Development Notions**

The influence of development extends far beyond the formal institutions charged with implementing development oriented programs. Cultural attitudes informed by development aspirations are entwined in popular cultures of developed and developing countries. For e.g. rural communities in Nepal utilize the category of `developed' (bikas) as a means of classifying people according to perceived class position and

social networks. Wealthy individuals in developed countries provide money for communities perceived as 'poor' via child sponsorship schemes for example.

**Useful Terms**

**Social Development** – the effort to meet basic needs and to assure access to basic human right
**Entwined** – joined or merged together
**Perceived** – considered or viewed
**NGOs** – Non government organizations

**Suggested Readings based on Internet Resources**
Students are advised to read the following paper (available in PDF format from the following web-site for this lecture), which provides useful and interesting information:

Applying Anthropology in and to Development
http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/applicationsofanthropology/greenpaper.htm

Lesson 40

# ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Development and Change
- What Development Anthropologists do
- Changing Notion of Development
- Contentions in Development
- A New Role for Anthropologists

**Development and Change**

From an anthropological point of view, culture is an asset, even though managing it is difficult since cultures change and do not have sharp borders.

Examples of development planners' and development workers' ignorance of local culture, have had devastating repercussions on the local level.

**What Development Anthropologists do**

Development anthropologists in interpret practices which are difficult for others to access who lack detailed comparative knowledge of social organization: gender, kinship, property resources.

Anthropological input is often restricted to appraisal and analysis of planned outcome failures. Besides international development, use of applied anthropology has grown in the West as well.

Anthropology in the US and in South America is often associated with cultural brokerage between indigenous groups and national governments, and between indigenous groups and private companies, often those associated with natural resource extraction.

**Changing Notion of Development**

Development necessitates a kind of social analysis of the situations which the proposed intervention will be designed to address. From an anthropological view, this essentially requires matching two representations of reality, that of development practioners and that of local environments.

Research on development and culture during the past years has emphasized a culture-sensitive approach in development. Emphasis on people undertaking their own development, instead of imposing development on them, it is suggested that research into local culture is one of the most important features for ensuring participatory development.

Participation means that development should involve all its stakeholders. Even the World Bank has recognized the complex local environments in which development policy was supposed to operate and had failed was due to lack of participation. A modified policy discourse spoke the need to include local people, civil society, and social networks in planning and implementation

**Contentions in Development**

If anthropology has conventionally been suspicious of unplanned changes, it has been particularly distrustful of directed change and of the international development project which has had directed change as its objective.

The ambivalent relationship between anthropology and development has its origins in the colonial systems of governance. British anthropology strove to be useful to 'practical men' of colonial administration in the 1930's to access public funds. In France, anthropological methods were used to improve colonial government.

This history accounts for the suspicion with which anthropology is still viewed in many countries which have a fairly recent history of colonial domination.

**A New Role for Anthropologists**

The involvement of anthropology in development did not end with the dawning of the post-colonial era. The inclusion of the discipline in the institutional structures of international development from the late 1970's on has created a number of anthropological positions within development agencies.
Induction of anthropologists in development agencies in the 1980's and 1990's coincided with a new people oriented discourse in international development and a renewed focus on social exclusion and marginality.

**Useful Terms**

**Contentions –** controversies or opposing points of view
**Conventionally** - standardized way of doing something
**Natural resource extraction** – extraction of resources from the natural environment (from the land or the sea) for productive purposes
**Post -Colonial** – the time period commencing after the colonization period is over, although the influence of colonizing countries may still remain after they have physically vacated a colony
**Ambivalent** – ambiguous or lacking a clear cut definition

**Suggested Readings using Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

The cultural process of development: Some impressions of anthropologists working in development
http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/kmi/Julkais/WPt/1998/WP898.HTM

Lesson 41

# ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Expectations from an Anthropologist
- Anthropology's Contribution to Development
- Requirements & Rewards of Anthropological Input

**Expectations from an Anthropologist**

Commonly it is expected that an anthropologist can assist development programmes by bringing in the anthropological perspective. Anthropologists are expected to address social rather that technical aspects of development programs.

It is anticipated that an anthropologist should take care of the 'soft' elements of the project. This is a diffuse expectation which can imply many tasks. The anthropologist can be expected to report on, for example, the division of labour in an area or why cultivators prefer a special crop. In the latter case, the anthropologist collaborates with an agronomist on the given project.

An anthropologist is expected to give answers to certain questions which should lead to action: for e.g. to drill a well, it is necessary to form a water group which will contribute labor and/or take the responsibility of maintaining the well after it has become operational.

Anthropologists entered the field of development when development organizations acknowledged that things often did not work out, according to expectations, because of cultural factors. Anthropologists can help in this regard given their understanding of cultural similarities and differences.

**Anthropology's Contribution to Development**

Anthropologists have highlighted an appreciation of local knowledge and practices. Anthropologists argue that indigenous knowledge, practices and social institutions must be considered if local resource management and development plans are to work.

Interaction between so-called experts in the modern sector and people representing local, specific knowledge can result in the creation of new knowledge and be a starting point for development activities.

In an anthropological sense, culture is integrated in society and social development and is thus heterogeneous, dynamic and holistic**.** Anthropologists have shown that people are not an undifferentiated mass.

A first step of development workers is to get the whole picture of norms and values, and maybe their ideals, in a specific area. The second step is to look for the variations in the heterogeneity of what first looks like a homogeneous mass of people.

Hierarchies are found everywhere. It is of utmost importance to recognize hierarchies in the process of planned change. The manner in which certain groups are left outside the decision-making process also deserves attention.

**Requirements & Rewards of Anthropological Input**

Research into culture and development requires time. It involves considering the interaction and interchange of different kind of knowledge and learning between development agents, the so-called experts, and people representing local knowledge - all this also requires much effort and resources.

Much work done by the anthropologist is anticipatory in nature. Anthropological experience helps anticipate potential, both negative and positive changes. A well done cultural analysis of development initiatives also helps to anticipate conflicts, which can be addressed before they become serious problems.

**Useful Terms**

**Hierarchies** – segmented responsibilities accompanied by differences in rewards and prestige
**Undifferentiated** – lacking differentiation, similar
**Integrated** – tied or connected to each other
**Operational** – functional or workable

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Addressing livelihoods in Afghanistan
http://www.areu.org.pk/publications/livelihoods/Addressing%20Livelihoods.pdf

Lesson 42

# CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ART

**Lesson Overview:**

- What is Art?
- Art and Anthropology
- Examples of Art
- Relevance of Art
- Differences in Art Forms
- Judging the Quality of Art
- Art and Politics

**What is Art?**

Art can be defined as the process and products of applying certain skills to any activity that transforms matter, sound, or motion into a form that is deemed aesthetically meaningful to people in a society. Yet there is no universal definition of art.

Art reflects the human urge to express oneself and to take pleasure from aesthetics. The creative process of art is enjoyable, produces an emotional response and conveys a message.

Verbal art includes myths and folktales. Myths tend to involve supernatural beings whereas folktales are more secular in nature. Like other art forms, verbal arts are connected to other aspects of a culture.

**Art and Anthropology**

Art plays a useful social function and is prominent in ceremonies and customs of most cultures. The forms of artistic expression of relevance to cultural anthropologists include graphic and plastic arts (such as painting, carving, and weaving), music, dance, and verbal art (such as myth and folklore).

**Examples of Art**

Painting, sculpture and ceramics are common forms of western art. Religiously inspired art forms are also impressive (including architecture).

Smaller societies also have distinct art forms; the Nubian body decorations, Eskimo body tattooing and Navajo sand paintings are examples of art.

**Relevance of Art**

Art contributes to the well-being of individuals and society. For individuals, art provides emotional gratification to the artist and the beholder.

From the social perspective, art strengthens and reinforces social bonds and cultural themes, acts as a mechanism of social control, and is a symbol of high status particularly in complex societies.

**Differences in Art Forms**

Major differences in art forms are found between different cultures of the world. In small-scale societies of foragers, pastoralists or shifting cultivators, with nomadic or semi-nomadic residence patterns, the art in these societies either involves performing arts (song, dance or story telling) or is highly portable (jewelry, tattooing).

**Judging the Quality of Art**

In modern societies, what constitutes good art is largely determined by the professional art establishment (experts, critics, academics).

In societies lacking professional art establishments, artistic standards are less elaborate and more diffuse and democratic, relying on public reaction.

Complex societies, with specialization and sophisticated institutions invest in elaborate buildings, larger than life canvases kept in museums.

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**Art and Politics**
It is possible to see symbols of political power expressed via art. In Polynesia, leadership based on centralized chiefdoms results in chiefs using permanent tattoos to reflect their hereditary high status. In Melanesia, on the other hand, power is more fluid and the 'big men' indicate their authority using temporary body paints.

**Useful Terms**

**Tattoo** – form of body art which illustrates onto the skin using permanent ink
**Canvas** – the cloth on which paintings are done
**Diffuse** – spread out
**Art establishment** – art experts, critics and academics. Museums and other art institutions are also part of this establishment

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 15 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and Chapter 26 in 'Anthropology' by Ember*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Art and Anthropology:
www.anthroarcheart.org or www.artandanthropology.com or www.augie.edu/dept/art

Lesson 43

## CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ART (continued)

**Lesson Overview:**

- Functionalist Perspectives Concerning Art
- Psychological Benefits of Art
- Art and Social Integration
- Art and Social Control
- Art as a Status Symbol
- Art as a Form of Protest

**Functionalist Perspectives Concerning Art**

Manilowski tended to emphasize how various cultural elements function for the psychological well-being of the individual. Radcliff-Brown stressed how a cultural functional element of art functions to contribute to the well-being or continuity of society.

**Psychological Benefits of Art**

For the artist, artistic impressions enable expression of emotional energy in a concrete and visible manner. The creative tension released via artistic expression brings personal gratification.

Works of art evoke emotional responses from their viewers, which can be positive or negative, but do help relieve stress.

**Art and Social Integration**

Art functions to sustain longevity of the society in which it is found. Art is connected to other parts of the social system and used to evoke positive feelings for its rulers.

Even in ancient Aztec and Egyptian civilizations the ziggurats and pyramids served to provide a visual reinforcement of the awesome power of the rulers.

Art forms like music also help reinforce social bonds and cultural themes. Martial music, on the other hand, helps rally people against a common enemy. Story-telling also passes on social values from one generation onto the next, whereby helping social integration.

**Art and Social Control**

A popular perception concerning artists is that they are non-conformist, visionary and aloof. Art often reinforces existing socio-cultural systems. It also instills important cultural values and influences people to behave in socially appropriate ways.

Art can buttress inequalities of existing stratification systems. In highly stratified societies, state governments use art for maintaining the status quo and to solicit obedience and respect.

**Art as a Status Symbol**

Acquiring art objects provides a convincing way to display one's wealth and power. Possessing art objects implies high prestige due to its uniqueness.

Art in ancient Egypt was the personal property of the pharos. Art galleries often exhibit personal collections obtained from high ranking members of society.

**Art as a Form of Protest**

Art functions as a vehicle for protest, resistance and even revolution. Various artists have attempted to raise the consciousness of their countrymen through their poems, painting and plays and helped instigate socio-political changes.

**Useful Terms**

**Consciousness** – the feelings, sentiments and thoughts of a person or of a given people
**Acquiring** – obtaining
**Status quo** – the existing system

**Ziggurats** – ancient places of worship in the South American continent, renowned for their architectural design

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 15 in '*Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective' by Ferrarro and Chapter 26 in 'Anthropology' by Ember*

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Art and Anthropology:
www.anthroarcheart.org or www.artandanthropology.com or www.augie.edu/dept/art

Lesson 44

# ETHICS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

**Lesson Overview:**

- Ethical Condemnation
- Orientalism
- Response of Anthropologists
- Defending Anthropological Integrity
- Using Criticism Constructively
- Assuring Anthropological Integrity

**Ethical Condemnation**

Since the 1960s, cultural anthropology has been the target of critical attacks both from within and without the discipline. The condemnation of anthropology and anthropologists by postmodernism, literary theory, and post-colonialism, among others, has been directed at its status as a science and its participation in the oppression of minorities and justification of colonialism.

Critics assert that anthropology has been used solely to objectify oppressed peoples and that it cannot be considered a science. Anthropologists are blamed for asserting domination over his or her subject due to negative and inaccurate representations formed by the critics.

Anthropology is charged with ignoring history in studying non-Western societies and so anthropologists have been blamed for treating cultures as isolated from neighbors and the world at large. Anthropologists can also reinforce biases and stereotypes by using flawed methodology in their works

**Orientalism**

By studying the orient the scholar separates him or herself from the culture they study and recreate it as another world. Said believes that Asians are confined by the Oriental label that has been constructed by the European scholar.

It is natural for the human race to divide itself into "us" and "them." It is this division that leads to hostility. The separation that arises due to scholarly study only strengthens this hostility.

**Response of Anthropologists**

In order to continue the study of culture, anthropology developed the term relativism, which stated that all cultures were equal, but not necessarily alike.

Cultural anthropology could not, however, accept relativism because issues of morality became controversial. The study of anthropology became obsessed with data analysis in order to avoid moral judgment.

Classic anthropologists feared domination of the discipline by psychology and sociology; therefore, anthropology, had to be redefined in order to shift the focus of the discipline back to the study of culture.

Past research existed only on exotic cultures and the theories developed from that research were used to try to define modern, or first-world, culture. Several problems arose from this movement. Few people were interested in studies in cities or familiar places, the exotic areas broke the rule that all cultures are equal, and, therefore, these areas drew the attention of anthropologists. Another problem was that all previous studies were done on societies with no recorded history, and, therefore, no changes in patterns or traditions were observed

**Defending Anthropological Integrity**

Leading and influential anthropologists generally believed in uniformity in the actions and nature of humankind, not in the idea of self and the 'Other'. They wanted to study all forms of culture, at home and abroad, to discover similarities.

There are several examples of anthropologists who recognized the importance of borrowing, diffusion, and regional and global interactions in shaping society. Anthropology should base their criticisms on a careful scrutiny of facts.

**Using Criticism Constructively**
Questions and ideas put forth by anthropology's critics must be used to help avoid misperceptions and poorly founded opinions from passing on as common knowledge to the new generation of anthropologists. Reexamination of the prevalent attitudes in anthropology can move away the notion of anthropologists as authoritarian figures to humanistic, scientific scholars interested in comparing and contrasting cultures.

**Assuring Anthropological Integrity**
Objectivity and functional analysis combined with today's knowledge of psychology that is the key to comprehensiveness and objectivity in anthropology.

**Useful Terms**

**Objectivity** – unbiased observation of facts
**Authoritarian** – monopolized exertion of power
**Prevalent** – existing or in current use
**Scrutiny** – study or careful observation

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 28 in '*Anthropology*' by Ember

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Ethics in Anthropology
http://www.publicanthropology.org/Journals/Engaging-Ideas/Rt(yano)/Peters1.htm

Lesson 45

# RELEVANCE OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**Lesson Overview:**

- Change and the Future of Anthropology
- Ensuring Cultural Survival
- Contemporary Anthropologists

**Change and the Future of Anthropology**

Change is occurring at such an accelerated pace that it is difficult to keep up with all the changes in the world today. The recent revolution in transportation and telecommunications and the resulting increase in communications and travel are diffusing cultures at a much greater rate today than ever before.

Some argue that cultural anthropology will loose importance in the future since it is only a matter of time when all cultures will be homogenized. Yet few cultural anthropologists are studying pristine cultures as the discipline is adapting to the realities of this changing world.

Concern for survival of indigenous cultures and the study of complex societies is now the new focus area for many cultural anthropologists. There is also greater emphasis on using anthropological perspectives to deal with developmental problems.

There is little evidence to suggest that the world is becoming a cultural melting pot, so despite cultural changes there is enough diversity in the world to keep cultural anthropologists occupied for a long time to come.

**Ensuring Cultural Survival**

Cultural patterns – and in some cases people themselves – have been eradicated as a direct result of progress and economic development. The indigenous population of Tasmania in 19th century by white settlers for sheep herding is a tragic example of cultural extinction.

The 1884 Berlin Conference was a civilized way of dividing spoils of Africa but not safeguarding rights of indigenous people and numerous conflicts on the African continent are based on this insensitive division and lumping together of different ethnic groups.

The Brazilian Amazon shelters the largest population of the world's still indigenous people. But by building roads through the Amazonian frontier, the Brazilian government has introduced diseases such as influenza and measles amongst the indigenous communities.

**Contemporary Anthropologists**

Anthropological research has great relevance for the public at large. Consider for example the role archaeology played in society during the nineteenth century. Books on the subject were widely read. Darwin's work, for example, significantly changed beliefs on human history and development of the modern world.

Throughout this era of advancements academic archaeology was on the rise. This movement finally phased out the participation of amateurs in the field, creating a more elitist and inaccessible discipline.

While professionalization has certainly had numerous benefits - including developments in "method, theory and culture historical knowledge", its negative aspects are causing a significant deterioration of popular interest in archaeology.

A movement towards popularization through accessible writing must take place in order to involve the public and rekindle active interest in archaeology and indeed in other branches of anthropology.

Accessibility glorifies the field of anthropology, rather than denigrates it. Nowadays, rather than writing holistic ethnographies, cultural anthropologists bring to the study of cities and complex societies a more nuanced sensitivity towards understanding and dealing with the issue of ethnic diversity.

Anthropologists practicing "action anthropology" collaborate with other disciplines concerning the development of culture and how it relates to current pertinent issues.

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**Useful Terms**

**Holistic ethnographies** – overarching description concerning all aspects of life of a given community
**Ethnic diversity** – different ethnic groups or the differences within or between them
**Pertinent** – relevant or important
**Nuanced** – having various aspects

**Suggested Readings**
Students are advised to read the following chapters to develop a better understanding of the various principals highlighted in this hand-out:

Chapter 17 in 'Cultural Anthropology: *An Applied Perspective'* by Ferrarro

**Internet Resources**
In addition to reading from the textbook, please visit the following web-site for this lecture, which provide useful and interesting information:

Intellectuals and the Responsibilities of Public Life: An Interview with Chomsky

http://www.publicanthropology.org/Journals/Engaging-Ideas/chomsky.htm