

Cultural Anthropology

Cultural Anthropology

DIANNA REPP



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PART I
READ ME FIRST AND
COURSE SYLLABUS

I. Course Information

ANT 112 Exploring Non-Western Cultures

Course Description: Anthropological survey of non-Western cultures. Includes major terms and concepts used in sociocultural anthropology, research methods, and relevant theories of the field. Also includes major cultural characteristics of pre-colonial, non-Western, subsistence cultures; cross-cultural comparisons and contrasts with the post-colonial era; and considering a global context.

Prerequisite(s): WRT 101.

Information: Students will have writing assignments that require college level skills, and writing quality will be graded.

Key Dates

For class add, drop, and withdrawal dates, go to the “My Schedule” section of MyPima, found on the Students > Academics MyPima page. Additional semester Key Dates and Deadlines (<https://www.pima.edu/calendars/key-dates-and-deadlines/index.html>) are on the **Calendar** link at the top of PCC webpages.

Expectation of coursework hours: Plan to spend at least 135 hours over 16 weeks on this course. This is the mandatory minimum of time for a 3-credit course. (9 hours a week)

Course Meeting Days/Time: Asynchronous

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize major terms and concepts in sociocultural anthropology.
2. Explain relevant methods and theories of the discipline.
3. Identify major cultural characteristics of pre-colonial, non-Western, and subsistence cultures.
4. Compare and contrast non-Western cultures in a post-colonial, global context.

Course Outline

- I. Major Terms and Concepts in Sociocultural Anthropology
 - A. Major terms and concepts used in sociocultural anthropology
 - B. Definition of culture
 - C. The Non-Western versus Western dichotomy
- II. Research Methods and Theories of Sociocultural Anthropology
 - A. Ethnographic methods
 1. Participant observation
 2. Interviewing
 - a. Structured
 - b. Unstructured
 3. Fieldwork in the electronic age
 - B. Theoretical perspectives in sociocultural anthropology
- III. Pre-colonial, Non-Western, and Subsistence Cultures
 - A. Characteristics of pre-colonial, Non-Western, and subsistence cultures

- B. Case studies
 - IV. Post-Colonial, Non-Western Cultures and the Global Context
 - A. Characteristics of post-colonial, Non-Western cultures
 - B. Cross-cultural comparisons and contrasts in the post-colonial era, in a global context
 - C. Resistance and self-determination among post-colonial, non-Western cultures
 - D. Case studies
-

2. Required Materials

No Text to Purchase!

You are not required to purchase a textbook for this online section of ANT 112. Readings are provided for you here on our class website. These readings offer rich content related directly to ANT 112 objectives. The readings also reflect what you would find in a required textbook for ANT 112.

Technical Requirements

It should go without saying as an online anthropology course that you will need a computer, word processing software (Google Drive is free and will work), and regular access to the Internet. If you have any trouble with these at home you may access all of these as a student at any Pima Community College campus during normal business hours.

3. Course Grading, Policies, and Procedures

Course Policies

Active Participation

It is your responsibility to be an active participant in this class every week by posting in discussion topics, submitting assignments, and completing weekly module quizzes or exams. For every week (i.e., 7-day period) that you do not post in a discussion board, submit an assignment, or take an assessment (i.e., quiz or exam) you will be reported to the College as being “absent.” Note that simply logging on to D2L or other computer-based systems does not meet the federal guidelines for active participation. You must actually complete grade-able work (i.e., make at least one discussion post, submit an assignment, or take a quiz or exam) in order to be considered “active,” and thus present in this class.

A failure to participate as required may result in loss of financial aid and failure in the class. For every credit hour of your classes, you should plan to spend approximately two to three hours outside of class studying each week. Class Attendance and Participation requirements (<https://www.pima.edu/programs-courses/credit-programs-degrees/attendance.html>)

Student Resources and Policies

Student Resources

Tutoring, libraries, computer commons, advising, code of conduct, complaint process. Student resources (<https://www.pima.edu/current-students/index.html>)

Student Policies

Plagiarism, use of copyright materials, financial aid benefits, ADA information, FERPA, and mandatory reporting laws (www.pima.edu/syllabusresources)

Online Etiquette

All participants in the class are required to practice online etiquette for all postings, whether in emails, discussions, or chat, are to be courteous and in language appropriate for an academic setting. Participants must avoid offensive and confrontational comments, and the instructor retains the right to delete any posting deemed inappropriate. For more information, read about [Netiquette: The Core Rules of Netiquette](#) from Albion.com [Etiquette in technology](#) from Wikipedia.

Email and Announcements

Your instructor's primary form of communication with the whole class will be through posted Announcements, but if they need to contact you directly, it will be through your D2L email. Thus, you are required to check your course for announcements and your D2L email inbox for messages at least twice a week, although it is highly recommended that you get in the habit of checking each time that you log into your class. Failure to view news items or check your email on a regular basis may result in you missing important instructions or updates from your instructor.

Late Work

With the exception of extra credit opportunities that allow you to submit a journal entry or two late there will be no late work accepted.

Incomplete (I) Grades

Incomplete Grades are only very rarely given for an unavoidable medical, or family reasons. Eligibility for an incomplete requires that the student has missed (or only will miss) 10% or less of the graded course material and has so far earned grades that average "C" or above at the time of the request. Any incomplete requires a written contract with specific requirements for completion of course.

Submitted Materials

All files must be submitted in Word (*.DOC), Rich Text Format (*.RTF) or as a PDF (Mac users sometimes have trouble preserving the formatting when they save as .RTF) to make sure that your other students and the instructor can open your work. The following are not acceptable formats: .wps, .wp, .odt, .pages, and .lnk.

Feedback Timeline

As a general rule, your work should be graded no later than one week after it was submitted. However, your instructor will want to get your submitted work back to you as soon as possible and in most cases, the turnaround could be quicker.

PCC Definition of a Credit

Students are expected to spend a minimum of 45 hours per credit on work related to the class. This includes time spent in the classroom as well as out-of-class work such as reading assignments, homework, projects, etc.

Additional Information

Pima Community College has a zero tolerance policy toward student acts of plagiarism. Plagiarism, as defined in the Student Code of Conduct, “includes representing the work of another person as one’s own, including information downloaded from the

Internet. The use of another person’s words, ideas, or information without proper acknowledgment also constitutes plagiarism.”

Please be aware that the College subscribes to a Web site, Turnitin.com, which instructors use specifically to detect plagiarism. Plagiarism, whether committed consciously or unconsciously, carries stiff repercussions.

All work submitted for this class must be the student’s original work written for this class. Reusing your own work that has been previously submitted for another professor, class, or semester, is a form of academic dishonesty and will result in academic sanctions.

Watch this video for more information on how to avoid plagiarism.



An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimaant112/?p=20>

Grade Determination

Module 1

Assessment	Total Points Possible
Syllabus Quiz	10
Discussion – Introductions	20
Virtual Field Trip – Essay	50
Virtual Field Trip – Discussion	10
Chapter 1 Quiz	15
Chapter 2 Quiz	15
Chapter 3 Quiz	15

Module 2

Assessment	Total Points Possible
Virtual Field Trip – Essay	50
Virtual Field Trip – Discussion	10
Chapter 4 Quiz	15
Chapter 5 Quiz	15
Chapter 6 Quiz	15
Semester Research Project Proposal	10

Module 3

Assessment	Total Points Possible
Virtual Field Trip – Essay	50
Virtual Field Trip – Discussion	10
Chapter 7 Quiz	15
Chapter 8 Quiz	15
Chapter 9 Quiz	15

Module 4

Assessment	Total Points Possible
Chapter 10 Quiz	15
Chapter 11 Quiz	15
Chapter 12 Quiz	15
Semester Research Project Essay	100

Module Totals

Module 1 = 135 points

Module 2 = 115 points

Module 3 = 105 points

Module 4 = 145 points
Course Total = 500 points

4. Schedule of Work

Click [here](#) to view the Schedule of Work page.

5. Academic Services

Student Resources and Policies

Student resources: tutoring, libraries, computer commons, advising, code of conduct, complaint process. Student resources (<https://www.pima.edu/current-students/index.html>)

Tutoring

Online tutoring available through NetTutor. See the Course Homepage for access.

Learning Centers (face-to-face tutoring):

- Desert Vista Campus – 520-206-5061
- Downtown Campus – 520-206-7311
- East Campus – 520-206-7863
- Northwest Campus – 520-206-2127
- West Campus – 520-206-3196

Library

- Community Campus – 520-206-6323
- Desert Vista Campus – 520-206-5095
- Downtown Campus – 520-206-7267
- East Campus – 520-206-7693
- Northwest Campus – 520-206-2250
- West Campus – 520-206-6821

Testing and Assessment Centers

- Community Campus – 520-206-6454
- Desert Vista Campus – 520-206-5047
- Downtown Campus – 520-206-7254
- East Campus – 520-206-7874
- Northwest Campus – 520-206-2212
- West Campus – 520-206-6648

Technical Support

If you have difficulty logging in, you can request help by completing the [PimaOnline D2L Technical Support](#) form or by calling (520) 206-4800. For online course issues, you may also call 206-6310. If you need more information on taking the online portion of this course, refer to the [PimaOnline](#) web page.

Computer Commons (Academic Computing)

- Community Campus – 520-206-6323
 - Desert Vista Campus – 520-206-5091
 - Downtown Campus – 520-206-7311
 - East Campus – 520-206-7861
 - Northwest Campus – 520-206-2127
 - West Campus – 520-206-6042
-

6. Photo of a Nukak Girl permission letter

Booth, Rob
<rbooth@pima.edu>

Fwd: Use of images for college course

1 message

Slaton, Stephanie <sslanton@pima.edu> Tue, Sep 19, 2017 at 8:28 AM

To: Rob Booth <rbooth@pima.edu>

Forwarded message

From: **Piers Calvert**
<piers@pierscalvert.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 19, 2017 at 12:57 AM

Subject: Re: Use of images for college
course

To: "Slaton, Stephanie"
<sslanton@pima.edu>

Hi Stephanie,

Thanks for getting in touch, and yes please do go ahead and use the image for your course. If you want any other images as well you can maybe check on my website under the sections The Way We Are Now, or Colombia.

I hope this helps

Best Regards

Piers

On 18 Sep 2017, at 23:55, Slaton, Stephanie <sslanton@pima.edu>
wrote:

Hi Piers,

I work for Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona, USA. I am working on a cultural anthropology course and looking for images of the Nukak people. I had found one of your images on Flickr posted by the United Nations Refugee Agency and the license stated it was CCBYNCSA, however it has a copyright symbol on the photo. While the Flickr license would lead me to believe I could show the image in our online course, I did not want to risk infringing on your copyright.

Would you allow us to use the image below in our course Exploring NonWestern Cultures? It is an online course that runs several sections per semester, with class sizes of about 30. We are discussing the Nukak people in regards to foraging. We are also a public (notforprofit) school.

Photo of a Nukak Girl

If you had other photos you may be willing to share as well, or instead, please let me know. I really appreciate your consideration.

Warm regards,

Stephanie

Stephanie Slaton

Instructional Media Specialist, Center for Learning Technology

Pima Community College

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=058925a735&jsver=ujO6RgBCJN0.en.&view=pt&search=inbox&th=15e9ac1b4e653579&siml=15e9ac1b4e653579> 1/2

9/19/2017

Pima

Community College Mail – Fwd: Use of images for college course

401 N. Bonita Avenue

Tucson, AZ 85709

520.206.6336

7. Rebecca Hobert Copyright Release

PART II
MODULE I

8. Welcome to Exploring Non-Western Cultures

As we begin our journey in **Anthropology 112: Exploring Non-Western Cultures**, think for a moment about the fact that you are taking a class about exploring other cultures around the world – and you are doing it in a format that actually allows you to connect with people from around the world. This is the power of the electronic age!

Working Online

Online courses offer us flexibility – to schedule coursework into our busy lives ... to work at our own pace ... and to do all this at home or a coffee shop or ... wherever!

Online Textbook Included!

Our textbook also offers us flexibility. It is an Open Educational Resource (known as OER), which means it was created with the goal of being a free source of information for students. This electronic resource was written by anthropologists from the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges, and we are utilizing twelve of their chapters for this ANT 112 course.

Thinking Across the Chapters

Each of the Modules in the course focuses on three chapters in the textbook. As you read the chapters and write your Virtual Field Trip essays, remember to think across the chapters:

- How are ideas, concepts and terms in different chapters related to each other? How does each chapter build on the ideas of previous chapters (within the Module and in the textbook as a whole)?
- As you explore why individuals and groups hold certain ideas and act/ behave in certain ways, go beyond just defining terms. Think and read more deeply. Look for interconnections between socio-economics, politics, ethnicity, race, gender, kinship, religion, and class (to name a few).
- When composing Field Trip essays, demonstrate that you are thinking across the chapters. Do your best to incorporate information, concepts and terms from other chapters of the relevant module. If used well, just one or two will usually strengthen the essay and, thus, the grade.

Exploration

In this course on “Exploring Non-Western Cultures,” I invite you to focus on the “exploration”: You are part of a larger group of learners – global citizens – who travel together this semester to learn more about the amazing peoples and cultures in world:

Where do you want to go?

Take Virtual Field Trips to visit peoples and places around the world.

What do you want to learn about?

Follow Your Own Path for your semester research project.

Community

In our online class, we connect with people by the words we type into a website. This is a fascinating kind of communication! I hope you embrace it this semester, and get to know your peers (and me) in this course during the discussion sessions. I have “met” people around the world through the portal of my computer – and it has made my life much richer. I hope this course will enrich us all.

I am excited about this class, and looking forward to working together with you this semester!

Let's Get Started! Introduce Yourself

Insta-Snap Introduction Discussion

- Introduce yourself to the class using a social media model! Be creative – draw on the way people use social media, with a short paragraph (100 words) and a photo or fun image to convey a sense of who you are!
- You choose what to share, but please mention one thing you would like to learn more about in this course on Exploring Non-Western Cultures (15 points).
- Include a photograph of favorite scenery, food, or another fun photo, with an explanation of how it reflects you (5 points).

You may also post two comments to peers, for extra credit (50 words each, 3 points each)!

9. About Your Textbook - ANT112

How to Use this Textbook

Your textbook in this course is free and built right into this course. It is *Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology*, from the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges, a section of the American Anthropological Association.

It is divided into 12 chapters. You may be assigned to read all or part of the chapter depending on the schedule of work. You can also download to your computer, print from the PDFs, or download an e-book version that can be read by iBooks on Apple devices, and Calibre on PC/Android on the [Perspectives website](#).

The cover image of "*Perspectives; An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology*:"

About this Textbook

Welcome to *Perspectives* and open access anthropology! We are delighted to bring to you this novel textbook, a collection of chapters on the essential topics in cultural anthropology. Different from other introductory textbooks, this book is an edited volume with each chapter written by a different author. Each author has written from their experiences working as an anthropologist and that personal touch makes for an accessible introduction to cultural anthropology.

Our approach to cultural anthropology is holistic. We see the interconnectedness of cultural practices and, in all of the chapters,

we emphasize the comparison of cultures and the ways of life of different peoples. We start with Laura Nader's observation that cultural differences need not be seen as a problem. In our complicated world of increasing migration, nationalism, and climate challenges, cultural diversity might actually be the source of conflict resolution and new approaches to ensuring a healthier world. Indeed, as Katie Nelson reminds us, anthropology exposes the familiarity in the ideas and practices of others that seem bizarre. Robert Borofsky advocates for anthropology's ability to empower people and facilitate good. Borofsky calls on anthropologists to engage with a wider public to bring our incredible stories and important insights to helping resolve the most critical issues we face in the world today. This book brings Nader, Nelson, Borofsky, and many others together to demonstrate that our anthropological understandings can help all of us to improve the lives of people the world over. We need you, as students, to see the possibilities. As instructors, we want to help you share anthropological knowledge and understanding easily. We want all readers to be inspired by the intensely personal writings of the anthropologists who contribute to this volume.

Why This Book?

For students, we promise readable and interesting writing on topics that will be covered in your first year anthropology course. The chapters contain links to support your use and enjoyment of the book. They are designed to help learn the material. Use this book, even if it is not your course text, and then ask your instructor tough questions! Use social media to ask us questions or to send us comments—the details are below.

About the Society for Anthropology in

Community Colleges

This book is produced by the [Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges](#) (SACC). SACCers, as we call ourselves, are teaching anthropologists who work in community colleges and universities across North America. We teach first year students – like you – many of whom have never taken an anthropology course. We believe strongly in the importance of learning about cultural diversity and we assert that the ideas and skills of anthropologists can inform work in any career. SACC has been building this book since 2012. We have assembled a terrific writing team of authors who teach in colleges and senior anthropologists who share our commitment to creating an open and accessible textbook. SACC tweets [@SACC_L](#) and is on [Facebook](#). We encourage you to tweet at us or post on our Facebook page when you are using this book. SACC is an official section of the American Anthropological Association.

Why Open Access?

This book was motivated by SACC's long-standing interest in supporting a diversity of anthropology students, including first generation college learners and students with lower incomes. Frequently, these are the students we teach. Further, SACCers have an interest in progressive social values and believe in the power of education in anthropology to improve the living conditions and situations of people abroad and at home. We want these messages to find their ways to as many people as possible, even if students aren't formally enrolled in an anthropology course. This book is published under a [creative commons license](#) (CC-BY-NC) which grants permission to instructors to copy, distribute, or remix the chapters to suit your educational needs as long as you credit the

original author and the original source of the material. The contents of this book may not be used for commercial purposes, meaning it cannot be sold in any form. THE

Cover Design

We put considerable thought into the cover of Perspectives. We wanted a cover that provokes discussion without stereotyping. We chose a design that prompts reflection and classroom engagement, while remaining friendly and inviting. We invite instructors to use the cover as a teaching tool. Consider discussing that the cover is a story that may be told in many ways. Consider the possibilities of this scene: Who are these people? Where are they in this snapshot and where are they off to? What did they have for breakfast and who will they meet in the course of their day? Similarly, examine this cover along with other recent and past covers of a range of Cultural Anthropology textbooks. What are [the messages](#) being sent by the different types of images that represent Cultural Anthropology?

We aren't sure the cover is quite perfect yet, so please teach its strengths and its limitations for understanding what anthropology is – and then let us know what you decide in your class. Please be in touch with us via social media or email if you have suggestions or questions. If you would like to be involved with this project by writing a chapter or creating ancillary materials, please contact us. The dynamic nature of an open access book means that there is always room to add new chapters or other materials.

Thank you for adopting Perspectives.

Nina Brown

Thomas McIlwraith

Laura Tubelle de González

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the generous contributions of many people. We would like to thank the Executive Board of the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges for their support of this project starting in 2012 as well as SACC members who contributed their time and expertise. Jeanne Thompson (Cypress College), and Philip L. Stein (Pierce College) served on the editorial committee and played a central role in shaping the book from the beginning. We also appreciate the assistance of Janine Chiappa McKenna, Director of Publishing for the American Anthropological Association, who helped us develop this book as an open access publishing project.

We would like to express our gratitude to Robert Borofsky (Hawaii Pacific University and Center for a Public Anthropology), who championed this project from its earliest stages and elevated our efforts through his outreach to authors and willingness to share resources. His commitment to a public anthropology that seeks to address the central issues of our time while engaging broad audiences was a central inspiration for our work.

In addition, we thank the following people for their expertise.

Peer Reviewers

Jessica Amato, Napa Valley College
Anthony Balzano, Sussex County Community College
Beverly Bennett, Wilbur Wright College, City Colleges of Chicago
Lin Bentley Keeling, El Paso Community College
Ronald Castanzo, University of Baltimore
Chuck Ellenbaum, College of DuPage
Carol Hayman, Austin Community College
Jeffrey Hoelle, University of California, Santa Barbara
Danielle James, Community College of Baltimore County
Angela Jenks, University of California, Irvine
Diane Levine, Pierce College
Brandon Lundy, Kennesaw State University

Bob Muckle, Capilano University
Carol Mukhopadhyay, San Jose State University
Karen Muir, Columbus State Community College
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Christian Palmer, Windward Community College, University of
Hawaii Anastasia Panagakos, Cosumnes River College
Philip Stein, Pierce College
Tim Sullivan, Richland College
Jeanne Thompson, Cypress College
Andrew Walsh, University of Western Ontario

Book Design and Production

Stacy Dreyer, Natalie Karst, and Janet Keller, copyeditors
Stuart Williams, cover design
Grapevine Publishing Services, page design and typesetting

10. Discussion: Introduce Yourself

Let's Get Started! Introduce Yourself

Insta-Snap Introduction Discussion

- Introduce yourself to the class using a social media model! Be creative – draw on the way people use social media, with a short paragraph (100 words) and a photo or fun image to convey a sense of who you are!
- You choose what to share, but please mention one thing you would like to learn more about in this course on Exploring Non-Western Cultures (15 points).
- Include a photograph of favorite scenery, food, or another fun photo, with an explanation of how it reflects you (5 points).

You may also post two comments to peers, for extra credit (50 words each, 3 points each)!

II. Module 1 Introduction

Welcome to Module 1!

This module is our introduction to anthropology. We will learn about three important areas that help us understand the cultures we are studying:

- **The Culture Concept** Start with important anthropological concepts that give us tools to understand the world, including the concepts of culture, cultural relativism, and the pitfalls of ethnocentrism. Learn about early anthropologists like Sir James Frazer and Sir E. B. Tylor, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Franz Boas. Lastly, consider some of the ethical issues that can arise from anthropological research.
- **Doing Fieldwork** Explore what is unique about ethnographic fieldwork and how it emerged as a key strategy in anthropology. Identify some of the contemporary ethnographic fieldwork techniques and perspectives. Continue learning about ethical considerations in doing anthropological fieldwork.
- **Language** Examine the relationship between human language and culture. Think about language variations, ethnic or cultural identity, and how language is affected by social class, ethnicity, gender and other aspects of identity. Explore the reasons why languages change and efforts that can be made to preserve endangered languages.

Where do you want to go?!

In Modules 1-3 you will get to choose your destination for a “virtual field trip” to explore other cultures. The Field Trip options draw on the chapter materials, and integrate them in an interdisciplinary way.

The Module One Virtual Field Trips offer you many choices. You will use some of the anthropological fieldwork methods found in our chapters to describe how you would conduct fieldwork with the culture you have chosen for your Virtual Field Trip! See the options below.

For each field trip, you will submit an essay to the Assignments tool, and paste a copy into the Discussion tool to share with your fellow students. You will then read and comment on two of your peers’ essays. See the **Virtual Field Trip** pages for complete instructions. Grading uses the following rubrics:

Virtual Field Trip Essay and Discussion Post (1 post, 350 words)

Exceeds Expectations (50 points)	Meets Expectations (40 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (30 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (20 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Student responds fully to the questions posed, demonstrating knowledge and application of ideas and concepts presented in this module. Clear knowledge and insights into the subject are demonstrated. Student uses at least one citation from the text and one citation from the Discussion video(s) or website(s) in developing the post, and provides a Bibliography.</p>	<p>Student's posting responds to the questions posed. The posting indicates understanding of the subject matter. Student uses at least one citation from the text and one citation from the Discussion video(s) or website(s) in developing the post, and provides a Bibliography.</p>	<p>Student's posting responds to the questions posed only on a superficial level. The response may contain many words but says little of substance. This type of response may be vague or unclear. This grade could also be assigned when the writing of the response is haphazard or appears to be rushed or "thrown together the last minute." Student uses at least one citation from the text or Discussion video(s)/website(s).</p>	<p>Student's posting is present but barely responds to the questions posed. The student may respond to only part of what was asked or substituted simpler or different questions altogether.</p>	<p>Not submitted.</p>

Student's Comments to Peers (2 posts, 75 words each)

Exceeds Expectations (10 points)	Meets Expectations (8 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (6 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (4 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Each posting response integrates the thoughts of others and ideas and concepts presented in this module within the discussion thread. Student is online at least two different days during the week and responds in a thoughtful manner to two or more other students' responses. Student reads the majority of the discussion posts.</p>	<p>Each posting indicates understanding of the subject matter but may not contain thoughtfulness or insight to the question or to other students' responses. The student is responding to at least two other students' responses.</p>	<p>Student responds to other students' work on a superficial level. The student is responding to at least one other student's response.</p>	<p>Student does not respond to other students' postings.</p>	<p>Not submitted.</p>

Module 1 Assignments

Discussion

If you have not completed the Insta-Snap Introduction Discussion, be sure to do that first. Instructions are on the [Welcome](#) page.

Reading

Read the following chapters from *Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology*, use the links below to read online or print.

- [The Culture Concept](#)
- [Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology](#)
- [Language](#)

Use the Study Guides as you read the chapters to help you focus on important terms, concepts, people, and places. This will also help you prepare for the quizzes in this module.

Study Guides and Quizzes

- [The Culture Concept Study Guide](#)
- [Doing Fieldwork Study Guide](#)
- [Language Study Guide](#)

There is a 15 question quiz for each chapter. You can find these in the Quizzes tool.

Virtual Field Trip – Where do you want to go?

Each Module will have a **Virtual Field Trip** assignment, that consists of a “visit” – to online websites and articles. You will write a 350-word **Field Trip Essay** – where you describe, analyze, and

reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to more deeply explore another culture!

Choose your Virtual Field Trip!

- [Australian Aboriginal Culture](#): Art, history, and a contemporary band using traditional music for indigenous rights!
- [American Indian Code Talkers](#)
- [Traditional Foods and Medicines, Ethnobotany](#)

Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then paste the text of your essay into the Discussion tool to share with your fellow students.

Read the essays posted by your peers, and post a comment (75 words each) to two peers. This will be done the week after you have posted your own Field Trip Essay. Due dates are on the Schedule of Work.

See complete Instructions on the Virtual Field Trip pages.

Research Project – Follow Your Own Path

Start thinking about a topic for your Semester Research Project.

How do professional anthropologists “follow their own path” when starting original research? They begin by creating a proposal outlining the type of research they want to pursue when they do field work.

In Module 2 you will turn in the Semester Research Project Study Proposal. This is a 150-word, one to two paragraph overview of your ideas, describing the culture and topic you would like to investigate.

Be sure to read the [Semester Research Project page](#) for complete instructions.

12. Chapter 1: The Culture Concept

Click [here](#) for full text and images of *Chapter 1: The Culture Concept*.

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast the ideas of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- Describe the role that early anthropologists Sir James Frazer and Sir E. B. Tylor played in defining the concept of culture in anthropology.
- Identify the differences between armchair anthropology and participant-observer fieldwork and explain how Bronislaw Malinowski contributed to the development of anthropological fieldwork techniques.
- Identify the contributions Franz Boas and his students made to the development of new theories about culture.
- Assess some of the ethical issues that can arise from anthropological research.

THOUGHTS ON CULTURE OVER A CUP OF COFFEE

Do you think culture can be studied in a coffee shop? Have you ever gone to a coffee shop, sat down with a book or laptop, and listened to conversations around you? If you just answered

yes, in a way, you were acting as an anthropologist. Anthropologists like to become a part of their surroundings, observing and participating with people doing day-to-day things. As two anthropologists writing a chapter about the culture concept, we wanted to know what other people thought about culture. What better place to meet than at our community coffee shop?

Our small coffee shop was filled with the aroma of coffee beans, and the voices of people competed with the sound of the coffee grinder. At the counter a chalkboard listed the daily specials of sandwiches and desserts. Coffee shops have their own language, with vocabulary such as *macchiato* and *latte*. It can feel like entering a foreign culture. We found a quiet corner that would allow us to observe other people, and hopefully identify a few to engage with, without disturbing them too much with our conversation. We understand the way that anthropologists think about culture, but we were also wondering what the people sitting around us might have to say. Would having a definition of culture really mean something to the average coffee-shop patron? Is a definition important? Do people care? We were very lucky that morning because sitting next to us was a man working on his laptop, a service dog lying at his feet.

Meeting Bob at the Coffee Shop

Having an animal in a food-service business is not usually allowed, but in our community people can have their service dogs with them. This young golden retriever wore a harness that displayed a sign stating the owner was diabetic. This dog was very friendly; in fact, she wanted to be touched and would not leave us alone, wagging her tail and pushing her nose against our hands. This is very

unusual because many service dogs, like seeing eye dogs, are not to be touched. Her owner, Bob, let us know that his dog must be friendly and not afraid to approach people: if Bob needs help in an emergency, such as a diabetic coma, the dog must go to someone else for help.

We enjoyed meeting Bob and his dog, and asked if he would like to answer our question: what is culture? Bob was happy to share his thoughts and ideas.

Bob feels that language is very important to cultural identity. He believes that if one loses language, one also loses important information about wildlife, indigenous plants, and ways of being. As a member of a First Nations tribe, Bob believes that words have deep cultural meaning. Most importantly, he views English as the language of commerce. Bob is concerned with the influence of Western consumerism and how it changes cultural identity.

Bob is not an anthropologist. He was just a person willing to share his ideas. Without knowing it though, Bob had described some of the elements of anthropology. He had focused on the importance of language and the loss of tradition when it is no longer spoken, and he had recognized that language is a part of cultural identity. He was worried about globalization and consumerism changing cultural values.

With Bob's opinions in mind, we started thinking about how we, two cultural anthropologists, would answer the same question about culture. Our training shapes our understandings of the question, yet we know there is more to culture concepts than a simple definition. Why is asking the culture concept question important to anthropologists? Does it matter? Is culture something that we can understand without studying it formally?

In this chapter, we will illustrate how anthropology developed the culture concept. Our journey will explore the importance of storytelling and the way that anthropology became a social science. This will include learning about the work of important scholars, how

anthropology emerged in North America, and an overview of the importance of ethics.

STORIES AS A REFLECTION ON CULTURE

Stories are told in every culture and often teach a moral lesson to young children. Fables are similar, but often set an example for people to live by or describe what to do when in a dangerous situation. They can also be a part of traditions, help to preserve ways of life, or explain mysteries. Storytelling takes many different forms such as tall tales and folktales. These are for entertainment or to discuss problems encountered in life. Both are also a form of cultural preservation, a way to communicate morals or values to the next generation. Stories can also be a form of social control over certain activities or customs that are not allowed in a society.

A fable becomes a tradition by being retold and accepted by others in the community. Different cultures have very similar stories sharing common themes. One of the most common themes is the battle between good and evil. Another is the story of the quest. The quest often takes the character to distant lands, filled with real-life situations, opportunities, hardships, and heartaches. In both of these types of stories, the reader is introduced to the anthropological concept known as *the Other*. What exactly is *the Other*? **The Other** is a term that has been used to describe people whose customs, beliefs, or behaviors are different from one's own.

Can a story explain the concept of the Other? Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is about four different voyages that Gulliver undertakes. His first adventure is the most well-known; in the story, Lemuel Gulliver is a surgeon who plans a sea voyage when his business fails. During a storm at sea, he is shipwrecked, and he awakens to find himself bound and secured by a group of captors, the Lilliputians, who are six inches tall. Gulliver, having what Europeans consider a normal body height, suddenly becomes a

giant. During this adventure, Gulliver is seen as an outsider, a stranger with different features and language. Gulliver becomes the Other.

What lessons about culture can we learn from *Gulliver's Travels*? Swift's story offers lessons about cultural differences, conflicts occurring in human society, and the balance of power. It also provides an important example of the Other. The Other is a matter of perspective in this story: Gulliver thinks the Lilliputians are strange and unusual. To Gulliver, the Lilliputians are the Other, but the Lilliputians equally see Gulliver as the Other—he is a their captive and is a rare species of man because of his size.

The themes in *Gulliver's Travels* describe different cultures and aspects of storytelling. The story uses language, customary behaviors, and the conflict between different groups to explore ideas of the exotic and strange. The story is framed as an adventure, but is really about how similar cultures can be. In the end, Gulliver becomes a member of another cultural group, learning new norms, attitudes, and behaviors. At the same time, he wants to colonize them, a reflection of his former cultural self.

Stories are an important part of culture, and when used to pass on traditions or cultural values, they can connect people to the past. Stories are also a way to validate religious, social, political, and economic practices from one generation to another. Stories are important because they are used in some societies to apply social pressure, to keep people in line, and are part of shaping the way that people think and behave.

Anthropologists as Storytellers

People throughout recorded history have relied on storytelling as a way to share cultural details. When early anthropologists studied people from

other civilizations, they relied on the written accounts and opinions of others; they presented facts and developed their stories, about other cultures based solely on information gathered by others. These scholars did not have any direct contact with the people they were studying. This approach has come to be known as **armchair anthropology**. Simply put, if a culture is viewed from a distance (as from an armchair), the anthropologist tends to measure that culture from his or her own vantage point and to draw comparisons that place the anthropologist's culture as superior to the one being studied. This point of view is also called ethnocentrism. **Ethnocentrism** is an attitude based on the idea that one's own group or culture is better than any other.

Early anthropological studies often presented a biased ethnocentric interpretation of the human condition. For example, ideas about racial superiority emerged as a result of studying the cultures that were encountered during the colonial era. During the colonial era from the sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, European countries (Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Dutch Republic, Spain, Portugal) asserted control over land (Asia, Africa, the Americas) and people. European ideas of wrong and right were used as a measuring stick to judge the way that people in different cultures lived. These other cultures were considered primitive, which was an ethnocentric term for people who were non-European. It is also a negative term suggesting that indigenous cultures had a lack of technological advancement. Colonizers thought that they were superior to the Other in every way.

Armchair anthropologists were unlikely to be aware of their ethnocentric ideas because they did not visit the cultures they studied. Scottish social anthropologist Sir James Frazer is well-known for his 1890 work *The Golden Bough: A Study of Comparative Religions*. Its title was later changed to *A Study in Magic and Religion*, and it was one of the first books to describe and record

magical and religious beliefs of different culture groups around the world. Yet, this book was not the outcome of extensive study in the field. Instead, Frazer relied on the accounts of others who had traveled, such as scholars, missionaries, and government officials, to formulate his study.

Another example of anthropological writing without the use of fieldwork is Sir E. B. Tylor's 1871 work *Primitive Culture*. Tylor, who went on to become the first professor of anthropology at Oxford University in 1896, was an important influence in the development of sociocultural anthropology as a separate discipline. Tylor defined **culture** as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."¹ His definition of culture is still used frequently today and remains the foundation of the culture concept in anthropology.

Tylor's definition of culture was influenced by the popular theories and philosophies of his time, including the work of Charles Darwin. Darwin formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*. Scholars of the time period, including Tylor, believed that cultures were subject to evolution just like plants and animals and thought that cultures developed over time from simple to complex. Many nineteenth century anthropologists believed that cultures evolved through distinct stages. They labeled these stages with terms such as savagery, barbarism, and civilization.² These theories of **cultural evolutionism** would later be successfully refuted, but conflicting views about cultural evolutionism in the nineteenth century highlight an ongoing nature versus nurture de-bate about whether biology shapes behavior more than culture.

Both Frazer and Tylor contributed important and foundational studies even though they never went into the field to gather their information. Armchair anthropologists were important in the development of anthropology as a discipline in the late nineteenth century because although these early scholars were not directly

experiencing the cultures they were studying, their work did ask important questions that could ultimately **only be answered by going into the field.**

Anthropologists as Cultural Participants

The armchair approach as a way to study culture changed when scholars such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Franz Boas, and Margaret Mead took to the field and studied by being participants and observers. As they did, fieldwork became the most important tool anthropologists used to understand the “complex whole” of culture.

Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish anthropologist, was greatly influenced by the work of Frazer. However, unlike the armchair anthropology approach Frazer used in writing *The Golden Bough*, Malinowski used more innovative ethnographic techniques, and his fieldwork took him off the veranda to study different cultures. The off the veranda approach is different from armchair anthropology because it includes active **participant-observation**: traveling to a location, living among people, and observing their day-to-day lives.

What happened when Malinowski came off the veranda? *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) was considered the first modern ethnography and redefined the approach to fieldwork. This book is part of Malinowski’s trilogy on the Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski lived with them and observed life in their villages. By living among the islanders, Malinowski was able to learn about their social life, food and shelter, sexual behaviors, community economics, patterns of kinship, and family.³

Malinowski went “native” to some extent during his fieldwork with the Trobriand Islanders. **Go-ing native** means to become fully integrated into a cultural group: taking leadership positions and assuming key roles in society; entering into a marriage or spousal contract; exploring sexuality or fully participating in rituals. When

an anthropologist goes native, the anthropologist is personally involved with locals. In *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski suggested that other anthropologists should “grasp the native’s point of view, his relations to life, to realize his vision of his world.”⁴ However, as we will see later in this chapter, Malinowski’s practice of going native presented problems from an ethical point of view. Participant-observation is a method to gather ethnographic data, but going native places both the anthropologist and the culture group at risk by blurring the lines on both sides of the relationship.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEORIES OF CULTURE

Anthropology in Europe

The discipline of cultural anthropology developed somewhat differently in Europe and North America, in particular in the United States, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with each region contributing new dimensions to the concept of culture. Many European anthropologists were particularly interested in questions about how societies were structured and how they remained stable over time. This highlighted emerging recognition that culture and society are not the same. Culture had been defined by Tylor as knowledge, beliefs, and customs, but a society is more than just shared ideas or habits. In every society, people are linked to one another through social institutions such as families, political organizations, and businesses. Anthropologists across Europe often focused their research on understanding the form and function of these social institutions.

European anthropologists developed theories of **functionalism** to explain how social institutions contribute to the organization of

society and the maintenance of social order. Bronislaw Malinowski believed that cultural traditions were developed as a response to specific human needs such as food, comfort, safety, knowledge, reproduction, and economic livelihood. One function of educational institutions like schools, for instance, is to provide knowledge that prepares people to obtain jobs and make contributions to society. Although he preferred the term **structural-functionalism**, the British anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown was also interested in the way that social structures functioned to maintain social stability in a society over time.⁵ He suggested that in many societies it was the family that served as the most important social structure because family relationships determined much about an individual's social, political, and economic relationships and these patterns were repeated from one generation to the next. In a family unit in which the father is the breadwinner and the mother stays home to raise the children, the social and economic roles of both the husband and the wife will be largely defined by their specific responsibilities within the family. If their children grow up to follow the same arrangement, these social roles will be continued in the next generation.

In the twentieth century, functionalist approaches also became popular in North American anthropology, but eventually fell out of favor. One of the biggest critiques of functionalism is that it views cultures as stable and orderly and ignores or cannot explain social change. Functionalism also struggles to explain why a society develops one particular kind of social institution instead of another. Functionalist perspectives did contribute to the development of more sophisticated concepts of culture by establishing the importance of social institutions in holding societies together.

While defining the division between what is cultural and what is social continues to be complex, functionalist theory helped to develop the concept of culture by demonstrating that culture is not just a set of ideas or beliefs, but consists of specific practices and social institutions that give structure to daily life and allow human communities to function.

Anthropology in the United States

During the development of anthropology in North America (Canada, United States, and Mexico), the significant contribution made by the American School of Anthropology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the concept of **cultural relativism**, which is the idea that cultures cannot be objectively understood since all humans see the world through the lens of their own culture. Cultural relativism is different than ethnocentrism because it emphasizes understanding culture from an insider's view. The focus on culture, along with the idea of cultural relativism, distinguished cultural anthropology in the United States from social anthropology in Europe.

The participant-observation method of field-work was a revolutionary change to the practice of anthropology, but at the same time it presented problems that needed to be overcome. The challenge was to move away from ethnocentrism, race stereotypes, and colonial attitudes, and to move forward by encouraging anthropologists to maintain high ethical standards and open minds.

Franz Boas, an American anthropologist, is acknowledged for redirecting American anthropologists away from cultural evolutionism and toward cultural relativism. Boas first studied physical science at the University of Kiel in Germany. Because he was a trained scientist, he was familiar with using empirical

methods as a way to study a subject. Empirical methods are based on evidence that can be tested using observation and experiment.

In 1883, Franz Boas went on a geographical expedition to Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic. *The Central Eskimo* (1888) details his time spent on Baffin Island studying the culture and language of the central Eskimo (Inuit) people. He studied every aspect of their culture such as tools, clothing, and shelters. This study was Boas' first major contribution to the American school of anthropology and convinced him that cultures could only be understood through extensive field research. As he observed on Baffin Island, cultural ideas and practices are shaped through interactions with the natural environment. The cultural traditions of the Inuit were suited for the environment in which they lived. This work led him to promote cultural relativism: the principle that a culture must be understood on its own terms rather than compared to an outsider's standard. This was an important turning point in correcting the challenge of ethnocentrism in ethnographic fieldwork.⁶

Boas is often considered the originator of American anthropology because he trained the first generation of American anthropologists including Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Alfred Kroeber. Using a commitment to cultural relativism as a starting point, these students continued to refine the concept of culture. Ruth Benedict, one of Boas' first female students, used cultural relativism as a starting point for investigating the cultures of the American northwest and southwest. Her best-selling book *Patterns of Culture* (1934) emphasized that culture gives people coherent patterns for thinking and behaving. She argued that culture affects individuals psychologically, shaping individual personality traits and leading the members of a culture to exhibit similar traits such as a tendency toward aggression, or calmness.

Benedict was a professor at Columbia University and in turn greatly influenced her student Margaret Mead, who went on to become one of the most well-known female American cultural anthropologists. Mead was a pioneer in conducting ethnographic

research at a time when the discipline was predominately male. Her 1925 research on adolescent girls on the island of Ta'ū in the Samoan Islands, published as *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), revealed that teenagers in Samoa did not experience the same stress and emotional difficulties as those in the United States. The book was an important contribution to the nature versus nurture debate, providing an argument that learned cultural roles were more important than biology. The book also reinforced the idea that individual emotions and personality traits are **products of culture**.

Alfred Louis Kroeber, another student of Boas, also shared the commitment to field re-search and cultural relativism, but Kroeber was particularly interested in how cultures change over time and influence one another. Through publications like *The Nature of Culture* (1952), Kroeber examined the historical processes that led cultures to emerge as distinct configurations as well as the way cultures could become more similar through the spread or diffusion of cultural traits. Kroeber was also interested in language and the role it plays in transmitting culture. He devoted much of his career to studying Native American languages in an attempt to document these languages before they disappeared.

Anthropologists in the United States have used cultural relativism to add depth to the concept of culture in several ways. Tylor had defined culture as including knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, capabilities and habits. Boas and his students added to this definition by emphasizing the importance of **enculturation**, the process of learning culture, in the lives of individuals. Benedict, Mead, and others established that through enculturation culture shapes individual identity, self-awareness, and emotions in fundamental ways. They also emphasized the need for **holism**, approaches to research that considered the entire context of a society including its history.

Kroeber and others also established the importance of language

as an element of culture and documented the ways in which language was used to communicate complex ideas. By the late twentieth century, new approaches to symbolic anthropology put language at the center of analysis. Later on, Clifford Geertz, the founding member of postmodernist anthropology, noted in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) that culture should not be seen as something that was “locked inside people’s heads.” Instead, culture was publicly communicated through speech and other behaviors. **Culture**, he concluded, is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life.”⁷ This definition, which continues to be influential today, reflects the influence of many earlier efforts to refine the concept of culture in American anthropology.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN TRUTH TELLING

As anthropologists developed more sophisticated concepts of culture, they also gained a greater understanding of the ethical challenges associated with anthropological research. Because participant-observation fieldwork brings anthropologists into close relationships with the people they study, many complicated issues can arise. Cultural relativism is a perspective that encourages anthropologists to show respect to members of other cultures, but it was not until after World War II that the profession of anthropology recognized a need to develop formal standards of professional conduct.

The Nuremberg trials, which began in 1946 in Nuremberg, Germany, were conducted under the direction of France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States, prosecuted members of the Nazi regime for war crimes. In addition to military and political figures, physicians and scientists were also prosecuted for unethical

human experimentation and mass murder. The trials demonstrated that physicians and other scientists could be dangerous if they used their skills for abusive or exploitative goals. The [Nuremberg Code](#) that emerged from the trials is considered a landmark document in medical and research ethics. It established principles for the ethical treatment of the human subjects involved in any medical or scientific research.

Because of events such as the Nuremberg trials, many universities embraced research ethical guidelines for the treatment of human subjects. Anthropologists and students who work in universities where these guidelines exist are obliged to follow these rules. The [American Anthropological Association](#) (AAA), along with many anthropology organizations in other countries, developed codes of ethics describing specific expectations for anthropologists engaged in research in a variety of settings. The principles in the AAA code of ethics include: do no harm; be open and honest regarding your work; obtain informed consent and necessary permissions; ensure the vulnerable populations in every study are protected from competing ethical obligations; make your results accessible; protect and preserve your records; and maintain respectful and ethical professional relationships. These principles sound simple, but can be complicated in practice.

Bronislaw Malinowski

The career of Bronislaw Malinowski provides an example of how investigations of culture can lead anthropologists into difficult ethical areas. As discussed above, Malinowski is widely regarded as a leading figure in the history of anthropology. He initiated the practice of participant-observation fieldwork and published several highly regarded books including *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Following his death, the private diary he kept while conducting fieldwork was discovered and published as *A Diary in*

the Strictest Sense of the Term (1967). The diary described Malinowski's feelings of loneliness and isolation, but also included a great deal of information about his sexual fantasies as well his some insensitive and contemptuous opinions about the Trobriand Islanders. The diary provided valuable insight into the mind of an important ethnographer, but also raised questions about the extent to which his personal feelings, including bias and racism, were reflected in his official conclusions.

Most anthropologists keep diaries or daily notes as a means of keeping track of the research project, but these records are almost never made public. Because Malinowski's diary was published after his death, he could not explain why he wrote what he did, or assess the extent to which he was able to separate the personal from the professional. Which of these books best reflects the truth about Malinowski's interaction with the Trobriand Islanders? This rare insight into the private life of a field researcher demonstrates that even when anthropologists are acting within the boundaries of professional ethics, they still struggle to set aside their own ethnocentric attitudes and prejudices.

Napoleon Chagnon

A more serious and complicated incident concerned research conducted among the Yanomami, an indigenous group living in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil and Venezuela. Starting in the 1960s, the anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon and James Neel, a geneticist, carried out research among the Yanomami. Neel was interested in studying the effects of radiation released by nuclear explosions on people living in remote areas. Chagnon was investigating theories about the role of violence in Yanomami society. In 2000, an American journalist, Patrick Tierney, published a book about Chagnon and Neel's research: *Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon*. The book contained

numerous stunning allegations, including a claim that the pair had deliberately infected the Yanomami with measles, starting an epidemic that killed thousands of people. The book also claimed that Neel had conducted medical experiments **without the consent of the Yanomami and that Chagnon had deliberately created conflicts between Yanomami groups so he could study the resulting violence.**

These allegations were brought to the attention of the American Anthropological Association, and a number of inquiries were eventually conducted. James Neel was deceased, but Napoleon Chagnon steadfastly denied the allegations. In 2002, the AAA issued their report; Chagnon was judged to have misrepresented the violent nature of Yanomami culture in ways that caused them harm and to have failed to obtain proper consent for his research. However, Chagnon continued to reject these conclusions and complained that the process used to evaluate the evidence was unfair. In 2005, the AAA rescinded its own conclusion, citing problems with the investigation process. The results of several years of inquiry into the situation satisfied few people. Chagnon was not definitively pronounced guilty, nor was he exonerated. Years later, debate over this episode continues.⁸ The controversy demonstrates the extent to which truth can be elusive in anthropological inquiry. Although anthropologists should not be storytellers in the sense that they deliberately create fictions, differences in perspective and theoretical orientation create unavoidable differences in the way anthropologists interpret the same situation. Anthropologists must try to use their toolkit of theory and methods to ensure that the stories they tell are truthful and represent the voice of the people being studied using an ethical approach.

BACK IN THE COFFEE SHOP

This chapter has looked at some historic turning points in the way anthropologists have defined culture. There is not one true, absolute definition of culture. Anthropologists respect traditions such as language; the development of self, especially from infancy to adulthood; kinship; and the structure of the social unit, or the strata of a person within their class structure; marriage, families, and rites of passage; systems of belief; and ritual. However, anthropologists also look at change and the impact it has on those traditions.

With globalization moving at a dramatic pace, and change unfolding daily, how will emerging trends redefine the culture concept? For example, social media and the Internet connect the world and have created new languages, relationships, and an online culture without borders. This leads to the question: is digital, or cyber anthropology the future? Is the study of online cultures, which are encountered largely through reading text, considered armchair or off the veranda research? Is the cyber world a real or virtual culture? In some ways, addressing online cultures takes anthropology back to its roots as anthropologists can explore new worlds without leaving home. At the same time, cyberspaces and new technologies allow people to see, hear, and communicate with others around the world in real time.

Back in the coffee shop, where we spent time with Bob, we discovered that he hoped to keep familiar aspects of his own culture, traditions such as language, social structure, and unique expressions of values, alive. The question, what is culture, caused us to reflect on our own understandings of the cultural self and *the cultural Other*, and on the importance of self and cultural awareness.

Emily

My cultural self has evolved from the first customary traditions of my childhood, yet my life with the Inuit caused me to consider that I have similar values and community traits as my friends in the North. My childhood was focused on caring, acceptance, and working together to achieve the necessities of life. Life on the land with the Inuit was no different, and throughout the years, I have seen how much we are the same, just living in different locations and circumstances. My anthropological training has enriched my life experiences by teaching me to enjoy the world and its peoples. I have also experienced being *the cultural Other* when working in the field, and this has always reminded me that *the cultural self* and *the cultural Other* will always be in conflict with each other on both sides of the experience.

Priscilla

Living with different indigenous tribes in Kenya gave me a chance to learn how communities maintain their traditional culture and ways of living. I come from a Portuguese- Canadian family that has kept strong ties to the culture and religion of our ancestors. Portuguese people believe storytelling is a way to keep one's traditions, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge, and language alive. When I lived in Nairobi Province, Kenya, I discovered that people there had the same point of view. I found it odd that people still define their identities by their cultural history. What I have learned by conducting cultural fieldwork is that the meanings of culture not only vary from one group to another, but that all human societies define themselves through culture.

Our Final Reflection

Bob took us on a journey to understand what is at the heart of the culture concept. Clearly, the culture concept does not follow a straight line. Scholars, storytellers, and the people one meets in everyday life have something to say about the components of culture. The story that emerges from different voices brings insight into what it is to be human. Defining the culture concept is like put-ting together a puzzle with many pieces. The puzzle of culture concepts is almost complete, but it is not finished...yet.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the armchair anthropology and the off the veranda approaches differ as methods to study culture? What can be learned about a culture by experiencing it in person that cannot be learned from reading about it?
2. Why is the concept of culture difficult to define? What do you think are the most important elements of culture?
3. Why is it difficult to separate the “social” from the “cultural”? Do you think this is an important distinction?
4. In the twenty-first century, people have much greater contact with members of other cultures than they did in the past. Which topics or concerns should be priorities for future studies of culture?

Glossary

Armchair anthropology: an early and discredited method of anthropological research that did not involve direct contact with the people studied.

Cultural determinism: the idea that behavioral differences are a result of cultural not racial or genetic causes.

Cultural evolutionism: a theory popular in nineteenth century anthropology suggesting that societies evolved through stages from simple to advanced. This theory was later shown to be incorrect.

Cultural relativism: the idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their own culture and not our own.

Enculturation: the process of learning the characteristics and expectations of a culture or group

Ethnocentrism: the tendency to view one's own culture as most important and correct and as the stick by which to measure all other cultures.

Functionalism: an approach to anthropology developed in British anthropology that emphasized the way that parts of a society work together to support the functioning of the whole.

Going native: becoming fully integrated into a cultural group through acts such as taking a leadership position, assuming key roles in society, entering into marriage, or

other behaviors that incorporate an anthropologist into the society he or she is studying.

Holism: taking a broad view of the historical, environmental, and cultural foundations of behavior.

Kinship: blood ties, common ancestry, and social relationships that form families within human groups.

Participant observation: a type of observation in which the anthropologist observes while participating in the same activities in which her informants are engaged.

Salvage anthropology: activities such as gathering artifacts, or recording cultural rituals with the belief that a culture is about to disappear.

Structuralism: an approach to anthropology that focuses on the ways in which the customs or social institutions in a culture contribute to the organization of society and the maintenance of social order.

The Other: a term that has been used to describe people whose customs, beliefs, or behaviors are “different” from one’s own

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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geography and cultural impact of tuberculosis from 1930 to 1972. From 2008 to 2015, her work in cultural resource management took her to the Canadian High Arctic archipelago to create a museum dedicated to the Defense Research Science Era at Parks Canada, Quttinirpaaq National Park on Ellesmere Island. When she is not jumping into Twin Otter aircraft for remote field camps, she is exploring cultural aspects of environmental health and religious pilgrimage throughout Mexico.

Priscilla Medeiros is a PhD candidate and instructor at McMaster University, Canada, and is defending her thesis in fall 2017. Her primary research interests center on the anthropology of health. This involves studying the biocultural dimensions of medicine, with a particular emphasis on the history and development of public health in developed countries, sickness and inequalities, and gender relationships. Priscilla began her community-based work in prevention, care, and support of people living with HIV and AIDS seven years ago in Nairobi Province, Kenya, as part of her master's degree. Her current research focuses on the absence of gender-specific and culturally appropriate HIV prevention initiatives and programs for women in the Maritime Provinces, Canada, and is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. When she is not working in rural areas or teaching in the classroom, Priscilla is traveling to exotic destinations to learn to prepare local cuisine, speak foreign languages, and explore the wonders of the world. In fact, she is the real-life Indiana Jane of anthropology when it comes to adventures in the field and has many great stories to share.

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NOTES

1. Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Customs* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1871), preface.

2. Lewis Henry Morgan was one anthropologist who proposed an evolutionary framework based on these terms in his book *Ancient Society* (New York: Henry Holt, 1877).

3. The film *Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda*, (Films Media Group, 1986) further describes Malinowski's research practices.

4. Bronislaw Malinowski. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1922), 290.

5. For more on this topic see Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School* (New York: Routledge, 1983) and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London: Cohen and West, 1952).

6. Boas' attitudes about cultural relativism were influenced by his experiences in the Canadian Arctic as he struggled to survive in a natural environment foreign to his own prior experience. His private diary and letters record the evolution of his thinking about what it means to be "civilized." In a letter to his fiancé, he wrote: "I often ask myself what advantages our 'good society' possesses over that of the 'savages' and find, the more I see of their customs, that we have no right to look down upon them... We have no right to blame them for their forms and superstitions which may seem ridiculous to us. We 'highly educated people' are much worse, relatively speaking." The entire letter can be read in George Stocking, ed. *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 33.

7. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, Geertz 1973), 89.

8. For more information about the controversy, see Thomas Gregor and Daniel Gross, "Guilt by Association: The Culture of Accusation and the American Anthropological Associations Investigation of Darkness in El Dorado." *American Anthropologist* 106 4 (2004):687-698 and Robert Borofsky, *Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and What We Can Learn From It* (Berkeley: University California Press, 2005). Napoleon Chagnon has written his rebuttal in *Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes—The Yanomamo and the Anthropologists* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

13. Chapter 2: Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology

Learning Objectives

- Discuss what is unique about ethnographic fieldwork and how it emerged as a key strategy in anthropology.
- Explain how traditional approaches to ethnographic fieldwork contrast with contemporary approaches.
- Identify some of the contemporary ethnographic fieldwork techniques and perspectives.
- Discuss some of the ethical considerations in doing anthropological fieldwork.
- Summarize how anthropologists transform their fieldwork data into a story that communicates meaning.

Click [here](#) for full text and images of *Chapter 2: Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology*

FINDING THE FIELD

My first experience with fieldwork as a student anthropologist

took place in a small **indigenous** community in [northeastern Brazil](#) studying the Jenipapo-Kanindé of *La-goa Encantada* (Enchanted Lake). I had planned to conduct an independent research project on **land tenure** among members of the indigenous tribe and had gotten permission to spend several months with the community. My Brazilian host family arranged for a relative to drive me to the rural community on the back of his motorcycle. After several hours navigating a series of bumpy roads in blazing equatorial heat, I was relieved to arrive at the edge of the reservation. He cut the motor and I removed my heavy backpack from my tired, sweaty back. Upon hearing us arrive, first children and then adults slowly and shyly began to approach us. I greeted the curious onlookers and briefly explained who I was. As a group of children ran to fetch the *cacique* (the chief/political leader), I began to explain my research agenda to several of the men who had gathered. I mentioned that I was interested in learning about how the tribe negotiated land use rights without any private land ownership. After hearing me use the colloquial term “*índio*” (Indian), a man who turned out to be the *cacique*’s cousin came forward and said to me, “Well, your work is going to be difficult because there are no Indians here; we are only Brazilians.” Then, abruptly, another man angrily replied to him, stating firmly that, in fact, they were Indians because the community was on an Indian reservation and the Brazilian government had recognized them as an indigenous tribe. A few women then entered the rapid-fire discussion. I took a step back, surprised by the intensity of my first interaction in the community. The debate subsided once the *cacique* arrived, but it left a strong impression in my mind. Eventually, I discarded my original research plan to focus instead on this disagreement within the community about who they were and were not. In anthropology, this type of conflict in beliefs is known as **contested identity**.

I soon learned that many among the Jenipapo-Kanindé did not embrace the Indian identity label. The tribe members were all

monolingual Portuguese-speakers who long ago had lost their original language and many of their traditions. Beginning in the 1980s, several local researchers had conducted studies in the community and had concluded that the community had indigenous origins. Those researchers lobbied on the community's behalf for official state and federal status as an indigenous reservation, and in 1997 the Funai (*Fundação Nacional do Índio* or National Foundation for the Indian) visited the community and agreed to officially demarcate the land as an indigenous reservation. More than 20 years later, the community is still waiting for that demarcation. Some in the community embraced indigenous status because it came with a number of benefits. The state (Ceará), using partial funding from Funai, built a new road to improve access to the community. The government also constructed an elementary school and a common well and installed new electric lines. Despite those gains, some members of the community did not embrace indigenous status because being considered Indian had a pejorative connotation in Brazil. Many felt that the label stigmatized them by associating them with a poor and marginalized class of Brazilians. Others resisted the label because of long-standing family and interpersonal conflicts in the community.

Fieldwork is the most important method by which cultural anthropologists gather data to answer their research questions. While interacting on a daily basis with a group of people, cultural anthropologists document their observations and perceptions and adjust the focus of their research as needed. They typically spend a few months to a few years living among the people they are studying.

The “field” can be anywhere the people are—a village in highland Papua New Guinea or a supermarket in downtown Minneapolis. Just as marine biologists spend time in the ocean to learn about the behavior of marine animals and geologists travel to a mountain range to observe rock

formations, anthropologists go to places where people are.

Doing Anthropology:

In this short film, Stefan Helmreich, Erica James, and Heather Paxson, three members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Anthropology Department, [talk about their current work and the process of doing fieldwork](#).

Making the Strange Familiar and the Familiar Strange

The cultural anthropologist's goal during fieldwork is to describe a group of people to others in a way that makes strange or unusual features of the culture seem familiar and familiar traits seem extraordinary. The point is to help people think in new ways about aspects of their own culture by comparing them with other cultures. The research anthropologist Margaret Mead describes in her monograph [Coming of Age in Samoa](#) (1928) is a famous example of this. In 1925, Mead went to American Samoa, where she conducted ethnographic research on adolescent girls and their experiences with sexuality and growing up. Mead's mentor, anthropologist Franz Boas, was a strong proponent of cultural determinism, the idea that one's cultural upbringing and social environment, rather than one's biology, primarily determine behavior. Boas encouraged Mead to travel to Samoa to study adolescent behavior there and to compare their culture and behavior with that of adolescents in the United States to lend support to his hypothesis. In the foreword of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Boas described what he saw as the key insight of her research: "The results of her painstaking investigation confirm the suspicion long held by anthropologists that much of what we ascribe to human nature is no more than a reaction to the restraints put upon us by our civilization."¹

Mead studied 25 young women in three villages in Samoa and found that the stress, anxiety, and turmoil of American adolescence were not found among Samoan youth. Rather, young women in Samoa experienced a smooth transition to adulthood with relatively little stress or difficulty. She documented instances of socially

accepted sexual experimentation, lack of sexual jealousy and rape, and a general sense of casualness that marked Samoan adolescence. *Coming of Age in Samoa* quickly became popular, launching Mead's career as one of the most well-known anthropologists in the United States and perhaps the world. The book encouraged American readers to reconsider their own cultural assumptions about what adolescence in the United States should be like, particularly in terms of the sexual repression and turmoil that seemed to characterize the teenage experience in mid-twentieth century America. Through her analysis of the differences between Samoan and American society, Mead also persuasively called for changes in education and parenting for U.S. children and adolescents.

Another classic example of a style of anthropological writing that attempted to make the familiar strange and encouraged readers to consider their own cultures in a different way is Horace Miner's [*Body Ritual among the Nacirema*](#) (1956). The essay described oral hygiene practices of the Nacirema ("American" spelled backward) in a way that, to cultural insiders, sounded extreme, exaggerated, and out of context. He presented the Nacirema as if they were a little-known cultural group with strange, exotic practices. Miner wrote the essay during an era in which anthropologists were just beginning to expand their focus beyond small-scale traditional societies far from home to large-scale post-industrial societies such as the United States. He wrote the essay primarily as a satire of how anthropologists often wrote about "the Other" in ways that made other cultures seem exotic and glossed over features that the Other had in common with the anthropologist's culture. The essay also challenged U.S. readers in general and anthropologists in particular to think differently about their own cultures and re-examine their cultural assumptions about what is "normal."

Emic and Etic Perspectives

When anthropologists conduct fieldwork, they gather data. An important tool for gathering anthropological data is **ethnography**—the in-depth study of everyday practices and lives of a people. Ethnography produces a detailed description of the studied group at a particular time and location, also known as a “**thick description**,” a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1973 book *The Interpretation of Cultures* to describe this type of research and writing. A thick description explains not only the behavior or cultural event in question but also the context in which it occurs and anthropological interpretations of it. Such descriptions help readers better understand the internal logic of why people in a culture behave as they do and why the behaviors are meaningful to them. This is important because understanding the attitudes, perspectives, and motivations of cultural insiders is at the heart of anthropology.

Ethnographers gather data from many different sources. One source is the anthropologist’s own observations and thoughts. Ethnographers keep field notebooks that document their ideas and reflections as well as what they do and observe when participating in activities with the people they are studying, a research technique known as **participant observation**. Other sources of data include informal conversations and more-formal interviews that are recorded and transcribed. They also collect documents such as letters, photographs, artifacts, public records, books, and reports.

Different types of data produce different kinds of ethnographic descriptions, which also vary in terms of perspective—from the perspective of the studied culture (**emic**) or from the perspective of the observer (**etic**). Emic perspectives refer to descriptions of behaviors and beliefs in terms that are meaningful to people who belong to a specific culture, e.g., how people perceive and categorize their culture and experiences, why people believe they do what they do, how they imagine and explain things. To uncover emic perspectives, ethnographers talk to people, observe what they do, and participate in their daily activities with them. Emic

perspectives are essential for anthropologists' efforts to obtain a detailed understanding of a culture and to avoid interpreting others through their own cultural beliefs.

Etic perspectives refer to explanations for behavior made by an outside observer in ways that are meaningful to the observer. For an anthropologist, etic descriptions typically arise from conversations between the ethnographer and the anthropological community. These explanations tend to be based in science and are informed by historical, political, and economic studies and other types of research. The etic approach acknowledges that members of a culture are unlikely to view the things they do as noteworthy or unusual. They cannot easily stand back and view their own behavior objectively or from another perspective. For example, you may have never thought twice about the way you brush your teeth and the practice of going to the dentist or how you experienced your teenage years. For you, these parts of your culture are so normal and "natural" you probably would never consider **questioning them**. An **emic lens** gives us an **alternative perspective that is essential when constructing a comprehensive view of a people**.

Most often, ethnographers include both emic and etic perspectives in their research and writing. They first uncover a studied people's understanding of what they do and why and then develop additional explanations for the behavior based on anthropological theory and analysis. Both perspectives are important, and it can be challenging to move back and forth between the two. Nevertheless, that is exactly what good ethnographers must do.

TRADITIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES **Early Armchair Anthropology**

Before ethnography was a fully developed research method, anthropologists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used techniques that were much less reliable to gather data about people throughout the world. From the comfort of their homes and library armchairs, early scholars collected others' travel accounts

and used them to come to conclusions about far-flung cultures and peoples. The reports typically came from missionaries, colonists, adventurers, and business travelers and were often incomplete, inaccurate, and/or misleading, exaggerated or omitted important information, and romanticized the culture.

Early scholars such as Wilhelm Schmidt and Sir E. B. Tylor sifted through artifacts and stories brought back by travelers or missionaries and selected the ones that best fit their frequently pre-conceived ideas about the peoples involved. By relying on this flawed data, they often drew inaccurate or even racist conclusions. They had no way of knowing how accurate the information was and no way to understand the full context in which it was gathered.

The work of Sir James Frazer (1854–1941) provides a good example of the problems associated with such anthropological endeavors. Frazer was a Scottish social anthropologist who was interested in myths and religions around the world. He read historical documents and religious texts found in libraries and book collections. He also sent questionnaires to missionaries and colonists in various parts of the world asking them about the people with whom they were in contact. He then used the information to draw sweeping conclusions about human belief systems. In his most famous book, [*The Golden Bough*](#), he described similarities and differences in magical and religious practices around the world and concluded that human beliefs progressed through three stages: from primitive magic to religion and from religion to science. This theory implied that some people were less evolved and more primitive than others. Of course, contemporary anthropologists do not view any people as less evolved than another. Instead, anthropologists today seek to uncover the historical, political, and cultural reasons behind peoples' behaviors rather than assuming that one culture or society is more advanced than another.

The main problem with Frazer's conclusion can be traced back to the fact that he did not do any research himself and none of the information he relied on was collected by an anthropologist. He never spent time with the people he was researching. He never

observed the religious ceremonies he wrote about and certainly never participated in them. Had he done so, he might have been able to appreciate that all human groups at the time (and now) were equally pragmatic, thoughtful, intelligent, logical, and “evolved.” He might also have appreciated the fact that how and why information is gathered affects the quality of the information. For instance, if a colonial administrator offered to pay people for their stories, some of the storytellers might have exaggerated or even made up stories for financial gain. If a Christian missionary asked recently converted parishioners to describe their religious practices, they likely would have omitted non-Christian practices and beliefs to avoid disapproval and maintain their positions in the church. A male traveler who attempted to document rite-of-passage traditions in a culture that prohibited men from asking such questions of women would generate data that could erroneously suggest that women did not participate in such activities. All of these examples illustrate the pitfalls of armchair anthropology.

Off the Veranda

Fortunately, the reign of armchair anthropology was brief. Around the turn of the twentieth century, anthropologists trained in the natural sciences began to reimagine what a science of humanity should look like and how social scientists ought to go about studying cultural groups. Some of those anthropologists insisted that one should at least spend significant time actually observing and talking to the people studied. Early ethnographers such as Franz Boas and Alfred Cort Haddon typically traveled to the remote locations where the people in question lived and spent a few weeks to a few months there. They sought out a local Western host who was familiar with the people and the area (such as a colonial official, missionary, or businessman) and found accommodations through them. Although

they did at times venture into the community without a guide, they generally did not spend significant time with the local people. Thus, their observations were primarily conducted from the relative comfort and safety of a porch—from their *verandas*.

Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's (1884–1942) pioneering method of participant observation fundamentally changed the relationship between ethnographers and the people under study. In 1914, he travelled to the Trobriand Islands and ended up spending nearly four years conducting fieldwork among the people there. In the process, he developed a rigorous set of detailed ethnographic techniques he viewed as best-suited to gathering accurate and comprehensive ethnographic data. One of the hallmarks of his method was that it required the researcher to get off the veranda to interact with and even live among the natives. In a well-known book about his research, [*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*](#) (1922), Malinowski described his research techniques and the role they played in his analysis of the Kula ceremony, an exchange of coral armbands and trinkets among members of the social elite. He concluded that the ceremonies were at the center of Trobriand life and represented the culmination of an elaborate multi-year venture called the Kula Ring that involved dangerous expeditions and careful planning. Ultimately, the key to his discovering the importance of the ceremony was that he not only observed the Kula Ring but also participated in it. This technique of participant observation is central to anthropological research today. Malinowski did more than just observe people from afar; he actively interacted with them and participated in their daily activities. And unlike early anthropologists who worked through translators, Malinowski learned the native language, which allowed him to immerse himself in the culture. He carefully documented all of his observations and

thoughts. Malinowski's techniques are now central components of ethnographic fieldwork.

Salvage Ethnography

Despite Malinowski's tremendous contributions to ethnography and anthropology generally, he was nevertheless a man of his time. A common view in the first half of the twentieth century was that many "primitive" cultures were quickly disappearing and features of those cultures needed to be preserved (salvaged) before they were lost. Anthropologists such as Malinowski, Franz Boas, and many of their students sought to document, photograph, and otherwise preserve cultural traditions in "dying" cultures among groups such as Native Americans and other traditional societies experiencing rapid change due to modernization, dislocation, and contact with outside groups. They also collected cultural artifacts, removing property from the communities and placing it in museums and private collections.

Others who were not formally trained in the sciences or in anthropology also participated in salvage activities. For instance, in his "documentary" film [*Nanook of the North*](#) (1922), Robery Flaherty filmed the life of an Inuit man named Nanook and his family in the Canadian Arctic. In an effort to preserve on film what many believed was a traditional way of life soon to be lost, Flaherty took considerable artistic license to represent the culture as he imagined it was in the past, including staging certain scenes and asking the Inuit men to use spears instead of rifles to make the film seem more "authentic."

Photographers and artists have likewise attempted to capture and preserve traditional indigenous life in paintings and photographs. Renowned painter George Catlin (1796–1872), for example,

is known to have embellished scenes or painted them in ways that glossed over the difficult reality that native people in the nineteenth century were actively persecuted by the government, displaced from their lands, and forced into unsustainable lifestyles that led to starvation and warfare. Photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952)

has been criticized for reinforcing romanticized images of “authentic” native scenes. In particular, he is accused of having perpetuated the problematic idea of the **noble savage** and, in the process, distracted attention from the serious social, political, and economic problems faced by native people.²

Today, anthropologists recognize that human cultures constantly change as people respond to so-cial, political, economic, and other external and internal influences—that there is no moment when a culture is more authentic or more primitive. They acknowledge that culture is fluid and cannot be treated as isolated in time and space. Just as we should not portray people as primitive vestiges of an earlier stage of human development, we also should not romanticize a culture or idealize another’s suffering as more authentic or natural.

Holism

In the throes of salvage ethnography, anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century ac-tively documented anything and everything they could about the cultures they viewed as endangered. They collected artifacts, excavated ancient sites, wrote dictionaries of non-written languages, and documented cultural traditions, stories, and beliefs. In the United States, those efforts developed into what is known today as the four-field approach or simply as general anthropology. This approach **integrates multiple scientific and humanistic perspectives into a single comprehensive discipline com-posed of cultural, archaeological, biological/physical, and linguistic anthropology.**

A hallmark of the four-field approach is its holistic perspective: anthropologists are interested in studying everything that makes us human. Thus, they use multiple approaches to understanding hu-mans throughout time and throughout the world. They also acknowledge that to understand people fully one cannot look solely at biology, culture, history, or language; rather, all of those things must be considered. The interrelationships between the four

subfields of anthropology are important for many anthropologists today.

Linguistic anthropologists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, for instance, examined interrelationships between culture, language, and cognition. They argued that the language one speaks plays a critical role in determining how one thinks, particularly in terms of understanding time, space, and matter. They proposed that people who speak different languages view the world differently as a result. In a well-known example, Whorf contrasted the Hopi and English languages. Because verbs in Hopi contained no future or past tenses, Whorf argued that Hopi-speakers understand time in a fundamentally different way than English-speakers. An observation by an English-speaker would focus on the difference in time while an observation by a Hopi-speaker would focus on validity.³

In another example, Peter Gordon spent many years living among the Pirahã tribe of Brazil learning their language and culture. He noted that the Pirahã have only three words for numbers: one, two, and many. He also observed that they found it difficult to remember quantities and numbers beyond three even after learning the Portuguese words for such numbers.⁴

Pirahã Numerical Terms:

In this short film, linguist Daniel Everett [illustrates Pirahã numerical terms](#).

Although some scholars have criticized Whorf and Gordon's conclusions as overly deterministic, their work certainly illustrates the presence of a relationship between language and thought and between cultural and biological influences. Words may not force people to think a particular way, but they can influence our thought processes and how we view the world around us. The holistic perspective of anthropology helps us to appreciate that our culture, language, and physical and

cognitive capacities for language are interrelated in complex ways.

ETHNOGRAPHY TODAY

Anthropology's Distinctive Research Strategy

Ethnography is cultural anthropology's distinctive research strategy. It was originally developed by anthropologists to study small-scale, relatively isolated cultural groups. Typically, those groups had relatively simple economies and technologies and limited access to larger, more technologically advanced societies. Early ethnographers sought to understand the entirety of a particular culture. They spent months to years living in the community, and in that time, they documented in great detail every dimension of people's lives, including their language, subsistence strategies, political systems, formation of families and marriages, and religious beliefs. This was important because it helped researchers appreciate the interconnectedness of all dimensions of social life. The key to the success of this ethnographic approach was not only to spend considerable time observing people in their home settings engaged in day-to-day activities but also to participate in those activities. Participation informed an emic perspective of the culture, something that had been missing in earlier social science research.

Because of how useful the ethnographic research strategy is in developing an emic perspective, it has been adopted by many other disciplines including sociology, education, psychology, and political science. Education researchers, for example, use ethnography to study children in classrooms to identify their learning strategies and how they understand and make sense of learning experiences. Sociologists use ethnography to study emerging social movements and how participants in such movements stay motivated and connected despite their sometimes-conflicting goals.

New Sites for Ethnographic Fieldwork

Like the cultures and peoples studied, anthropology and ethnography are evolving. Field sites for ethnographic research are

no longer exclusively located in far-flung, isolated, non-industrialized societies. Increasingly, anthropologists are conducting ethnographic research in complex, technologically advanced societies such as the United States and in urban environments elsewhere in the world. For instance, my doctoral research took place in the United States. I studied identity formation among **undocumented** Mexican immigrant college students in Minnesota. Because some of my informants were living in Mexico when my fieldwork ended, I also traveled to Veracruz, Mexico, and spent time conducting research there. Often, anthropologists who study migration, **diasporas**, and people in motion must conduct research in multiple locations. This is known as multi-sited ethnography.

Anthropologists use ethnography to study people wherever they are and however they interact with others. Think of the many ways you ordinarily interact with your friends, family, professors, and boss. Is it all face-to-face communication or do you sometimes use text messages to chat with your friends? Do you also sometimes email your professor to ask for clarification on an assignment and then call your boss to discuss your schedule? Do you share funny videos with others on Facebook and then later make a Skype video call to a relative? These new technological “sites” of human interaction are fascinating to many ethnographers and have expanded the definition of fieldwork.

Problem-oriented Research

In the early years, ethnographers were interested in exploring the entirety of a culture. Taking an **inductive** approach, they generally were not concerned about arriving with a relatively narrow pre-defined research topic. Instead, the goal was to explore the people, their culture, and their homelands and what had previously been written about them. The focus of the study was allowed to emerge gradually during their time in the field. Often, this approach to ethnography resulted in rather general ethnographic descriptions.

Today, anthropologists are increasingly taking a more **deductive**

approach to ethnographic re-search. Rather than arriving at the field site with only general ideas about the goals of the study, they tend to select a particular problem before arriving and then let that problem guide their research. In my case, I was interested in how undocumented Mexican immigrant youth in Minnesota formed a sense of identity while living in a society that used a variety of dehumanizing labels such as illegal and alien to refer to them. That was my research “problem,” and it oriented and guided my study from beginning to end. I did not document every dimension of my informants’ lives; instead, I focused on the things most closely related to my research problem.

Quantitative Methods

Increasingly, cultural anthropologists are using quantitative research methods to complement qualitative approaches. **Qualitative** research in anthropology aims to comprehensively describe human behavior and the contexts in which it occurs while **quantitative** research seeks patterns in numerical data that can explain aspects of human behavior. Quantitative patterns can be gleaned from statistical analyses, maps, charts, graphs, and textual descriptions. Surveys are a common quantitative technique that usually involves closed-ended questions in which respondents select their responses from a list of pre-defined choices such as their degree of agreement or disagreement, multiple-choice answers, and rankings of items. While surveys usually lack the sort of contextual detail associated with qualitative research, they tend to be relatively easy to code numerically and, as a result, can be easier to analyze than qualitative data. Surveys are also useful for gathering specific data points within a large population, something that is challenging to do with many qualitative techniques.

Anthropological nutritional analysis is an area of research that commonly relies on collecting quantitative data. Nutritional anthropologists explore how factors such as culture, the environment, and economic and political systems interplay to impact human health and nutrition. They may count the calories people consume and expend, document patterns of food

consumption, measure body weight and body mass, and test for the presence of parasite infections or nutritional deficiencies. In her ethnography *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa* (1993), Katherine Dettwyler described how she conducted nutritional research in Mali, which involved weighing, measuring, and testing her research subjects to collect a variety of quantitative data to help her understand the causes and consequences of child malnutrition.

Mixed Methods

In recent years, anthropologists have begun to combine ethnography with other types of research methods. These mixed-method approaches integrate qualitative and quantitative evidence to provide a more comprehensive analysis. For instance, anthropologists can combine ethnographic data with questionnaires, statistical data, and a media analysis. Anthropologist Leo Chavez used mixed methods to conduct the research for his book *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (2008). He started with a problem: how has citizenship been discussed as an identity marker in the mainstream media in the United States, especially among those labeled as Latinos. He then looked for a variety of types of data and relied on ethnographic case studies and on quantitative data from surveys and questionnaires. Chavez also analyzed a series of visual images from photographs, magazine covers, and cartoons that depicted Latinos to explore how they are represented in the American mainstream.

Mixed methods can be particularly useful when conducting problem-oriented research on complex, technologically advanced societies such as the United States. Detailed statistical and quantitative data are often available for those types of societies.

Additionally, the general population is usually literate and somewhat comfortable with the idea of filling out a questionnaire.

ETHNOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES AND PERSPECTIVES Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

The guiding philosophy of modern anthropology is **cultural relativism**—the idea that we should seek to understand another person’s beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their culture rather than our own. Anthropologists do not judge other cultures based on their values nor view other cultural ways of doing things as inferior. Instead, anthropologists seek to understand people’s beliefs within the system they have for explaining things.

Cultural relativism is an important methodological consideration when conducting research. In the field, anthropologists must temporarily suspend their own value, moral, and esthetic judgments and seek to understand and respect the values, morals, and esthetics of the other culture on their terms. This can be a challenging task, particularly when a culture is significantly different from the one in which they were raised.

During my first field experience in Brazil, I learned firsthand how challenging cultural relativism could be. Preferences for physical proximity and comfort talking about one’s body are among the first differences likely to be noticed by U.S. visitors to Brazil. Compared to Americans, Brazilians generally are much more comfortable standing close, touching, holding hands, and even smelling one another and often discuss each other’s bodies. Children and adults commonly refer to each other using playful nicknames that refer to their body size, body shape, or skin color. Neighbors and even strangers frequently stopped me on the street to comment on the color of my skin (It concerned some as being overly pale or pink—Was I ill? Was I sunburned?), the texture of my hair (How did I get it so smooth? Did I straighten my hair?), and my body size and shape (“You have a nice bust, but if you lost a little weight around the middle you would be even more attractive!”).

During my first few months in Brazil, I had to remind myself constantly that these comments were not rude, disrespectful, or

inappropriate as I would have perceived them to be in the United States. On the contrary, it was one of the ways that people showed affection toward me. From a culturally relativistic perspective, the comments demonstrated that they cared about me, were concerned with my well-being, and wanted me to be part of the community. Had I not taken a culturally relativistic view at the outset and instead judged the actions based on my cultural perspective, I would have been continually frustrated and likely would have confused and offended people in the community. And offending your informants and the rest of the community certainly is not conducive to completing **high-quality ethnography!** Had I not fully understood the importance of body contact and physical proximity in communication in Brazil, I would have missed an important component of the culture.

Another perspective that has been rejected by anthropologists is **ethnocentrism**—the tendency to view one’s own culture as most important and correct and as a stick by which to measure all other cultures. People who are ethnocentric view their own cultures as central and normal and reject all other cultures as inferior and morally suspect. As it turns out, many people and cultures are ethnocentric to some degree; ethnocentrism is a common human experience. Why do we respond the way we do? Why do we behave the way we do? Why do we believe what we believe? Most people find these kinds of questions difficult to answer. Often the answer is simply “because that is how it is done.” They believe what they believe because that is what one normally believes and doing things any other way seems wrong.

Ethnocentrism is not a useful perspective in contexts in which people from different cultural backgrounds come into close contact with one another, as is the case in many cities and communities throughout the world. People increasingly find that they must adopt culturally relativistic perspectives in governing communities and as a guide for their interactions with members of the community.

For anthropologists in the field, cultural relativism is especially important. We must set aside our innate ethnocentrism and let cultural relativism guide our inquiries and interactions with others so that our observations are not biased. Cultural relativism is at the core of the discipline of anthropology.

Objectivity and Activist Anthropology

Despite the importance of cultural relativism, it is not always possible and at times is inappropriate to maintain complete objectivity in the field. Researchers may encounter cultural practices that are an affront to strongly held moral values or that violate the human rights of a segment of a population. In other cases, they may be conducting research in part to advocate for a particular issue or for the rights of a marginalized group.

Take, for example, the practice of female genital cutting (FGC), also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice that is common in various regions of the world, especially in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Such practices involving modification of female genitals for non-medical and cultural reasons range from clitoridectomy (partial or full removal of the clitoris) to infibulation, which involves removal of the clitoris and the inner and outer labia and suturing to narrow the vag-inal opening, leaving only a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual fluid. Anthropologists working in regions where such practices are common often understandably have a strong negative opinion, viewing the practice as unnecessary medically and posing a risk of serious infection, infertility, and complications from childbirth. They may also be opposed to it because they feel that it violates the right of women to experience sexual pleasure, something they likely view as a fundamental human right. Should the anthropologist intervene to prevent girls and women from being subjected to this practice?

Anthropologist Janice Boddy studied FGC/FGM in rural northern Sudan and sought to explain it from a culturally relativistic perspective. She found that the practice persists, in part, because it is believed to preserve a woman's chastity and curb her sexual desire, making her less likely to have affairs once she is married.

Boddy's research showed how the practice makes sense in the context of a culture in which a woman's sexual conduct is a symbol of her family's honor, which is important culturally.⁵

Boddy's relativistic explanation helps make the practice comprehensible and allows cultural outsiders to understand how it is internally culturally coherent. But the question remains. Once anthropologists understand why people practice FGC/FGM, should they accept it? Because they uncover the cultural meaning of a practice, must they maintain a neutral stance or should they fight a practice viewed as an injustice? How does an anthropologist know what is right?

Unfortunately, answers to these questions are rarely simple, and anthropologists as a group do not always agree on an appropriate professional stance and responsibility. Nevertheless, examining practices such as FGC/FGM can help us understand the debate over objectivity versus "activism" in anthropology more clearly. Some anthropologists feel that striving for objectivity in ethnography is paramount. That even if objectivity cannot be completely achieved, anthropologists' ethnography should be free from as much subjective opinion as possible. Others take the opposite stance and produce anthropological research and writing as a means of fighting for equality and justice for dis-empowered or voiceless groups. The debate over how much (if any) activism is acceptable is ongoing. What is clear is that anthropologists are continuing to grapple with the contentious relationship between objectivity and activism in ethnographic research.

Science and Humanism

Anthropologists have described their field as the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities. Early anthropologists fought to legitimize anthropology as a robust scientific field of study. To do so, they borrowed methods and techniques from the physical sciences and applied them to

anthropological inquiry. Indeed, anthropology today is categorized as a social science in most academic institutions in the United States alongside sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. However, in recent decades, many cultural anthropologists have distanced themselves from science-oriented research and embraced more-humanistic approaches, including symbolic and interpretive perspectives. Interpretive anthropology treats culture as a body of “texts” rather than attempting to test a hypothesis based on deductive or inductive reasoning. The texts present a particular picture from a particular subjective point of view. Interpretive anthropologists believe that it is not necessary (or even possible) to objectively interrogate a text. Rather, they study the texts to untangle the various webs of meaning embedded in them. Consequently, interpretive anthropologists include the context of their interpretations, their own perspectives and, importantly, how the research participants view themselves and the meanings they attribute to their lives.

Anthropologists are unlikely to conclude that a single approach is best. Instead, anthropologists can apply any and all of the approaches that best suit their particular problem. Anthropology is unique among academic disciplines for the diversity of approaches used to conduct research and for the broad range of orientations that fall under its umbrella.

Science in Anthropology:

For a discussion of science in anthropology, see the following article published by the American Anthropological Association: [AAA Responds to Public Controversy Over Science in Anthropology](#).

Ethnographic Techniques *Observation and Participant Observation*

Of the various techniques and tools used to conduct ethnographic research, observation in general and participant observation in particular are among the most important. Ethnographers are trained to pay attention to everything happening around them when in the field—from routine daily activities such as cooking dinner to major events such as an annual religious celebration. They observe

how people interact with each other, how the environment affects people, and how people affect the environment. It is essential for anthropologists to rigorously document their observations, usually by writing field notes and recording their feelings and perceptions in a personal journal or diary.

As previously mentioned, participant observation involves ethnographers observing while they participate in activities with their informants. This technique is important because it allows the researcher to better understand why people do what they do from an emic perspective. Malinowski noted that participant observation is an important tool by which “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world.”⁶

To conduct participant observation, ethnographers must live with or spend considerable time with their informants to establish a strong rapport with them. Rapport is a sense of trust and a comfortable working relationship in which the informant and the ethnographer are at ease with each other and agreeable to working together.

Participant observation was an important part of my own research. In 2003, I spent six months living in two Mayan villages in highland Chiapas, Mexico. I was conducting ethnographic research on behalf of the Science Museum of Minnesota to document changes in *huipil* textile designs. *Huip-iles* (pronounced “we-peel-ays”) are a type of hand-woven blouse that Mayan women in the region weave and wear, and every town has its own style and designs. At a large city market, one can easily identify the town each weaver is from by the colors and designs of her *huipiles*. For hundreds of years, *huipil* designs changed very little. Then, starting around 1960, the designs and colors of *huipiles* in some of the towns began to change rapidly. I was interested in learning why some towns’ designs were changing more rapidly than other towns’ were and in collecting examples of *huipiles* to supplement the museum’s existing collection.

I spent time in two towns, Zinacantán and San Andrés Larráinzar. Zinacantán was located near the main city, San Cristóbal de las

Casas. It received many tourists each year and had regularly established bus and van routes that locals used to travel to San Cristóbal to buy food and other goods. Some of the men in the town had worked in the United States and returned with money to build or improve their family homes and businesses. Other families were supported by **remittances** from relatives working in the United States or in other parts of Mexico. San Andrés, on the other hand, was relatively isolated and much further from San Cristóbal. Most families there relied on subsistence farming or intermittent agricultural labor and had limited access to tourism or to outside communities. San Andrés was also the site of a major indigenous revolt in the mid-1990s that resulted in greater autonomy, recognition, and rights for indigenous groups throughout Mexico. Politically and socially, it was a progressive community in many ways but remained conservative in others.

I first asked people in Zinacantán why their *huipil* designs, motifs, and colors seemed to change almost every year. Many women said that they did not know. Others stated that weaving was easy and could be boring so they liked to make changes to keep the *huipiles* interesting and to keep weaving from getting dull. When I asked people in San Andrés what they thought about what the women in Zinacantán had said, the San Andrés women replied that “Yes, perhaps they do get bored easily. But we in San Andrés are superior weavers and we don’t need to change our designs.” Neither response seemed like the full story behind the difference.

Though I spent hundreds of hours observing women preparing to weave, weaving, and selling their textiles to tourists, I did not truly understand what the women were telling me until I tried weaving myself. When I watched them, the process seemed so easy and simple. They attached strings of thread vertically to two ends of the back-strap looms. When weaving, they increased and decreased the tension on the vertical threads by leaning backward and forward

with the back strap and teased individual threads horizontally through the vertical threads to create the desired pattern. After each thread was placed, they pushed it down with great force using a smooth, flat wooden trowel. They did the entire process with great ease and fluidity. When I only watched and did not participate, I could believe the Zinacantán women when they told me weaving was easy.

When I began to weave, it took me several days simply to learn how to sit correctly with a back-strap loom and achieve the appropriate tension. I failed repeatedly at setting up the loom with vertically strung threads and never got close to being able to create a design. Thus, I learned through participant observation that weaving is an exceptionally difficult task. Even expert weavers who had decades of experience sometimes made mistakes as half-finished weavings and rejected textiles littered many homes. Although the women appeared to be able to multi-task while weaving (stoking the fire, calling after small children, cooking food), weaving still required a great deal of concentration to do well.

Through participant observation, I was able to recognize that other factors likely drove the changes in their textiles. I ultimately concluded that the rate of change in *huipil* design in Zinacantán was likely related to the pace of cultural change broadly in the community resulting from interactions between its residents and tourists and relatively frequent travel to a more-urban environment. Participant observation was an important tool in my research and is central to most ethnographic studies today.

Conversations and Interviews

Another primary technique for gathering ethnographic data is simply talking with people—from casual, unstructured conversations about ordinary topics to formal scheduled interviews about a particular topic. An important element for successful conversations and interviews is establishing rapport with informants. Sometimes, engaging in conversation is part of establishing that rapport. Ethnographers frequently use multiple forms of conversation and interviewing for a single research project

based on their particular needs. They sometimes record the conversations and interviews with an audio recording device but more often they simply engage in the conversation and then later write down everything they recall about it. Conversations and interviews are an essential part of most ethnographic research designs because spoken communication is central to humans' experiences.

Gathering Life Histories

Collecting a personal narrative of someone's life is a valuable ethnographic technique and is often combined with other techniques. Life histories provide the context in which culture is experienced and created by individuals and describe how individuals have reacted, responded, and contributed to changes that occurred during their lives. They also help anthropologists be more aware of what makes life meaningful to an individual and to focus on the particulars of individual lives, on the tenor of their experiences and the patterns that are important to them. Researchers often include life histories in their ethnographic texts as a way of intimately connecting the reader to the lives of the informants.

The Genealogical Method

The genealogical (kinship) method has a long tradition in ethnography. Developed in the early years of anthropological research to document the family systems of tribal groups, it is still used today to discover connections of **kinship**, descent, marriage, and the overall social system. Because kinship and genealogy are so important in many nonindustrial societies, the technique is used to collect data on important relationships that form the foundation of the society and to trace social relationships more broadly in communities.

When used by anthropologists, the genealogical method involves using symbols and diagrams to document relationships. Circles

represent women and girls, triangles represent men and boys, and squares represent ambiguous or unknown gender. Equal signs between individuals represent their union or marriage and vertical lines descending from a union represent parent-child relationships. The death of an individual and the termination of a marriage are denoted by diagonal lines drawn across the shapes and equal signs. Kinship charts are diagrammed from the perspective of one person who is called the Ego, and all of the relationships in the chart are based on how the others are related to the Ego. Individuals in a chart are sometimes identified by numbers or names, and an accompanying list provides more-detailed information.

Key Informants

Within any culture or subculture, there are always particular individuals who are more knowledgeable about the culture than others and who may have more-detailed or privileged knowledge. Anthropologists conducting ethnographic research in the field often seek out such cultural specialists to gain a greater understanding of certain issues and to answer questions they otherwise could not answer. When an anthropologist establishes a rapport with these individuals and begins to rely more on them for information than on others, the cultural specialists are referred to as key informants or key cultural consultants.

Key informants can be exceptional assets in the field, allowing the ethnographer to uncover the meanings of behaviors and practices the researcher cannot otherwise understand. Key informants can also help researchers by directly observing others and reporting those observations to the researchers, especially in situations in which the researcher is not allowed to be present or when the researcher's presence could alter the participants' behavior. In addition, ethnographers can check information they obtained from other informants, contextualize it, and review it for accuracy. Having a key informant in the field is like having a research ally. The relationship can grow and become enormously fruitful.

A famous example of the central role that key informants can play in an ethnographer's research is a man named Doc in William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943). In the late 1930s, Whyte studied social relations between street gangs and "corner boys" in a Boston urban slum inhabited by first- and second-generation Italian immigrants. A social worker introduced Whyte to Doc and the two hit it off. Doc proved instrumental to the success of Whyte's research. He introduced Whyte to his family and social group and vouched for him in the tight-knit community, providing access that Whyte could not have gained otherwise.

Field Notes

Field notes are indispensable when conducting ethnographic research. Although making such notes is time-consuming, they form the primary record of one's observations. Generally speaking, ethnographers write two kinds of notes: field notes and personal reflections. Field notes are detailed descriptions of everything the ethnographer observes and experiences. They include specific details about what happened at the field site, the ethnographer's sensory impressions, and specific words and phrases used by the people observed. They also frequently include the content of conversations the ethnographer had and things the ethnographer overheard others say. Ethnographers also sometimes include their personal reflections on the experience of writing field notes. Often, brief notes are jotted down in a notebook while the anthropologist is observing and participating in activities. Later, they expand on those quick notes to make more formal field notes, which may be organized and typed into a report. It is common for ethnographers to spend several hours a day writing and organizing field notes.

Ethnographers often also keep a personal journal or diary that may include information about their emotions and personal experiences while conducting research. These personal reflections can be as important as the field notes. Ethnography is not an objective science. Everything researchers do and experience in the field is filtered through their personal life experiences. Two ethnographers may experience a situation in the field in different

ways and understand the experience differently. For this reason, it is important for researchers to be aware of their reactions to situations and be mindful of how their life experiences affect their perceptions. In fact, this sort of reflexive insight can turn out to be a useful data source and analytical tool that improves the researcher's understanding.

The work of anthropologist Renato Rosaldo provides a useful example of how anthropologists can use their emotional responses to fieldwork situations to advance their research. In 1981, Rosaldo and his wife, Michelle, were conducting research among the Ilongots of Northern Luzon in the Philippines. Rosaldo was studying men in the community who engaged in emotional rampages in which they violently murdered others by cutting off their heads. Although the practice had been banned by the time Rosaldo arrived, a longing to continue headhunting remained in the cultural psyche of the community.

Whenever Rosaldo asked a man why he engaged in headhunting, the answer was that rage and grief caused him to kill others. At the beginning of his fieldwork, Rosaldo felt that the response was overly simplistic and assumed that there had to be more to it than that. He was frustrated because he could not uncover a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Then, on October 11, 1981, Rosaldo's wife was walking along a ravine when she tripped, lost her footing, and fell 65 feet to her death, leaving Rosaldo a grieving single father. In his essay "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage," Rosaldo later wrote that it was his own struggle with rage as he grieved for his wife that helped him truly grasp what the Ilongot men meant when they described their grief and rage.

Only a week before completing the initial draft of an earlier version of this introduction, I rediscovered my journal entry, written some six weeks after Michelle's death, in which I made a vow to myself about how I would return to writing anthropology, if I ever did so, by writing *Grief and a Headhunter's Rage* . . . My journal

went on to reflect more broadly on death, rage, and headhunting by speaking of my wish for the Ilongot solution; they are much more in touch with reality than Christians. So, I need a place to carry my anger – and can we say a solution of the imagination is better than theirs? And can we condemn them when we napalm villages? Is our rationale so much sounder than theirs? All this was written in despair and rage.⁷

Only through the very personal and emotionally devastating experience of losing his wife was Ro-saldo able to understand the emic perspective of the headhunters. The result was an influential and insightful ethnographic account.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical Guidelines

From the earliest days of anthropology as a discipline, concern about the ethical treatment of people who take part in studies has been an important consideration. Ethical matters are central to any research project and anthropologists take their ethical responsibilities particularly seriously. As discussed throughout this chapter, anthropologists are oriented toward developing empathy for their informants and understanding their cultures and experiences from an emic perspective. Many also have a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the local people with whom they work in the field.

The American Anthropological Association has developed a [Code of Ethics](#) that all anthropologists should follow in their work. Among the many ethical responsibilities outlined in the code, doing no harm, obtaining informed consent, maintaining subjects' anonymity, and making the results of the research accessible are especially important responsibilities.

Do No Harm

First and foremost, anthropologists must ensure that their involvement with a community does not harm or embarrass their informants. Researchers must carefully consider any potential harm associated with the research, including legal, emotional, political,

economic, social, and cultural dimensions, and take steps to insulate their informants from such harm. Since it is not always possible to anticipate every potential repercussion at the outset, anthropologists also must continually monitor their work to ensure that their research design and methods minimize any risk.

Regrettably, the proscription to do no harm is a deceptively complex requirement. Despite their best efforts, anthropologists have run into ethical problems in the field. Work by Napoleon Chagnon among an isolated indigenous tribe of the Amazon, the Yanomami, is a well-known example of ethical problems in anthropological research. In his groundbreaking ethnography *Yanomamö: The Fierce People* (1968), Chagnon portrayed the Yanomami as an intensely violent and antagonistic people. The ethnography was well received initially. However, not long after its publication, controversy erupted. Anthropologists and other scholars have accused Chagnon of encouraging the violence he documented, staging fights and scenes for documentary films and fabricating data.

Today, Do No Harm is a central ethical value in anthropology. However, it can be difficult to predict every challenge one may encounter in the field or after the work is published. Anthropologists must continually reevaluate their research and writing to ensure that it does not harm the informants or their communities. Before fieldwork begins, researchers from universities, colleges, and institutions usually must submit their research agendas to an institutional review board (IRB). IRBs review research plans to ensure that the proposed studies will not harm human subjects. In many cases, the IRB is aware of the unique challenges and promise of anthropological research and can guide the researcher in eliminating or mitigating potential ethical problems.

Obtain Informed Consent

In addition to taking care to do no harm, anthropologists must obtain informed consent from all of their informants before conducting any research. Informed consent is the informant's

agreement to take part in the study. Originally developed in the context of medical and psychological research, this ethical guideline is also relevant to anthropology. Informants must be aware of who the anthropologist is and the research topic, who is financially and otherwise supporting the research, how the research will be used, and who will have access to it. Finally, their participation must be *optional* and not coerced. They should be able to stop participating at any time and be aware of and comfortable with any risks associated with their participation.

In medical and psychological research settings in the United States, researchers typically obtain informed consent by asking prospective participants to sign a document that outlines the research and the risks involved in their participation, acknowledging that they agree to take part. In some anthropological contexts, however, this type of informed consent may not be appropriate. People may not trust the state, bureaucratic processes, or authority, for example. Asking them to sign a formal legal-looking document may intimidate them. Likewise, informed consent cannot be obtained with a signed document if many in the community cannot read. The anthropologist must determine the most appropriate way to obtain informed consent in the context of the particular research setting.

Maintain Anonymity and Privacy

Another important ethical consideration for anthropologists in the field is ensuring the anonymity and privacy of informants who need such protection. When I did research among undocumented Mexican immigrant college students, I recognized that my informants' legal status put them at considerable risk. I took care to use pseudonyms for all of the informants, even when writing field notes. In my writing, I changed the names of the informants' relatives, friends, schools, and work places to protect them from being identified. Maintaining privacy and anonymity is an important way for anthropologists to ensure that their involvement does no harm.

Make Results Accessible

Finally, anthropologists must always make their final research results accessible to their informants and to other researchers. For informants, a written report in the researcher's native language may not be the best way to convey the results. Reports can be translated or the results can be converted into a more accessible format. Examples of creative ways in which anthropologists have made their results available include establishing accessible databases for their research data, contributing to existing databases, producing films that portray the results, and developing texts or recommendations that provide tangible assistance to the informants' communities. Though it is not always easy to make re-search results accessible in culturally appropriate ways, it is essential that others have the opportunity to review and benefit from the research, especially those who participated in its creation.

WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Analysis and Interpretation of Research Findings

Once all or most of the fieldwork is complete, ethnographers analyze their data and research findings before beginning to write. There are many techniques for data analysis from which to choose based on the strategy and goals of the research. Regardless of the particular technique, data analysis involves a systematic interpretation of what the researcher thinks the data mean. The ethnographer reviews all of the data collected, synthesizes findings from the review, and integrates those findings with prior studies on the topic. Once the analysis is complete, the ethnographer is ready to write an account of the fieldwork.

Ethnographic Authority

In recent years, anthropologists have expressed concern about how ethnographies should be written in terms of ethnographic authority: how ethnographers present themselves and their informants in text. In a nonfiction text, the author is a mediator between readers and the topic and the text is written to help readers understand an unfamiliar topic. In an ethnography, the topic is people, and people naturally vary in terms of their thoughts,

opinions, beliefs, and perspectives. That is, they have individual voices. In the past, anthropologists commonly wrote ethnographic accounts as if they possessed the ultimate most complete scientific knowledge on the topic. Subsequently, anthropologists began to challenge that writing style, particularly when it did not include the voices of their informants in the text and analysis. Some of this criticism originated with feminist anthropologists who noted that women's experiences and perspectives frequently were omitted and misrepresented in this style of writing. Others believed that this style of writing reinforced existing global power dynamics and privileges afforded to Western anthropologists' voices as most important.

Polyvocality

In response to criticisms about ethnographic authority, anthropologists have begun to include polyvocality. A polyvocal text is one in which more than one person's voice is presented, and its use can range from ensuring that informants' perspectives are presented in the text while still writing in the researcher's voice to including informants' actual words rather than paraphrasing them and co-authoring the ethnography with an informant. A good example of polyvocality is anthropologist Ruth Behar's book *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* (1993). Behar's book documents the life story of a Mexican street peddler, Esperanza Hernández, and their unique friendship. Large sections of the book are in Esperanza's own words and discuss issues that are important to her. Behar also includes pieces of her own life story and an anthropological analysis of Esperanza's story.

By using polyvocality, researchers can avoid writing from the perspective of the ultimate ethnographic authority. A polyvocal style also allows readers to be more involved in the text since they have the opportunity to form their own opinions about the ethnographic data and perhaps even critique the author's analysis.

It also encourages anthropologists to be more transparent when presenting their methods and data.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is another relatively new approach to ethnographic research and writing. Beginning in the 1960s, social science researchers began to think more carefully about the effects of their life experiences, status, and roles on their research and analyses. They began to insert themselves into their texts, including information about their personal experiences, thoughts, and life stories and to analyze in the accounts how those characteristics affected their research and analysis.

Adoption of reflexivity is perhaps the most significant change in how ethnography is researched and written in the past 50 years. It calls on anthropologists to acknowledge that they are part of the world they study and thus can never truly be objective. Reflexivity has also contributed to anthropologists' appreciation of the unequal power dynamics of research and the effects those dynamics can have on the results. Reflexivity reminds the ethnographer that there are multiple ways to interpret any given cultural scenario. By acknowledging how their backgrounds affect their interpretations, anthropologists can begin to remove themselves from the throne of ethnographic authority and allow other, less-empowered voices to be heard.

Discussion questions

1. If you were to conduct anthropological fieldwork anywhere in the world, where would you go? What would you study? Why? Which ethnographic techniques would you use? What kinds of ethical considerations would you

likely encounter? How would you disseminate your research?

2. What is unique about ethnographic fieldwork and how did it emerge as a key strategy in anthropology?

3. How do traditional approaches to ethnographic fieldwork contrast with contemporary approaches?

4. What are some of the contemporary ethnographic fieldwork techniques and perspectives and why are they important to anthropology?

5. What are some of the ethical considerations in doing anthropological fieldwork and why are they important?

6. How do anthropologists transform their fieldwork data into a story that communicates meaning? How are reflexivity and polyvocality changing the way anthropologists communicate their work?

Glossary

Contested identity: a dispute within a group about the collective identity or identities of the group.

Cultural relativism: the idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their own culture and not our own.

Deductive: reasoning from the general to the specific; the inverse of inductive reasoning. Deductive research is more common in the natural sciences than in anthropology. In a deductive approach, the researcher creates a hypothesis and then designs a study to prove or disprove the hypothesis. The results of deductive research can be generalizable to other settings.

Diaspora: the scattering of a group of people who have left their original homeland and now live in various locations. Examples of people living in the diaspora are Salvadoran immigrants in the United States and Europe, Somalian refugees in various countries, and Jewish people living around the world.

Emic: a description of the studied culture from the perspective of a member of the culture or insider.

Ethnocentrism: the tendency to view one's own culture as most important and correct and as the stick by which to measure all other cultures.

Ethnography: the in-depth study of the everyday practices and lives of a people.

Etic: a description of the studied culture from the perspective of an observer or outsider.

Indigenous: people who have continually lived in a particular location for a long period of time (prior to the arrival of others) or who have historical ties to a location and who are culturally distinct from the dominant population surrounding them. Other terms used to refer to indigenous people are aboriginal, native, original, first nation, and first people. Some examples of indigenous people are Native Americans of North America, Australian Aborigines, and the Berber (or Amazigh) of North Africa.

Inductive: a type of reasoning that uses specific information to draw general conclusions. In an inductive approach, the researcher seeks to collect evidence without trying to definitively prove or disprove a hypothesis. The researcher usually first spends time in the field to become familiar with the people before identifying a hypothesis or research question. Inductive research usually is not generalizable to other settings.

Key Informants: individuals who are more knowledgeable about their culture than others and who are particularly helpful to the anthropologist.

Kinship: blood ties, common ancestry, and social relationships that form families within human groups.

Land tenure: how property rights to land are allocated within societies, including how permissions are granted to access, use, control, and transfer land.

Noble savage: an inaccurate way of portraying indigenous groups or minority cultures as innocent, childlike, or uncorrupted by the negative characteristics of “civilization.”

Participant observation: a type of observation in which the anthropologist observes while participating in the same activities in which her informants are engaged.

Qualitative: anthropological research designed to gain an in-depth, contextualized understanding of human behavior.

Quantitative: anthropological research that uses statistical, mathematical, and/or numerical data to study human behavior.

Remittances: money that migrants laboring outside of

the region or country send back to their hometowns and families. In Mexico, remittances make up a substantial share of the total income of some towns' populations.

Thick description: a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1973 book *The Interpretation of Cultures* to describe a detailed description of the studied group that not only explains the behavior or cultural event in question but also the context in which it occurs and anthropological interpretations of it.

Undocumented: the preferred term for immigrants who live in a country without formal authorization from the state. Undocumented refers to the fact that these people lack the official documents that would legally permit them to reside in the country. Other terms such as illegal immigrant and illegal alien are often used to refer to this population. Anthropologists consider those terms to be discriminatory and dehumanizing. The word undocumented acknowledges the human dignity and cultural and political ties immigrants have developed in their country of residence despite their inability to establish formal residence permissions.

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NOTES

1. Franz Boas, "Foreward," in *Coming of Age in Samoa* by Margaret Mead (New York: William Morrow, 1928).
2. Examples of Curtis' photography can be found in Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian: The Photographic Images* (New York: Aperture, 2005).
3. Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics," *MIT Technology Review* 42 (1940): 229–248.
4. Peter Gordon, "Numerical Cognition Without Words: Evidence from Amazonia," *Science* 306 no. 5695 (2004): 496–499.
5. Janice Bodd, *Civilizing Women: British Crusades in Colonial Sudan* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
6. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An*

Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea (London: Kegan Paul, 1922), 25.

7. Renato Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage," in *Violence in War and Peace*, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe I. Bourgois (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 171.

14. Chapter 3: Language

Learning Objectives

- Explain the relationship between human language and culture.
- Identify the universal features of human languages and the design features that make them unique.
- Describe the structures of language: phonemes, morphemes, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.
- Assess the relationship between language variations and ethnic or cultural identity.
- Explain how language is affected by social class, ethnicity, gender and other aspects of identity.
- Evaluate the reasons why languages change and efforts that can be made to preserve endangered languages.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 3: Language*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE TO HUMAN CULTURE

Students in my cultural anthropology classes are required to memorize a six-point thumbnail definition of culture, which includes all of the features most anthropologists agree are key to its essence. Then, I refer back to the definition as we arrive at each relevant unit in the course. Here it is— with the key features in bold type.

Culture is:

1. An integrated system of *mental elements* (be-liefs, values,

worldview, attitudes, norms), the *behaviors* motivated by those mental elements, and the *material items* created by those behaviors;

2. A system shared by the members of the society;

3. 100 percent learned, not innate;

4. Based on symbolic systems, the most important of which is language;

5. Humankind's most important adaptive mechanism, and

6. Dynamic, constantly changing.

This definition serves to underscore the crucial importance of language to all human cultures. In fact, human language can be considered a culture's most important feature since complex human culture could not exist without language and language could not exist without culture. They are inseparable because language encodes culture and provides the means through which culture is shared and passed from one generation to the next. Humans think in language and do all cultural activities using language. It surrounds our every waking and sleeping moments, although we do not usually think about its importance. For that matter, humans do not think about their immersion in culture either, much as fish, if they were endowed with intelligence, would not think much about the water that surrounds them. Without language and culture, humans would be just another great ape. Anthropologists must have skills in linguistics so they can learn the languages and cultures of the people they study.

All human languages are symbolic systems that make use of symbols to convey meaning. A **symbol** is anything that serves to refer to something else, but has a meaning that cannot be guessed because there is no obvious connection between the symbol and its referent. This feature of human language is called **arbitrariness**. For example, many cultures assign meanings to certain colors, but the meaning for a particular color may be completely different from one culture to another. Western cultures like the United States use the color black to represent death, but in China it is the color white that

symbolizes death. White in the United States symbolizes purity and is used for brides' dresses, but no Chinese woman would ever wear white to her wedding. Instead, she usually wears red, the color of good luck. Words in languages are symbolic in the same way. The word *key* in English is pronounced exactly the same as the word *qui* in French, meaning "who," and *ki* in Japanese, meaning "tree." One must learn the language in order to know what any word means.

THE BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF LANGUAGE

The human anatomy that allowed the development of language emerged six to seven million years ago when the first human ancestors became bipedal—habitually walking on two feet. Most other mammals are quadrupedal—they move about on four feet. This evolutionary development freed up the forelimbs of human ancestors for other activities, such as carrying items and doing more and more complex things with their hands. It also started a chain of anatomical adaptations. One adaptation was a change in the way the skull was placed on the spine. The skull of quadrupedal animals is attached to the spine at the back of the skull because the head is thrust forward. With the new upright bipedal position of pre-humans, the attachment to the spine moved toward the center of the base of the skull. This skeletal change in turn brought about changes in the shape and position of the mouth and throat anatomy.

Humans have all the same organs in the mouth and throat that the other great apes have, but the **larynx**, or voice box (you may know it as the Adam's apple), is in a lower position in the throat in humans. This creates a longer **pharynx**, or throat cavity, which functions as a resonating and amplifying chamber for the speech sounds emitted by the larynx. The rounding of the shape of the tongue and **palate**, or the roof of the mouth, enables humans to make a greater variety of sounds than any great ape is capable of making (see Figure 1).

Speech is produced by exhaling air from the lungs, which passes through the larynx. The voice is created by the vibration of the vocal folds in the larynx when they are pulled tightly together, leaving a

narrow slit for the air to pass through under pressure. The narrower the slit, the higher the pitch of the sound produced. The sound waves in the exhaled air pass through the pharynx then out through the mouth and/or the nose. The different positions and movements of the articulators—the tongue, the lips, the jaw—produce the different speech sounds.

Along with the changes in mouth and throat anatomy that made speech possible came a gradual enlargement and compartmentalization of the brain of human ancestors over millions of years. The modern human brain is among the largest, in proportion to body size, of all animals. This development was crucial to language ability because a tremendous amount of brain power is required to process, store, produce, and comprehend the complex system of any human language and its associated culture. In addition, two areas in the left brain are specifically dedicated to the processing of language; no other species has them. They are Broca's area in the left frontal lobe near the temple, and Wernicke's area, in the temporal lobe just behind the left ear.

Language Acquisition in Childhood

Linguist Noam Chomsky proposed that all languages share the properties of what he called **Uni-versal Grammar (UG)**, a basic template for all human languages, which he believed was embedded in our genes, hard-wiring the brains of all human children to acquire language. Although the theory of UG is somewhat controversial, it is a fact that all normally developing human infants have an innate ability to acquire the language or languages used around them. Without any formal instruction, children easily acquire the sounds, words, grammatical rules, and appropriate social functions of the language(s) that surround them. They master the basics by about age three or four. This also applies to children, both deaf and hearing, who are exposed to signed language.

If a child is not surrounded by people who are using a language, that child will gradually lose the ability to acquire language naturally

without effort. If this deprivation continues until puberty, the child will no longer be biologically capable of attaining native fluency in any language, although they might be able to achieve a limited competency. This phenomenon has been called the **Critical Age Range Hypothesis**. A number of abused children who were isolated from language input until they were past puberty provide stark evidence to support this hypothesis. The classic case of “Genie” is an example of this evidence.¹ Found at the age of almost 14, Genie had been confined for all of her life to her room and, since the age of two, had been tied to a potty chair during the day and to a crib at night with almost no verbal interaction and only minimal attention to her physical needs. After her rescue, a linguist worked with her intensively for about five years in an attempt to help her learn to talk, but she never achieved language competence beyond that of a two-year old child. The hypothesis also applies to the acquisition of a second language. A person who starts the study of another language after puberty will have to exert a great deal of effort and will rarely achieve native fluency, especially in pronunciation. There is plenty of evidence for this in the U.S. educational system. You might very well have had this same experience. It makes you wonder why our schools rarely offer foreign language classes before the junior high school level.

The Gesture Call System and Non-Verbal Human Communication

All animals communicate and many animals make meaningful sounds. Others use visual signs, such as facial expressions, color changes, body postures and movements, light (fireflies), or electricity (some eels). Many use the sense of smell and the sense of touch. Most animals use a combination of two or more of these systems in their communication, but their systems are **closed systems** in that they cannot create new meanings or messages. Human communication is an **open**

system that can easily create new meanings and messages. Most animal communication systems are basically innate; they do not have to learn them, but some species' systems entail a certain amount of learning. For example, songbirds have the innate ability to produce the typical songs of their species, but most of them must be taught how to do it by older birds.

Great apes and other primates have relatively complex systems of communication that use varying combinations of sound, body language, scent, facial expression, and touch. Their systems have therefore been referred to as a **gesture-call system**. Humans share a number of forms of this gesture-call, or non-verbal system with the great apes. Spoken language undoubtedly evolved embedded within it. All human cultures have not only verbal languages, but also non-verbal systems that are consistent with their verbal languages and cultures and vary from one culture to another. We will discuss the three most important human non-verbal communication systems.

Kinesics

Kinesics is the term used to designate all forms of human body language, including gestures, body position and movement, facial expressions, and eye contact. Although all humans can potentially perform these in the same way, different cultures may have different rules about how to use them. For example, eye contact for Americans is highly valued as a way to show we are paying attention and as a means of showing respect. But for the Japanese, eye contact is usually inappropriate, especially between two people of different social statuses. The lower status person must look down and avoid eye contact to show respect for the higher status person.

Facial expressions can convey a host of messages, usually related to the person's attitude or emotional state. Hand gestures may

convey unconscious messages, or constitute deliberate messages that can replace or emphasize verbal ones.

Proxemics

Proxemics is the study of the social use of space, specifically the distance an individual tries to maintain around himself in interactions with others. The size of the “space bubble” depends on a number of social factors, including the relationship between the two people, their relative status, their gender and age, their current attitude toward each other, and above all their culture. In some cultures, such as in Brazil, people typically interact in a relatively close physical space, usually along with a lot of touching. Other cultures, like the Japanese, prefer to maintain a greater distance with a minimum amount of touching or none at all. If one person stands too far away from the other according to cultural standards, it might convey the message of emotional distance. If a person invades the culturally recognized space bubble of another, it could mean a threat. Or, it might show a desire for a closer relationship. It all depends on who is involved.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to those characteristics of speech beyond the actual words spoken. These include the features that are inherent to all speech: pitch, loudness, and tempo or duration of the sounds. Varying pitch can convey any number of messages: a question, sarcasm, defiance, surprise, confidence or lack of it, impatience, and many other often subtle connotations. An utterance that is shouted at close range usually conveys an emotional element, such as anger or urgency. A word or syllable that is held for an undue amount of time can intensify the impact of that word. For example, compare “It’s beautiful” versus “It’s beauuuuu-tiful!” Often the latter type of expression is further emphasized by extra loudness of the syllable, and perhaps higher pitch; all can serve to make a part of the utterance more important. Other paralinguistic features that often accompany speech might be a

chuckle, a sigh or sob, deliberate throat clearing, and many other non-verbal sounds like “hm,” “oh,” “ah,” and “um.”

Most non-verbal behaviors are unconsciously performed and not noticed unless someone violates the cultural standards for them. In fact, a deliberate violation itself can convey meaning. Other non-verbal behaviors are done consciously like the U.S. gestures that indicate approval, such as thumbs up, or making a circle with your thumb and forefinger—“OK.” Other examples are waving at someone or putting a forefinger to your lips to quiet another person. Many of these deliberate gestures have different meanings (or no meaning at all) in other cultures. For example, the gestures of approval in U.S. culture mentioned above may be obscene or negative gestures in another culture.

Try this: As an experiment in the power of non-verbal communication, try violating one of the cultural rules for proxemics or eye contact with a person you know. Choosing your “guinea pigs” carefully (they might get mad at you!), try standing or sitting a little closer or farther away from them than you usually would for a period of time, until they notice (and they will notice). Or, you could choose to give them a bit too much eye contact, or too little, while you are conversing with them. Note how they react to your behavior and how long it takes them to notice.

HUMAN LANGUAGE COMPARED WITH THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS OF OTHER SPECIES

Human language is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the communication systems of all other species of animals. Linguists have long tried to create a working definition that distinguishes it from non-human communication systems. Linguist Charles Hockett’s solution was to create a hi-erarchical list of what he called **design features**, or descriptive characteristics, of the communication systems of all species, including that of humans.² Those features of human language not shared with any other species illustrate exactly how it differs from all other species.

Hockett’s Design Features

The communication systems of all species share the following features:

1. **A mode of communication** by which messages are transmitted through a system of signs, using one or more sensory systems to transmit and interpret, such as vocal-auditory, visual, tactile, or kinesic;

2. **Semanticity**: the signs carry meaning for the users, and

3. **Pragmatic function**: all signs serve a useful purpose in the life of the users, from survival functions to influencing others' behavior.

Some communication systems (including humans) also exhibit the following features:

4. **Interchangeability**: the ability of individuals within a species to both send and receive messages. One species that lacks this feature is the honeybee. Only a female "worker bee" can perform the dance that conveys to her hive-mates the location of a newly discovered food source. Another example is the mockingbird whose songs are performed only by the males to attract a mate and mark his territory.

5. **Cultural transmission**: the need for some aspects of the system to be learned through interaction with others, rather than being 100 percent innate or genetically programmed. The mockingbird learns its songs from other birds, or even from other sounds in its environment that appeal to it.

6. **Arbitrariness**: the form of a sign is not inherently or logically related to its meaning; signs are symbols. It could be said that the movements in the honeybees' dance are arbitrary since anyone who is not a honeybee could not interpret their meaning.

Only true human language also has the following characteristics:

7. **Discreteness**: every human language is made up of a small number of meaningless discrete sounds. That is, the sounds can be isolated from each other, for purposes of study by linguists, or to be represented in a writing system.

8. **Duality of patterning** (two levels of combination): at the first level of patterning, these meaningless discrete sounds, called

phonemes, are combined to form words and parts of words that carry meaning, or **morphemes**. In the second level of patterning, morphemes are recombined to form an infinite possible number of longer messages such as phrases and sentences according to a set of rules called **syntax**. It is this level of combination that is entirely lacking in the communication abilities of all other animals and makes human language an open system while all other animal systems are closed.

9. **Displacement**: the ability to communicate about things that are outside of the here and now made possible by the features of discreteness and duality of patterning. While other species are limited to communicating about their immediate time and place, we can talk about any time in the future or past, about any place in the uni-verse, or even fictional places.

10. **Productivity/creativity**: the ability to produce and understand messages that have never been expressed before or to express new ideas. People do not speak according to prepared scripts, as if they were in a movie or a play; they create their utterances spontaneously, according to the rules of their language. It also makes possible the creation of new words and even the ability to lie.

A number of great apes, including gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans, have been taught human sign languages with all of the human design features. In each case, the apes have been able to communicate as humans do to an extent, but their linguistic abilities are reduced by the limited cognitive abilities that accompany their smaller brains.

UNIVERSALS OF LANGUAGE

Languages we do not speak or understand may sound like meaningless babble to us, but all the human languages that have ever been studied by linguists are amazingly similar. They all share a number of characteristics, which linguists call **language universals**. These language universals can be considered properties of the

Universal Grammar that Chomsky proposed. Here is a list of some of the major ones.

1. All human cultures have a human language and use it to communicate.
2. All human languages change over time, a reflection of the fact that all cultures are also constantly changing.
3. All languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey. There are no primitive languages.
4. All languages are symbolic systems.
5. All languages have a basic word order of elements, like subject, verb, and object, with variations.
6. All languages have similar basic grammatical categories such as nouns and verbs.
7. Every spoken language is made up of **discrete** sounds that can be categorized as vowels or consonants.
8. The underlying structure of all languages is characterized by the feature **duality of patterning**, which permits any speaker to utter any message they need or wish to convey, and any speaker of the same language to understand the message.

DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS: STRUCTURES OF LANGUAGE

The study of the structures of language is called descriptive linguistics. Descriptive linguists discover and describe the phonemes of a language, research called **phonology**. They study the **lexicon** (the vocabulary) of a language and how the morphemes are used to create new words, or **morphology**. They analyze the rules by which speakers create phrases and sentences, or the study of **syntax**. And they look at how these features all combine to convey meaning in certain social contexts, fields of study called **semantics** and **pragmatics**.

The Sounds of Language: Phonemes

A **phoneme** is defined as the minimal unit of sound that can make a difference in meaning if substituted for another sound in a word that is otherwise identical. The phoneme itself does not carry meaning. For example, in English if the sound we associate with the

letter “p” is substituted for the sound of the letter “b” in the word *bit*, the word’s meaning is changed because now it is *pit*, a different word with an entirely different meaning. The human articulatory anatomy is capable of producing many hundreds of sounds, but no language has more than about 100 phonemes. English has about 36 or 37 phonemes, including about eleven vowels, depending on dialect. Hawaiian has only five vowels and about eight consonants. No two languages have the same exact set of phonemes.

Linguists use a written system called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to represent the sounds of a language. Unlike the letters of our alphabet that spell English words, each IPA symbol always represents only one sound no matter the language. For example, the letter “a” in English can represent the different vowel sounds in such words as *cat*, *make*, *papa*, *law*, etc., but the IPA symbol /a/ always and only represents the vowel sound of *papa* or *pop*.

The Units That Carry Meaning: Morphemes

A **morpheme** is a minimal unit of meaning in a language; a morpheme cannot be broken down into any smaller units that still relate to the original meaning. It may be a word that can stand alone, called an **unbound morpheme** (*dog*, *happy*, *go*, *educate*). Or it could be any part of a word that carries meaning that cannot stand alone but must be attached to another morpheme, **bound morphemes**. They may be placed at the beginning of the root word, such as *un-* (“not,” as in *unhappy*), or *re-* (“again,” as in *rearrange*). Or, they may follow the root, as in *-ly* (makes an adjective into an adverb: *quickly* from *quick*), *-s* (for plural, possessive, or a verb ending) in English. Some languages, like Chinese, have very few if any bound morphemes. Others, like Swahili have so many that nouns and verbs cannot stand alone as separate words; they must have one or more other bound morphemes attached to them.

The Structure of Phrases and Sentences: Syntax

Rules of syntax tell the speaker how to put morphemes together grammatically and meaningfully. There are two main types of

syntactic rules: rules that govern word order, and rules that direct the use of certain morphemes that perform a grammatical function. For example, the order of words in the English sentence “The cat chased the dog” cannot be changed around or its meaning would change: “The dog chased the cat” (something entirely different) or “Dog cat the chased the” (something meaningless). English relies on word order much more than many other languages do because it has so few morphemes that can do the same type of work.

For example, in our sentence above, the phrase “the cat” must go first in the sentence, because that is how English indicates the subject of the sentence, the one that does the action of the verb. The phrase “the dog” must go after the verb, indicating that it is the dog that received the action of the verb, or is its object. Other syntactic rules tell us that we must put “the” before its noun, and “-ed” at the end of the verb to indicate past tense. In Russian, the same sentence has fewer restrictions on word order because it has bound morphemes that are attached to the nouns to indicate which one is the subject and which is the object of the verb. So the sentence *koshka [chased] sobaku*, which means “the cat chased the dog,” has the same meaning no matter how we order the words, because the *-a* on the end of *koshka* means the cat is the subject, and the *-u* on the end of *sobaku* means the dog is the object. If we switched the endings and said *koshku [chased] sobaka*, now it means the dog did the chasing, even though we haven’t changed the order of the words. Notice, too, that Russian does not have a word for “the.”

Conveying Meaning in Language: Semantics and Pragmatics

The whole purpose of language is to communicate meaning about the world around us so the study of meaning is of great interest to linguists and anthropologists alike. The field of **semantics** focuses on the study of the meanings of words and other morphemes as well as how the meanings of phrases and sentences derive from them. Recently linguists have been enjoying examining the multitude of meanings and uses of the word “like” among American youth, made famous through the film *Valley Girl* in 1983. Although it started as a feature of California English, it has spread all across the country,

and even to many young second-language speakers of English. It's, like, totally awesome dude!

The study of **pragmatics** looks at the social and cultural aspects of meaning and how the context of an interaction affects it. One aspect of pragmatics is the **speech act**. Any time we speak we are performing an act, but what we are actually trying to accomplish with that utterance may not be interpretable through the dictionary meanings of the words themselves. For example, if you are at the dinner table and say, “Can you pass the salt?” you are probably not asking if the other person is capable of giving you the salt. Often the more polite an utterance, the less direct it will be syntactically. For example, rather than using the imperative syntactic form and saying “Give me a cup of coffee,” it is considered more polite to use the question form and say “Would you please give me a cup of coffee?”

LANGUAGE VARIATION: SOCIOLINGUISTICS Languages Versus Dialects

The number of languages spoken around the world is somewhat difficult to pin down, but we usually see a figure between 6,000 and 7,000. Why are they so hard to count? The term **language** is commonly used to refer to the idealized “standard” of a variety of speech with a name, such as English, Turkish, Swedish, Swahili, or Urdu. One language is usually considered to be incomprehensible to speakers of another one. The word **dialect** is often applied to a subordinate variety of a language and the common assumption is that we can understand someone who speaks another dialect of our own language.

These terms are not really very useful to describe actual language variation. For example, many of the hundreds of “dialects” spoken

in China are very different from each other and are not mutually comprehensible to speakers of other Chinese “dialects.” The Chinese government promotes the idea that all of them are simply variants of the “Chinese language” because it helps to promote national solidarity and loyalty among Chinese people to their country and reduce regional factionalism. In contrast, the languages of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are considered separate languages, but actually if a Swede, a Dane, and a Norwegian were to have a conversation together, each could use their own language and understand most of what the others say. Does this make them dialects or lan-guages? The Serbian and Croatian languages are considered by their speakers to be separate languages due to distinct political and religious cultural identities. They even employ different writing systems to emphasize difference, but they are essentially the same and easily understandable to each other.

So in the words of linguist John McWhorter, actually “dialects is all there is.”³ What he means by this is that a continuum of language variation is geographically distributed across populations in much the same way that human physical variation is, with the degree of difference between any two varieties increasing across increasing distances. This is the case even across national boundaries. Catalan, the language of northeastern Spain, is closer to the languages of southern France, Provençal and Occitan than any one is to its associated national language, Spanish or French. One language variety blends with the next geographically like the colors of the rainbow. However, the historical influence of colonizing states has affected that natural distribution. Thus, there is no natural “language” with variations called “dialects.” Usually one variety of a language is considered the “standard,” but this choice is based on the social and political prestige of the group that speaks that variety; it has no inherent superiority over the other variants called its “dialects.” The way people speak is an indicator of who they are, where they come from, and what social groups they identify with, as well as what particular situation they find themselves

in, and what they want to accomplish with a specific inter-action.

How Does Language Variation Develop?

Why do people from different regions in the United States speak so differently? Why do they speak differently from the people of England? A number of factors have influenced the development of English dialects, and they are typical causes of dialect variation in other languages as well.

Settlement patterns: The first English settlers to North America brought their own dialects with them. Settlers from different parts of the British Isles spoke different dialects (they still do), and they tended to cluster together in their new homeland. The present-day dialects typical of people in various areas of the United States, such as New England, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware, still reflect these original settlement sites, although they certainly have changed from their original forms.

Migration routes: After they first settled in the United States, some people migrated further west, establishing dialect boundaries as they traveled and settled in new places.

Geographical factors: Rivers, mountains, lakes and islands affected migration routes and settlement locations, as well as the relative isolation of the settlements. People in the Appalachian mountains and on certain islands off the Atlantic coast were relatively isolated from other speakers for many years and still speak dialects that sound very archaic compared with the mainstream.

Language contact: Interactions with other language groups, such as Native Americans, French, Spanish, Germans, and African-Americans, along paths of migration and settlement resulted in mutual borrowing of vocabulary, pronunciation, and some syntax.

Have you ever heard of “Spanglish”? It is a form of Spanish spoken near the borders of the United States that is characterized by a number of words adopted from English and incorporated into the phonological, morphological and syntactic systems of Spanish. For example, the Spanish sentence *Voy a estacionar mi camioneta*, or

“I’m going to park my truck” becomes in Spanglish *Voy a parqurear mi troca*. Many other languages have such English-flavored versions, including Franglais and Chinglish. Some countries, especially France, actively try to prevent the incursion of other languages (especially English) into their language, but the effort is always futile. People will use whatever words serve their purposes, even when the “language police” disapprove. Some Franglais words that have invaded in spite of the authorities protestations include the recently acquired *binge-drink-ing*, *beach*, *e-book*, and *drop-out*, while older ones include *le weekend* and *stop*.

Region and occupation: Rural farming people may continue to use archaic expressions compared with urban people, who have much more contact with contemporary life styles and diverse speech communities.

Social class: Social status differences cut across all regional variations of English. These differences reflect the education and income level of speakers.

Group reference: Other categories of group identity, including ethnicity, national origin of ancestors, age, and gender can be symbolized by the way we speak, indicating in -group versus out-group identity. We talk like other members of our groups, however we define that group, as a means of maintaining social solidarity with other group members. This can include occupational or interest -group jargon, such as medical or computer terms, or surfer talk, as well as pronunciation and syntactic variations. Failure to make linguistic accommodation to those we are speaking to may be interpreted as a kind of symbolic group rejection even if that dialect might be relatively stigmatized as a marker of a disrespected minority group. Most people are able to use more than one style of speech, also called **register**, so that they can adjust depending on who they are interacting with: their family and friends,

their boss, a teacher, or other members of the community.

Linguistic processes: New developments that promote the simplification of pronunciation or syntactic changes to clarify meaning can also contribute to language change.

These factors do not work in isolation. Any language variation is the result of a number of social, historical, and linguistic factors that might affect individual performances collectively and therefore dialect change in a particular speech community is a process that is continual.

Try This: Which of these terms do you use, *pop* versus *soda* versus *coke*? *Pail* versus *bucket*? Do you say “vayse” or “vahze” for the vessel you put flowers in? Where are you from? Can you find out where each term or pronunciation is typically used? Can you find other regional differences like these?

What Is a “Standard” Variety of a Language?

The standard of any language is simply one of many variants that has been given special prestige in the community because it is spoken by the people who have the greatest amount of prestige, power, and (usually) wealth. In the case of English its development has been in part the result of the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth-century and the subsequent increase in printed versions of the language. This then stimulated more than a hundred years of deliberate efforts by grammarians to standardize spelling and grammatical rules. Their decisions invariably favored the dialect spoken by the aristocracy. Some of their other decisions were rather arbitrarily determined by standards more appropriate to Latin, or even mathematics. For example, as it is in many other languages, it was typical among the common people of the time (and it still is among the present-day working classes and in casual speech), to use multiple negative particles in a sentence, like “I *don’t* have *no* money.” Those eighteenth-century grammarians said we must use either *don’t* or *no*, but not both, that is, “I don’t have any money” or “I have no money.” They based this on a mathematical rule that says

that two negatives make a positive. (When multiplying two signed negative numbers, such as -5 times -2 , the result is $+10$.) These grammarians claimed that if we used the double negative, we would really be saying the positive, or “I have money.” Obviously, anyone who utters that double-negative sentence is not trying to say that they have money, but the rule still applies for standard English to this day.

Non-standard varieties of English, also known as **vernaculars**, are usually distinguished from the standard by their inclusion of such stigmatized forms as multiple negatives, the use of the verb form *ain't* (which was originally the normal contraction of *am not*, as in “I ain't,” comparable to “you ar-en't,” or “she isn't”); pronunciation of words like *this* and *that* as *dis* and *dat*; pronunciation of final “-ing” as “-in;” and any other feature that grammarians have decreed as “improper” English.

The standard of any language is a rather artificial, idealized form of language, the language of education. One must learn its rules in school because it is not anyone's true first language. Everyone speaks a dialect, although some dialects are closer to the standard than others. Those that are regarded with the least prestige and respect in society are associated with the groups of people who have the least amount of social prestige. People with the highest levels of education have greater access to the standard, but even they usually revert to their first dialect as the appropriate **register** in the context of an informal situation with friends and family. In other words, no language variety is inherently better or worse than any other one. It is due to social attitudes that people label some varieties as “better” or “proper;” and others as “incorrect” or “bad.” Recall Language Universal 3: “All languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally

capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey.”

In 1972 sociolinguist William Labov did an interesting study in which he looked at the pronunciation of the sound /r/ in the speech of New Yorkers in two different department stores. Many people from that area drop the /r/ sound in words like *fourth* and *floor* (*fawth*, *floah*), but this pronunciation is primarily associated with lower social classes and is not a feature of the approved standard for English, even in New York City. In two different contexts, an upscale store and a discount store, Labov asked customers what floor a certain item could be found on, already knowing it was the fourth floor. He then asked them to repeat their answer, as though he hadn't heard it correctly. He compared the first with the second answers by the same person, and he compared the answers in the expensive store versus the cheaper store. He found 1) that the responders in the two stores differed overall in their pronunciation of this sound, and 2) that the same person may differ between situations of less and more self-consciousness (first versus second answer). That is, people in the upscale store tended to pronounce the /r/, and responders in both stores tended to produce the standard pronunciation more in their second answers in an effort to sound “higher class.” These results showed that the pronunciation or deletion of /r/ in New York correlates with both social status and context.⁴

There is nothing inherently better or worse in either pronunciation; it depends entirely on the social norms of the community. The same /r/ deletion that is stigmatized in New York City is the prestigious, standard form in England, used by the upper class and announcers for the BBC. The pronunciation of the /r/ sound in England is stigmatized because it is used by lower-status people in some industrial cities.

It is important to note that almost everyone has access to a number of different language variations and registers. They know that one variety is appropriate to use with some people in some

situations, and others should be used with other people or in other situations. The use of several language varieties in a particular interaction is known as **code-switching**.

Try This: To understand the importance of using the appropriate register in a given context, the next time you are with a close friend or family member try using the register, or style of speech, that you might use with your professor or a respected member of the clergy. What is your friend's reaction? I do not recommend trying the reverse experiment, using a casual vernacular register with such a respected person (unless they are also a close friend). Why not?

Linguistic Relativity: The Whorf Hypothesis

In the 1920s, Benjamin Whorf was a graduate student studying with linguist Edward Sapir at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Sapir, considered the father of American linguistic anthropology, was responsible for documenting and recording the languages and cultures of many Native American tribes, which were disappearing at an alarming rate. This was due primarily to the deliberate efforts of the United States government to force Native Americans to assimilate into the Euro-American culture. Sapir and his predecessors were well aware of the close relationship between culture and language because each culture is reflected in and influences its language. Anthropologists need to learn the language of the culture they are studying in order to understand the world view of its speakers. Whorf believed that the reverse is also true, that a language affects culture as well, by actually influencing how its speakers think. His hypothesis proposes that the words and the structures of a language influence how its speakers think about the world, how they behave, and

ultimately the culture itself. (See our definition of culture above.) Simply stated, Whorf believed that human beings see the world the way they do because the specific languages they speak influence them to do so. He developed this idea through both his work with Sapir and his work as a chemical engineer for the Hartford Insurance Company investigating the causes of fires.

One of his cases while working for the insurance company was a fire at a business where there were a number of gasoline drums. Those that contained gasoline were surrounded by signs warning employees to be cautious around them and to avoid smoking near them. The workers were always careful around those drums. On the other hand, empty gasoline drums were stored in another area, but employees were more careless there. Someone tossed a cigarette or lighted match into one of the “empty” drums, it went up in flames, and started a fire that burned the business to the ground. Whorf theorized that the meaning of the word *empty* implied to the worker that “nothing” was there to be cautious about so the worker behaved accordingly. Unfortunately, an “empty” gasoline drum may still contain fumes, which are more flammable than the liquid itself.

Whorf’s studies at Yale involved working with Native American languages, including Hopi. The Hopi language is quite different from English, in many ways. For example, let’s look at how the Hopi language deals with time. Western languages (and cultures) view time as a flowing river in which we are being carried continuously away from a past, through the present, and into a future. Our verb systems reflect that concept with specific tenses for past, present, and future. We think of this concept of time as universal, that all humans see it the same way. A Hopi speaker has very different ideas and the structure of their language both reflects and shapes the way they think about time. The Hopi language has no present, past, or future tense. Instead, it divides the world into what Whorf called the manifested and unmanifest domains. The manifested domain deals

with the physical universe, including the present, the immediate past and future; the verb system uses the same basic structure for all of them. The unmanifest domain involves the remote past and the future, as well as the world of desires, thought, and life forces. The set of verb forms dealing with this domain are consistent for all of these areas, and are different from the manifested ones. Also, there are no words for hours, minutes, or days of the week.

Native Hopi speakers often had great difficulty adapting to life in the English speaking world when it came to being “on time” for work or other events. It is simply not how they had been conditioned to behave with respect to time in their Hopi world, which followed the phases of the moon and the movements of the sun. In a book about the Abenaki who lived in Vermont in the mid-1800s, Trudy Ann Parker described their concept of time, which very much resembled that of the Hopi and many of the other Native American tribes. “They called one full day a sleep, and a year was called a winter. Each month was referred to as a moon and always began with a new moon. An Indian day wasn’t divided into minutes or hours. It had four time periods—sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Each season was determined by the budding or leafing of plants, the spawning of fish or the rutting time for animals. Most Indians thought the white race had been running around like scared rabbits ever since the invention of the clock.”⁵

The **lexicon**, or vocabulary, of a language is an inventory of the items a culture talks about and has categorized in order to make sense of the world and deal with it effectively. For example, modern life is dictated for many by the need to travel by some kind of vehicle—cars, trucks, SUVs, trains, buses, etc. We therefore have thousands of words to talk about them, including types of vehicles, models, brands, or parts.

The most important aspects of each culture are similarly reflected in the lexicon of its language. Among the societies living in the islands of Oceania in the Pacific, fish have great economic and

cultural importance. This is reflected in the rich vocabulary that describes all aspects of the fish and the environments that islanders depend on for survival. For example, in Palau there are about 1,000 fish species and Palauan fishermen knew, long before biologists existed, details about the anatomy, behavior, growth patterns and habitat of most of them—in many cases far more than modern biologists know even today. Much of fish behavior is related to the tides and the phases of the moon. Throughout Oceania, the names given to certain days of the lunar months reflect the likelihood of successful fishing. For example, in the Caroline Islands, the name for the night before the new moon is *otolol*, which means “to swarm.” The name indicates that the best fishing days cluster around the new moon. In Hawaii and Tahiti two sets of days have names containing the particle *`ole* or *`ore*; one occurs in the first quarter of the moon and the other in the third quarter. The same name is given to the prevailing wind during those phases. The words mean “nothing,” because those days were considered bad for fishing as well as planting.

Parts of Whorf’s hypothesis, known as **linguistic relativity**, were controversial from the beginning, and still are among some linguists. Yet Whorf’s ideas now form the basis for an entire sub-field of cultural anthropology: cognitive or psychological anthropology. A number of studies have been done that support Whorf’s ideas. Linguist George Lakoff’s work looks at the pervasive existence of metaphors in everyday speech that can be said to predispose a speaker’s world view and attitudes on a variety of human experiences.⁶ A metaphor is an expression in which one kind of thing is understood and experienced in terms of another entirely unrelated thing; the metaphors in a language can reveal aspects of the culture of its speakers. Take, for example, the concept of an argument. In logic and philosophy, an argument is a discussion involving differing points of view, or a debate. But the conceptual metaphor in American culture can be stated as ARGUMENT IS WAR. This metaphor is reflected in many expressions of the everyday language of American speakers: I *won* the argument. He *shot down*

every point I made. They *attacked* every argument we made. Your point is *right on target*. I had a *fight* with my boyfriend last night. In other words, we use words appropriate for discussing war when we talk about arguments, which are certainly not real war. But we actually think of arguments as a verbal battle that often involve anger, and even violence, which then structures how we argue.

To illustrate that this concept of argument is not universal, Lakoff suggests imagining a culture where an argument is not something to be won or lost, with no strategies for attacking or defending, but rather as a dance where the dancers' goal is to perform in an artful, pleasing way. No anger or violence would occur or even be relevant to speakers of this language, because the metaphor for that culture would be ARGUMENT IS DANCE.

LANGUAGE IN ITS SOCIAL SETTINGS: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

The way we speak can be seen as a marker of who we are and with whom we identify. We talk like the other people around us: where we live, our social class, our region of the country, our ethnicity, and even our gender. These categories are not homogeneous. All New Yorkers do not talk exactly the same; all women do not speak according to stereotypes; all African-Americans do not speak an African-American dialect. No one speaks the same way in all situations and contexts, but there are some consistencies in speaking styles that are associated with many of these categories.

Social Class

As discussed above, people can indicate social class by the way they speak. The closer to the standard version their dialect is, the more they are seen as a member of a higher social class because the dialect reflects a higher level of education. In American culture, social class is defined primarily by income and net worth, and it is difficult (but not impossible) to acquire wealth without a high level of education. However, the speech of people in the higher social classes also varies with the region of the country where they live, because there is no single standard of American English, especially

with respect to pronunciation. An educated Texan will sound different from an educated Bostonian, but they will use the standard version of English from their own region. The lower the social class of a community, the more their language variety will differ from both the standard and from the vernaculars of other regions.

Ethnicity

An ethnicity, or ethnic group, is a group of people who identify with each other based on some combination of shared [cultural heritage, ancestry, history](#), country of origin, [language](#), or dialect. In the United States such groups are frequently referred to as “races,” but there is no such thing as biological race, and this misconception has historically led to racism and discrimination. Because of the social implications and biological inaccuracy of the term “race,” it is often more accurate and appropriate to use the terms ethnicity or ethnic group. A language variety is often associated with an ethnic group when its members use language as a marker of solidarity. They may also use it to distinguish themselves from a larger, sometimes oppressive, language group when they are a minority population.

A familiar example of an oppressed ethnic group with a distinctive dialect is African-Americans. They have a unique history among minorities in the United States, with their centuries-long experience as captive slaves and subsequent decades under Jim Crow laws. (These laws restricted their rights after their emancipation from slavery.) With the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and other laws, African-Americans gained legal rights to access public places and housing, but it is not possible to eliminate racism and discrimination only by passing laws; both still exist among the white majority. It is no longer culturally appropriate to openly express racism, but it is much less frowned upon to express negative attitudes about African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Typically, it is not the language itself that these attitudes are targeting; it is the people who speak it.

As with any language variety, AAVE is a complex, rule-driven, grammatically consistent language variety, a dialect of American

English with a distinctive history. A widely accepted hypothesis of the origins of AAVE is as follows. When Africans were captured and brought to the Americas, they brought their own languages with them. But some of them already spoke a version of English called a **pidgin**. A pidgin is a language that springs up out of a situation in which people who do not share a language must spend extended amounts of time together, usually in a working environment. Pidgins are the only exception to the Language Universal number 3 (all languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey).

There are no primitive languages, but a pidgin is a simplified language form, cobbled together based mainly on one core language, in this case English, using a small number of phonemes, simplified syntactic rules, and a minimal lexicon of words borrowed from the other languages involved. A pidgin has no native speakers; it is used primarily in the environment in which it was created. An English-based pidgin was used as a common language in many areas of West Africa by traders interacting with people of numerous language groups up and down the major rivers. Some of the captive Africans could speak this pidgin, and it spread among them after the slaves arrived in North America and were exposed daily to English speakers. Eventually, the use of the pidgin expanded to the point that it developed into the original forms of what has been called a Black English plantation **creole**. A creole is a language that develops from a pidgin when it becomes so widely used that children acquire it as one of their first languages. In this situation it becomes a more fully complex language consistent with Universal number 3.

All African-Americans do not speak AAVE, and people other than African-Americans also speak it. Anyone who grows up in an area where their friends speak it may be a speaker of AAVE like the

rapper Eminem, a white man who grew up in an African-American neighborhood in Detroit. Present-day AAVE is not homogeneous; there are many regional and class variations. Most variations have several features in common, for instance, two phonological features: the dropped /r/ typical of some New York dialects, and the pronunciation of the “th” sound of words like *this* and *that* as a /d/ sound, *dis* and *dat*. Most of the features of AAVE are also present in many other English dialects, but those dialects are not as severely stigmatized as AAVE is. It is interesting, but not surprising, that AAVE and southern dialects of white English share many features. During the centuries of slavery in the south, African-American slaves outnumbered whites on most plantations. Which group do you think had the most influence on the other group’s speech? The African-American community itself is divided about the acceptability of AAVE. It is probably because of the historical oppression of African-Americans as a group that the dialect has survived to this day, in resistance to the majority white society’s disapproval.

Language and Gender

In any culture that has differences in gender role expectations—and all cultures do—there are differences in how people talk based on their sex and gender identity. These differences have nothing to do with biology. Children are taught from birth how to behave appropriately as a male or a female in their culture, and different cultures have different standards of behavior. It must be noted that not all men and women in a society meet these standards, but when they do not they may pay a social price. Some societies are fairly tolerant of violations of their standards of gendered behavior, but others are less so.

In the United States, men are generally expected to speak in a low, rather monotone pitch; it is seen as masculine. If they do not sound sufficiently masculine, American men are likely to be negatively labeled as effeminate. Women, on the other hand, are freer to use their entire pitch range, which they often do when expressing emotion, especially excitement. When

a woman is a television news announcer, she will modulate the pitch of her voice to a sound more typical of a man in order to be perceived as more credible. Women tend to use **minimal responses** in a conversation more than men. These are the vocal indications that one is listening to a speaker, such as *m-hm*, *yeah*, *I see*, *wow*, and so forth. They tend to face their conversation partners more and use more eye contact than men. This is one reason women often complain that men do not listen to them.

Deborah Tannen, a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., has done research for many years on language and gender. Her basic finding is that in conversation women tend to use styles that are relatively cooperative, to emphasize an equal relationship, while men seem to talk in a more competitive way in order to establish their positions in a hierarchy. She emphasizes that both men and women may be cooperative and competitive in different ways.⁷

Other societies have very different standards for gendered speech styles. In Madagascar, men use a very flowery style of talk, using proverbs, metaphors and riddles to indirectly make a point and to avoid direct confrontation. The women on the other hand speak bluntly and say directly what is on their minds. Both admire men's speech and think of women's speech as inferior. When a man wants to convey a negative message to someone, he will ask his wife to do it for him. In addition, women control the marketplaces where tourists bargain for prices because it is impossible to bargain with a man who will not speak directly. It is for this reason that Malagasy women are relatively independent economically.

In Japan, women were traditionally expected to be subservient to men and speak using a "fem-inine" style, appropriate for their position as wife and mother, but the Japanese culture has been changing in recent decades so more and more women are joining

the work force and achieving positions of relative power. Such women must find ways of speaking to maintain their feminine identities and at the same time express their authority in interactions with men, a challenging balancing act. Women in the United States do as well, to a certain extent. Even Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of England, took speech therapy lessons to “feminize” her language use while maintaining an expression of authority.

The Deaf Culture and Signed Languages

Deaf people constitute a linguistic minority in many societies worldwide based on their common experience of life. This often results in their identification with a local Deaf culture. Such a culture may include shared beliefs, attitudes, values, norms, and values, like any other culture, and it is invariably marked by communication through the use of a sign language. It is not enough to be physically deaf (spelled with a lower case “d”) to belong to a Deaf culture (written with a capital “D”). In fact, one does not even need to be deaf. Identification with a Deaf culture is a personal choice. It can include family members of deaf people or anyone else who associates with deaf people, as long as the community accepts them. Especially important, members of Deaf culture are expected to be competent communicators in the sign language of the culture. In fact, there have been profoundly deaf people who were not accepted into the local Deaf community because they could not sign. In some deaf schools, at least in the United States, the practice has been to teach deaf children how to lip read and speak orally, and to prevent them from using a signed system. They were expected to blend in with the hearing community as much as possible. This is called the **oralist approach** to education, but it is considered by members of the Deaf community to be a threat to the existence of their culture. For the same reason, the development of [cochlear implants](#), which can restore hearing for some deaf children, has been controversial in U.S. Deaf communities. The members often have a positive attitude toward their deafness and do not consider

it to be a disability. To them, regaining hearing represents disloyalty to the group and a desire to leave it.

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are over 200 distinct sign languages in the world, which are not mutually comprehensible. They are all considered by linguists to be true languages, consistent with linguistic definitions of all human languages. They differ only in the fact that they are based on a gestural-visual rather than a vocal-auditory sensory mode. Each is a true language with basic units comparable to phonemes but composed of hand positions, shapes, and movements, plus some facial expressions. Each has its own unique set of morphemes and grammatical rules. American Sign Language (ASL), too, is a true language separate from English; it is not English on the hands. Like all other signed languages, it is possible to sign with a word-for-word translation from English, using finger spelling for some words, which is helpful in teaching the deaf to read, but they prefer their own language, ASL, for ordinary interactions. Of course, Deaf culture identity intersects with other kinds of [cultural identity](#), like nationality, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation, so each Deaf culture is not only small but very diverse.

LANGUAGE CHANGE: HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

Recall the language universal stating that all languages change over time. In fact, it is not possible to keep them from doing so. How and why does this happen? The study of how languages change is known as **historical linguistics**. The processes, both historical and linguistic, that cause language change can affect all of its systems: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic.

Historical linguists have placed most of the languages of the world into **taxonomies**, groups of languages classified together based on words that have the same or similar meanings. Language taxonomies create something like a family tree of languages. For example, words in the Romance family of languages, called sister languages, show great similarities to each other because they have

all de-ri-ved from the same “mother” language, Latin (the language of Rome). In turn, Latin is considered a “sister” language to Sanskrit (once spoken in India and now the mother language of many of India’s modern languages, and still the language of the Hindu religion) and classical Greek. Their “mother” language is called “Indo-European,” which is also the mother (or grandmother!) language of almost all the rest of European languages.

Let’s briefly examine the history of the English language as an example of these processes of change. England was originally populated by Celtic peoples, the ancestors of today’s Irish, Scots, and Welsh. The Romans invaded the islands in the first-century AD, bringing their Latin language with them. This was the edge of their empire; their presence there was not as strong as it was on the European mainland. When the Roman Empire was defeated in about 500 AD by Germanic speaking tribes from northern Europe (the “barbarians”), a number of those related Germanic languages came to be spoken in various parts of what would become England. These included the languages of the Angles and the Saxons, whose names form the origin of the term Anglo-Saxon and of the name of England itself—Angle-land. At this point, the languages spoken in England included those Germanic lan-guages, which gradually merged as various dialects of English, with a small influence from the Celtic languages, some Latin from the Romans, and a large influence from Viking invaders. This form of English, generally referred to as **Old English**, lasted for about 500 years. In 1066 AD, England was invaded by William the Conqueror from Normandy, France. New French rulers brought the French language. French is a Latin-based language, and it is by far the greatest source of the Latin-based words in English today; almost 10,000 French words were adopted into the English of the time pe-riod. This was the beginning of **Middle English**, which lasted another 500 years or so.

The change to **Modern English** had two main causes. One was the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, which

resulted in a deliberate effort to standardize the various dialects of English, mostly in favor of the dialect spoken by the elite. The other source of change, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was a major shift in the pronunciation of many of the vowels. Middle English words like *hus* and *ut* came to be pronounced *house* and *out*. Many other vowel sounds also changed in a similar manner.

None of the early forms of English are easily recognizable as English to modern speakers. Here is an example of the first two lines of the Lord's Prayer in Old English, from 995 AD, before the Norman Invasion:

*Fæder ūre, ðū ðē eart on heofonum,
Sī ðīn nama gehālgod.*

Here are the same two lines in Middle English, English spoken from 1066 AD until about 1500 AD.

These are taken from the Wycliffe Bible in 1389 AD:

*Our fadir that art in heuenes,
halwid be thi name.*

The following late Middle English/early Modern English version from the 1526 AD Tyndale Bible, shows some of the results of grammarians' efforts to standardize spelling and vocabulary for wider distribution of the printed word due to the invention of the printing press:

*O oure father which arte in heven,
halowed be thy name.*

And finally, this example is from the King James Version of the Bible, 1611 AD, in the early Modern English language of Shakespeare. It is almost the same archaic form that modern Christians use.

*Our father which art in heauen,
hallowed be thy name.*⁸

Over the centuries since the beginning of Modern English, it has been further affected by exposure to other languages and dialects worldwide.⁹ This exposure brought about new words and changed meanings of old words. More changes to the sound systems resulted from phonological processes that may or may not be attributable to the influence of other languages. Many other changes, especially

in recent decades, have been brought about by cultural and technological changes that require new vocabulary to deal with them.

Try This: Just think of all the words we use today that have either changed their primary meanings, or are completely new: mouse and mouse pad, google, app, computer (which used to be a person who computes!), texting, cool, cell, gay. How many more can you think of?

GLOBALIZATION AND LANGUAGE

Globalization is the spread of people, their cultures and languages, products, money, ideas, and information around the world. Globalization is nothing new; it has been happening throughout the existence of humans, but for the last 500 years it has been increasing in its scope and pace, primarily due to improvements in transportation and communication. Beginning in the fifteenth-century, English explorers started spreading their language to colonies in all parts of the world. English is now one of the three or four most widely spoken languages. It has official status in at least 60 countries, and it is widely spoken in many others. Other colonizers also spread their languages, especially Span-ish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Russian. Like English, each has its regional variants. One effect of colonization has often been the suppression of local languages in favor of the language of the more powerful colonizers.

In the past half century, globalization has been dominated by the spread of North American pop-ular culture and language to other countries. Today it is difficult to find a country that does not have American music, movies and television programs, or Coca Cola and McDonald's, or many other artifacts of life in the United States, and the English terms that go with them.

In addition, people are moving from rural areas to cities in their own countries, or they are mi-grating to other countries in unprecedented numbers. Many have moved because they are refugees fleeing violence, or they found it increasingly difficult to

survive economically in their own countries. This mass movement of people has led to the on-going extinction of large numbers of the world's languages as people abandon their home regions and language in order to assimilate into their new homes.

Language Shift, Language Maintenance, and Language Death

Of the approximately 6,000 languages still surviving today, about half the world's more than seven billion people speak only ten. These include Mandarin Chinese, two languages from India, Spanish, English, Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, and German. Many of the rest of the world's languages are spoken by a few thousand people, or even just a few hundred, and most of them are threatened with extinction, called **language death**. It has been predicted that by the end of this century up to 90 percent of the languages spoken today will be gone. The rapid disappearance of so many languages is of great concern to linguists and anthropologists alike. When a language is lost, its associated culture and unique set of knowledge and worldview are lost with it forever. Remember Whorf's hypothesis. An interesting website shows [short videos of the last speakers](#) of several endan-gered languages, including one speaking an African "click language."

Some minority languages are not threatened with extinction, even those that are spoken by a relatively small number of people. Others, spoken by many thousands, may be doomed. What determines which survive and which do not? Smaller languages that are associated with a specific country are likely to survive. Others that are spoken across many national boundaries are also less threatened, such as Quechua, an indigenous language spoken throughout much of South America, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. The great majority of the world's languages are spoken by people with minority status in their countries. After all, there are only about 193 countries in the world, and over 6,000 languages are spoken in them. You can do the math.

The survival of the language of a given speech community is ultimately based on the accumulation of individual decisions by its speakers to continue using it or to abandon it. The abandonment

of a language in favor of a new one is called **language shift**. These decisions are usually influenced by the society's prevailing attitudes. In the case of a minority speech community that is surrounded by a more powerful majority, an individual might keep or abandon the native language depending on a complex array of factors. The most important factors will be the attitudes of the minority people toward themselves and their language, and the attitude of the majority toward the minority.

Language represents a marker of identity, an emblem of group membership and solidarity, but that marker may have a downside as well. If the majority look down on the minority as inferior in some way and discriminates against them, some members of the minority group may internalize that attitude and try to blend in with the majority by adopting the majority's culture and language. Others might more highly value their identity as a member of that stigmatized group, in spite of the discrimination by the majority, and continue to speak their language as a symbol of resistance against the more powerful group. One language that is a minority language when spoken in the United States and that shows no sign of dying out either there or in the world at large, is Spanish. It is the primary language in many countries and in the United States it is by far the largest minority language.

A former student of mine, James Kim (pictured in Figure 3 as a child with his brother), illustrates some of the common dilemmas a child of immigrants might go through as he loses his first language. Although he was born in California, he spoke only Korean for the first six years of his life. Then he went to school, where he was the only Korean child in his class. He quickly learned English, the language of instruction and the language of his classmates. Under peer pres-

sure, he began refusing to speak Korean, even to **Figure 3:** James

Kim with his brother, his parents, who spoke little English. His parents tried to encourage him to keep his Korean language and culture by sending him to Korean school on Saturdays, but soon he refused to attend. As a college student, James began to regret the loss of the language of his parents, not to mention his relationship with them. He tried to take a college class in Korean, but it was too difficult and time consuming. After consulting with me, he created a six-minute radio piece, called "[First Language Attrition: Why My Parents and I Don't Speak the Same Language](#)," while he was an intern at a National Public Radio station. He interviewed his parents in the piece and was embarrassed to realize he needed an interpreter.¹⁰ Since that time, he has started taking Korean lessons again, and he took his first trip to Korea with his family during the summer of 2014. He was very excited about the prospect of reconnecting with his culture, with his first language, and especially with his parents.

The Korean language as a whole is in no danger of extinction, but many Korean speaking communities of immigrants in the United States, like other minority language groups in many countries, are having difficulty maintaining their language and culture. Those who are the most successful live in large, geographically coherent neighborhoods; they maintain closer ties to their homeland by frequent visits, telephone, and email contact with relatives. There may also be a steady stream of new immigrants from the home country. This is the case with most Spanish speaking communities in the United States, but it is less so with the Korean community.¹¹

Another example of an oppressed minority group that has struggled with language and culture loss is Native Americans. Many were completely wiped out by the European colonizers, some by deliberate genocide but the great majority (up to 90 percent) by the diseases that the white explorers brought with them, against which the Native Americans had no immunity. In the twentieth-century, the American government stopped trying to kill Native Americans but instead

tried to assimilate them into the white majority culture. It did this in part by forcing Native American children to go to boarding schools where they were required to cut their hair, practice Christianity, and speak only English. When they were allowed to go back home years later, they had lost their languages and their culture, but had not become culturally “white” either. The status of Native Americans in the nine-teenth and twentieth-centuries as a scorned minority prompted many to hide their ethnic identities even from their own children. In this way, the many hundreds of original Native American languages in the United States have dwindled to less than 140 spoken today, according to UNESCO. More than half of those could disappear in the next few years, since many are spoken by only a handful of older members of their tribes. However, a number of Native American tribes have recently been making efforts to revive their languages and cultures, with the help of linguists and often by using texts and old recordings made by early linguists like Edward Sapir.

Revitalization of Indigenous Languages

A fascinating example of a tribal language revitalization program is that of the Wampanoag tribe in Massachusetts. The Wampanoag were the Native Americans who met the Puritans when they landed at Plymouth Rock, helped them survive the first winter, and who were with them at the first Thanks-giving. The contemporary descendants of that historic tribe still live in Massachusetts, but bringing back their language was not something Wampanoag people had ever thought possible because no one had spoken it for more than a century.

A young Wampanoag woman named Jessie Little Doe Baird (pictured in Figure 4 with her daughter Mae) was inspired by a series of dreams in which her ancestors spoke to her in their language, which she of course did not understand. She eventually earned a master's degree in Algonquian linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston and launched a project to bring her language back from the dead. This process was made possible by the existence of a large collection of documents, including copies of the King James Bible, written phonetically in Wampanoag during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. She also worked with speakers of languages related to the Algonquian family to help in the reconstruction of the language. The community has established a school to teach the language to the children and promote its use among the entire community. Her daughter Mae is among the first new native speakers of Wampanoag.¹²

How Is the Digital Age Changing Communication?

The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth-century was just the beginning of technological transformations that made the spread of information in European languages and ideas possible across time and space using the printed word. Recent advances in travel and digital technology are rapidly transforming communication; now we can be in contact with almost anyone, anywhere, in seconds. However, it could be said that the new age of instantaneous access to everything and everyone is actually continuing a social divide that started with the printing press.

In the fifteenth century, few people could read and write, so only the tiny educated minority were in a position to benefit from printing. Today, only those who have computers and the skills to use them, the educated and relatively wealthy, have access to this brave new world of communication. Some schools have adopted computers and tablets for their students, but these schools are more often found in wealthier neighborhoods. Thus, technology is

continuing to contribute to the growing gap between the economic haves and the have-nots.

There is also a digital generation gap between the young, who have grown up with computers, and the older generations, who have had to learn to use computers as adults. These two generations have been referred to as digital natives and digital immigrants.¹³ The difference between the two groups can be compared to that of children versus adults learning a new language; learning is accomplished much more easily by the young.

Computers, and especially social media, have made it possible for millions of people to connect with each other for purposes of political activism, including “Occupy Wall Street” in the United States and the “Arab Spring” in the Middle East. Some anthropologists have introduced computers and cell phones to the people they studied in remote areas, and in this way they were able to stay in contact after finishing their ethnographic work. Those people, in turn, were now able to have greater access to the outside world.

Facebook and Twitter are becoming key elements in the survival of a number of endangered indigenous languages. Facebook is now available in over 70 languages, and Twitter in about 40 languages. For example, a website has been created that seeks to preserve *Anishinaabemowin*, an endangered Native American language from Michigan.

The language has 8,000-10,000 speakers, but most of the native speakers are over 70 years old, which means the language is threatened with extinction. Modern social media are an ideal medium to help encourage young people to communicate in their language to keep it alive.¹⁴

Clearly, language and communication through modern technology are in the forefront of a rapidly changing world, for better or for worse. It's anybody's guess what will happen next.

discussion questions

1. How do you think modern communication technologies like cell phones and computers are changing how people communicate? Is the change positive or negative?
2. How is language related to social and economic inequality? Do you think that attitudes about language varieties have affected you and/or your family?
3. How has the use of specific terms in the news helped to shape public opinion? For example, what are the different implications of the terms *terrorist* versus *freedom fighter*? *Downsizing* versus *firing* staff at a company? Euphemistic terms used in reference to war include *friendly fire*, *pacification*, *collateral damage*? Can you think of other examples?
4. Think about the different styles you use when speaking to your siblings and parents, your friends, your significant other, your professors, your grandparents. What are some of the specific differences among these styles? What do these differences indicate about the power relationships between you and others?

Arbitrariness: the relationship between a symbol and its referent (meaning), in which there is no obvious connection between them.

Bound morpheme: a unit of meaning that cannot stand alone; it must be attached to another morpheme.

Closed system: a form of communication that cannot create new meanings or messages; it can only convey pre-programmed (innate) messages.

Code-switching: using two or more language varieties in a particular interaction.

Creole: a language that develops from a pidgin when the pidgin becomes so widely used that children acquire it as one of their first languages. Creoles are more fully complex than pidgins.

Critical age range hypothesis: research suggesting that a child will gradually lose the ability to acquire language naturally and without effort if he or she is not exposed to other people speaking a language until past the age of puberty. This applies to the acquisition of a second language as well.

Cultural transmission: the process by which aspects of culture are passed from person to person; often generation to generation; a feature of some species' communication systems.

Design features: descriptive characteristics of the communication systems of all species, including that of humans, proposed by linguist Charles Hockett to serve as a definition of human language.

Dialect: a variety of speech. The term is often applied to a subordinate variety of a language. Speakers of two dialects of the same language do not necessarily always understand each other. **Discreteness:** a feature of human speech that can be isolated from others.

Displacement: the ability to communicate about things that are outside of the here and now. **Duality of patterning:** at the first level of patterning, meaningless discrete sounds of speech are combined to form words and parts of words that carry meaning. In the second level of patterning, those units of meaning are recombined to form an infinite possible number of longer messages such as phrases and sentences.

Gesture-call system: a system of non-verbal communication using varying combinations of sound, body language, scent, facial expression, and touch, typical of great apes and other primates, as well as humans.

Historical linguistics: the study of how languages change.

Interchangeability: the ability of all individuals of the species to both send and receive messages; a feature of some species' communication systems.

Kinesics: the study of all forms of human body language.

Language: an idealized form of speech, usually referred to as the standard variety.

Language death: the total extinction of a language.

Language shift: when a community stops using their old language and adopts a new one.

Language universals: characteristics shared by all linguists.

Larynx: the voice box, containing the vocal bands that produce the voice.

Lexicon: the vocabulary of a language.

Linguistic relativity: the idea that the structures and words of a language influence how its speakers think, how they behave, and ultimately the culture itself (also known as the Whorf Hypothesis). **Middle English:** the form of the English language spoken from 1066 AD until about 1500 AD.

Minimal response: the vocal indications that one is listening to a speaker.

Modern English: the form of the English language spoken from about 1500 AD to the present.

Morphemes: the basic meaningful units in a language.

Morphology: the study of the morphemes of language.

Old English: English language from its beginnings to about 1066 AD.

Open system: a form of communication that can create an infinite number of new messages; a feature of human language only.

Oralist approach: an approach to the education of deaf children that emphasizes lip reading and speaking orally while discouraging use of signed language.

Palate: the roof of the mouth.

Paralanguage: those characteristics of speech beyond the actual words spoken, such as pitch, loudness, tempo.

Pharynx: the throat cavity, located above the larynx.

Phonemes: the basic meaningless sounds of a language.

Phonology: the study of the sounds of language.

Pidgin: a simplified language that springs up out of a situation in which people who do not share a language must spend extended amounts of time together.

Pragmatic function: the useful purpose of a communication. Usefulness is a feature of all species' communication systems.

Pragmatics: how social context contributes to meaning in an interaction.

Productivity/creativity: the ability to produce and understand messages that have never been expressed before.

Proxemics: the study of the social use of space, including the amount of space an individual tries to maintain around himself in interactions with others.

Register: a style of speech that varies depending on who is speaking to whom and in what context. **Semanticity:** the meaning of signs in a communication system; a feature of all species' communication systems.

Semantics: how meaning is conveyed at the word and phrase level.

Speech act: the intention or goal of an utterance; the intention may be different from the dictionary definitions of the words involved.

Standard: the variant of any language that has been given special prestige in the community.

Symbol: anything that serves to refer to something else.

Syntax: the rules by which a language combines morphemes into larger units.

Taxonomies: a system of classification.

Universal grammar (UG): a theory developed by linguist Noam Chomsky suggesting that a basic template for all human languages is embedded in our genes.

Unbound morpheme: a morpheme that can stand alone as a separate word.

Vernaculars: non-standard varieties of a language, which are usually distinguished from the standard by their inclusion of stigmatized forms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Light has been a lecturer in linguistic and cultural anthropology at California State University Long Beach since 1995. During much of that period she also taught as adjunct professor at Cypress College, Santa Ana College, Rancho Santiago College, and Golden West College, all in Orange County, California. She was a consultant to Coast-line Community College District in the production of thirty-five educational videos that were used in three series, including the cultural anthropology series *Our Diverse World*. Her main areas of interest have been indigenous language loss and maintenance, language and gender, and first language attrition in the children of immigrants.

NOTES

1. You can find a documentary film about Genie via Google or YouTube under the title *Genie, Secret of the Wild Child*, a NOVA production.
2. Adapted here from Nick Cipollone, Steven Keiser, and Shravan Vasishth, *Language Files* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1998), 20–23.
3. John McWhorter, *The Power of Babel: A Natural History of Language* (New York: Times Books, Henry Holt, 2001), 53.
4. William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
5. Trudy Ann Parker, *Aunt Sarah, Woman of the Dawnland* (Lancaster, NH, Dawnland Publications 1994), 56.
6. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4–5.
7. For more information see Deborah Tannen, *Gender and Discourse* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996). Or, Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010).
8. From Wikipedia: History of the Lord's Prayer in English.
9. You can hear the entire prayers in Old English and Middle English read out loud in YouTube files: [The Lord's Prayer in Old English from the Eleventh Century](#), and [The Lord's Prayer/Preier of Oure Lord in Recorded Middle English](#).
10. You can hear the 6-minute piece at <http://www.scpr.org/programs/offramp/2012/04/05/25912/first-language-attrition-why-my-parents-and-i-dont/>
11. From François Grosjean, *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), chapter two.
12. Filmmaker Anne Makepeace created a documentary of the story, called *We Still Live Here: Âs Nutayuneân*, which PBS broadcast in 2010. You can watch the clips from the video online.
13. Terms first coined by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born*

Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Native
(New York, Basic Books, 2008).

14. Lydia Emmanouilidou, For Rare Languages, Social Media Provide New Hope. <http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2014/07/26/333732206/for-rare-languages-social-media-provide-new-hope>

15. Chapter 1: The Culture Concept Study Guide

The Culture Concept

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Armchair anthropology
- Boas
- Common themes in stories
- Cultural determinism
- Cultural evolutionism
- Cultural relativism
- Empirical methodology
- Enculturation
- Ethical principles in anthropology
- Ethnocentrism
- European colonial era
- Frazer
- Functionalism
- Geertz (and definition of culture)
- Going native
- Gulliver's Travels (written by Jonathan Swift)
- Holism
- Kinship
- Malinowski
- Participant observation
- Radcliffe-Brown
- Salvage anthropology

- Stories Structuralism
- The Other
- Tylor (and definition of culture)

16. Chapter 2: Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology Study Guide

Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Argonauts of the Western Pacific
- Coming of Age in Samoa
- Contested Identity
- Cultural relativism
- Diaspora
- Emic
- Ethical Guidelines
- Ethnocentrism
- Ethnographic fieldwork sites
- Ethnographic research strategy
- Ethnography
- Etic
- Four-field approach to anthropology
- Genealogical Method
- Holistic Perspective
- Indigenous
- Inductive and Deductive Research Strategies
- Informed Consent

- Interpretive Anthropology
- Key informants
- Kinship
- Kula Ring
- Land tenure
- Life History
- Malinowski
- Margaret Mead
- Noble savage
- Participant
- Observation
- Polyvocalic Texts
- Qualitative: anthropological research
- Quantitative: anthropological research
- Remittances
- Rosaldo
- Salvage Anthropology
- Thick description
- Undocumented

17. Chapter 3: Language Study Guide

Language

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Arbitrariness
- Bound morpheme
- Closed system
- Code-switching
- Colonialism
- Creole
- Critical age range hypothesis
- Design features
- Dialect
- Discreteness
- Displacement
- Duality of patterning
- Gendered speech patterns
- Gesture-call system
- Historical linguistics
- Kinesics Lakoff
- Language as a marker of solidarity
- Language shift
- Language universals
- Lexicon
- Linguistic relativity
- Middle English

- Modern English
 - Morphemes
 - Old English
 - Open system
 - Oralist approach
 - Palate
 - Paralanguage
 - Pharynx
 - Phoneme
 - Phonology
 - Pidgin
 - Pragmatic function
 - Pragmatics
-

18. Virtual Field Trip: Australian Aboriginal Culture, Art, History, Music

Virtual Field Trip: Australian Aboriginal Culture, Art, History, Music

Australia has always had a mix of cultures and people although not in the same way as it does today.

-

[A photograph of The Seven Peace Keepers. Seven cylindrical statues in traditional aboriginal design and color.](#)

[A photograph of Glen Namundja painting.](#)

[Primitive drawing of a kangaroo.](#)

[Man in aboriginal dress playing a didgeridoo.](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have changed and developed over time. However, European colonisation of Australia brought very rapid changes to Aboriginal society and dramatically affected Aboriginal land and the ways people lived. Australia has always had a mix of cultures and people although not in the same way as it does today.

Before 1788 Australia was populated only by the Indigenous people of Australia – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In 1788 Aboriginal people inhabited the whole of Australia and Torres Strait Islanders lived on the islands between Australian and Papua New Guinea, in what is now called the Torres Strait. There were many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities made up of people who spoke different languages with various cultural beliefs, practices and traditions.

Before 1788 there were approximately 700 languages spoken throughout Australia with an estimated population of 750 000 people. Today Indigenous people make up 2% of the entire Australian population (about 410 000 people). The number of Aboriginal people has changed since European settlement because of the effects of removal of people from traditional lands and the impact of cities and towns on populations...

Australia today is a much different place from when the First Fleet arrived in 1788 with convicts and marines. Just as in the past, Indigenous Australians live throughout Australia but now this includes cities, towns, the coast, rural areas and the outback. There is no one Indigenous culture but a mixture of contemporary and traditional thoughts, ways and practices.

[Introduction to Indigenous Australia, Australian Museum](#)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

Each of the videos has a caption at the beginning: “May contain names, images or voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” This respects Indigenous community cultural protocols related to deceased persons. For more information, see: [Indigenous Cultural Protocols](#)

Be sure to check out the “Education Notes” for each of the videos; they contain great background information!

- Creative Spirits: Get Aboriginal Culture Without Agenda “I

think anybody who does a course on Aboriginal culture just sees Australia so differently. It's very enlightening and gives another dimension to being Australian. —Anna Bell, coordinator Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater

- [History](#)
- [Spirituality](#)
- [Arts](#)

19. Virtual Field Trip: American Indian Code Talkers

Virtual Field Trip: American Indian Code Talkers

During World War I and World War II, hundreds of American Indians joined the United States armed forces and used words from their traditional tribal languages as weapons.

Select an image to view larger:

[6 Choctaw Indians in WWII military uniforms](#)

[A group of Choctaw men pose around a large American flag in civilian dress](#)

-

[A group of Comanche soldiers stading around two men in Native American dress](#)

[Man in aboriginal dress playing a didgeridoo](#)

[Sample code for Planes in Navajo Code: Planes, wo tah de ne ih, airforce: Dive Bomber Gini, Chicken Hawk: Torpedo Plane, Tas Chizzie, Swallow: Orbs Plan, ne as jah, owl: Fighter plane, de he tih hi, humming bird: Bomber Plane, jay sho, buzzard: Patrol Plane ga gih, crow: Transport atsah, eagle.](#)

[Sample code for ships in Navajo Code: Ships, toh-dineh-ih, sea force: battleship, lo-tso, whale; aircraft tsidi-moffa-ye-hi bird carrier; submarine besh-lo iron fish; mine sweeper cha beaver; destroyer ca-lo shark; transport dineh-nay-ye-hi man carrier; cruiser lo-tso-yazzie small whale; mosquito boat tse-e mosquito](#)

The United States military asked them to develop secret battle communications based on their languages—and America's enemies

never deciphered the coded messages they sent. “Code Talkers,” as they came to be known after World War II, are twentieth-century American Indian warriors and heroes who significantly aided the victories of the United States and its allies.” (from *Native Words, Native Warriors*)

So we start talking about different things, animals, sea creatures, birds, eagles, hawks, and all those domestic animals. Why don't we use those names of different animals—from A to Z. So A, we took a red ant that we live with all the time. B we took a bear, Yogi the Bear, C a Cat, D a Dog, E an Elk, F, Fox, G, a goat and so on down the line.”

—Chester Nez, Navajo Code Talker, National Museum of the American Indian interview, 2004

The idea of using American Indians who were fluent in both their traditional tribal language and in English to send secret messages in battle was first put to the test in World War I with the Choctaw Telephone Squad and other Native communications experts and messengers. However, it wasn't until World War II that the US military developed a specific policy to recruit and train American Indian speakers to become code talkers. (WWII Museum, New Orleans)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Website: [Navajo Code Talker](http://NavajoCodeTalker), Navajopeople.org

- Website: [Native Words, Native Warriors](#) Smithsonian Institute exhibition
This site has information about the many American Indian tribes who were Code Talkers.
- Article: [Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code](#), Central intelligence Agency Website
- Video: [Chester Nez: The Last of the Original Navajo Codetalkers](#), video from the American Legion
- Video: [Navajo Code Talkers Honored](#), 43rd U.S. President George W. Bush presented the Navajo Code Talkers their Congressional Gold Medals at the Capital Rotunda, Washington, DC., Courtesy of CSPAN2.

20. Virtual Field Trip: Traditional Foods and Medicines, Ethnobotany

Where do you want to go?

Virtual Field Trip: Traditional Foods and Medicines, Ethnobotany

For generations, major sustenance for the members of the Tohono O'odham tribe was found in native plants of the southeastern Arizona desert. The Tohono O'odham Nation encompasses four non-contiguous land bases located south of Casa Grande on parts of Pinal, Pima and Maricopa Counties before continuing south into Mexico. A culture with strong ties to the land, the O'odham celebration of growth and harvest cycles is an enduring part of their identity. However, tribal agriculture has been in steep decline throughout the twentieth century. As groups once sustained by agriculture lose their farming traditions, heritage is lost as well. Also at risk is independent access to food and the preservation of the traditional crops and culinary practices. ArizonaExperience.org

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or research another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Video: [Tohono O'odham Food System](#)
- Video: [What the people of the Amazon know that you don't](#), TedGlobal

2I. Virtual Field Trip: Know Your Sources

KNOW YOUR SOURCES

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING SOURCES

When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From tweets to newspaper articles, this tool provides a brief description of each and breaks down 6 factors of what to consider when selecting a source.

Tweets

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics that enables brief dialogue between distinct groups of people across geographic, political, cultural and economic boundaries.

Tumblr blog

An avenue for sharing both developed and unpolished ideas and interests with a niche community with relative ease.

Youtube video

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos that are shared rapidly and widely.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed of daily events, sports, and current news. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Popular magazine

A glossy compilation of informative, entertaining stories with unique themes intended for a specific interests—or lifestyles—from celebrities to gardening to gaming.

Professional journal

A collection of work-related articles that keep professionals up-to-date on the latest trends, breakthroughs and controversies in their field.

Scholarly journal

A collection of analytic reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

A book in which the information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author, and the editor pulls them all together into a whole. Often these types of books have a narrow and specific focus.

Encyclopedia

A book or set of books giving information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject. Some are intended as an entry point into research for a general audience, some provide detailed information. Most list relevant books and articles for further information on a topic.

TOTAL NUMBER PUBLISHED PER DAY

When an idea can be published quickly, we end up with many ideas that we have to sift through before we find what we're looking for. As the selectivity of a medium increases, the value and uniqueness of the contribution typically increases too. However, on the flip side,

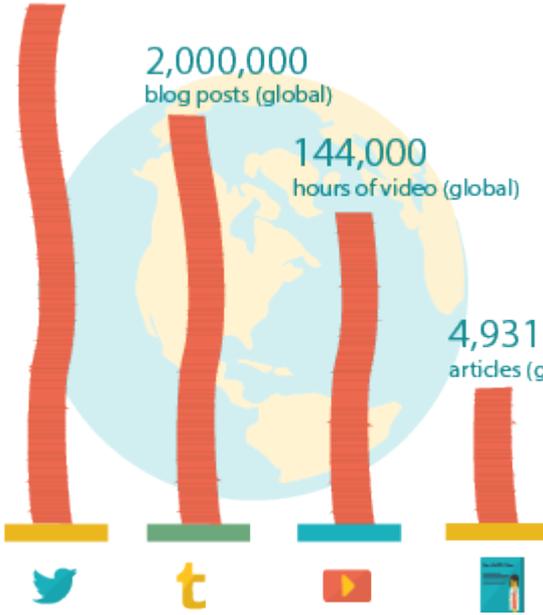
when the selectivity increases, fewer diverse ideas or voices may be published.

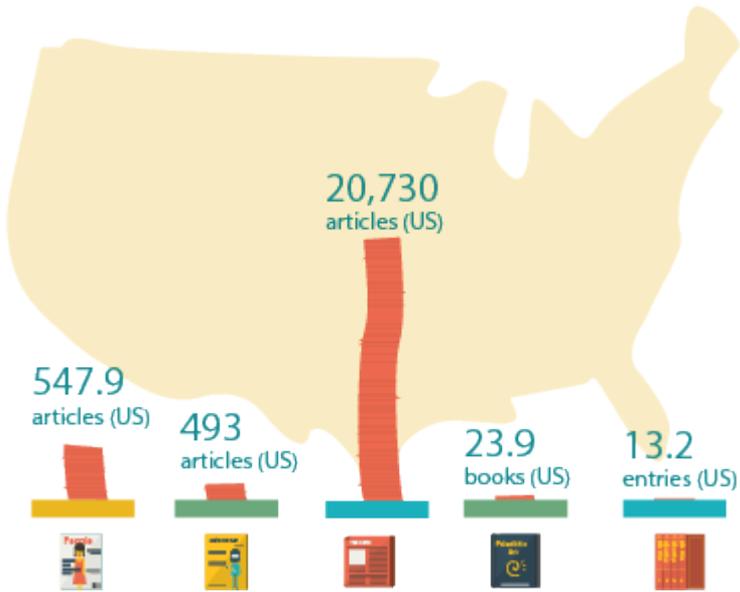
500,000,000
tweets (global)

2,000,000
blog posts (global)

144,000
hours of video (global)

4,931
articles (global)





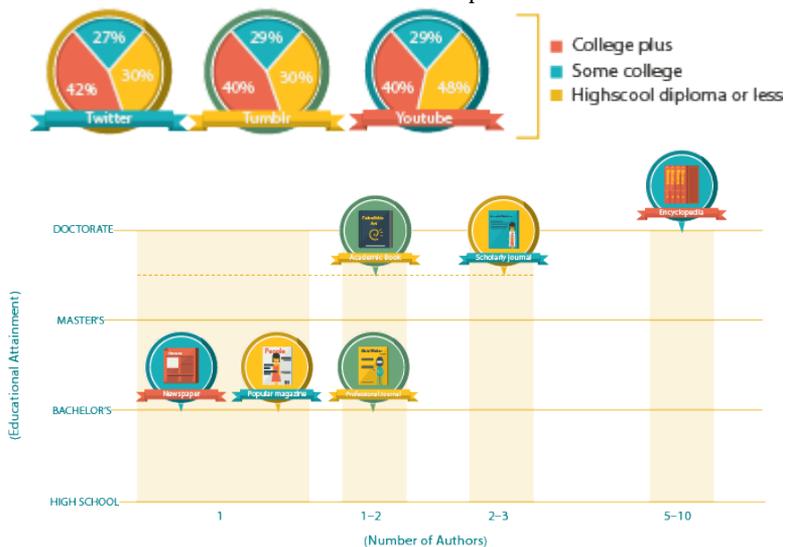
DEGREE OF SCRUTINY BEFORE A SOURCE IS PUBLISHED

Two factors contribute to the amount of scrutiny that a source receives before it might be published: The **number of reviewers** fact-checking the written ideas and the **total time** spent by reviewers as they fact-check the ideas. The more people pulled into the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Youtube, tumblr and twitter enable dialogue with outside “reviewers” after an idea has been published. The comments section of a Youtube video might receive hundreds of comments from outside voices.

DEGREE OF AUTHOR EDUCATION

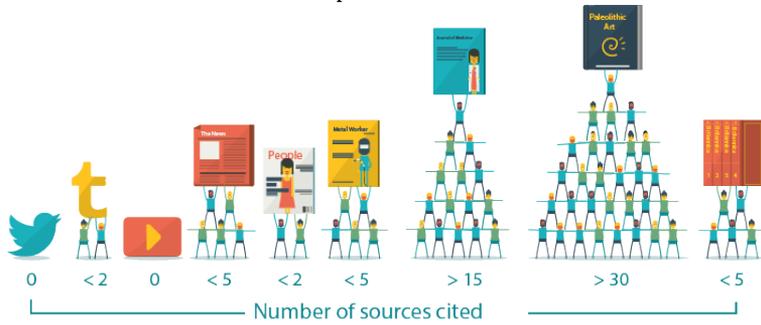
One factor contributing to the amount of knowledge used to produce a source is the **number of authors** collaborating on the article. When more people contribute their viewpoints or ideas to the writing, the quality and breadth are likely strengthened. A second factor to consider is the **number of years of formal education** that the author(s) received prior to writing the article. The more combined education that the authors have, the more knowledgeable we can assume the team of authors to be. What other factors can contribute to author expertise?



NUMBER OF OUTSIDE SOURCES

When an author pulls many outside sources into her writing, she demonstrates familiarity with ideas beyond her own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more

comprehensive and reliable. Below, we show the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.



15, Academic books: >30, Encyclopedias: <5." width="703" height="298">

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER SOURCE

When an source uses more words to convey its points, those words are likely used to document a more thorough, well-reasoned argument that is better supported with existing research or past claims. Below, you will find the typical number of words used by an author when expressing ideas in each source.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Every source makes some assumptions about the reader's knowledge of the subject. The level of technical words and ideas rises when the author is targeting readers in a niche field. In advanced sources, the reader can expect the information and writing to go beyond the basics. When the author is writing for a general audience, terms are typically defined and background

information is provided to make the content understandable to an average reader. Here, we convey the typical level of knowledge assumed by authors for each type of source.

DATA SOURCES

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[Images/En/Peer_review_process.gif](#)

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22. Virtual Field Trip Essay - Assignment

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

Each of the videos has a caption at the beginning: “May contain names, images or voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” This respects Indigenous community cultural protocols related to deceased persons. For more information, see: [Indigenous Cultural Protocols](#)

Be sure to check out the “Education Notes” for each of the videos; they contain great background information!

- Creative Spirits: Get Aboriginal Culture Without Agenda “I think anybody who does a course on Aboriginal culture just sees Australia so differently. It’s very enlightening and gives another dimension to being Australian. —Anna Bell, coordinator Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater
 - [History](#)
 - [Spirituality](#)
 - [Arts](#)

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of the topics from the list below and follow the suggested websites, or select your own [scholarly resources](#).

History and Culture

- Website: [Koori History](#)
- Website: [The AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia](#) The Aboriginal Language Map attempts to represent all of the language or tribal or nation groups of Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates general locations of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group.

Music

- Article: [Treaty by Yothu Yindi – a Trojan horse in the culture wars](#) The Yolngu song never quite achieved what it set out to in the lifetime of its author, but it gave reconciliation in Australia an anthem
- Webpage: [Yothu Yindi](#) Band biography. “They took the ancient song cycles of north-east Arnhem Land – featuring such traditional instruments as the bilma (ironwood clapsticks) and yidaki (didgeridoo or hollow log) – and juxtaposed them with western pop sounds to present a true musical meeting of two diverse cultures. They took traditional Yolngu dance performances – describing the behavior of crocodiles, wallabies, brolga and other fauna of their homelands – and worked them into the context of contemporary performance. The result is a band that’s been hailed as “the most powerful blend of indigenous and modern music to emerge from the

world music scene”.

- Article: [Read the Lyrics of Yothu Yindi](#) Yothu Yindi were best known for the song “Treaty”? about the Hawke government’s broken promise to Indigenous people. Here are the lyrics, with translations.

Rituals and Rites of Passage

- Video Clip: [Blood Brothers – Jardiwarnpa](#) A sweeping aerial view of mountains jutting out of the flat desert-scape. A song of the area plays out in subtitles over the image. An elder tells us about the sacred Ancestor of this area, and his relation to him.
- Website: [Photo Essay: Australian Aboriginal – Initiation and Mourning Rites of Passage](#)

Art

- Website: Artlandish Aboriginal Art Gallery, [The Story of Aboriginal Art](#)
- Article: Smithsonian Magazine, [Contemporary Aboriginal Art](#)
- Video: Shaman Creative, [Gilbert Laurie, Artist](#)

Instructions

Each Module will have a “virtual field trip” assignment, that consists of a visit – to online websites and articles – and a written “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to more deeply explore another culture!

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above.

Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.

- Select a more specific topic to help you dive deeper. Read, watch, and listen to the suggested websites for your topics above, and
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your field trip. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 1. If the field trip focuses on one cultural group, compare and contrast two elements within that culture, such as practices (rituals, art, etc.), or two different time periods
 2. If the field trip covers multiple groups, compare and contrast specific elements of two cultural groups
3. **Then, dig deeper!** Apply these two anthropological fieldwork methods:
 1. Participant observation. Define participant observation. Explain at least two things you would do as part of this activity (2- sentences for each of these). How would this help you learn more about this culture?
 2. Interview. What is one question you would ask a member of that culture? Explain how that would help you learn

more deeply about that culture or practice.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

• Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your desitnation, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Website: [Navajo Code Talker](http://NavajoCodeTalker.com), Navajopeople.org
- Website: [Native Words, Native Warriors](#) Smithsonian Institute exhibition
This site has information about the many American Indian tribes who were were Code Talkers.
- Article: [Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code](#), Central intelligence Agency Website
- Video: [Chester Nez: The Last of the Original Navajo Codetalkers](#), video from the American Legion
- Video: [Navajo Code Talkers Honored](#), 43rd U.S. President George W. Bush presented the Navajo Code Talkers their Congressional Gold Medals at the Capital Rotunda, Washington, DC., Courtesy of CSPAN2.

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose a topic from the list below and follow the suggested websites, or select your own [scholarly resources](#).

WWI

- Article: [WWI The Original Code Talkers](#) Article about the WWI Choctaw Telephone Squad

WWII

- Article and Video: [Comanche Code of Honor](#) Comanche National Museum & Cultural Center

People

- Articles: [Army Code Talkers](#) Biographies of Army Code Talkers
- Video: [Marine Visits Battleground Where Her Grandfather Fought Serving as a Navajo Code Talker](#) Marine Corp Association & Foundation

Language

- Resource: [Navajo Code Talkers Dictionary](#) Naval History and Heritage Command
- Resource: [Learning a Native American Language](#) PowWows.com

Instructions

Each Module will have a “virtual field trip” assignment, that consists of a visit – to online websites and articles – and a written “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to more deeply explore another culture!

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above. Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.
- Select a more specific topic to help you dive deeper. Read, watch, and listen to the suggested websites for your topics above, and
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your field trip. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 1. If the field trip focuses on one cultural group, compare and contrast two elements within that culture, such as practices (rituals, art, etc.), or two

different time periods

2. If the field trip covers multiple groups, compare and contrast specific elements of two cultural groups
3. **Then, dig deeper!**

Apply these two anthropological fieldwork methods:

1. Participant observation. Define participant observation. Explain at least two things you would do as part of this activity (2- sentences for each of these). How would this help you learn more about this culture?
2. Interview. What is one question you would ask a member of that culture? Explain how that would help you learn more deeply about that culture or practice.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

◦ **Your Field Guide**

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of

your destination, or research another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Video: [Tohono O'odham Food System](#)
- Video: [What the people of the Amazon know that you don't](#), TedGlobal

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose a topic from the list below and follow the suggested websites, or select your own [scholarly resources](#).

Tohono O'odham

- Article/Videos: [Traditional Foods and Medicine of the Tohono O'odham Nation](#)
- Video: [Take a Foodie Tour of the Tohono O'odham Swapmeet](#)

Tucson

- Article: [What Makes Tucson Deserving of the United States' First Capital of Gastronomy](#), Smithsonian Magazine
- Article: [Community Spotlight: Native Seeds/SEARCH](#), Edible Baja Magazine

Saguaro Fruit Harvest

- Resource: [Saguaro Fruit: A Traditional Harvest](#),

National Park Service

- Gallery: [Saguaro Fruit Harvest 2014](#), Sonora Desert Museum

When the slide set starts, check to see if the commentary/captions appear, to the right of the photograph. If not, be sure to click the icon for information (letter i in a circle) in the upper right of the screen, to see the commentary for each slide. Enjoy the harvest!

- Article: [Arizona's Best Known Saguaro Fruit Harvester](#)

Medicinal Use of Plants and Herbs

- Journal Article: [Historical Review of Medicinal Plants' Usage](#), US National Library of Health 2012
- Journal Article: [Native American Healing Traditions](#) (Press **Download full-text PDF**), Portman and Garrett 2014
- Journal Article: [Medicinal plants used to treat the most frequent diseases encountered in Ambalabe rural community, Eastern Madagascar](#), US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health
- Journal Article: [Local Knowledge of Plants and their uses among Women in the Bale Mountains, Ethiopia](#), Ethnobotany Research & Applications
- Journal Article: [Introduction of Medicinal Plants Species with the Most Traditional Usage in Alamut Region](#), US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health

Instructions

Each Module will have a “virtual field trip” assignment, that consists of a visit – to online websites and articles – and a written “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to more deeply explore another culture!

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above. Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.
- Select a more specific topic to help you dive deeper. Read, watch, and listen to the suggested websites for your topics above, and
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your field trip. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 1. If the field trip focuses on one cultural group,

compare and contrast two elements within that culture, such as practices (rituals, art, etc.), or two different time periods

2. If the field trip covers multiple groups, compare and contrast specific elements of two cultural groups
3. **Then, dig deeper!**

Apply these two anthropological fieldwork methods:

1. Participant observation. Define participant observation. Explain at least two things you would do as part of this activity (2- sentences for each of these). How would this help you learn more about this culture?
2. Interview. What is one question you would ask a member of that culture? Explain how that would help you learn more deeply about that culture or practice.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

23. Virtual Field Trip Essay - Discussion

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

PART III
MODULE 2

24. Module 2 Introduction

Welcome to Module Two!

As we journey into our next Module, we learn about three more areas that help us to understand the cultures we are studying – and more about ourselves, too!

- **Gender and Sexuality**

Explore the ways in which culture shapes sex/gender and sexuality. Think about the range of possible ways of constructing gender and sexuality by learning about examples from different cultures, including small-scale societies.

- **Race and Ethnicity**

Anthropologists assert that race is a socially constructed concept. In this chapter, think about how ethnicity is different from race, how ethnic groups are different from racial groups, and what is meant by symbolic ethnicity and pan-ethnicity. Consider the history of immigration to the United States, and how different waves of immigrant groups have been perceived as racially different and have shifted popular understandings of “race.” Lastly, think about how the racial and ethnic compositions of professional sports have shifted over time and how those shifts resulted from changing social and cultural circumstances that drew new groups into sports.

- **Religion**

Consider the significance of religion in human cultures, and the theories used to explain the importance of supernatural beliefs in human communities. Examine the four elements of religion (cosmology, belief in the supernatural, rules of behavior, and

rituals) and how each element contributes to religious practices. Learn more about rites of passage, rites of intensification, rites of revitalization, and the purpose of each type of ritual.

Where do you want to go?!

Our Virtual Field Trips continue to offer you new cultures to “visit.” As with the previous field trip, it consists of a visit to online websites and articles – but this one has a new twist...as you write up your “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned – you will also be asked to compare this culture and topic with the one you studied in your first Field Trip (or another option from Field Trip One).

This is part of the holistic and comparative approach used by anthropologists: As we see similarities between cultures, we also see what makes each culture unique. See the options below.

See the [Module 1 Introduction](#) web page for the Virtual Field Trip Rubric.

Module 2 Assignments

Reading

- [Gender and Sexuality](#)
- [Race and Ethnicity](#)
- [Religion](#)

Use the Study Guides as you read the chapters to help you focus on important terms, concepts, people, and places. This will also help you prepare for the quizzes in this module.

Study Guides and Quizzes

- [Gender and Sexuality Study Guide](#)
- [Race and Ethnicity Study Guide](#)
- [Religion Study Guide](#)

There is a 15 question quiz for each chapter. You can find these in the Quizzes tool.

Virtual Field Trip – Where do you want to go?

This Module’s “virtual field trips” continue to offer you a choice of online websites and articles – inviting you to explore the amazing diversity of human experience! You will write a 350 word “Field Trip Essay,” where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to think more deeply and broaden your horizons!

Choose your Virtual Field Trip!

- [Cultural Appropriation](#)
- [Two Spirits](#) (Native American Gender Roles)
- [Traditional Indigenous Dances](#) in North and South America
- [Coming of Age Ceremonies](#)
- [The Ainu](#): Art, history, and the tattooing done by this group’s

women

- [Toward a Deeper Understanding of Refugees](#): Past and Present

Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and paste the text of your essay into the Discussion tool to share with your fellow students.

Read the Essays posted by your peers, and post a comment (75 words each) to two peers. This will be done the week after you have posted your own Field Trip Essay.

See complete Instructions on the Virtual Field Trip pages.

Research Project – Follow Your Own Path

In this module you will submit your Semester Research Project Study Proposal.

The Semester Research Project Study Proposal is your first step in the Semester Research Project assignment. This is your opportunity to explore a specific non-Western small group or indigenous culture of your choice more deeply.

You are encouraged to “follow your own path” in research!

Semester Research Project Study Proposal

For this assignment, you will create a Semester Research Project Study Proposal: A 150-word, one to two paragraph overview of your ideas, describing the culture and topic you would like to investigate, two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, citing our text) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and one outside source you can use in your research

(include internal citation). Both sources (textbook and outside source) should be listed in the Bibliography.

This is a 150-word, one to two paragraph overview of your ideas, describing:

- the culture you want to learn about
- the topic you would like to investigate

Your proposal should include:

- two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, citing our text) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and
- one outside source you can use in your research (include internal citation).
- bibliography listing both sources, and any others you choose to use.

Be sure to read the [Semester Research Project page](#) for complete instructions.

25. Chapter 4: Gender and Sexuality

Learning Objectives

- Identify ways in which culture shapes sex/gender and sexuality.
- Describe ways in which gender and sexuality organize and structure the societies in which we live.
- Assess the range of possible ways of constructing gender and sexuality by sharing examples from different cultures, including small-scale societies.
- Analyze how anthropology as a discipline is affected by gender ideology and gender norms.
- Evaluate cultural “origin” stories that are not supported by anthropological data.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images of *Chapter 4: Gender and Sexuality*.

INTRODUCTION: SEX AND GENDER ACCORDING TO ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Anthropologists are fond of pointing out that much of what we take for granted as “natural” in our lives is actually cultural—it is not grounded in the natural world or in biology but invented by humans.² Because culture is invented, it takes different forms in different places and changes over time in those places. Living in the twenty-first century, we have witnessed how rapidly and

dramatically culture can change, from ways of communicating to the emergence of same-sex marriage. Similarly, many of us live in culturally diverse settings and experience how varied human cultural inventions can be.

We readily accept that clothing, language, and music are cultural—invented, created, and alterable—but often find it difficult to accept that gender and sexuality are not natural but deeply embedded in and shaped by culture. We struggle with the idea that the division of humans into two and only two categories, “male” and “female,” is not universal, that “male” and “female” are cultural concepts that take different forms and have different meanings cross-culturally. Similarly, human sexuality, rather than being simply natural is one of the most culturally significant, shaped, regulated, and symbolic of all human capacities. The concept of humans as either “heterosexual” or “homosexual” is a culturally and historically specific invention that is increasingly being challenged in the United States and elsewhere.

Part of the problem is that gender has a biological component, unlike other types of cultural inventions such as a sewing machine, cell phone, or poem. We do have bodies and there are some male-female differences, including in reproductive capacities and roles, albeit far fewer than we have been taught. Similarly, sexuality, sexual desires and responses, are partially rooted in human natural capacities. However, in many ways, sexuality and gender are like food. We have a biologically rooted need to eat to survive and we have the capacity to enjoy eating. What constitutes “food,” what is “delicious” or “repulsive,” the contexts and meanings that surround food and human eating—those are cultural. Many potentially edible items are not “food” (rats, bumblebees, and cats in the United States, for example), and the concept of “food” itself is embedded in elaborate conventions about eating: how, when, with whom, where, “utensils,” for what purposes? A “romantic dinner” at a “gourmet restaurant” is a complex cultural invention.

In short, gender and sexuality, like eating, have biological

components. But cultures, over time, have erected complex and elaborate edifices around them, creating systems of meaning that often barely resemble what is natural and innate. We experience gender and sexuality largely through the prism of the culture or cultures to which we have been exposed and in which we have been raised.

In this chapter, we are asking you to reflect deeply on the ways in which what we have been taught to think of as natural, that is, our sex, gender, and our sexuality, is, in fact, deeply embedded in and shaped by our culture. We challenge you to explore exactly which, if any, aspects of our gender and our sexuality are totally natural.

One powerful aspect of culture, and a reason cultural norms feel so natural, is that we learn culture the way we learn our native language: without formal instruction, in social contexts, picking it up from others around us, without thinking. Soon, it becomes deeply embedded in our brains. We no longer think consciously about what the sounds we hear when someone says “hello” mean unless we do not speak English. Nor is it difficult to “tell the time” on a “clock” even though “time” and “clocks” are complex cultural inventions.

The same principles apply to gender and sexuality. We learn very early (by at least age three) about the categories of gender in our culture—that individuals are either “male” or “female” and that elaborate beliefs, behaviors, and meanings are associated with each gender. We can think of this complex set of ideas as a **gender ideology** or a **cultural model of gender**. All societies have gender ideologies, just as they have belief systems about other significant areas of life, such as health and disease, the natural world, and social relationships, including family. For an activity related to this section, see Activity 1.

Words can reveal cultural beliefs. A good example is the term “sex.” In the past, sex referred both to sexuality and to someone’s biologic sex: male or female. Today, although sex still refers to sexuality, “gender” now means the categories male, female, or increasingly, other gender possibilities. Why has this occurred?

The change in terminology reflects profound alterations in gender ideology in the United States (and elsewhere). In the past, influenced by Judeo-Christian religion and nineteenth and twentieth century scientific beliefs, biology (and reproductive capacity) was literally considered to be destiny. Males and females, at least “normal” males and females, were thought to be born with different intellectual, physical, and moral capacities, preferences, tastes, personalities, and predispositions for violence and suffering.³

Ironically, many cultures, including European Christianity in the Middle Ages, viewed women as having a strong, often “insatiable” sexual “drive” and capacity. But by the nineteenth century, women and their sexuality were largely defined in reproductive terms, as in their capacity to “carry a man’s child.” Even late-twentieth-century human sexuality texts often referred only to “reproductive systems,” to genitals as “reproductive” organs, and excluded the “clitoris” and other female organs of sexual pleasure that had no reproductive function. For women, the primary, if not sole, legitimate purpose of sexuality was reproduction.⁴

Nineteenth and mid-twentieth century European and U.S. gender ideologies linked sexuality and gender in other ways.⁵ Sexual preference—the sex to whom one was attracted—was “naturally” heterosexual, at least among “normal” humans, and “normal,” according to mid-twentieth century Freudian-influenced psychology, was defined largely by whether one adhered to conventional gender roles for males and females. So, appropriately, “masculine” men were “naturally” attracted to “femi-nine” women and vice versa. Homosexuality, too, was depicted not just as a sexual preference but as gender-inappropriate role behavior, down to gestures and color of clothing.⁶ This is apparent in old stereotypes of gay men as “effeminate” (acting like a female, wearing “female” fabrics such as silk or colors such as pink, and participating in “feminine” professions like ballet) and of lesbian women as “butch”

(cropped hair, riding motorcycles, wearing leather—prototypical masculinity). Once again, separate phenomena—sexual preference and gender role performance—were conflated because of beliefs that rooted both in biology. “Abnormality” in one sphere (sexual preference) was linked to “abnormality” in the other sphere (gendered capacities and preferences).

In short, the gender and sexual ideologies were based on **biological determinism**. According to this theory, males and females were supposedly born fundamentally different reproductively and in other major capacities and preferences and were “naturally” (biologically) sexually attracted to each other, although women’s sexual “drive” was not very well developed relative to men’s and was reproductively oriented.

Rejecting Biological Determinism

Decades of research on gender and sexuality, including by feminist anthropologists, has challenged these old theories, particularly biological determinism. We now understand that cultures, not nature, create the gender ideologies that go along with being born male or female and the ideologies vary widely, cross-culturally. What is considered “man’s work” in some societies, such as carrying heavy loads, or farming, can be “woman’s work” in others. What is “masculine” and “fem-inine” varies: pink and blue, for example, are culturally invented gender-color linkages, and skirts and “make-up” can be worn by men, indeed by “warriors.” Hindu deities, male and female, are highly decorated and difficult to distinguish, at least by conventional masculinist U.S. stereotypes.

Women can be thought of as stronger (“tougher,” more “rational”) than men. Phyllis Kaberry, an anthropologist who studied the [Nsaw of Cameroon](#) in the 1940s, said males in that culture argued that land preparation for the rizga crop was “a woman’s job, which is too strenuous for the men” and that “women could carry heavy loads because they had stronger foreheads.”⁷ Among the Aka who live in the present-day Central African Republic, fathers have close, intimate, relationships with infants, play major roles in all aspects of infant-care, and

can sometimes produce breast milk.⁸ As for sexual desires, research on the human sexual response by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson established that men and women have equal biological capacities for sexual pleasure and orgasm and that, because males generally ejaculate simultaneously with orgasm, it is easier for women than men to have multiple orgasms.⁹

Gender: A Cultural Invention and a Social Role

One's **biologic sex** is a different phenomenon than one's **gender**, which is socially and historically constructed.¹⁰ Gender is a set of culturally invented expectations and therefore constitutes a role one assumes, learns, and performs, more or less consciously. It is an "identity" one can in theory choose, at least in some societies, although there is tremendous pressure, as in the United States, to conform to the gender role and identity linked to your biologic sex.

This is a profound transformation in how we think about both gender and sexuality. The reality of human biology is that males and females are shockingly similar.¹¹ There is arguably more variability **within** than **between** each gender, especially taking into account the enormous variability in human physical traits among human populations globally.¹² Notice, for example, the variability in height in the two photos of U.S. college students shown in Figures 3 and 4. Which gender is "taller"? Much of what has been defined as "biological" is actually cultural, so the possibilities for transformation and change are nearly endless! That can be liberating, especially when we are young and want to create identities that fit our particular configuration of abilities and preferences. It can also be upsetting to people who have deeply internalized and who want to maintain the old gender ideology.

The Gender Binary and Beyond

We anthropologists, as noted earlier, love to shake up notions of what is "natural" and "normal." One common assumption is that

all cultures divide human beings into two and only two genders, a **binary** or dualistic model of gender. However, in some cultures gender is more fluid and flexible, allowing individuals born as one biologic sex to assume another gender or creating more than two genders from which individuals can select. Examples of non-binary cultures come from pre-con-tact Native America. Anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict long ago identified a fairly widespread phenomenon of so-called “two-spirit” people, individuals who did not comfortably conform to the gender roles and gender ideology normally associated with their biologic sex. Among the pre-con-tact Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico, which was a relatively gender-egalitarian horticultural society, for example, individuals could choose an alternative role of “not-men” or “not-women.” A two-spirited Zuni man would do the work and wear clothing normally associated with females, having shown a preference for female-identified activities and symbols at an early age. In some, but not all cases, he would eventually marry a man. Early European ethnocentric reports often described it as a form of homosexuality. Anthropologists suggested more-complex motivations, including dreams of selection by spirits, individual psychologies, biological characteristics, and negative aspects of male roles (e.g., warfare). Most significantly, these alternative gender roles were acceptable, publicly recognized, and sometimes venerated.¹³

Less is known about additional gender roles available to biological women, although stories of “manly hearted women” suggest a

parallel among some Native American groups. For example, a Kutenai woman known to have lived in 1811 was originally married to a French-Canadian man but then returned to the Kutenai and assumed a male gender role, changing her name to Kauxuma nupika (Gone-to-the-Spirits), becoming a spiritual prophet, and eventually marrying a woman.¹⁴

A well-known example of a non-binary gender system is found among the Hijra in India. Often called a **third gender**, these individuals are usually biologically male but adopt female clothing, gestures, and names; eschew sexual desire and sexual activity; and go through religious rituals that give them certain divine powers, including blessing or cursing couples' fertility and performing at weddings and births. Hijra may undergo voluntary surgical removal of genitals through a *nirvan* or rebirth operation. Some hijra are males born with ambiguous external genitals, such as a particularly small penis or testicles that did not fully descend.¹⁵

Research has shown that individuals with ambiguous genitals, sometimes called “intersex,” are surprisingly common. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein estimate that such intersex individuals constitute five percent of human births.¹⁶ So what are cultures to do when faced with an infant or child who cannot easily be “sexed?” Some cultures, including the United States, used to force children into one of the two binary categories, even if it required surgery or hormone therapy. But in other places, such as India and among the Isthmus Zapotec in southern Oaxaca, Mexico, they have instead created a third gender category that has an institutional identity and role to perform in society.¹⁷

These cross-cultural examples demonstrate that the traditional rigid binary gender model in the United States is neither universal nor necessary. While all cultures recognize at least two biological sexes, usually based on genitals visible at birth, and have created at least two gender roles, many cultures go beyond the binary model, offering a third or fourth gender category. Other cultures allow individuals to adopt, without sanctions, a gender role that is

not congruent with their biological sex. In short, biology need not be destiny when it comes to gender roles, as we are increasingly discovering in the United States.

Variability among Binary Cultures

Even societies with a binary gender system exhibit enormous variability in the meanings and practices associated with being male or female. Sometimes male-female distinctions pervade virtually all aspects of life, structuring space, work, social life, communication, body decoration, and expressive forms such as music. For instance, both genders may farm, but may have separate fields for “male” and “female” crops and gender-specific crop rituals. Or, the village public space may be spatially segregated with a “men’s house” (a special dwelling only for men, like a “men’s club”) and a “women’s house.” In some societies, such as the Sambia of New Guinea, even when married couples occupy the same house, the space within the house is divided into male and female areas.¹⁸

Women and men can also have gender-specific religious rituals and deities and use gender-identified tools. There are cases of “male” and “female” foods, rains, and even “languages” (including words, verb forms, pronouns, inflections, and writing systems; one example is the Nu Shu writing system used by some women in parts of China in the twentieth century).¹⁹ Gender ideologies can emphasize differences in character, capacities, and morality, sometimes portraying males and females as “opposites” on a continuum.

In societies that are highly segregated by gender, gender relationships sometimes are seen as hostile or oppositional with one of the genders (usually female) viewed as potentially threatening. Female bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood and vaginal secretions, can be dangerous, damaging to men, “impure,” and “polluting,” especially in ritual contexts. In other cases, however, menstrual blood is associated with positive power. A girl’s first menstruation may be celebrated publicly with elaborate community rituals, as among the Bemba in southern Africa, and subsequent monthly flows bring special privileges.²⁰ Men in some small-scale

societies go through ritualized nose-bleeding, sometimes called “male menstruation,” though the meanings are quite complex.²¹

Gender Relations: Separate and Unequal

Of course, gender-differentiation is not unique to small-scale societies like the Sambia. Virtually all major world religions have traditionally segregated males and females spatially and “marked” them in other ways. Look at eighteenth and nineteenth century churches, which had gender-specific seating; at contemporary Saudi Arabia, Iranian, and conservative Malaysian mosques; and at Orthodox Jewish temples today in Israel and the United States.

Ambivalence and even fear of female sexuality, or negative associations with female bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood, are widespread in the world’s major religions. Orthodox Jewish women are not supposed to sleep in the same bed as their husbands when menstruating. In Kypseli, Greece, people believe that menstruating women can cause wine to go bad.²² In some Catholic Portuguese villages, menstruating women are restricted from preparing fresh pork sausages and from being in the room where the sausages are made as their presence is believed to cause the pork to spoil. Contact with these women also supposedly wilts plants and causes inexplicable movements of objects.²³ Orthodox forms of Hinduism prohibit menstruating women from activities such as cooking and attending temple.

These traditions are being challenged. A 2016 British Broadcasting Company (BBC) television program, for example, described “Happy to Bleed,” a movement in India to change negative attitudes about menstruation and eliminate the ban on menstruating-age women entering the famous Sabriamala Temple in Kerala.²⁴

Emergence of Public (Male) vs. Domestic (Female) Spheres

In large stratified and centralized societies—that is, the powerful empires (so-called “civilizations”) that have dominated much of the world for the past several thousand years—a “public” vs. “private”

or “domestic” distinction appears. The public, extra-family sphere of life is a relatively recent development in human history even though most of us have grown up in or around cities and towns with their obvious public spaces, physical manifestations of the political, economic, and other extra-family institutions that characterize large-scale societies. In such settings, it is easy to identify the domestic or private spaces families occupy, but a similar public-domestic distinction exists in villages. The public sphere is associated with, and often dominated by, males. The domestic sphere, in contrast, is primarily associated with women—though it, too, can be divided into male and female spheres. In India, for example, where households frequently consist of multi-generational groups of male siblings and their families, there often are “lounging” spaces where men congregate, smoke pipes, chat, and meet visitors. Women’s spaces typically focus around the kitchen or cooking hearth (if outside) or at other sites of women’s activities.²⁵ In some cases, an inner court is the women’s area while the outer porch and roads that connect the houses are male spaces. In some Middle Eastern villages, women create over-the-roof paths for visiting each other without going “outside” into male spaces.²⁶

The gender division between public and private/domestic, however, is as symbolic as it is spatial, often emphasizing a gender ideology of social separation between males and females (except young children), social regulation of sexuality and marriage, and male rights and control over females (wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers). It manifests as separate spaces in mosques, sex-segregated schools, and separate “ladies compartments” on trains, as in India (Figure 5).

Of course, it is impossible to separate the genders completely. Rural women pass through the more-public spaces of a village to fetch water and firewood and to work in agricultural fields. Women shop in public markets, though that can be a “man’s job.” As girls more often attend school, as in India, they take public transportation and thus travel through public “male” spaces even if they travel

to all-girl schools (Figure 6). At college, they can be immersed in and even live on campuses where men predominate, especially if they are studying engineering, computer science, or other technical subjects (Figure 7). This can severely limit Indian girls' educational and occupational choices, particularly for girls who come from relatively conservative families or regions.²⁷

One way in which women navigate “male” spaces is by adopting routes, behavior (avoiding eye contact), and/or clothing that create separation.²⁸ The term *purdah*, the separation or segregation of women from men, literally means “veiling,” although other devices can be used. In nineteenth century Jaipur, Rajasthan, royal Rajput women inhabited the inner courtyard spaces of the palace. But an elaborate false building front, the [hawa mahal](#), allowed them to view the comings and goings on the street without being exposed to the public male gaze.

As demand for educating girls has grown in traditionally sexually segregated societies, all-girl schools have been constructed (see Figure 6), paralleling processes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States. At the university level, however, prestigious schools that offer high-demand subjects such as engineering often have historically been all-male, excluding women as Harvard once did.²⁹ In other cases, there are no female faculty members teaching traditionally male subjects like engineering at all-women colleges. In Saudi Arabia, women's universities have taught courses using closed-circuit television to avoid violating norms of sexual segregation, particularly for young, unmarried women.³⁰ In countries such as India, gynecologists and obstetricians have been predominantly female, in part because families object to male doctors examining and treating women. Thus, in places that do not have female physicians, women's health can suffer.

Sanctions, Sexuality, Honor, and Shame

Penalties for deviating from the rules of social separation vary

across and within cultures. In small communities, neighbors and extended family kin can simply report inappropriate behavior, especially between unmarried young adults, to other family members. More severe and sometimes violent responses by family members can occur, especially if the family's "honor" is involved—that is, if the young adults, especially girls, engage in activities that would "shame" or dishonor the family. Honor and shame are complex concepts that are often linked to sexuality, especially female sexuality, and to behavior by family members that involves or hints at sexual impropriety. The Turkish film *Mustang*, nominated for the 2016 best foreign film Academy Award, offers a good illustration of how concepts of sexualized honor and shame operate.

We hear in the news of "honor killings" carried out by conservative Muslims in countries such as Pakistan and powerfully portrayed in documentaries such as *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness* (2015).³¹ But it is not just Islam. Some orthodox sectors of major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism, may hold similar views about "honor" and "shame" and impose sometimes violent sanctions against those who violate sexuality-related codes. The brutal 2012 gang rape-murder of a young woman on a bus in Delhi, though perpetrated by strangers, was rationalized by the men who committed the crime (and their defense attorney) as a legitimate response to the woman's "shameful" behavior—traveling on a bus at night with a male friend, implying sexual impropriety.³²

Social separation, sex-segregated schools, and penalties for inappropriate sexual behavior have also existed in the United States and Europe, especially among upper-strata women for whom female "purity" was traditionally emphasized. Chastity belts in Europe, whether or not actually used, symbolized the idea that a

woman's sexuality belonged solely to her husband, thus precluding her from engaging not only in premarital and extra-marital sex but also in masturbation (Figure 8).³³ In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, set in mid-sixteenth century Massachusetts, Hester was forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress and to stand on a public scaffold for three hours a day, a relatively nonviolent but powerful form of shaming and punishment. Stoning women to death for sexually inappropriate behavior, especially adultery, and other violent sanctions may have occurred in some European Christian and Jewish communities.

Rape, so frequent in warfare past and present, also can bring shame to the victim and her family, particularly in sexually conservative societies. During the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence against Pakistan, East Bengali women who were raped by soldiers were ostracized by their families because of the "shame" their rape had brought. During the partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947, some Sikh families reportedly forced daughters to jump into wells to drown rather than risk being raped by strangers.³⁴

Alternative Models of Gender: Complementary and Fluid

Not all binary cultures are gender-segregated; nor does gender hostility necessarily accompany gender separation. Nor are all binary cultures deeply concerned with, some might say obsessed with, regulating female sexuality and marriage. Premarital and extra-marital sex can even be common and acceptable, as among the !Kung San and Trobriand Islanders.³⁵ And men are not always clearly ranked over women as they typically are in stratified large-scale centralized societies with "patriarchal" systems. Instead, the two genders can be seen as complementary, equally valued and both recognized as necessary to society. Different need not mean unequal. The Lahu of southwest China and Thailand exemplify a complementary gender system in which men and women have distinct expected roles but a male-female pair is necessary to accomplish most daily tasks (Figure 9). A male-female pair historically took responsibility for local leadership. Male-female

dyads completed daily household tasks in tandem and worked together in the fields. The title of anthropologist Shanshan Du's book, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs* (1999), encapsulates how complementary gender roles defined Lahu society. A single chopstick is not very useful; neither is a single person, man or woman, in a dual focused society.³⁶

Like the Lahu, the nearby Na believe men and women both play crucial roles in a family and household. Women are associated with birth and life while men take on tasks such as butchering animals and preparing for funerals (Figures 10 and 11). Every Na house has two large pillars in the central hearth room, one representing male identity and one representing female identity. Both are crucial, and the house might well topple symbolically without both pillars. As sociologist Zhou Huashan explained in his 2002 book about the Na, this is a society that “values women without diminishing men.”³⁷ Anthropologists have also encountered relatively androgynous gender-binary cultures. In these cultures, some gender differentiation exists but “gender bending” and role-crossing are frequent, accepted, and reflect circumstances and individual capacities and preferences. Examples are the !Kung San mentioned earlier, Native American Washoe in the United States, and some segments of European societies in countries such as Sweden and Finland and, increasingly, in the United States.³⁸ Contemporary twenty-first century gender ideologies tend to emphasize commonality, not difference: shared human traits, flexibility, fluidity, and individual expression.

Even cultures with fairly well-defined gender roles do not necessarily view them as fixed, biologically rooted, permanent,

“essentialist,” or “naturalized” as occurred in the traditional gender ideology in the United States.³⁹ Gender may not even be an “identity” in a psychological sense but, rather, a social role one assumes in a particular social context just as one moves between being a student, a daughter, an employee, a wife or husband, president of the bicycle club, and a musician.

Cultures also change over time through internal and external forces such as trade, conquest, colo-nialism, globalization, immigration, mass media, and, especially, films. Within every culture, there is tremendous diversity in class, ethnicity, religion, region, education level, and generation, as well as diversity related to more-individual family circumstances, predilections, and experiences. Gender expectations also vary with one’s age and stage in life as well as one’s social role, even within the family (e.g., “wife” vs. “sister” vs. “mother” vs. “mother-in-law” and “father” vs. “son” vs. “brother” vs “father-in-law”). Finally, people can appear to conform to cultural norms but find ways of working around or ignoring them.

Even in highly male-dominated, sexually segregated societies, women find ways to pursue their own goals, to be actors, and to push the boundaries of the gender system. Among Egyptian Awlad ‘Ali Bedouin families, for example, women rarely socialized outside their home compounds or with unrelated men. But within their spheres, they freely interacted with other women, could influence their husbands, and wrote and sang poetic couplets as expressive outlets.⁴⁰ In some of the poor-est and least-developed areas of central India, where **patriloc** extended-family male-controlled households reign, activist Sampat Pal has organized lo-cal rural women to combat violence based on dishonor and gender.⁴¹ Her so-called “Gulabi Gang,” the subject of two films, illustrates both the possibilities of resistance and the difficulties of changing a deeply embedded system based on gender, caste, and class system (Figure

12).⁴² For a related activity, see Activity 2: Understanding Gender from a Martian Perspective.

Unraveling Our Gender Myths: Primate Roots, “Man the Hunter,” and Other “Origin Stories” of Gender and Male Dominance

Even unencumbered by pregnancy or infants, a female hunter would be less fleet, generally less strong, possibly more prone to changes in emotional *tonus* as a consequence of the estrus cycle, and less able to adapt to changes in temperature than males.⁴³

—U.S. anthropologist, 1969

Women don’t ride motorcycles because they can’t; they can’t because they are not strong enough to put their legs down to stop it.⁴⁴

—Five-year-old boy, Los Angeles, 1980

Men hunted because women were not allowed to come out of their houses and roam about in forests.⁴⁵

—Pre-college student in India, 1990

All cultures have “creation” stories. Many have elaborate gender-related creation stories that de-scribe the origins of males and females, their gender-specific traits, their relationships and sexual pro-clivities, and, sometimes, how one gender came to “dominate” the other. Our culture is no different.

The Judeo-Christian Bible, like the Koran and other religious texts, addresses origins and gender (think of Adam and Eve), and traditional folk tales, songs, dances, and epic stories, such as the Ra-mayana in Hinduism and Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, treat similar themes.

Science, too, has sought to understand gender differences. In the late nineteenth and early twen-tieth centuries, a number of scientists, immersed in Darwinian theories, began to explore the evolu-tionary roots of what they assumed to be universal: male dominance. Of course, scientists, like the rest of us, view the world partially through their own cultural lenses and through a gendered version. Prior to the 1970s, women and gender relations were largely

invisible in the research literature and most researchers were male so it is not surprising that 1960s theories reflected prevailing male-oriented folk beliefs about gender.⁴⁶

The Hunting Way of Life “Molds Man” (and Woman)

The most popular and persistent theories argued that male dominance is universal, rooted in species-wide gendered biological traits that we acquired, first as part of our primate heritage, and further developed as we evolved from apes into humans. Emergence of “the hunting way of life” plays a major role in this story. Crucial components include: a diet consisting primarily of meat, obtained through planned, cooperative hunts, by all-male groups, that lasted several days and covered a wide territory. Such hunts would require persistence, skill, and physical stamina; tool kits to kill, butcher, transport, preserve, and share the meat; and a social organization consisting of a stable home base and a monogamous nuclear family. Several biological changes were attributed to adopting this way of life: a larger and more complex brain, human language, an upright posture (and humans’ unique foot and stride), loss of body hair, a long period of infant dependency, and the absence of “estrus” (ovulation-related female sexual arousal)(Figure 13), which made females sexually “receptive” throughout the monthly cycle. Other human characteristics purportedly made sex more enjoyable, frontal sex and fleshier breasts, buttocks, and genitals, especially the human penis. Making sex “sexier” some speculated, cemented the pair-bond, helping to keep the man “around” and the family unit stable.⁴⁷

Hunting was also linked to a “world view” in which the flight of animals from humans seemed natural and (male) aggression became normal, frequent, easy to learn, rewarded, and enjoyable. War, some have suggested, might psychologically be simply a form of hunting and pleasurable for male participants.⁴⁸ The Hunting Way of Life, in short, “molded man,” giving our species its distinctive characteristics. And as a result, we contemporary humans **cannot** erase the effects of our hunting past even though

we live in cities, stalk nothing but a parking place, and can omit meat from our diets.

The biology, psychology, and customs that separate us from the apes—all these we owe to the hunters of time past. And, although the record is incomplete and speculation looms larger than fact, for those who would understand the origin and nature of human behavior there is no choice but to try to understand “Man the Hunter.”⁴⁹

—Washburn and Lancaster (1974)

Gender roles and male dominance were supposed to be part of our evolutionary heritage. Males evolved to be food-providers—stronger, more aggressive, more effective leaders with cooperative and bonding capacities, planning skills, and technological inventiveness (tool-making). In this creation story, females never acquired those capacities because they were burdened by their reproductive roles—pregnancy, giving birth, lactation, and child care—and thus became dependent on males for food and protection. The gender gap widened over time. As males initiated, explored, invented, women stayed at home, nurtured, immersed themselves in domestic life. The result: men are active, women are passive; men are leaders, women are followers; men are dominant, women are subordinate.

Many of us have heard pieces of this Hunting Way of Life story. Some of the men Mukhopadhyay interviewed in Los Angeles in the late 1970s invoked “our hunting past” to explain why they—and men generally—operated barbecues rather than their wives. Women’s qualifications to be president were questioned on biological grounds such as “stamina” and “toughness.” Her women informants, all hospital nurses, doubted their navigational abilities, courage, and strength despite working in intensive care and regularly lifting heavy male patients. Mukhopadhyay encountered serious scholars who cited women’s menstrual cycle and “emotional instability” during ovulation to explain why women “can’t” hunt.

Similar stories are invoked today for everything from some men’s

love of hunting to why men dominate “technical” fields, accumulate tools, have extra-marital affairs or commit the vast majority of homicides. Strength and toughness remain defining characteristics of masculinity in the United States, and these themes often permeate national political debates.⁵⁰ One element in the complex debate over gun control is the male-masculine strength-through-guns and man-the-hunter association, and it is still difficult for some males in the United States to feel comfortable with their soft, nurturant, emotional, and artistic sides.⁵¹

What is most striking about man-the-hunter scenarios is how closely they resemble 1950s U.S. models of family and gender, which were rooted in the late nineteenth century “cult of domesticity” and “true womanhood.” Father is “head” of the family and the final authority, whether in household decisions or in disciplining children. As “provider,” Father goes “outside” into the cold, cruel world, hunting for work. Mother, as “chief mom,” remains “inside” at the home base, creating a domestic refuge against the “survival of the fittest” “jungle.” American anthropologists seemed to have subconsciously projected their own folk models onto our early human ancestors.

Altering this supposedly “fundamental” gender system, according to widely read authors in the 1970s, would go against our basic “human nature.” This belief was applied to the political arena, then a virtually all-male domain, especially at state and national levels. The following quote from 1971 is particularly relevant and worthy of critical evaluation since, for the first time, a major U.S. political party selected a woman as its 2016 presidential candidate (See Text Box 3, Gender and the Presidential Election).

To make women equal participants in the political process, we will have to change the very process itself, which means changing a pattern bred into our behavior over the millennia.

—Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox⁵²

Replacing Stories with Reality

Decades of research, much of it by a new generation of women scholars, have altered our view of the hunting way of life in our evolutionary past.⁵³ For example, the old stereotype of primates as living in male-centered, male-dominated groups does not accurately describe our closest primate relatives, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos. The stereotypes came from 1960s research on savannah, ground-dwelling baboons that suggested they were organized socially by a stable male-dominance hierarchy, the “core” of the group, that was established through force, regulated sexual access to females, and provided internal and external defense of the “troop” in a supposedly hostile savannah environment.⁵⁴ Females lacked hierarchies or coalitions, were passive, and were part of dominant male “harems.”

Critics first argued that baboons, as monkeys rather than apes, were too far removed from humans evolutionarily to tell us much about early human social organization. Then, further research on baboons living in other environments by primatologists such as Thelma Rowell discovered that those baboons were neither male-focused nor male-dominated. Instead, the stable group core was matrifocal—a mother and her offspring constituted the central and enduring ties. Nor did males control female sexuality. Quite the contrary in fact. Females mated freely and frequently, choosing males of all ages, sometimes establishing special relationships—“friends with favors.” Dominance, while infrequent, was not based simply on size or strength; it was learned, situational, and often stress-induced. And like other primates, both male and female baboons used sophisticated strategies, dubbed “primate politics” to predict and manipulate intricate social networks in which they lived.

Rowell also restudied the savannah baboons. Even they did not fit the baboon “stereotype.” She found that their groups were loosely structured with no specialized stable male-leadership coalitions and were so-called, matrifocal, and infant-centered much like the Rhesus monkeys pictured above (see Figure 15). Females actively initiated sexual encounters with a variety of male partners. When

attacked by predators or frightened by some other major threat, males, rather than “defending the troop,” typically would flee, running away first and leaving the females carrying infants to follow behind (Figures 16).⁵⁶

Man the Hunter, the Meat-Eater?

The second, more important challenge was to key assumptions about the hunting way of life. Archaeological and paleontological fossil evidence and ethnographic data from contemporary foragers revealed that hunting and meat it provided were not the primary subsistence mode. Instead, gathered foods such as plants, nuts, fruits, roots and small fish found in rivers and ponds constituted the bulk of such diets and provided the most stable food source in all but a few settings (northerly climates, herd migration routes, and specific geographical and historical settings). When meat was important, it was more often “scavenged” or “caught” than hunted.

A major symposium on human evolution concluded that “opportunistic scavenging” was probably the best description of early human hunting activities. Often, tools found in pre-modern human sites such as caves would have been more appropriate for “smashing” scavenged bones than hunting live animals.⁵⁷ Hunting, when carried out, generally did not involve large-scale, all-male, cooperative expeditions involving extensive planning and lengthy expeditions over a wide territorial range. Instead, as among the Hadza of Tanzania, hunting was likely typically conducted by a single male, or perhaps two males, for a couple of hours, often without success. When hunting collectively, as occurs among the Mbuti in the Central African rainforest, groups of families likely participated with women and men driving animals into nets. Among the Agta of the Philippines, women rather than men hunt collectively using dogs to herd animals to a place where they can be killed.⁵⁸ And !Kung San men, despite what was shown in the 1957 ethnographic film *The Hunters*, do not normally hunt giraffe; they usually pursue small animals such as hares, rats, and gophers.

Discrediting the Hunting Hypothesis

Once the “hunting-meat” hypothesis was discredited, other parts of the theory began to unravel, especially the link between male dominance and female economic dependency. We now know that for most of human history—99 percent of it prior to the invention of agriculture some 10,000 or so years ago—women have “worked,” often providing the stable sources of food for their family. Richard Lee, Marjorie Shostak, and others have detailed, with caloric counts and time-work estimates, the significance of women’s gathering contributions even in societies such as the !Kung San, in which hunting occurs regularly.⁵⁹ In foraging societies that rely primarily on fish, women also play a major role, “collecting” fish from rivers, lakes, and ponds. The exceptions are atypical environments such as the Arctic.

Of course, “meat-getting” is a narrow definition of “food getting” or “subsistence” work. Many food processing activities are time-consuming. Collecting water and firewood is crucial, heavy work and is often done by women (Figure 17). Making and maintaining clothing, housing, and tools also occupy a significant amount of time. Early humans, both male and female, invented an array of items for carrying things (babies, wood, water), dug tubers, processed nuts, and cooked food. The invention of string some 24,000 years ago, a discovery so essential that it produced what some have called the “String Revolution,” is attributed to women.⁶⁰ There is the work of kinship, of healing, of ritual, of teaching the next generation, and emotional work. All are part of the work of living and of the “invisible” work that women do. Nor is it just hunting that requires intelligence, planning, cooperation, and detailed knowledge. Foragers have lived in a wide variety of environments across the globe, some more challenging than others (such as Alaska). In all of these groups, both males and females have needed and have developed intensive detailed knowledge of local flora and fauna and strategies for using those resources. Human social interactions also require sophisticated mental and communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal. In short, humans’

complex brains and other modern traits developed as an adaptation to complex social and child-rearing that required cooperative nurturing, and many different kinds of “work” that even the simplest human societies performed.

Refuting Pregnancy and Motherhood as Debilitating

Finally, cross-cultural data refutes another central man-the-hunter stereotype: the “burden” of pregnancy and child care. Women’s reproductive roles do not generally prevent them from food-get-ting, including hunting; among the Agta, women hunt when pregnant. Foraging societies accommodate the work-reproduction “conflict” by spacing out their pregnancies using indigenous methods of “family planning” such as prolonged breast feeding, long post-pregnancy periods of sexual inactivity, and native herbs and medicinal plants. Child care, even for infants, is rarely solely the responsibility of the birth mother. Instead, multiple caretakers are the norm: spouses, children, other relatives, and neighbors.⁶¹ Reciprocity is the key to human social life and to survival in small-scale societies, and reciprocal child care is but one example of such reciprocity. Children and infants accompany their mothers (or fathers) on gathering trips, as among the !Kung San, and on Aka collective net-hunting expeditions. Agta women carry nursing infants with them when gathering-hunting, leaving older children at home in the care of spouses or other relatives.⁶²

In pre-industrial horticultural and agricultural societies, having children and “working” are not incompatible—quite the opposite! Anthropologists long ago identified “female farming systems,” especially in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia, in which farming is predominantly a woman’s job and men “help out” as needed.⁶³

In most agricultural societies, women who do not come from high-status or wealthy families perform a significant amount of agricultural labor, though it often goes unrecognized in the dominant gender ideology. Wet-rice agriculture, common in south and southeast Asia, is labor-intensive, particularly weeding and

transplanting rice seedlings, which are often done by women (Figure 10). Harvesting rice, wheat, and other grains also entails essential input by women. Yet the Indian Census traditionally records only male family members as “farmers.” In the United States, women’s work on family-owned farms is often invisible.⁶⁴

Women may accommodate their reproductive and child-rearing roles by engaging in work that is more compatible with child care, such as cooking, and in activities that occur closer to home and are interruptible and perhaps less dangerous, though cooking fires, stoves, and implements such as knives certainly can cause harm!⁶⁵ More often, women adjust their food-getting “work” in response to the demands of pregnancy, breast-feeding, and other child care activities. They gather or process nuts while their children are napping; they take their children with them to the fields to weed or harvest and, in more recent times, to urban construction sites in places such as India, where women often do the heaviest (and lowest-paid) work.

In the United States, despite a long-standing cultural model of the stay-at-home mom, some mothers have always worked outside the home, mainly out of economic necessity. This shifting group includes single-divorced-widowed mothers and married African-Americans (pre- and post-slavery), immigrants, and Euro-American women with limited financial resources. But workplace policies (except during World War II) have historically made it harder rather than easier for women (and men) to carry out family responsibilities, including requiring married women and pregnant women to quit their jobs.⁶⁶ Circumstances have not improved much. While pregnant women in the United States are no longer automatically dismissed from their jobs—at least not legally—the United States

lags far behind most European countries in providing affordable [child care](#) and [paid parental leave](#).

Family and Marriage: A Cultural Construct and a Social Invention

Unraveling the theory of the hunting-way-of-life scenario, especially female dependence on males, undermines the “naturalness” of the nuclear family with its male-provider-protector and fe-male-domestic-child-care division of labor. More than one hundred years of cross-cultural research has revealed the varied forms humans have invented for “partnering”—living in households, raising children, establishing long-term relationships, transmitting valuables to offspring, and other social behaviors associated with “family.” Once again, the universality and evolutionary origins of the U.S. form of the human family is more fiction than fact, a projection of our cultural model of family and gender roles onto the past and onto the entire human species.

Family: Biology and Culture

What **is** natural about the family? Like gender and sexuality, there is a biological component. There is a biological mother and a biological father, although the mother plays a significantly larger and longer role from the time of conception through the end of infant’s dependence. In the past, conception usually required sexual intercourse, but that is no longer the case thanks to sperm banks, which have made the embodied male potentially obsolete, biologically speaking. There is also a bi-ological relationship between parents and offspring—again, more obvious in the case of the mother since the baby develops in and emerges from her body. Nevertheless, DNA and genes are real and influence the traits and potentialities of the next generation.

Beyond those biological “realities,” culture and society seem to take over, building on—or ignor-ing—biology. We all know there are biological fathers who may be unaware of or not concerned about their biological offspring and not involved in their care and biological mothers who, after giving birth, give up their children through adoption or to other family members. In recent decades,

technology has allowed women to act as “surrogate mothers,” using their bodies as carriers for im-planted fertilized eggs of couples who wish to have a child. On the other hand, we all probably know of excellent parents who are not the children’s biological mothers and fathers, and “legal” parenthood through adoption can have more-profound parenting consequences for children than biological par-enthood.

When we think of good (or bad) parents, or of someone as a really “good mother,” as an “excellent father,” as two “wonderful mothers,” we are not talking biology. We usually are thinking of a set of cultural and behavioral expectations, and being an adoptive rather than a biological parent isn’t really the issue. Clearly, then, parenthood, mother-father relationships, and other kinship relationships (with siblings, grandparents, and uncles-aunts) are not simply rooted in biology but are also social roles, legal relationships, meanings and expectations constructed by human cultures in specific social and historical contexts. This is not to deny the importance of kinship; it is fundamental, especially in small-scale pre-industrial societies. But kinship is as much about culture as it is about biology. Biology, in a sense, is only the beginning—and may not be necessary.

Marriage also is not “natural.” It is a cultural invention that involves various meanings and func-tions in different cultural contexts. We all know that it is not necessary to be married to have sex or to have children. Indeed, in the United States, a growing number of women who give birth are not married, and the percent of unmarried women giving birth is higher in many northwestern European countries such as Sweden.⁶⁷ Cross-culturally, marriage seems to be primarily about **societal regulation of relationships**—a social contract between two individuals and, often, their families, that specifies rights and obligations of married individuals and of the offspring that married women produce. Some anthropologists have argued that marriage IS primarily about children and “descent”—who will “own” children.⁶⁸ To whom will they belong?

With what rights, obligations, social statuses, access to resources, group identities, and all the other assets—and liabilities—that exist within a society? Children have historically been essential for family survival—for literal reproduction and for social reproduction.

Think, for a moment, about our taken-for-granted assumptions about to whom children belong.⁶⁹ Clearly, children emerge from a woman's body and, indeed, after approximately nine months, it is her body that has nurtured and "grown" this child. But who "owns" that child legally—to whom it "be-ongs" and the beliefs associated with how it was conceived and about who played a role in its concep-tion—is not a biological given. Not in human societies. One fascinating puzzle in human evolution is how females lost control over their sexuality and their offspring! Why do so many, though not all, cultural theories of procreation consider women's role as minor, if not irrelevant—not as the "seed," for example, but merely as a "carrier" of the male seed she will eventually "deliver" to its "owner"? Thus, having a child biologically is not equivalent to social "ownership." Marriage, cross-culturally, deals with social ownership of offspring. What conditions must be met? What exchanges must occur, particularly between families or kinship groups, for that offspring to be theirs, his, hers—for it to be a legitimate "heir"?

Marriage is, then, a "contract," usually between families, even if unwritten. Throughout most of human history, kinship groups and, later, religious institutions have regulated marriage. Most major religions today have formal laws and marriage "contracts," even in societies with "civil" marriage codes. In some countries, like India, there is a separate marriage code for each major religion in addition to a secular, civil marriage code. Who children "belong to" is rarely solely about biology, and when biology is involved, it is biology shaped by society and culture. The notion of an "illegiti-mate" child in the United States has not been about biology but about "legitimacy," that is, whether the child was the result of a legally recognized relationship that entitled offspring to certain rights, including inheritance.

From this perspective, what we think of as a

“normal” or “natural” family in the United States is actually a culturally and historically specific, legally codified set of relationships between two individuals and, to some extent, their families. Cross-culturally, the U.S. (and “traditional” British-Eu-ro-American) nuclear family is quite unusual and atypical. Married couples in the United States “ideally” establish a separate household, a nuclear-family-based household, rather than living with one spouse’s parents and forming a larger multi-generational household, often referred to as an “ex-tended” family, which is the most common form of family structure. In addition, U.S. marriages are monogamous—legally, one may have only one husband or wife at a time. But a majority of societies that have been studied by anthropologists have allowed polygamy (multiple spouses). Polygyny (one husband, multiple wives) is most common but polyandry (one wife, multiple husbands) also occurs; occasionally marriages involve multiple husbands and multiple wives. Separate spouses, particularly wives, often have their own dwelling space, commonly shared with their children, but usually live in one compound, with their husbands’ parents and his relatives. Across cultures, then, most households tend to be versions of extended-family-based groups.

These two contrasts alone lead to families in the United States that are smaller and focused more on the husband-wife (or spousal) and parent-child relationships; other relatives are more distant, literally and often conceptually. They are also more “independent”—or, some

would say, more de-pendent on a smaller set of relationships to fulfill family responsibilities for work, child care, finances, emotional companionship, and even sexual obligations. Other things being equal, the death or loss of a spouse in a “traditional” U.S. family has a bigger impact than such a loss in an extended family household (see Text Box 1). On the other hand, nuclear families own and control their incomes and other assets, unlike many extended families in which those are jointly held. This ownership and control of resources can give couples and wives in nuclear families greater freedom.

There are other cross-cultural variations in family, marriage and kinship: in expectations for spouses and children, exchanges between families, inheritance rules, marriage rituals, ideal ages and characteristics of spouses, conditions for dissolving a marriage and remarriage after a spouse’s death, attitudes about premarital, extra-marital, and marital sexuality, and so forth. How “descent” is calculated is a social-cultural process that carves out a smaller “group” of “kin” from all of the potential relatives in which individuals have rights (e.g., to property, assistance, political representation) and obligations (economic, social). Often there are explicit norms about who one should and should not marry, including which relatives. Marriage between people we call “cousins” is common cross-culturally. These variations in the definition of marriage and family reflect what human cultures do with the biological “facts of life,” creating many different kinds of marriage, family, and kinship systems.

Another major contrast between the U.S. and many other cultures is that our husband-wife relationship is based on free choice and “romantic love.” Marriages are arranged by the couple and reflect their desires rather than the desires of larger societal groups. Of course, even in the United States, that has never been entirely the case. Informal prohibitions, often imposed by families, have shaped (and continue to shape) individual choices, such as marrying outside one’s religion, racial/ethnic group, and socio-economic class or within one’s gender. Some religions explicitly forbid marrying someone from another religion. But U.S. formal government

prohibitions have also existed, such as laws against inter-racial marriage, which were only declared unconstitutional in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*).

These so-called anti-miscegenation laws, directed mainly at European-American and African-Americans, were designed to preserve the race-based system of social stratification in the United States.⁷⁰ They did not affect both genders equally but reflected the intersection of gender with class and racial inequality. During slavery, most inter-racial sexual activity was initiated by Euro-American males. It was not uncommon for male slave owners to have illicit, often forced sexual relations with female slaves. The laws were created so that children of slave women inherited their mother's racial and slave status, thereby also adding to the slave property of the "father."

Euro-American women's relationships with African-American men, though far less frequent and usually voluntary, posed special problems. Offspring would inherit the mother's "free" status and increase the free African-American population or possibly end up "passing" as "White." Social and legal weapons were used to prevent such relationships. Euro-American women, especially poorer women, who were involved sexually with African-American men were stereotyped as prostitutes, sexually de-praved, and outcasts. Laws were passed that fined them for such behavior or required them to work as indentured servants for the child's father's slave owner; other laws prohibited cohabitation between a "White" and someone of African descent.

Post-slavery anti-miscegenation laws tried to preserve the "color line" biologically by outlawing inter-racial mating and maintaining the legal "purity" and status of Euro-American lineages by outlawing inter-racial marriage. In reality, of course, inter-racial mating continued, but inter-racial offspring did not have the rights of "legitimate" children. By the 1920s, some states, like Virginia, had outlawed "Whites" from marrying anyone who had a "single drop"

of African blood. By 1924, 38 states had outlawed Black-White marriages, and as late as the 1950s, inter-racial marriage bans existed in almost half of the states and had been extended to Native Americans, Mexicans, “East Indians,” Malays, and other groups designated “not White.”⁷¹

Overall, stratified inegalitarian societies tend to have the strictest controls over marriage. Such control is especially common when some groups are considered inherently superior to others, be it racially, castes, or “royal” blood. Patriarchal societies closely regulate and restrict premarital sexual contacts of women, especially higher-status women. One function of marriage in these societies is to reproduce the existing social structure, partially by insuring that marriages and any offspring resulting from them will maintain and potentially increase the social standing of the families involved. Elite, dominant groups have the most to lose in terms of status and wealth, including inheritances. “Royalty” in Britain, for example, traditionally are not supposed to marry “commoners” so as to ensure that the royal “blood,” titles, and other privileges remain in the “royal” family.

Cross-culturally, even in small-scale societies that are relatively egalitarian such as the San and the Trobriand Islanders studied by Annette Weiner, marriage is rarely a purely individual choice left to the wishes—and whims of, or “electricity” between—the two spouses.⁷² This is not to say that spouses never have input or prior contact; they may know each other and even have grown up together. In most societies, however, a marriage usually has profound social consequences and is far too important to be “simply” an individual choice. Since marriages affect families and kin economically, socially, and politically, family members (especially elders) play a major role in arranging marriages along lines consistent with their own goals and using their own criteria. Families sometimes arrange their children’s marriages when the children are quite young. In Nuosu communities of southwest China, some families held formal engagement ceremonies for babies to, ideally, cement a good cross-cousin partnership, though no

marital relationship would occur until much later.⁷³ There also can be conventional categories of relatives who are supposed to marry each other so young girls might know that their future husbands will be particular cousins, and the girls might play or interact with them at family functions as children.⁷⁴

This does not mean that romantic love is purely a recent or U.S. and European phenomenon. Romantic love is widespread even in cultures that have strong views on arranging marriages. Traditional cultures in India, both Hindu and Muslim, are filled with “love stories” expressed in songs, paintings, and famous temple sculptures. One of the most beautiful buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal, is a monument to Shah Jahan’s love for his wife. Where young girls’ marriages are arranged, often to older men (as among the Maasai), we know that those girls, once married, sometimes take “lovers” about whom they sing “love songs” and with whom they engage in sexual relations.⁷⁵ Truly, romantic love, sex, and marriage can exist independently.

Nevertheless, cross-culturally and historically, marriages based on free choice and romantic love are relatively unusual and recent. Clearly, young people all over the world are attracted to the idea, which is “romanticized” in Bollywood films, popular music, poetry, and other forms of contemporary popular culture. No wonder so many families—and conservative social and religious groups—are concerned, if not terrified, of losing control over young people’s mating and marriage behavior (see, for example, the excellent PBS documentary *The World before Her*).⁷⁶ A social revolution is truly underway and we haven’t even gotten to same-sex sex and same-sex marriage.

We have certain expectations about the trajectories of relationships and family life in the United States—young people meet, fall in love, purchase a diamond, and then marry. To some extent, this specific view of family is changing as same-sex

relationships and no-longer-new reproductive technologies expand our views of what family can and cannot be. Still, quite often, we think about family in a rigid, heteronormative context, assuming that everyone wants the same thing.

What if we think about family in an entirely different way? In fact, many people already do. In 2014, 10 percent of American adults lived in cohabitating relationships. Meanwhile, 51 percent were married in state-endorsed relationships, and that percentage has been dropping fast.⁷⁷ Those numbers may sound familiar as part of politicians' "focus on the family," decrying the number of children born to unmarried parents and bemoaning the weakening of an institution they hold dear (even though their colleagues are frequently exposed in the news for sexual indiscretions).

It is true that adults with limited resources face challenges raising children when they have limited access to affordable, high-quality child care. They struggle when living wage jobs migrate to other countries or other states where workers earn less. In an economic system that encourages concentration of resources in a tiny fraction of the population, it is no wonder that they struggle. But is the institution of marriage really to blame? The number of cohabitating unmarried individuals is high in many parts of Europe as well, but with better support structures in place, parents fare much better. They enjoy parental leave policies that mandate their jobs be held for them upon return from leave. They also benefit from strong educational systems and state-subsidized child care, and their children enjoy better outcomes than ours.

Critics see the "focus on the family" by U.S. politicians as a convenient political trick that turns attention away from crucial policy issues and refocuses it on the plight of the institution of marriage and the fate of the nation's children. Few people can easily dismiss these concerns, even if they do not reflect their own lived realities. And besides, the family model trumpeted by politicians as lost is but one form of family that is not universal even in the United States, much less among all human groups, as sociologist Stephanie Coontz convincingly argued in books including *The Way We Never*

Were (1992) and *The Way We Really Are* (1997). In fact, the “focus on family” ignores the diverse ways peoples on this continent have organized their relationships. For Hopi, a Native American group living in what is today the southwestern United States, for example, it is their mother’s kin rather than their husbands’ from whom they draw support. The Navajo, Kiowa, and Iroquois Native American cultures all organize their family units and arrange their relationships differently.

Na people living in the foothills of the Himalayas have many ways to structure family relationships. One relationship structure looks like what we might expect in a place where people make their living from the land and raise livestock to sustain themselves. Young adults marry, and brides sometimes move into the husband’s childhood home and live with his parents. They have children, who live with them, and they work together. A second Na family structure looks much less familiar: young adults live in large, extended family households with several generations and form romantic relationships with someone from another household. When they are ready, the young man seeks permission to spend the night in the young woman’s room. If both parties desire, their relationship can evolve into a long-term one, but they do not marry and do not live together in the same household. When a child is conceived, or before if the couple chooses, their relationship moves from a secretive one to one about which others know. Even so, the young man rarely spends daylight hours with his partner. Instead, he returns to his own family’s home to help with farming and other work there. The state is not involved in their relationship, and their money is not pooled either, though presents change hands. If either partner becomes disenchanted with the other, the relationship need not persist. Their children remain in the mother’s home, nurtured by adults who love them deeply—not just by their mothers but also by their grandmothers, maternal aunts, maternal uncles, and often

older cousins as well. They enjoy everyday life with an extended family (Figure 18). The third Na family structure mixes the preceding two systems. Someone joins a larger household as a spouse. Perhaps the family lacked enough women or men to manage the household and farming tasks adequately or the couple faced pressure from the government to marry.

As an anthropologist who has done fieldwork in Na communities since 2001, I can attest to the loving and nurturing families their system encourages. It protects adults as well as children. Women who are suffering in a relationship can end it with limited consequences for their children, who do not need to relocate to a new house and adjust to a new lifestyle. Lawyers need not get involved, as they often must in divorce cases elsewhere in the world. A man who cannot afford to build a new house for his family—a significant pressure for people in many areas of China that prevents young men from marrying or delays their marriages—can still enjoy a relationship or can choose, instead, to devote himself to his role as an uncle. Women and men who do not feel the urge to pursue romantic lives are protected in this system as well; they can contribute to their natal families without having to worry that no one will look out for them as they age.

Like any system composed of real people, Na systems are not perfect, and neither are the people who represent them. In the last few decades, people have flocked to Lugu Lake hoping to catch a glimpse of this unusual society, and many tourists and tour guides have mistakenly taken Na flexibility in relationships as signifying a land of casual sex with no recognition of paternity. These are highly problematic assumptions that offend my Na acquaintances deeply.

Na people have fathers and know who they are, and they often enjoy close relationships despite living apart. In fact, fathers are deeply involved in children's lives and often participate in everyday child-rearing activities. Of course, as in other parts of the world, some fathers participate more than others. Fathers and their birth families also take responsibility for contributing to school expenses and make other financial contributions as circumstances permit. Clearly, this is not a community in which men do not fulfill responsibilities as fathers. It is one in which the responsibilities and how they are fulfilled varies markedly from those of fathers living in other places and cultures.

Though problems exist in Na communities and their relationship patterns are already changing and transforming them, it is encouraging that so many people can live satisfied lives in this flexible system. The Na shatter our expectations about how families and relationships should be organized. They also inspire us to ask whether we can, and should, adapt part of their ethos into our own society.⁷⁸

For more information, see the [TEDx FurmanU presentation](#) by Tami Blumenfeld.

Male Dominance: Universal and Biologically Rooted?

Unraveling the myth of the hunting way of life and women's dependence on male hunting undermined the logic behind the argument for biologically rooted male dominance. Still, for feminist scholars, the question of male dominance remained important. Was it universal, "natural," inevitable, and unalterable? Were some societies gender-egalitarian? Was gender inequality a cultural phenomenon, a product of culturally and historically specific conditions?

Research in the 1970s and 1980s addressed these questions.⁷⁹ Some argued that "sexual asymmetry" was universal and resulted from complex cultural processes related to women's reproductive roles.⁸⁰ Others presented evidence of gender equality in small-scale societies (such as the !Kung San and Native American Iroquois) but argued that it had disappeared with the rise of private property

and “the state.”⁸¹ Still others focused on evaluating the “status of women” using multiple “variables” or identifying “key determinants” (e.g., economic, political, ecological, social, and cultural) of women’s status.⁸² By the late 1980s, scholars realized how difficult it was to define, much less measure, male dominance across cultures and even the “status of women” in one culture.

Think of our own society or the area in which you live. How would you go about assessing the “status of women” to determine whether it is male-dominated? What would you examine? What information would you gather and from whom? What difficulties might you encounter when making a judgment? Might men and women have different views? Then imagine trying to compare the status of women in your region to the status of women in, let’s say, the Philippines, Japan, or China or in a kin-based, small society like that of the Minangkabau living in Indonesia and the !Kung San in Botswana. Next, how might Martians, upon arriving in your city, decide whether you live in a “male dominated” culture? What would they notice? What would they have difficulty deciphering? This

experiment gives you an idea of what anthropologists confronted—except they were trying to include all societies that ever existed. Many were accessible only through archaeological and paleontological evidence or through historical records, often made by travelers, sailors, or missionaries. Surviving small-scale cultures were surrounded by more-powerful societies that often imposed their cultures and gender ideologies on those under their control.

For example, the !Kung San of Southern Africa when studied by anthropologists, had already been pushed by European colonial rulers into marginal areas. Most were living on “reserves” similar to In-dian reservations in the United States. Others lived in market towns and were sometimes involved in the tourist industry and in films such as the ethnographically flawed and ethnocentric film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980). !Kung San women at the time were learning European Christian ideas about sexuality, clothing, and covering their breasts, and children were attending missionary-

established schools, which taught the church's and European views of gender and spousal roles along with the Bible, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the South African military tried to recruit San to fight against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), taunting reluctant !Kung San men by calling them "chicken" and assuming, erroneously, that the !Kung San shared their "tough guys / tough guise" version of masculinity.⁸³

Given the complexity of evaluating "universal male dominance," scholars abandoned the search for simple "global" answers, for key "determinants" of women's status that would apply to all societies. A 1988 *Annual Review of Anthropology* article by Mukhopadhyay and Higgins concluded that "one of the profound realizations of the past ten years is that the original questions, still unanswerable, may be both naive and inappropriate."⁸⁴ Among other things, the concept of "status" contains at least five separate, potentially independent components: economics, power/authority, prestige, autonomy, and gender ideologies/beliefs. One's life-cycle stage, kinship role, class, and other socio-economic and social-identity variables affect one's gender status. Thus, even within a single culture, women's lives are not uniform.⁸⁵

New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender

More-recent research has been focused on improving the ethnographic and archaeological record and re-examining old material. Some have turned from cause-effect relations to better understanding how gender systems work and focusing on a single culture or cultural region. Others have explored a single topic, such as menstrual blood and cultural concepts of masculinity and infertility across cultures.⁸⁶

Many American anthropologists "returned home," looking with fresh eyes at the diversity of wom-en's lives in their own society: working-class women, immigrant women, women of various ethnic and racial groups, and women in different geographic regions and occupations.⁸⁷ Some ethnographers, for example, immersed themselves in the abortion debates, conducting fieldwork to

understand the perspective and logic behind pro-choice and anti-choice activists in North Dakota. Others headed to college campuses, studying the “culture of romance” or fraternity gang rape.⁸⁸ Peggy Sanday’s work on sexual coercion, including her cross-cultural study of rape-prone societies, was followed by other studies of power-coercion-gender relationships, such as using new reproductive technologies for selecting the sex of children.⁸⁹

Many previously unexplored areas such as the discourse around reproduction, representations of women in medical professions, images in popular culture, and international development policies (which had virtually ignored gender) came under critical scrutiny.⁹⁰ Others worked on identifying complex local factors and processes that produce particular configurations of gender and gender relations, such as the **patrifocal** (male-focused) cultural model of family in many parts of India.⁹¹ Sexuality studies expanded, challenging existing binary paradigms, making visible the lives of lesbian mothers and other traditionally marginalized sexualities and identities.⁹²

The past virtual invisibility of women in archaeology disappeared as a host of new studies was published, often by feminist anthropologists, including a pioneering volume by Joan Gero and Margaret Conkey, *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*. That book gave rise to a multi-volume series specifically on gender and archaeology edited by Sarah Nelson. Everything from divisions of labor to power relations to sexuality could be scrutinized in the archaeological record.⁹³

Some anthropologists argued that there are recurring patterns despite the complexity and variability of human gender systems. One is the impact of women’s economic contributions on their power, prestige, and autonomy.⁹⁴ Women’s work, alone, does not necessarily give them control or ownership of what they produce. It is not always valued and does not necessarily lead to political

power. Women in many cultures engage in agricultural labor, but the fields are often owned and controlled by their husbands' families or by a landlord, as in many parts of India and Iran.⁹⁵ The women have little authority, prestige, or autonomy.⁹⁶ Many foraging and some horticultural societies, on the other hand, recognize women's economic and reproductive contributions, and that recognition may reflect relative equality in other spheres as well, including sexuality. Gender relations seem more egalitarian, overall, in small-scale societies such as the San, Trobrianders, and Na, in part because they are kin-ship-based, often with relatively few valuable resources that can be accumulated; those that exist are communally owned, usually by kinship groups in which both women and men have rights.

Another factor in gender equality is the social environment. Positive social relations—an absence of constant hostility or warfare with neighbors—seems to be correlated with relatively egalitarian gender relations. In contrast, militarized societies—whether small-scale horticultural groups like the Sambia who perceive their neighbors as potential enemies or large-scale stratified societies with formal military organizations and vast empires—seem to benefit men more than women overall.⁹⁷ Warrior societies culturally value men's roles, and warfare gives men access to economic and political resources.

As to old stereotypes about why men are warriors, there may be another explanation. From a re-productive standpoint, men are far more expendable than women, especially women of reproductive age.⁹⁸ While this theme has not yet been taken up by many anthropologists, male roles in warfare could be more about expendability than supposed greater male strength, aggressiveness, or courage. One can ask why it has taken so long for women in the United States to be allowed to fly combat missions? Certainly it is not about women not being strong enough to carry the plane.⁹⁹

Patriarchy . . . But What about Matriarchy?

The rise of stratified agriculture-intensive centralized “states” has tended to produce transformations in gender relations and gender

ideologies that some have called **patriarchy**, a male-dominated political and authority structure and an ideology that privileges males over females overall and in every strata of society. Gender intersects with class and, often, with religion, caste, and ethnicity. So, while there could be powerful queens, males took precedence over females within royal families, and while upper-class Brahmin women in India could have male servants, they had far fewer formal assets, power, and rights than their brothers and husbands. Also, as noted earlier, families strictly controlled their movements, interactions with males, “social reputations,” and marriages. Similarly, while twentieth-century British colonial women in British-controlled India had power over some Indian men, they still could not vote, hold high political office, control their own fertility or sexuality, or exercise other rights available to their male counterparts.¹⁰⁰ Of course, poor lower-class lower-caste Indian women were (and still are) the most vulnerable and mistreated in India, more so overall than their brothers, husbands, fathers, or sons.

On the other hand, we have yet to find any “matriarchies,” that is, female-dominated societies in which the extent and range of women’s power, authority, status, and privilege parallels men’s in patriarchal societies. In the twentieth century, some anthropologists at first confused “matriarchy” with **matrilineal**. In matrilineal societies, descent or membership in a kinship group is transmitted from mothers to their children (male and female) and then, through daughters, to their children, and so forth (as in many Na families). Matrilineal societies create woman-centered kinship groups in which having daughters is often more important to “continuing the line” than having sons, and living arrangements after marriage often center around related women in a **matrilocal** extended family household (See Text Box 1, What Can We Learn from the Na?). Female sexuality may become less regulated since it

is the mother who carries the “seed” of the lineage. In this sense, it is the reverse of the kinds of patrilineal, patrilocal, patrifocal male-oriented kinship groups and households one finds in many patriarchal societies. Peggy Sanday suggested, on these and other grounds, that the Minang-kabau, a major ethnic group in Indonesia, is a matriarchy.¹⁰¹

Ethnographic data have shown that males, especially as members of matrilineages, can be powerful in matrilineal societies. Warfare, as previously mentioned, along with political and social stratification can alter gender dynamics. The Nayar (in Kerala, India), the Minangkabau, and the Na are matrilineal societies embedded in, or influenced by, dominant cultures and patriarchal religions such as Islam and Hinduism. The society of the Na in China is also **matrifocal** in some ways. Thus, the larger context, including contemporary global processes, can undermine women’s power and status.¹⁰² At the same time, though, many societies are clearly matrifocal, are relatively female-centered, and do not have the kinds of gender ideologies and systems found in most patriarchal societies.¹⁰³ Text Boxes 1 and 2 provide examples of such systems.

Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian spirit possession religion in which Yoruba (West African) deities called *orixás* are honored at religious sites called *terreiros* where the *Candomblé* priestesses (*mães do santo*) and their “daughters” (*filhas do santo*) live. One of the central “hubs” of *Candomblé* worship in Brazil is the northeastern state of Bahia, where Afro-Brazilians make up more than 80 percent of the population in the capital city, Salvador. Brazil’s geography is perceived through the lenses of race and class since Bahia, a majority Afro-Brazilian state, is viewed as underdeveloped, backward, and poor relative to the whiter and wealthier Southern region.¹⁰⁴

In the 1930s, a Jewish female anthropologist Ruth Landes provided a different perspective about Bahia, one that emphasized black women’s communal power. During the time in which Landes conducted her research, the Brazilian police persecuted *Candomblé* communities for “harboring communists.” The Brazilian

government was linked with Nazism, torture, rape, and racism, and Afro-Brazilians resisted this oppression.¹⁰⁵ Also during this period, debate began among social scientists about whether Candomblé was a matriarchal religion in which women were the primary spiritual leaders. The debate was rooted in the question of where “black matriarchy” came from. Was it a result of the history of slavery or was it an African “cultural survival”? The debate was simultaneously about the power and importance of Afro-Brazilian women in spiritual and cultural life.

On one side of the debate was E. Franklin Frazier, an African-American sociologist trained at University of Chicago, who maintained that Candomblé and the lack of legal marriage gave women their important position in Bahia. He believed that black women had been matriarchal authorities since the slavery period and described them as defiant and self-reliant. On the other side of the debate was anthropologist Melville Herskovits, who was trained by German immigrant Franz Boas at Columbia University. Herskovits believed that black women’s economic roles demonstrated African cultural survivals, but downplayed the priestesses’ importance in Candomblé.¹⁰⁶ Herskovits portrayed patriarchy rather than matriarchy as the central organizing principle in Bahia. He argued that African cultural survivals in Brazil came from the patrilineal practices of Dahomey and Yoruba in West Africa and portrayed Bahian communities as male-centered with wives and “concu-bines” catering to men and battling each other for male attention.

Ruth Landes and her work triggered the debate about “black matriarchy” in Bahia. Landes had studied with anthropologists Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict at Columbia University. She began her studies of Candomblé in 1938 in Salvador, Bahia, working with her research partner, guide, and significant other, Edison Carneiro, a scholar of Afro-Brazilian studies and journalist, resulting in publication in 1947 of *The City of Women*.¹⁰⁷ Landes contended that

Afro-Brazilian women were the powerful matriarchal leaders of *terreiros* de Candomblé. She called them matriarchal because she argued that their leadership was “made up almost exclusively of women and, in any case controlled by women.”¹⁰⁸ Landes claimed that the women provided spiritual advice and sexual relationships in exchange for financial support from male patrons of the *terreiros*. She also explained that newer *caboclo* houses (in which indigenous spirits were worshipped in addition to Yoruba spirits) had less-stringent guidelines and allowed men to become priests and dance for the gods, actions considered taboo in the Yoruba tradition. Landes elaborated that these men were primarily “passive” homosexuals. She looked down on this “modern” development, which she viewed as detracting from the supposedly “pure” woman-centered Yoruba (West African) practices.¹⁰⁹

Even Landes’ (controversial) argument about homosexuality was part of her claim about matriarchy; she contended that the homosexual men who became *pais do santo* (“fathers of the saint,” or Candomblé priests) had previously been “outcasts”—prostitutes and va-grants who were hounded by the police. By becoming like the “mothers” and acting as women, they could gain status and respect. Landes was strongly influenced by both Ed-ison Carneiro’s opinion and the convictions of Martiniano Eliseu do Bonfim (a revered *babalaô* or “father of the secrets”) and the women priestesses of the traditional houses (*Gantois*, *Casa Branca*, and *Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá*) with whom she spent the majority of her time. Thus, her writings likely represent the views of her primary informants, making her work unique; at that time, anthropologists (ethnocentrically) considered themselves more knowledgeable about the cultures they studied than the people in those cultures.

Landes incorporated ideas from the research of E. Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits to contend that the existence of the matriarchy in Bahia rested on women’s economic positions, sexuality, and capacities, which were influenced by 1) white slave owners’ preference for black women as heads of families and the inculcation of leadership traits in black women and not black men

and 2) the history of women's roles as property owners, market sellers, priestesses, and warriors in West Africa.¹¹⁰

Landes' findings continue to be critiqued in contemporary academic contexts because some scholars disagree with her matriarchy thesis and her views about homosexual *pais* and *filhos do santo*. J. Lorand Matory, director of African and African-American research at Duke University, has taken one of the strongest positions against Landes, arguing that she altered the evidence to argue for the existence of the "*cult matriarchate*." Matory believes that her division between "new" and "traditional" houses is a false one and that men traditionally were the leaders in Candomblé. In fact, Matory contends that, at the time of Landes' research, more men than women were acting as priests.¹¹¹ In contrast, Cheryl Sterling sees Landes' *The City of Women* as "still relevant today as the first feminist account of Candomblé" and maintains that Candomblé is a space in which Afro-Brazilian women are the "supreme authority" and that the *terreiro* is an enclave of "female power." The Brazilian state stereotypes black women as socially pathological with "unstable" family structures, making them "sub-citizens," but Sterling argues that Candomblé is a space in which female blackness prevails.¹¹²

Has Civilization "Advanced" Women's Position?

Ironically, some nineteenth and twentieth century writers and social scientists, such as Herbert Spencer, have argued that women's positions "advanced" with civilization, especially under European influence, at least relative to so-called "primitive" societies. The picture is complicated, but the opposite may actually be true. Most anthropological studies have suggested that "civilization," "colonialism," "development," and "globalization" have been mixed blessings for women.¹¹³ Their traditional workloads tend to increase while they are simultaneously excluded from new opportunities in agricultural cash crops, trading, and technology. Sometimes they lose traditional rights (e.g., to property) within extended family kinship groups or experience increased pressure

from men to be the upholders of cultural traditions, whether in clothing or marriage practices. On the other hand, new political, economic, and educational opportunities can open up for women, allowing them not only to contribute to their families but to delay marriage, pursue alternatives to marriage, and, if they marry, to have a more powerful voice in their marriages.¹¹⁴

Deeply embedded cultural-origin stories are extremely powerful, difficult to unravel, and can persist despite contradictory evidence, in part because of their familiarity. They resemble what people have seen and experienced throughout their lifetimes, even in the twenty-first century, despite all the changes. Yet, nineteenth and twentieth century cultural models are also continuously reinforced and reproduced in every generation through powerful devices: children's stories; rituals like Valentine's Day; fashion, advertisements, music, video games, and popular culture generally; and in financial, political, legal, and military institutions and leaders. But profound transformations can produce a "backlash," as in U.S. movements to restore "traditional" family forms, "traditional" male and female roles, sexual abstinence-virginity, and the "sanctity" of heterosexual marriage.¹¹⁵ Some would argue that backlash elements were at work in the 2016 Presidential and Congressional elections (see Text Box 3).

Cultural origin stories also persist because they are **legitimizing ideologies**—complex belief systems often developed by those in power to rationalize, explain, and perpetuate systems of inequality. The hunting-way-of-life theory of human evolution, for example, both naturalizes and essentializes male dominance and other gender-related traits and provides an origin story and a legitimizing ideology for the "traditional" U.S. nuclear family as "fundamental to human social organization and life." It also can be used to justify "spousal rape" and domestic violence, treating both as private family matters and, in the past, as male "rights." Not surprisingly, elements of the traditional nuclear family model appear in the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized same-sex marriage,

especially in the [dissenting views](#). And cultural models of gender and family played a role in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. For a related activity, see Activity 3 below.

The 2016 presidential election was gender precedent-setting in ways that will take de-cades to analyze (see for example [Gail Collins](#)). For the first time, a major U.S. political party chose a woman as its presidential candidate. And while Hillary Rodham Clinton did not win the electoral college, she won the popular vote, the first woman to do so, and by nearly three million votes. As a cultural anthropologist who has long studied women and politics, I offer a few preliminary observations on the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election.¹¹⁶

Women on the Political Leadership Stage

From a positive perspective, for the first time, two women (Republican Carly Fiorina and Democrat Hillary Clinton) participated in televised presidential primary debates and one went on to the [“finals.”](#) Millions of people, including children, saw articulate, accomplished, powerful women competing with men to be “Commander-in-Chief.” During the 2016 [Democratic National Convention](#), the country watched a major political party and key male leaders celebrate the life and professional and leadership-relevant achievements of a woman, its presidential nominee. The role-modeling impacts are enormous—and, one hopes, long-lasting.

The Gendered White House Family

The 2016 presidential campaign challenged, at least momentarily, the traditional, tak-en-for-granted, gendered institution of the White House first “family.” What if the president’s spouse were male? This would wreck havoc with the conventional “first lady” role! Traditionally, the spouse, even if highly educated, becomes the “help mate” and “listener,” handles “domestic affairs,” organizes and attends important social occasions, and works on gender-appropriate projects such as children’s health. Hillary Clinton was roundly criticized, as first lady, for venturing beyond the “domestic

sphere” and pursuing health care re-form in Bill Clinton’s administration even though she had indisputably relevant professional expertise. Michelle Obama, with her Harvard law degree and prior career as a lawyer, became best known as “First Mom” and a “fashion trend-setter” whose clothing was discussed and emulated. While she was a very positive role model, especially for African-Americans, and developed major initiatives to combat childhood obesity and promote fresh food, she did not challenge [gender conventions](#). How many girls remember her professional credentials and achievements?

Had Hillary Clinton won, the need to confront gendered elements of the conventional White House family would have come to the forefront as the “first gentleman” role gradually evolved. Certainly, no one would have expected Bill Clinton to choose china patterns, redecorate the living quarters, or become a “fashion trend-setter.”

The 2016 presidential campaign stimulated discussion of other often- ignored gender-re-lated topics. Despite some progress, sexual harassment and sexual assault, including rape, remain widespread in the workplace and on college campuses (cf. [Stanford case](#), [The Hunting Ground](#)). Yet there has been enormous pressure on women—and institu-tions—to remain silent.

In October 2016, after a video was released of Donald Trump bragging about his abil-ity to sexually grope women he did not know, the presidential candidate said it was only “locker room talk”...not anything he had ever done. Hearing these denials, several women, some well- known, came forth with convincing claims that Trump had groped them or in other ways engaged in inappropriate, non-consensual sexual behavior. Trump respond-ed by denying the charges, insulting the accusers, and threatening lawsuits against the claimants and news media organizations that published the reports.¹¹⁷ For many women, the video aroused memories of their own recurring experiences with sexual harassment and assault. After the video was released, Kelly Oxford started a tidal wave of women un-burdening long -kept secrets with her tweet: “ [Women:](#)

[tweet me your first assaults.](#)” Others went on record denouncing Trumps’ talk and behavior, and the hashtag #NotOkay surged on Twitter.

In a normal U.S. presidential election, the video and repeated accusations of sexual assault would have forced the candidate to withdraw (as happened with [Gary Hart](#) in a previous election). Instead, accusers experienced a backlash not only from Trump but from some media organizations and Trump supporters, illustrating why women are reluctant to come forth or press sexual charges, especially against powerful men (see the 1991 [Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas case](#)). These voters’ reactions and the continued willingness of so many others to vote for the candidate suggest that “locker room banter” and unwanted sexual advances are still considered normal and acceptable among significant segments of our population. After all, “boys will be boys,” at least in the old (false) baboon stereotype of male behavior! Clearly, we need more public conversations about what constitutes ap-propriate and consensual sexually related behavior.

Sexism: Alive and Well

The 2016 presidential campaign revealed that sexism is alive and well, though not al-ways [recognized](#), explicit, or acknowledged even when obvious (see article by [Lynn Sherr](#)). The media, both before and after the election, generally underplayed the impact of sexism despite research showing that sexist attitudes, not political party, were more likely to pre-dict voters preference for Donald Trump over [Hillary Clinton](#).¹¹⁸

The campaign also reflected a persistent double standard. Despite widespread agree-ment that Hillary Clinton was highly qualified to be president, her judgment, competence, “stamina,” and even her proven accomplishments were subjected to scrutiny and criticism not normally applied to similarly experienced male candidates. Additional gender-specific criteria were imposed: “likeability,” “smiling enough,” “warmth,” and appearance. She did not “look” “presidential”—an image of leadership that evoked the stereotype baboon mod-el! But being six feet tall with large biceps

and acting “tough” and “aggressive” probably would have disqualified her, as a woman, from the start! Other traits that are acceptable in men—ambitious, goal-focused, strategic, “wanting” the presidency—were treated as liabilities in Clinton, part of a “power-hungry” critique, as though women are not legitimately supposed to pursue or hold power.

Patriarchal Stereotypes of Women

Hillary Clinton’s candidacy seems to have activated long-standing patriarchal stereo-types and images of women. One is the “good vs. bad” woman opposition. The “good” woman is chaste, obedient, nurturing, self-sacrificing, gentle—the Virgin Mary/Mother figure. The “bad” woman is greedy, selfish, independent, aggressive, and often, sexually active—importantly, she lies, deceives, is totally untrustworthy. Bad (“nasty”) women in myths and reality must be punished for their transgressions; they are dangerous to men and threaten the social order.

As a researcher and someone who had many conversations with voters during this election, I was shocked by the intensity and level of animosity directed at Hillary Clinton. It was palpable, and it went far beyond a normal critique of a normal candidate. At Republican rallies, mass shouts of “lock her up” and T-shirts and bumper stickers bearing slogans like “[Trump that Bitch](#)” ([and worse](#)) bore a frightening resemblance to violence-inciting hate-speech historically directed at African-Americans and at Jews, gays, and socialists in Nazi Germany, as well as to hate-filled speech that fueled Medieval European witch-burnings in which thousands (if not millions), mainly women, were burned at the stake [“burn the witch”].¹¹⁹ Clinton was indeed challenging “traditional” gender roles in U.S. [politics](#), the workplace, and at home. Patriarchy was being threatened, and many, though not all, voters found that profoundly disturbing even though they did not necessarily recognize it or admit it.¹²⁰

Beyond that, there is a long tradition of blaming women for personal and societal disasters—for convincing Adam to eat the

forbidden fruit, for the breakup of joint family households in places like India. Women often become the repository for people's frustrations when things "go wrong" (Remember the spoiled sausage in Portuguese culture discussed earlier in this chapter?). Women—like minorities, immigrants, and "evil empires"—are culturally familiar, available targets to which one can legitimately assign blame, frustration, and even rage, as we saw in the [2016 election](#).¹²¹

Hillary Clinton as a Symbol of Change

Ironically, Hillary Clinton was depicted and criticized during the campaign as a symbol of the "establishment" while her key opponents stood for "change." I think it is just the opposite. Hillary Clinton and her campaign and coalition symbolized (and embraced) the major transformations—indeed, upheavals—that have occurred in the United States since the 1960s. It is not just feminism and a new definition of masculinity that rejects the old baboon male-dominance tough-guy model, although that is one change.¹²² While economic anxiety and "white nationalism" both played roles, the election was also about an "America" that is changing demographically, socially, religiously, sexually, linguistically, technologically, and ideologically—changing what constitutes "truth" and reality. For many in rural areas, outside forces—especially the government, run by liberal, urban elites—are seen as trying to control one's way of life with gun control, environmental regulations, ending coal mining, banning school (Christian) prayer, requiring schools to teach evolution and comprehensive sex education (vs. abstinence only). Hillary Clinton, her coalition, and her alignment with the Obama White House, not just with its policies but with an African-American "first family," symbolized the intersection of all these social, demographic, and cultural transformations. She truly represented "change."

Ironically, Clinton's opponents, even in the Democratic Party, were more "establishment" candidates culturally, demographically, and in their gender relationships. Bernie Sanders attracted an enormous, enthusiastic following and came close to winning the

Democratic presidential primary. Yet his rhetoric and policy proposals, while unusual in twenty-first century mainstream politics, resembled the economic inequality, anti-Wall Street, “it’s only about economics” focus of early twentieth century democratic socialists such as Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas and of progressive Henry Wallace. And, not surprisingly, Sanders appealed largely to Euro-American demographic groups rather than to the broader spectrum of twenty-first century voters.

In short, the election and the candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton symbolized more than half a century of enormous change—and a choice between continuing that change or selecting a candidate who symbolized what was traditional, familiar, and, to many, more comfortable. Whether the transformations of the past fifty years will be reversed remains to be seen.¹²³

Discussion

From a global perspective, the United States lags behind many countries in women’s political leadership and representation. For national legislative bodies, U.S. women constitute only 19 percent of Congress, **below** the world average of 23 percent, below the average in the Americas, 28 percent, and far below Nordic countries, 41 percent. The U.S. ranks 104th of 193 countries in the world (see <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>). When it comes to political leadership, over 65 nations have elected at least one woman as their head of state, including countries with predominantly Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and/or Buddhist populations. (see <https://www.theglobalist.com/women-on-top-of-the-political-world/>.) Yet the U.S. still has never elected a woman President (or even Vice-President). Are you surprised by these data or by some of the countries that rank higher than the United States? Why? What do you think are some of the reasons the US lags behind so many other countries?

Additional Resources and Links

[Center for American Women and Politics](#)

Presidential Gender Watch: <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/>

[Institute for Women's Policy Research](#)

[Pew Research Institute](#) (U.S. and international data)

[United Nations, UN Women](#)

CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Contemporary anthropology now recognizes the crucial role played by gender in human society. Anthropologists in the post-2000 era have focused on exploring fluidity within and beyond sexuality, incorporating a gendered lens in all anthropological research, and applying feminist science frameworks, discourse-narrative analyses, political theory, critical studies of race, and queer theory to better understand and theorize gendered dynamics and power. Pleasure, desire, trauma, mobility, boundaries, reproduction, violence, coercion, bio-politics, globalization, neoliberal “development” policies and discourses, immigration, and other areas of anthropological inquiry have also informed gender and sexuality studies. We next discuss some of those trends.¹²⁴

Heteronormativity and Sexuality in the United States

In the long history of human sexual relationships, we see that most involve people from different biological sexes, but some societies recognize and even celebrate partnerships between members of the same biological sex.¹²⁵ In some places, religious institutions formalize unions while in others unions are recognized only once they result in a pregnancy or live birth. Thus, what many people in the United States consider “normal,” such as the partnership of one man and one woman in a sexually exclusive relationship legitimized by the state and federal government and often sanctioned by a religious institution, is actually **heteronormative**. **Heteronormativity** is a term coined by French philosopher Michel Foucault to refer to the often-unnoticed system of rights and privileges that accompany normative sexual choices and family formation. For example, a “biologically female” woman

attracted to a “biologically male” man who pursued that attraction and formed a relationship with that man would be following a heteronormative pattern in the United States. If she married him, she would be continuing to follow societal expectations related to gender and sexuality and would be agreeing to state involvement in her love life as she formalizes her relationship.

Despite pervasive messages reinforcing heteronormative social relations, people find other ways to satisfy their sexual desires and organize their families. Many people continue to choose partners from the so-called “opposite” sex, a phrase that reflects the old U.S. bipolar view of males and females as being at opposite ends of a range of characteristics (strong-weak, active-passive, hard-soft, out-side-inside, Mars-Venus).¹²⁶ Others select partners from the same biological sex. Increasingly, people are choosing partners who attract them—perhaps female, perhaps male, and perhaps someone with ambiguous physical sexual characteristics.

Labels have changed rapidly in the United States during the twenty-first century as a wider range of sexual orientations has been openly acknowledged, accompanied by a shift in our binary view of sexuality. Rather than thinking of individuals as either heterosexual OR homosexual, scholars and activists now recognize a *spectrum* of sexual orientations. Given the U.S. focus on identity, it is not surprising that a range of new personhood categories, such as bisexual, queer, questioning, lesbian, and gay have emerged to reflect a more-fluid, shifting, expansive, and ambiguous conception of sex-uality and sexual identity.

Transgender, meanwhile, is a category for people who transition from one sex to another, male to female or female to male, using a number of methods. Anthropologist David Valentine explored how the concept of “transgender” became established in the United States and found that many people who were identified by others as transgender did not embrace the label themselves. This label, too, has undergone a profound shift in usage, and the high-profile transition by [Caitlyn Jenner](#) in the mid-2010s has further shifted how people think about those who identify as transgender.¹²⁷

By 2011, an estimated 8.7 million people in the United States identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.¹²⁸ These communities represent a vibrant, growing, and increasingly politically and economically powerful segment of the population. While people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender—or any of a number of other sexual and gender minorities—have existed throughout the United States’ history, it is only since the Stonewall uprisings of 1969 that the modern LGBT movement has been a key force in U.S. society.¹²⁹ Some activists, community members, and scholars argue that LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender) is a better choice of labels than GLBT since it puts lesbian identity in the foreground—a key issue because the term “gay” is often used as an umbrella term and can erase recognition of individuals who are not gay males. Recently, the acronym has been expanded to include LGBTQ (queer or questioning), LGBTQQ (both queer and questioning), LGBTQIA (queer/questioning, intersex, and/or asexual), and LGBTQAIA (adding allies as well).

Like the U.S. population overall, the LGBTQ community is extremely diverse. Some African-Americans prefer the term “same-gender loving” because the other terms are seen as developed by and for “white people.” Emphasizing the importance and power of words, Jafari Sinclair Allen explains that “same-gender loving” was “coined by the black queer activist Cleo Manago [around 1995] to mark a distinction between ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ culture and identification, and black men and women who have sex with members of the same sex.”¹³⁰ While scholars continue to use gay, lesbian, and queer and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control uses MSM (men who have sex with men), “same-gender loving” resonates in some urban communities.

Not everyone who might fit one of the LGBTQIA designations consciously identifies with a group defined by sexual orientation. Some people highlight their other identities, as Minnesotans, for example, or their ethnicity, religion, profession, or hobby—whatever

they consider central and important in their lives. Some scholars argue that heteronormativity allows people who self-identify as heterosexual the luxury of not being defined by their sexual orientation. They suggest that those who identify with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth be referred to as **cisgender**.¹³¹ Only when labels are universal rather than used only for non-normative groups, they argue, will people become aware of discrimination based on differences in sexual preference.

Though people are urging adoption of sexual identity labels, not everyone is embracing the move to self-identify in a specific category. Thus, a man who is attracted to both men and women might self-identify as bisexual and join activist communities while another might prefer not to be incorporated into any sexual-preference-based politics. Some people prefer to eliminate acronyms altogether, instead embracing terms such as *genderfluid* and *genderqueer* that recognize a spectrum instead of a static identity. This freedom to self-identify or avoid categories altogether is important. Most of all, these shifts and debates demonstrate that, like the terms themselves, LGBTQ communities in the United States are diverse and dynamic with often-changing priorities and makeup.

Changing Attitudes toward LGBTQ People in the United States

In the last two decades, attitudes toward LGBTQ—particularly lesbian, gay and bisexual—people have changed dramatically. The most sweeping change is the extension of marriage rights to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. The first state to extend marriage rights was Massachusetts in 2003. By 2014, more than half of U.S. Americans said they believed same-sex couples should have the right to marry, and on June 26, 2015, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. supreme court declared that same-sex couples had the legal right to marry.¹³² Few civil rights movements have seen such progress in such a short period of time. While many factors have influenced the shift in attitudes, sociologists and anthropologists have identified increased awareness of and exposure to LGBTQ people through the media and personal interactions as playing key roles.¹³³

Legalization of same-sex marriage also helped normalize same-sex parenting. Sarah, whose three young children—including a set of twins—are mothered by Sarah and her partner, was active in campaigns for marriage equality in Minnesota and ecstatic when the campaign succeeded in 2013 (see Text Box 4).

However, legalization of same-sex marriage has not been welcomed everywhere in the United States. Anthropologist Jessica Johnson's ethnographic work profiling a Seattle-based megachurch from 2006 through 2008 initially explored their efforts to oppose same-sex marriage. Later, she shifted her focus to the rhetoric of gender, masculinity, and cisgender sexuality used by the church and its pastor.¹³⁴ Official church communications dismissed homosexuality as aberrant and mobi-lized members to advocate against same-sex marriage. The church's efforts were not successful.

Interestingly, activists and gender studies scholars express concern over incorporating marriage—a heteronormative institution some consider oppressive—into queer spaces not previously governed by state authority. These concerns may be overshadowed by a desire for normative lives and legal protections, but as sociologist Tamara Metz and others have argued, legally intertwining passion, romance, sexual intimacy, and economic rights and responsibilities is not necessarily a move in the right direction.¹³⁵ As Miriam Smith has written, “We must move beyond thinking of same-sex marriage and relationship recognition as struggles that pit allegedly normalized or assimilated same-sex couples against queer politics and sensibilities and, rather, recognize the increasingly complex gender politics of same-sex marriage and relationship recognition, a politics that implicates groups beyond the LGBT community.”¹³⁶

While U.S. culture on the whole has become more supportive and accepting of LGBTQ people, they still face challenges. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not federally protected statuses. Thus, in 32 states (as of 2016), employers can legally refuse to hire

and can fire someone simply for being LGBTQ.¹³⁷ Even in states where queer people have legal protection, transgender and other gender-diverse people do not. LGBTQ people can be legally denied housing and other important re-sources heterosexual people take for granted. LGBTQ youth made up 40 percent of homeless young people in the United States in 2012 and are often thrust into homelessness by family rejection.¹³⁸ Transgender people are the most vulnerable and experience high levels of violence, including homi-cide. See Activity 4: Bathroom Transgression.

In 2013, the Minnesota state legislature voted on whether to approve same -sex mar-riage. Before the vote, a woman named Sarah made the difficult decision to advocate publicly for the bill's approval. In the process, she wrote the following letter.

Dear Minnesota Senator,

This is an open letter to you in support of the marriage equality bill. I may not be your constituent, and you may already know how you are planning to vote, but I ask you to read this letter with an open mind and heart nonetheless.

I want same-sex marriage for the same reasons as many others. My partner Abby and I met in the first days of 2004 and have created a loving home together with our three kids and two cats. We had a commitment ceremony in 2007 in Minneapolis and were legally married in Vancouver during our “honeymoon.” We want our marriage to be recognized because our kids deserve to have married parents, and because we constantly face increased stress as a result of having our relationship not recognized. But that’s not why I’m writing. I’m writing because there is one conversation I have over and over again with my son that puts a pit in my stomach each time, and I’m ready for that pit to go away.

Abby and I both wear wedding bands. We designed them prior to our ceremony and spent more time on that decision than we did on the flowers, dresses, and music combined. Our son is now three and a half and, like other kids his age, he asks about everything. All the time. When I get him dressed, change his diaper (please let him

be potty-trained soon), or wipe his nose, he sees my ring. And he always asks:

“Mama, what’s that ring on your finger?”

“It’s my wedding band.”

“Why you wear a wedding band?”

“Because when Ima and I got married, we picked out wedding bands and now we wear them every day. It shows that we love each other.”

“I want wear wedding band.”

“Someday when you’re all grown up, you’ll fall in love and get married. And you’ll get to wear a wedding band, too.”

“I’ll grow up and get married? And then I get a wedding band?”

“Yep.”

“Okay.”

And then he goes about his day. This conversation may seem silly and harmless to you, but read it again. Look at how many times the issue of marriage comes up. We call it a wedding band, but every time we say that, we know it’s not completely true because we were not legally wed in Minnesota. When I tell my son about our marriage or our wedding, I know I’m hiding a secret from him, but am I really supposed to explain that it was a “commitment ceremony” and we are “committed, but not “married”? He’s too young to be saddled with the pain that comes from being left out. He looks at our pictures and sees that his parents made a commitment to each other because of love. He doesn’t understand his grandfather’s speech recognizing how bittersweet the day was because the state we call home refused to bless our union as it blesses the unions of our friends. And he doesn’t understand that, when I tell him he will grow up and get married, his marriage will (most likely) be part of a tradition from which his parents are excluded.

I am grateful that he is blissfully unaware right now. Imagine having the conversation with your children. Imagine the pain you would feel if innocent conversations with your child re-minded you constantly that your love is not valued by your community. Don’t

get me wrong; our friends and family treated our ceremony as they would a legal wedding. We had a phenomenal time with good food, music, laughter, and joy. If our ceremony in Minneapolis had been enough, though, we wouldn't have bothered to get legally married in Vancouver. There is something so powerful and intangible about walking into a government office and walking out with a marriage license. We are grateful we had the opportunity there, and simply wish our state would recognize our commitment as the marriage that it is.

Take a look at the picture of my family. It's outdated, primarily because we can't get our kids to sit still long enough for a photo. I'm on the right, Abby on the left. Our son is now 3.5 and our girls (twins) are almost 2. We can appreciate that this is a difficult vote for many of you and we would be honored if you think of our family and the impact this vote will have on us. We know many people outside of the Twin Cities never have a chance to meet families like ours. Tell them about us, if it helps. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

Sarah

Minneapolis, Minnesota

April 2013

Note: Minnesota legalized same-sex marriage in 2013.

Sexuality outside the United States

Same-sex sexual and romantic relationships probably exist in every society, but concepts like “gay,” “lesbian,” and “bisexual” are cultural products that, in many ways, reflect a culturally specific gender ideology and a set of beliefs about how sexual preferences develop. In many cultures (such as the Sam-bia discussed above), same-sex sex is a behavior, not an identity. Some individuals in India identify as practicing “female-female sexuality” or “male-male sexuality.” The film *Fire* by Mira Nair aroused tremendous controversy in India partly because it depicted a same-sex

relationship between two married women somewhat graphically and because it suggested alternatives available to women stuck in unhappy and abusive patriarchal marriages.¹³⁹ Whether one is “homosexual” or “heterosexual” may not be linked simply to engaging in same-sex sexual behavior. Instead, as among some Brazilian males, your status in the sexual relationship, literally and symbolically, depends on (or determines!) whether you are the inserter or the penetrated.¹⁴⁰ Which would you expect involves higher status?

Even anthropologists who are sensitive to cross-cultural variations in the terms and understandings that accompany same-sex sexual and romantic relationships can still unconsciously project their own meanings onto other cultures. Evelyn Blackwood, an American, described how surprised she was to realize that her Sumatran lover, who called herself a “Tombois,” had a different conception of what constituted a “lesbian” identity and lesbian relationship than she did.¹⁴¹ We must be careful not to assume that other cultures share LGBTQ identities as they are understood in the United States and many European countries.

Furthermore, each country has its own approach to sexuality and marriage, and reproduction of-ten plays a central role. In Israel, an embrace of pro-natalist policies for Jewish Israelis has meant that expensive reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization are provided to women at no cost or are heavily subsidized. An Israeli gay activist described how surprised queer activists from other coun-tries were when they found that nearly all Israeli female same-sex couples were raising children. (This embrace of same-sex parenting did not extend to male couples, for whom the state did not provide assisted reproductive support.) The pro-natalist policies can be traced in part to Israel’s emergence as a state: founded in the aftermath of persecution and systematic genocide of Jewish residents of Europe from 1937 through 1945, Israel initially promoted policies that encouraged births at least in part as resistance to Nazi attempts to destroy the Jewish people. The

contexts may be less dramatic elsewhere, but local and national histories often inform policies and practices.

In Thailand, Ara Wilson has explored how biological women embrace identities as *toms* and *dees*. Although these terms seem to be derived from English-language concepts (*dees* is etymologically related to “ladies”), suggesting international influences, the ubiquity and acceptance of *toms* and *dees* in Thailand does diverge from patterns in the United States.¹⁴²

In China (as elsewhere), the experiences of those involved in male-male sexuality and those involved in female-female sexuality can differ. In her book *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China*, Lucetta Yip Lo Kam discusses how lesbians in China note their lack of public social spaces compared with gay men.¹⁴³ Even the words *lala* and *tongzhi* index different categories from the English terms: *lala* encompasses lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people while *tongzhi* is a gloss term that usually refers to gay men but has been expanded in the last two decades to other uses. (*Tongzhi* is a cooptation of the Chinese-language socialist-era term for *comrade*.)

Language makes a difference in how individuals and communities articulate their identities. Anthropologists such as Kam have commented on how sharing their own backgrounds with those with whom they work can be instrumental in gaining trust and building rapport. Her identity as a Chinese-speaking queer anthropologist and activist from Hong Kong helped women in Shanghai feel comfortable speaking with her and willing to include her in their networks.¹⁴⁴

From these examples, we see that approaches to sexuality in different parts of the world are evolving, just as gender norms in the United States are undergoing tremendous shifts. Anthropologists often cross boundaries to research these changes, and their contributions will continue to shape understandings of the broad range of approaches to sexuality.

Anthropology of the Body

Another important topic for anthropologists interested in gender and sexuality is the anthropology of the body, sometimes referred to as embodied anthropology. Viewing the human body as an analytic category offers exciting new theoretical possibilities.¹⁴⁵ Topics that have attracted particular attention include popular and scientific representations of the body; (dis)ability; the anthropology of obesity; the politics of reproduction; coercion; complex issues associated with genital modifications such as female circumcision; and the relationship between bodies and borders.¹⁴⁶ Who can cross which lines physically (think about national borders), emotionally, psychologically, and socially? Embodied anthropology foregrounds these questions.

Anthropologists increasingly write about their own experiences using an auto-ethnographic mode. For example, Pamela Runestad examined how her time as a patient in a Japanese maternity ward influenced her understanding of the importance of carefully crafted meals and nutrition for HIV/ AIDS patients.¹⁴⁷ In subsequent research on HIV/AIDS in Japan, she probed more deeply into how patients' nourishment inside and outside clinical settings affected their perceptions of health.

Anthropology of the body overlaps with work on gender and sexuality, including the discourse surrounding women's bodies and reproductive functions. Emily Martin's pioneering book, *The Woman in the Body*, critically examined lay women and medical descriptions of menstruation, child-bearing, and menopause in the United States. She identified a scientific ideology of reproduction that is infused with traditional U.S. binary gender stereotypes similar to those in man-the-hunter origin stories. In her classic essay about what she calls a "scientific fairy tale," Martin describes how U.S. biology texts represented the egg and sperm as romantic partners whose actions are described with passive or active verbs according to gendered assumptions.¹⁴⁸

I realized that the picture of egg and sperm drawn in popular as well as scientific accounts of reproductive biology relies on

stereotypes central to our cultural definitions of male and female. The stereotypes imply not only that female biological processes are less worthy than their male counterparts but also that women are less worthy than men. Part of my goal in writing this article is to shine a bright light on the gender stereotypes hidden within the scientific language of biology.¹⁴⁹

Subsequent work has challenged the “sperm penetrates egg” model of fertilization, noting that it is medically inaccurate and reinforces male-active-dominant, female-passive (penetrated) gender models. In reality, the egg and sperm fuse, but the egg activates the sperm by releasing molecules that are crucial for it to find and adhere to the egg.¹⁵⁰ Old videos like [The Miracle of Life](#) offer, in their narration and background music, striking examples of the cultural ideology of reproduction in the United States that Martin and others have described.¹⁵¹

In another classic essay, Corinne Hayden explored interactions between biology, family, and gender among lesbian couples. Even though both members of the lesbian couples she studied did not necessarily contribute biologically to their offspring, the women and their families found ways to embrace these biological differences and develop a new formulation of family that involved biological connection but was not limited to it.¹⁵²

Some research analyzes the body, especially the female body, as a site of coercion and expression of power relations by individuals (e.g., partner rape and domestic violence), but state-sanctioned collective acts also occur, such as using women as “sex slaves” (Japan’s so-called “Comfort Women” during World War II) and using civilian rape as a form of psychological warfare. Anthropologists document other ways in which states exert power over bodies—through family planning policies (China’s planned birth policy), legislation that bans (or permits) artificial forms of contraception and abortion, and government programs to promote

fertility, including subsidized infertility treatments.¹⁵³ For example, Turkish anthropologists have described how state policies in Turkey have appropriated, for state purposes, sexual issues of concern to Turkish families, such as assisted reproduction for disabled war veterans and treatment of vaginismus, a condition that prevents women from engaging in sexual intercourse. Power relationships are also associated with new reproductive technologies. For example, the availability of amniocentesis often contributes to shifts in the ratio of male and female babies born. Unequal power relations are also in play between surrogate mothers (often poor women) and wealthier surrogate families desiring children.¹⁵⁴

Women in Anthropology

As seen earlier in this chapter, female anthropologists have always played a key role in anthropology. In sex-segregated societies, they have had unique access to women's worlds. Recently, they have analyzed how gender might affect styles of authorship and authority in ethnographies. Social characteristics, including gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion, also influence how an anthropologist engages in fieldwork and how she and her colleagues relate to one another.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes the identity of an anthropologist creates new opportunities for deeper understanding and connection, but at other times one's personal identity can create professional challenges.

Fieldwork

Women face particular challenges when conducting fieldwork regardless of the culture but particularly in sex-segregated and patriarchal societies. Sometimes women are perceived as more vulnerable than men to sexual harassment, and their romantic choices in fieldwork situations are subject to greater scrutiny than choices made by men in similar situations.¹⁵⁶ Women may be more likely to juggle family responsibilities and professional projects and bring children with them for fieldwork. At first glance, this practice may

raise eyebrows because of the risks it brings to accompanying children and because of potential negative impacts on the anthropologist's planned work, but many female anthropologists have found fieldwork undertaken with their families to be a transformative experience both professionally and personally. Whereas appearing as a decontextualized single fieldworker can arouse suspicion, arriving at a field site with the recognizable identities of parent, daughter, or spouse can help people conceptualize the anthropologist as someone with a role beyond camera-toting interviewer and observer. At the same time, arriving as a multi-person group also complicates what Jocelyn Linnekin called "impression management." One's child is often less aware of delicate matters and less sensitive in communicating preferences to hosts, causing potentially embarrassing situations but also creating levity that might otherwise be slow to develop. Fieldwork as a family unit also allows for a different rhythm to the elusive work-life balance; many families have reported cherishing time spent together during fieldwork since they rarely had so much time together in their activity-filled home settings.¹⁵⁷

More anthropologists now conduct fieldwork in their home communities. Some wish to explore theoretical and empirical questions best examined in local field sites. Others are reluctant or unable to relocate their families or partners temporarily. Conducting fieldwork close to home can also be a less expensive option than going abroad! But the boundaries of field and home

can become quite porous. In their writings, women anthropologists reveal how the realms of public and private and political and personal are connected in the field/home. Innovative, activist, and self-reflective studies address intersections that other scholars treat separately.¹⁵⁸

Academic Anthropology in the United States

Though the representation of women in U.S. academic anthropology is now proportional to their numbers in the Ph.D. pool, discrepancies remain between male and female anthropology professors in rank and publication rates. A 2008 report on the status of women in anthropology, for example, found evidence of continuity of the “old boys’ network”—the tendency for men in positions of power to develop relationships with other men, which creates pooled resources, positive performance evaluations, and promotions for those men but not for women. Furthermore, since women in the United States are usually socialized to avoid making demands, they often accept lower salary offers than could have been negotiated, which can have significant long-term financial consequences.¹⁵⁹

Women are also over-represented among non-tenure-track anthropology faculty members who are often paid relatively small per-course stipends and whose teaching leaves little time for research and publishing. Some married women prioritize their partners’ careers, limiting their own geographic flexibility and job (and fieldwork) opportunities. Left with few academic job options in a given area, they may leave academia altogether.¹⁶⁰

On a positive note, women have an increasingly prominent place in the highest ranks of anthropology, including as president of the American Anthropological Association. Nonetheless, systemic gender inequality continues to affect the careers of female anthropologists. Given what we know about gender systems, we should not be surprised.

Masculinity Studies

Students in gender studies and anthropology courses on gender

are often surprised to find that they will be learning about men as well as women. Early women's studies initially employed what has been called an "add women and stir" approach, which led to examinations of gender as a social construct and of women's issues in contemporary society. In the 1990s, women's studies expanded to become gender studies, incorporating the study of other genders, sexuality, and issues of gender and social justice.¹⁶¹ Gender was recognized as being fundamentally relational: femaleness is linked to maleness, femininity to masculinity. One outgrowth of that work is the field of "masculinity studies."¹⁶²

Masculinity studies goes beyond men and their roles to explore the relational aspects of gender. One focus is the enculturation processes through which boys learn about and learn to perform "man-hood." Many U.S. studies (and several excellent videos, such as *Tough Guise* by Jackson Katz), have examined the role of popular culture in teaching boys our culture's key concepts of masculinity, such as being "tough" and "strong," and shown how this "tough guise" stance affects men's relationships with women, with other men, and with societal institutions, reinforcing a culture of violent masculinity. Sociologist Michael Kimmel has further suggested that boys are taught that they live in a "perilous world" he terms "Guyland."¹⁶³

Anthropologists began exploring concepts of masculinity cross-culturally as early as the 1970s, resulting in several key publications in 1981, including Herdt's first book on the Sambia of New Guinea and Ortner and Whitehead's volume, *Sexual Meanings*. In 1990, Gilmore analyzed cross-cultural ethnographic data in his *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts in Masculinity*.¹⁶⁴ Other work followed, including a provocative video on the Sambia, *Guardians of the Flutes*. But the growth of studies of men and masculinity in the United States also stimulated new research approaches, such as "performative" aspects of masculinity and how gender functions in wealthier, post-industrial societies and communities with access to new technologies and mass media.¹⁶⁵

Anthropologists sometimes turn to unconventional information

sources as they explore gendered culture, including popular television commercials. Interestingly, the 2015 Super Bowl commercials produced for the Always feminine product brand also focused on gender themes in its [#Likeagirl campaign](#), which probed the damaging connotations of the phrases “throw like a girl” and “run like a girl” by first asking boys and girls to act out running and throwing, and then asking them to act out a *girl* running and throwing. A [companion clip](#) further explored the negative impacts of anti-girl messages, provoking dialogue among Super Bowl viewers and in social media spaces (though, ironically, that dialogue was intended to promote consumption of feminine products). As the clips remind us, while boys and men play major roles in perceptions related to gender, so do the women who raise them, often reinforcing gendered expectations for play and aspiration. Of course, women, like men, are enculturated into their culture’s gender ideology.¹⁶⁶ Both girls and boys—and adults—are profoundly influenced by popular culture.

Though scholars from many disciplines publish important work on masculinity, anthropologists, with their cross-cultural research and perspectives, have significantly deepened and enriched interdisciplinary understandings. Anthropologists have made strong contributions not only by providing nuanced portrayals (of, for example, men in prison, heroin users, migrant laborers, college students, and athletes in the United States) but also through offering vivid accounts of expectations of men in other societies, including the relationship between those expectations and warfare. This can include differences in expectations based on a person’s age, other role-based variations, and transformation of traditional roles as a result of globalization.¹⁶⁷

Not all societies expect men to be “tough guys/guise,” and those that do go about it in different ways and result in different impacts on men and women.¹⁶⁸ For example, in Sichuan Province in China, young Nuosu men must prove their maturity through risky behavior

such as theft. In recent years, theft has been supplanted for many by heroin use, particularly as young men have left their home communities for urban areas (where they are often feared by city residents and attract suspicion).¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, in the Middle East, technologies such as assisted reproduction are challenging and reshaping ideas about masculinity among some Arab men, particularly men who acknowledge and struggle with infertility. There and elsewhere, conceptions of fatherhood are considered crucial components of masculinity. In Japan, for example, a man who has not fathered a child is not considered to be fully adult.¹⁷⁰

Elsewhere, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, men are expected to be gentle nurturers of young children and to behave in ways that do not fit typical U.S. stereotypes. In Na communities, men dote on babies and small children, often rushing to pick them up when they enter a room. In South Korea, men in wildly popular singing groups wear eyeliner and elaborate clothing that would be unusual for U.S. groups, and throughout China and India, as in many other parts of the world, heterosexual men walk down the street holding hands or arm-in-arm without causing raised eyebrows. Physical contact between men, especially in sex-segregated societies, is probably far more common than contact between men and women! Touch is a human form of intimacy that need not have sexual implications. So if male-male relations are the most intimate in a society, physical expressions of those relations are “normal” overall unless there is a cultural fear of male physical intimacy. There is much more nuance in actual behavior than initial appearances lead people to believe.

Anthropologists are also applying approaches taken in American studies to other cultures. They are engaging in more-intimate discussions of males’ self-perceptions, dilemmas, and challenges and have not hesitated to intercede, carefully, in the communities in which they work. Visual anthropologist Harjant Gill, conducting research in the Punjab region of India, began asking men about pressures they faced and found that the conversations prompted unexpected reflection. Gill titled his film [*Mardistan*](#) (*Macholand*)

and shepherded the film through television broadcasts and smaller-scale viewings to encourage wide discussion in India of the issues he explored.¹⁷¹ For a related activity, see Activity 5: Analyzing Gendered Stereotypes and Masculinity in Music Videos.

CONCLUSION

In 1968, a cigarette company in the United States decided to target women as tobacco consumers and used a clever marketing campaign to entice them to take up [smoking](#). “You’ve come a long way, baby!” billboards proclaimed. Women, according to the carefully constructed rhetoric, had moved away from their historic oppressed status and could—and should—now enjoy the full complement of twentieth-century consumer pleasures. Like men, they deserved to enjoy themselves and relax with a cigarette. The campaigns were extremely successful; within several years, smoking rates among women had increased dramatically. But had women really come a long way? We now know that tobacco (including in vaporized form) is a highly addictive substance and that its use is correlated with a host of serious health conditions. In responding to the marketing rhetoric, women moved into a new sphere of bodily pleasure and possibly enjoyed increased independence, but they did so at a huge cost to their health. They also succumbed to a long-term financial relationship with tobacco companies who relied on addicting individuals in order to profit. Knowing about the structures at work behind the scenes and the risks they took, few people today would agree that women’s embrace of tobacco represented a huge step forward.

Perhaps saying “You’ve come a long way, baby!” with the cynical interpretation with which we read it today can serve as an analogy for our contemporary explorations of gender and culture. Certainly, many women in the United States today enjoy heightened freedoms. We can travel to previously forbidden spaces, study disciplines long considered the domain of men, shape our families to meet our own needs, work in whatever field we choose, and, we believe, live

according to our own wishes. But we would be naive to ignore how gender continues to shape, constrain, and inform our lives. The research and methods of anthropology can help us become more aware of the ongoing consequences of our gendered heritage and the ways in which we are all complicit in maintaining gender ideologies that limit and restrict people's possibilities.

By committing to speak out against subtle, gender-based discrimination and to support those struggling along difficult paths, today's anthropologists can emulate pioneers such as Franz Boas and Margaret Mead, who sought to fuse research and action. May we all be kinder to those who differ from the norm, whatever that norm may be. Only then will we all—women, men and those who identify with neither category—have truly come a long way. (But we will leave the infantilizing “baby” to those tobacco companies!)

discussion questions

1. What is “natural” about how you experience gender and human sexuality? What aspects are at least partially shaped by culture? How do other cultures' beliefs and practices regarding gender and sexuality differ from those commonly found in the United States? Are there any parallels? Does it depend on which U.S. community we are talking about? What about your own beliefs and practices?
2. Reflect on the various ways you have “learned” about gender and sexuality throughout your life. Which influences do you think had the biggest impact?
3. How important is your gender to how you think about yourself, to your “identity” or self-definition, to your everyday life? Reflect on what it would be like to be a different gender.

4. How important is your “sexuality” and “sexual orientation” to how you think about yourself, to your identity or self-definition? Reflect on what it would be like if you altered your sexual identity or practices.

5. In what ways have your school settings been shaped by and around gender norms?

6. How are anthropologists influenced by gender norms? How has this affected the discipline of anthropology?

glossary

Androgyny: cultural definitions of gender that recognize some gender differentiation, but also accept “gender bending” and role-crossing according to individual capacities and preferences.

Binary model of gender: cultural definitions of gender that include only two identities—male and female.

Biologic sex: refers to male and female identity based on internal and external sex organs and chromosomes. While male and female are the most common biologic sexes, a percentage of the human population is intersex with ambiguous or mixed biological sex characteristics.

Biological determinism: a theory that biological differences between males and females leads to fundamentally different capacities, preferences, and gendered behaviors. This scientifically unsupported view suggests that gender roles are rooted in biology, not culture.

Cisgender: a term used to describe those who identify with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth.

Dyads: two people in a socially approved pairing. One example is a married couple.

Gender: the set of culturally and historically invented beliefs and expectations about gender that one learns and performs. Gender is an “identity” one can choose in some societies, but there is pressure in all societies to conform to expected gender roles and identities.

Gender ideology: a complex set of beliefs about gender and gendered capacities, propensities, preferences, identities and socially expected behaviors and interactions that apply to males, females, and other gender categories. Gender ideology can differ among cultures and is acquired through enculturation. Also known as a cultural model of gender.

Heteronormativity: a term coined by French philosopher Michel Foucault to refer to the often-un-noticed system of rights and privileges that accompany normative sexual choices and family formation.

Legitimizing ideologies: a set of complex belief systems, often developed by those in power, to rationalize, explain, and perpetuate systems of inequality.

Matrifocal: groups of related females (e.g. mother-her sisters-their offspring) form the core of the family and constitute the family’s most central and enduring social and emotional ties.

Matrilineal: societies where descent or kinship group membership is transmitted through women, from mothers

to their children (male and female), and then through daughters, to their children, and so forth.

Matrilocal: a woman-centered kinship group where living arrangements after marriage often center around households containing related women.

Patriarchy: describes a society with a male-dominated political and authority structure and an ideology that privileges males over females in domestic and public spheres.

Patrifocal: groups of related males (e.g. a father-his brothers) and their male offspring form the core of the family and constitute the family's most central and enduring social and emotional ties.

Patrilineal: societies where descent or kinship group membership is transmitted through men, from men to their children (male and female), and then through sons, to their children, and so forth.

Patrilocal: a male-centered kinship group where living arrangements after marriage often center around households containing related men.

Third gender: a gender identity that exists in non-binary gender systems offering one or more gender roles separate from male or female.

Transgender: a category for people who transition from one sex to another, either male-to-female or female-to-male.

Activity 1: How Does Gender Shape Your Life?

Think about everything, and we do mean **everything**, you did since waking up this morning. Include micro-behaviors, tiny behavioral acts that take minutes or even seconds, as well as objects, substances, and language, spoken and written. Think about all the “cultural” (i.e. not found “in nature”) artifacts associated with these behaviors. For example, while urinating is natural, your “toilet” is a cultural invention. Now, which activities and behaviors were in some way “gendered”? That is, which had an element associated with “female” or “male” in some way?

As you think about how gender has shaped your life today, consider:

- What did you sleep in?
- How did you handle bodily functions?
- How did you clean yourself?
- How did you modify your body? (e.g. “shaving”, “makeup”, “deodorant”)
- What do the names for products, like deodorants, perfumes or aftershave, convey?

List all these gendered (and gender-neutral) aspects of your day thus far. Also consider: how typical is today? Would a weekend involve more or less “gendered” dimensions?

Activity 2. Understanding Gender from a Martian Perspective.

If you were a Martian, what would you have to “know” or “learn” in order to follow gender rules on a college campus? As you consider your response, think about the following questions.

- In what ways are we a gender “binary” culture? An “opposite sex” culture? An “androgynous” culture?
- Are areas of U.S. life informally sexually segregated? Are there, informally, “male” and “female” spheres? Are there male spheres where women are not supposed to go? Or spheres where if they go, they incur certain risks? Are there any parallels for men who enter female spheres?
- Are there any elements of an “honor” and “shame” culture in the U.S. that a Martian should be aware of? What about in your own social circle?

Activity 3. Ethnographic Interview: How has Gender Changed Over Time?

Interview someone at least age 65 (if you are close to 65, find someone a generation older or younger than you). Ask that person: What kind of changes in gender roles, gender relations, gender restrictions or privileges have occurred within your lifetime? After you conclude your interview, compare notes with others to find common threads. Then ask someone closer to your age what changes they anticipate may happen their lifetime?

Activity 4. Bathroom Transgression.

Transgender people often face dilemmas when needing to use public restrooms. As a way to experience what it’s like to be an ally, some people have started intentionally

using bathrooms designated for others—an issue that took on a heightened relevance in 2016, when North Carolina banned transgender people from using sex-segregated bathrooms that did not correspond to the sex registered on their birth certificates. As part of this activity, consider whether you dare enter the bathroom you don't normally use. If you do, then try it! What happens when you enter the men's room, or the women's room? How are these boundaries patrolled and enforced? Many European countries offer unisex facilities; do you think the U.S. should do so as well? Or do you agree with some politicians in North Carolina who cited safety concerns for public restroom use by transgender individuals?

Note: keep safety in mind if you choose this activity, and beware of settings where people may be hostile to an experiment like this.

Activity 5. Analyzing Gendered Stereotypes and Masculinity in Music Videos.

Popular culture plays an enormous role in shaping our

ideas about gender, about femininity and masculinity, and about sexuality. Watch several of the videos below, paying careful attention to how these concepts are visible in current music videos. Do they draw on gendered stereotypes or push boundaries of expected gendered norms? Specify which videos you watched in your response, and also look for examples of other videos that could stimulate fruitful conversations about masculinity, femininity and other gender dynamics.

- Watch [Maddi & Tae, “Girl in a Country Song”](#). This song is partly a response to Blake Shel-ton—“[Boys ’Round Here](#),” and Florida Georgia Line—“[Get your Shine On](#).” What do you think of Maddi & Tae’s portrayal of men in their video? How does it compare with portrayals of women in videos by Blake Shelton and Florida Georgia Line?

- Compare “[Bitch in Business](#)” (created by MBA students), to “Girl in a Country Song.” Pay particular attention to the third and fourth verses of “Bitch in Business.” Would you change any lyrics, or do you think they are justified? What about the word “Bitch” itself? Is it problematic? In what ways? Do words matter? Can you really change the historically negative associations of a word, like “bitch” or “slut”? Are there parallels to ethnic slurs?

- Compare Niki Minaj and Lady Gaga: how do they deploy gender in their songs, lyrics and vid-eos? How do their strategies compare to a male artist from a similar genre?

- Compare Sir Mix-A-Lot, “[Baby Got Back](#)” and Niki Minaj, “[Anaconda](#).” How do they deploy gender in their songs, lyrics, and videos? Is there any significant difference

between what Minaj does in her video and what Sir Mix-a-Lot does in his? How is race used in these videos?

- Should the music video industry be regulated and if so, in what ways and why? Does it make a difference if the videos are frequently consumed by (and marketed to) young people, pre-teens and teens, rather than adults who have a more fully-developed personal sense of identity? What concerns might you as a parent have?

For further exploration and analysis, view the video, *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (<http://www.mediaed.org/>). Do you think the analysis provided by filmmaker Byron Hurt can be applied to these music videos?

Also view *Dreamworlds 3* (<http://www.mediaed.org/>), which analyzes the stories told in popular culture about gender and sexuality. How well does this analysis apply to contemporary videos, including the ones that you've just viewed?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Educational Media Companies and Distributors:

- Documentary Education Resources. <http://www.der.org>. One of the earliest distributors of anthropology-ethnographic films. Includes older, but still very useful, ethnographic films. Such films document ways of life that are rapidly disappearing.

- Media Education Foundation. <http://www.mediaed.org/> Focuses on contemporary USA culture, with a wide range of videos analyzing mass media, popular culture, and advertising. Videos often include teaching guides.

- Women Make Movies. www.wmm.com. Wide range of films/ videos by women filmmakers on diverse topics, social groups, both within the US and throughout the world. One of the earliest distributors of films on gender.

- Women's Media Center. www.womensmediacenter.com/ More U.S.-centered resources, especially contemporary issues of women's representation in the media.

Some Key Accessible Readings by Anthropologists:

Brettell, Carolyn and Brettell, Carolyn B. and Carolyn F. Sargent, eds. *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. 6th edition (New York: Routledge, 2012). Excellent collection of articles, with overviews. Also includes a Film Bibliography for each topical section of the book.

Geller, Pamela L. and Miranda K. Stockett, eds., *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Many articles by biological and archeological anthropologists.

Hodgson, Dorothy L., ed. *The Gender, Culture, and Power Reader*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Useful reader for students and non-specialist readers. Includes a wide range of articles, often adapted from longer academic articles.

Ellen Lewin, ed., *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Excellent collection with introductory essay by editor, a pioneer in feminist and Lesbian-Gay studies.

Strum, Shirley and Fedigan, Linda, eds., *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Ward, Martha and Monica Edelstein, *A World full of Women*. 6th edition (New York: Routledge/Taylor Francis, 2014). Readable overview of the field.

Some Useful Organizational Websites

[American Men's Studies Association](#)

[Association for Feminist Anthropology](#), American Anthropological Association [VOICES](#): Journal of the Association for Feminist

Anthropology [Book reviews](#) from the Association for Feminist Anthropology

[Association for Queer Anthropology](#)

Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University

[Feminist Majority Foundation](#)

[Guttmacher Center](#) (Research on reproductive health)

[National Women's Studies Association](#)

[Planned Parenthood](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Mukhopadhyay specializes in gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and culture-cognition, with research in the USA and India on gendered families, politics, and science-engineering. In graduate school she co-created one of the earliest gender-culture courses.

She has developed numerous gender classes and taught, for 20 years, a popular anthropology and gender-oriented, multi-section Human Sexuality course. Gender-related publications include: *Cognitive Anthropology Through a Gendered Lens* (2011). *How Exportable are Western Theories of Gendered Science?* (2009), *A Feminist Cognitive Anthropology: The Case of Women and Mathematics* (2004), *Women, Education and Family Structure in India* (1994, with S. Seymour). She co-authored an early *Annual Review of Anthropology* article on gender (1988) and is in the Association for Feminist Anthropology. In other work, she served as a Key Advisor for the AAA RACE project; co-authored *How Real is Race: A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology*, (2nd Edition, 2014) and promotes active learning approaches to teaching about culture (cf.2007).

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Politics in China, with Helaine Silverman (2013), and of *Doing Fieldwork in China...With Kids!* with Candice Cornet (2016). Blumenfield also produced *Some Na Ceremonies*, a Berkeley Media film by Onci Archei and Ruheng Duoqi. Blumenfield holds a PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology from the University of Washington.

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Abby Gondek is a PhD candidate in Global and Socio-cultural Studies (majoring in Anthropology/Sociology) at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. She defended her dissertation proposal in April 2016. Her project, "Jewish Women's Transracial, Transdisciplinary and Transnational Social Science Networks, 1920–1970" uses social network analysis and grounded theory methodology to understand the relationships between the

anti-racist and pro-political/economic justice stance taken by Jewish female social scientists and their Jewish gendered-racialized subjectivities. Further information about her work is available from <http://transform-art-gender.webs.com> and <http://abbygondek.blogspot.com> as well as <https://www.instagram.com/abbygondek/>.

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NOTES

1. The Introduction and much of the material in the Foundations segment draws upon and synthesizes Mukhopadhyay's decades of research, writing, and teaching courses on culture, gender, and human sexuality. Some of it has been published. Other material comes from lecture notes. See <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay>.

2. We use quotation marks here and elsewhere in the chapter to alert readers to a culturally specific, culturally invented concept in the United States. We need to approach U.S. cultural inventions the same way we would a concept we encountered in a foreign, so-called "exotic" culture.

3. See Carolyn B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent, *Gender in Cross-*

Cultural Perspective (New York: Routledge, 2005). Also, Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender. Biological Theories About Women and Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). For some web-based examples of these nineteenth century views, see article at <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century>. For a list of descriptive terms, see http://www2.ivcc.edu/gen2002/Women_in_the_Nine-teenth_Century.htm.

4. For an example of a textbook, see Herant A. Katchadurian, *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality* (Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989). See also Linda Stone, *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013).

5. Material in the following paragraphs comes from Mukhopadhyay, unpublished Human Sexuality lecture notes.

6. Herant A. Katchadurian, *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality*, 365.

7. Phyllis Kaberry, *Women of the Grassfields. A Study of the Economic Position of Women in Bamenda, British Cameroons* (Colonial Research publication 14. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952) The image comes from the cover of her book, which is also available online: http://www.era.anthropology.ac.uk/Kaberry/Kaberry_text/.

8. See Barry S. Hewlett, *Intimate Fathers: The Nature and Context of Aka Pygmy Paternal Infant Care* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); and personal communication with Mukhopadhyay.

9. W.H. Masters and V.E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (New York: Bantam Books, 1966).

10. Some feminist scholars have also questioned the “naturalness” of the biological categories male and female. See for example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999 [1990]).

11. For genital similarities, see Janet S. Hyde and John D. DeLamater, *Understanding Human Sexuality* (McGraw Hill, 2014), 94–101. For more parallels, see Mukhopadhyay’s online Human

Sexuality course materials, at www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay.

12. For some idea of the enormous variability in human physical characteristics, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in C. Mukho-padhyay, R. Henze, and Y. Moses, *How Real is Race: Race, Culture and Biology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).

13. Information about alternative gender roles in pre-contact Native American communities can be found in Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women* (Boston: Pearson, 2013). Also, see the 2011 PBS Independent Lens film *Two Spirits* for an account of the role of two-spirit ideology in Navajo communities, including the story of a Navajo teenager who was the victim of a hate crime because of his two-spirit identity.

14. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women*.

15. Serena Nanda, *Neither Man nor Woman: the Hijras of India* (Boston, MA: Cengage, 1999); Serena Nanda, *Gender Diversity: Cross-cultural Variations* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland 2000); and Gayatri Reddy and Serena Nanda, "Hijras: An "Alternative" Sex/Gender in India," in *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. C. Brettell and C. Sargent, 278–285 (Upper Saddle River New Jersey: Pearson, 2005).

16. Janet S. Hyde and John D. DeLamater, *Understanding Human Sexuality*, 99; Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women*.

17. Beverly Chinas, personal communication with Mukhopadhyay. See also her writings on Isthmus Zapotec women such as: Beverly Chinas, *The Isthmus Zapotecs: A Matrifocal Culture of Mexico* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers 1997). For a film on this culture, see Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne, *Blossoms of Fire, Film* (San Francisco: Film Arts Foundation, 2001).

18. Gilbert Herdt, *The Sambia* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 2006). For an excellent film see Gilbert Herdt, *Guard-ians of the Flutes* (London UK: BBC, 1994).

19. More information about the Nu shu writing system can be

found in the film by Yue-Qing Yang, *Nu Shu: A Hidden Language of Women in China* (New York: Women Make Movies, 1999).

20. Ernestine Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975). See Audrey Richards, *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Zambia* (London: Faber, 1956) and A. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia, An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe* (London: Oxford, 1939).

21. See for example, Ian Hogbin, *The Island of Menstruating Men: Religion in Wogeo, New Guinea* (Scranton, PA: Chandler Publishing Company, 1970).

22. Susannah M Hoffman, Richard A Cowan and Paul Aratow, *Kypseli: Men and Women Apart A Divided Reality* (Berkeley CA: Berkeley Media, 1976).

23. Denise Lawrence, Menstrual Politics: Women and Pigs in Rural Portugal, in *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, ed. Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, 117–136 (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1988.), 122–123.

24. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03k6k0h>. Some women are posing with photos of menstrual pads and hashtags #happytobleed: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/indian-women-launch-happy-to-bleed-campaign-to-protest-against-sexist-religious-rule-a6748396.html>.

25. See the film by Michael Camerini and Rina Gill, *Dadi's Family* (Watertown, MA: DER, 1981).

26. Cynthia Nelson, "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World" *American Ethnologist* 1 no. 3 (1974): 551–56.

27. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Family Structure and Indian Women's Participation in Science and Engineering," in *Women, Education and Family Structure in India*, ed. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay and Susan Seymour, 103–133 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

28. Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik. an Ethnography of an Iraqi Village* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965).

29. Susan Seymour, *Cora Du Bois: Anthropologist, Diplomat, Agent* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

30. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Women in Science: Is the Glass Ceiling Disappearing?" Proceedings of conference organized by the National Institute of Science and Technology Development Studies, the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India; Indian Council of Social Science Research; and the Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum. March 8–10, 2004. New Delhi, India.

31. See for instance, <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/a-powerful-documentary-about-pakistans-honor-killings> and <http://www.latimes.com/world/afghanistan-pakistan/la-fg-pakistan-oscar-20160229-story.html>.

32. For more details, see the film by Leslee Udwin, *India's Daughter* (Firenze, Italy: Berta Film). The Wikipedia article about the film notes the reluctance of the Indian government to air the film in India, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India's_Daughter.

33. For a critique of the "myth" of the medieval chastity belt, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/chastity-belts-the-odd-truth-about-locking-up-womens-genitalia>.

34. See for example, the film by Sabiha Sumar, *Silent Waters* (Mumbai, India: Shringar Film). While this is not a documentary, the film reflects the tumultuous history of the partition into two countries.

35. For the !Kung San, see Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: Life and Words of a Kung Woman* (New York: Vintage, 1983). For Trobrianders, see Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987).

36. Shanshan Du, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs: Gender Unity and Gender Equality Among the Lahu of Southwest China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

37. Zhou Huashan, *Zhong nu bu qingnan de muxi mosuo: Wufu de guodu?* [Matrilineal Mosuo, Valuing Women without Devaluing Men: A Society without Fathers or Husbands?] (Beijing: Guangming Ribao Chubanshe, 2009 [2001]).

38. Ernestine Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).

39. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Sati or Shakti: Women, Culture and Politics in India," in *Perspectives on Power: Women in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, ed. Jean O'Barr, 11-26 (Durham: Center for International Studies, Duke University 1982).

40. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

41. Mukhopadhyay and Seymour use the term "patrifocal" to describe households that consist of related males, usually brothers, and their sons, and the spouses and children of those males. See C. Mukhopadhyay and S. Seymour, "Introduction" in *Women, Family, and Education in India* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

42. For powerful documentaries see, the film by Nishta Jain, *Gulabi Gang* (Stavanger, Norway: Kudos Family Distribution, 2012); and the film by Kim Longinotto, *Pink Saris* (New York: Women Make Movies, 2011).

43. Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005[1969]), 45.

44. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, *The Sexual Division of Labor in the Family*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1980, 192.

45. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, fieldnotes, India; and Mukhopadhyay, *The Cultural Context of Gendered Science: The Case of India*, 2001, www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/papers.

46. For example, the major symposium on *Man the Hunter* sponsored by Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research included only four women among more than sixty listed participants. See Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1972[1968]), xiv-xvi.

47. Mukhopadhyay, Lecture Notes, Human Sexuality, Gender and Culture.

48. S.Washburn and C.S. Lancaster, "The Evolution of Hunting," in *Man the Hunter*, 299.

49. *Ibid.*, 303.

50. Jackson Katz, *Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood and American Culture* (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2013).

51. Abigail Disney and Kathleen Hughes, *The Armor of Light* (New York: Fork Films, 2015).

52. Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1997 [1971]), 101.

53. Some useful reviews include the following: Linda M. Fedigan, "The Changing Role of Women in Models of Human Evolution" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1986): 25–66; Linda Fedigan, *Primate Paradigms: Sex Roles and Social Bonds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Pamela L. Geller and Miranda K. Stockett. *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2006); Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, *Engendering Arche-ology: Women and Prehistory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1991); Shirley Strum and Linda Fedigan *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender and Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Meredith F. Small, *What's Love Got to Do with It? The Evolution of Human Mating* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); Nancy Makepeace Tanner, *On Becoming Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a readable short article, see Meredith Small, "What's Love Got to Do with It," *Discover Magazine*, June 1991, 46–51.

54. Irven DeVore, ed. *Primate Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

55. *Ibid.* Also, for primate politics in particular, see Sarah B. Hrdy, *The Woman That Never Evolved* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999 [1981]). See also Hrdy's website <http://www.citrona.com/hrdy.html>.

56. Thelma Rowell. *Social Behaviour of Monkeys* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972). For an excellent online article on Rowell's work with additional references, read Vinciane Despret, "Culture and Gender Do Not Dissolve into How Scientists 'Read' Nature: Thelma Rowell's Heterodoxy." In *Rebels of Life. Iconoclastic Biologists in the Twentieth Century*, edited by O. Hartman and M. Friedrich (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 340–355. <http://www.vincianedespret.be/2010/04/culture-and-gender->

[do-not-dissolve-into-how-scientists-read-nature-thelma-rowells-heterodoxy/](#).

57. See Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, eds. *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1972[1968]).

58. See Estioko-Griffin, Agnes A. Daughters of the Forest. *Natural History* 95(5):36–43 (May 1986).

59. Richard B. Lee, *The !Kung San. Men, Women and Work in a Foraging Society* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

60. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women*, 26.

61. Susan Seymour, “Multiple Caretaking of Infants and Young Children: An Area in Critical Need of a Feminist Psychological Anthropology,” *Ethos* 32 no. (2004): 538–556.

62. Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Cultural Anthropology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006), 274.

63. Ester Boserup, *Women’s Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1970); Barbara D. Miller, *Cultural Anthropology* (Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2012).

64. Mauma Downie and Christina Gladwin, *Florida Farm Wives: They Help the Family Farm Survive* (Gainesville: Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida, 1981).

65. Judith K. Brown, “A Note on the Division of Labor by Sex,” *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970):1073–78.

66. See www.momsrising.org for some contemporary examples of the challenges and obstacles workplaces pose for working mothers, as well as efforts to advocate for improved accommodation of parenting and working.

67. Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology. Appreciating Cultural Diversity* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013).

68. See C. Mukhopadhyay, Human Sexuality Lecture notes, for the following analysis, available from <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/courses/AnthBioHS140/>. See also Mukhopadhyay, Part II, “Culture Creates Race,” especially chapter 7 and 9, in Carol Mukhopadhyay, R. Henze and Y. Moses *How Real*

is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

69. Ibid.

70. This and subsequent material comes from C. Mukhopadhyay, Part 2, especially chapter 9, and p. 182–185, in Carol Mukhopadhyay, R. Henze and Y. Moses. *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology, 2nd edition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

71. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, Yolanda Moses and Rosemary Henze, *How Real is Race?*, Chapter 9.

72. Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987).

73. Lu Hui, “Preferential Bilateral-Cross-Cousin Marriage among the Nuosu in Liangshan,” in *Perspectives on the Yi of South-west China*, Stevan Harrell, ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

74. Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*.

75. See the film *Maasai Women*, 1980.

76. An excellent documentary on two alternative paths some women take in contemporary India: the Miss India path and the fundamentalist Hindu path. Filmed in India, *The World Before Her*, <http://www.pbs.org/pov/worldbeforeher/>.

77. See <https://contemporaryfamilies.org/the-way-we-still-never-were-brief-report/> and <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-09-14/singles-now-outnumber-married-people-america-and-thats-good-thing> for background and links to detailed information.

78. Material in this text box was adapted from “[What Can We Learn from the Na? Shattering Ideas about Family and Relationships](#),” a TEDx FurmanU presentation by Tami Blumenfield. See also Tami Blumenfield, “Chinese Tour Groups in Europe, Chinese Tour Groups in Yunnan: Narrating a Nation in the World” *The China Beat* June 2, 2011. <http://www.thechinabeat.org/?p=3494>; Siobhan M. Mattison, Brooke Scelza, and Tami Blumenfield, “[Paternal Investment and the Pos-itive](#)

[Effects of Fathers among the Matrilineal Mosuo \(Na\) of Southwest China](#)” *American Anthropologist* 116 no. 3 (2014): 591–610; Tami Blumenfield, “Resilience in Mountainous Southwest China: Adopting a Socio-Ecological Approach to Community Change,” in *Worlds in the Making: Interethnicity and the Processes of Generating Meaning in Southwestern China*, *Cahiers d’Extrême Asie* 23 (2014).

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81. Rayna Rapp Reiter, ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975); Karen Sacks, *Sisters and Wives. The Past and Future of Sexual Equality* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979).

82. Peggy Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

83. For an alternative ethnographic, research based video see N!ai: *The Story of a !Kung Woman*. 1980.

84. Carol Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins, “Anthropological Studies of the Status of Women Revisited: 1977–1987,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988), 462.

85. Ibid.

86. See for example, Evelyn Blackwood. *Webs of Power. Women, Kin, and Community in a Sumatran Village* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 2000); Marcia Inhorn, *Infertility and Patriarchy: The Cultural Politics of Gender and Family Life in Egypt* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, ed. *Blood Magic. The Anthropology of Menstruation*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Marcia Inhorn, and Frank Van Balen, eds. *Infertility around the Globe: New Thinking*

on Childlessness, Gender and Reproductive Technologies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

87. Johnnetta Cole, ed. *All American Women: Lines That Divide, Ties That Bind* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragoné and Patricia Zavella, eds. *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

88. See for example, Faye Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Dorothy Holland and Margaret Eisenhart. *Educated in Romance*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990); Peggy Sanday, *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*. (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

89. Peggy Sanday, "The Socio-cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-cultural Study" *Journal of Social Issues* 37 no. 5 (1981): 5-27. See also Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology. Appreciating Cultural Diversity* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013); Veena Das, *Violence, Gender and Subjectivity, Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 37 (2008):283-299; Tulsi Patel, ed. *Sex-Selective Abortion in India. Gender, Society and New Reproductive Technologies* (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 2007).

90. Eleanor Leacock and Helen I. Safa, eds., *Women's Work: Development and the Division of Labor by Gender* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1986); Nandini Gunewardena and Ann Kingsolver, eds. *The Gender of Globalization: Women Navigating Cultural and Economic Marginalities* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2008); Kay B. Warren and Susan C. Bourque, "Women, Technology, and Development Ideologies. Frameworks and Findings," in Sandra Morgen, ed. *Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching* (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association Publication, 1989), 382-410.

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Education and Family Structure in India (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

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94. The following analysis was developed by Mukhopadhyay in scholarly papers and in lecture notes.

95. Mary E. Hegland, *Days of Revolution: Political Unrest in an Iranian Village* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

96. This analysis was developed by Mukhopadhyay in scholarly papers and in lecture notes. An example of this pattern from Iran is Mary E. Hegland, *Days of Revolution*.

97. Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology. Appreciating Cultural Diversity*. 15th ed. (McGraw Hill, 2013).

98. E. Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View*; C. Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins, "Anthropological Studies of the Status of Women Revisited: 1977–1987." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988): 461–495.

99. One 1970s male pilot, when asked about why there were no women pilots, said, without thinking, "Because women aren't strong enough to fly the plane!" He then realized what he'd said and laughed. From Mukhopadhyay, field notes, 1980.

100. Ann Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable. The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-century Colonial Cultures," in *Situated Lives. Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, ed. Louise Lamphere, H. Ragone, and P. Zavella, 373–399 (New York: Routledge, 1997).

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103. See for instance Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*; Martha Ward and Monica Edelman, *A World Full of Women*; Carolyn B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent, eds. *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*.

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26. Chapter 5: Race and Ethnicity

Learning Objectives

- Define the term reification and explain how the concept of race has been reified throughout history.
- Explain why a biological basis for human race categories does not exist.
- Discuss what anthropologists mean when they say that race is a socially constructed concept and explain how race has been socially constructed in the United States and Brazil.
- Identify what is meant by racial formation, hypodescent, and the one-drop rule.
- Describe how ethnicity is different from race, how ethnic groups are different from racial groups, and what is meant by symbolic ethnicity and pan-ethnicity.
- Summarize the history of immigration to the United States, explaining how different waves of immigrant groups have been perceived as racially different and have shifted popular understandings of “race.”
- Analyze ways in which the racial and ethnic compositions of professional sports have shifted over time and how those shifts resulted from changing social and cultural circumstances that drew new groups into sports.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 5: Race and Ethnicity*.

Suppose someone asked you the following open-ended questions: How would you define the word **race** as it applies to groups of human beings? How many human races are there and what are they? For each of the races you identify, what are the important or key criteria that distinguish each group (what characteristics or features are unique to each group that differentiate it from the others)? Discussions about race and racism are often highly emotional and encompass a wide range of emotions, including discomfort, fear, defensiveness, anger, and insecurity—why is this such an emotional topic in society and why do you think it is so difficult for individuals to discuss race dispassionately?

How would you respond to these questions? I pose these thought-provoking questions to students enrolled in my Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course just before we begin the unit on race and ethnicity in a worksheet and ask them to answer each question fully to the best of their ability without doing any outside research. At the next class, I assign the students to small groups of five to eight depending on the size of the class and give them a few minutes to share their responses to the questions with one another. We then collectively discuss their responses as a class. Their responses are often very interesting and quite revealing and generate memorable classroom dialogues.

“DUDE, WHAT ARE YOU?!”

Ordinarily, students select a college major or minor by carefully considering their personal interests, particular subjects that pique their curiosity, and fields they feel would be a good basis for future professional careers. Technically, my decision to major in anthropology and later earn a master’s degree and doctorate in anthropology was mine alone, but I tell my friends and students, only partly as a joke, that my choice of major was made for me to some degree by people I encountered as a child, teenager, and young adult. Since middle school, I had noticed that many people—complete strangers, classmates, coworkers, and

friends—seemed to find my physical appearance confusing or abnormal, often leading them to ask me questions like “What are you?” and “What’s your race?” Others simply assumed my heritage as if it was self-evident and easily defined and then interacted with me according to their conclusions.

These subjective determinations varied wildly from person to person and from situation to situation. I distinctly recall, for example, an incident in a souvenir shop at the beach in Ocean City, Maryland, shortly after I graduated from high school. A middle-aged merchant attempted to persuade me to purchase a T-shirt that boldly declared “100% Italian . . . and Proud of It!” with bubbled letters that spelled “Italian” shaded green, white, and red. Despite my repeated efforts to convince the merchant that I was not of Italian ethnic heritage, he refused to believe me. On another occasion during my mid-twenties while I was studying for my doctoral degree at Temple University, I was walking down Diamond Street in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, passing through a predominantly African American neighborhood. As I passed a group of six male teenagers socializing on the steps of a row house, one of them shouted “Hey, honky! What are you doing in this neighborhood?” Somewhat startled at being labeled a “honky,” (something I had never been called before), I looked at the group and erupted in laughter, which produced looks of surprise and disbelief in return. As I proceeded to walk a few more blocks and reached the predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhood of Lower Kensington, three young women flirtatiously addressed me as *papí* (an affectionate Spanish slang term for man). My transformation from “honky” to “*papí*” in a span of ten minutes spoke volumes about my life history

and social experiences—and sparked my interest in cultural and physical anthropology.

Throughout my life, my physical appearance has provided me with countless unique and memorable experiences that have emphasized the significance of race and ethnicity as **socially constructed** concepts in America and other societies. My fascination with this subject is therefore both personal and professional; a lifetime of questions and assumptions from others regarding my racial and ethnic background have cultivated my interest in these topics. I noticed that my perceived race or ethnicity, much like beauty, rested in the eye of the beholder as individuals in different regions of the country (and outside of the United States) often perceived me as having different specific heritages. For example, as a teenager living in York County, Pennsylvania, senior citizens and middle-aged individuals usually assumed I was “white,” while younger residents often saw me as “Puerto Rican” or generically “Hispanic” or “Latino.” When I lived in Philadelphia, locals mostly assumed I was “Italian American,” but many Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Dominicans, in the City of Brotherly Love often took me for either “Puerto Rican” or “Cuban.”

My experiences in the southwest were a different matter altogether. During my time in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado, local residents—regardless of their respective heritages—commonly assumed I was of Mexican descent. At times, local Mexican Americans addressed me as *carnal* (pronounced car-NAHL), a term often used to imply a strong sense of community among Mexican

American men that is somewhat akin to frequent use of the label “brother” among African American men. On more occasions than I can count, people assumed that I spoke Spanish. Once, in Los Angeles, someone from the Spanish-language television network Univisión attempted to interview me about my thoughts on an immigration bill pending in the California legislature. My West Coast friends and professional colleagues were surprised to hear that I was usually assumed to be Puerto Rican, Italian, or simply “white” on the East Coast, and one of my closest friends from graduate school—a Mexican American woman from northern California—once memorably stated that she would not “even assume” that I was “half white.”

I have a rather ambiguous physical appearance—a shaved head, brown eyes, and a black mustache and goatee. Depending on who one asks, I have either a “pasty white” or “somewhat olive” complexion, and my last name is often the single biggest factor that leads people on the East Coast to conclude that I am Puerto Rican. My experiences are examples of what sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1986) referred to as “racial commonsense”—a deeply entrenched social belief that another person’s racial or ethnic background is obvious and easily determined from brief glances and can be used to predict a person’s culture, behavior, and personality. Reality, of course, is far more complex. One’s racial or ethnic background cannot necessarily be accurately determined based on physical appearance alone, and an individual’s “race” does not necessarily determine his or her “culture,” which in turn does not determine “personality.” Yet, these perceptions remain.

IS ANTHROPOLOGY THE “SCIENCE OF RACE?”

Anthropology was sometimes referred to as the “science of race” during the eighteenth and nine-teenth centuries when physical anthropologists sought a biological basis for categorizing humans into racial types.¹ Since World War II, important research by anthropologists has revealed that racial categories are socially and culturally defined concepts and that racial labels and their definitions vary widely around the world. In other words, different

countries have different racial categories, and different ways of classifying their citizens into these categories.² At the same time, significant genetic studies conducted by physical anthropologists since the 1970s have revealed that biologically distinct human races do not exist. Certainly, humans vary in terms of physical and genetic characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape, but those variations cannot be used as criteria to bi-ologically classify racial groups with scientific accuracy. Let us turn our attention to understanding why humans cannot be scientifically divided into biologically distinct races.

Race: A Discredited Concept in Human Biology

At some point in your life, you have probably been asked to identify your race on a college form, job application, government or military form, or some other official document. And most likely, you were required to select from a list of choices rather than given the ability to respond freely. The frequency with which we are exposed to four or five common racial labels—“white,” “black,” “Caucasian,” and “Asian,” for example—tends to promote the illusion that racial categories are natural, objective, and evident divisions. After all, if Justin Timberlake, Jay-Z, and Jackie Chan stood **side by side**, those common racial labels might seem to make sense. What could be more objective, more conclusive, than this evidence before our very eyes? By this point, you might be thinking that anthropologists have gone completely insane in denying biological human races!

Physical anthropologists have identified several important concepts regarding the true nature of humans’ physical, genetic, and biological variation that have discredited race as a biological concept. Many of the issues presented in this section are discussed in further detail in [Race: Are We So Differ-ent](#), a website created by the American Anthropological Association. The American Anthropological Association (AAA) launched the website to educate the public about the true nature of human bio-logical and cultural

variation and challenge common misperceptions about race. This is an important endeavor because race is a complicated, often emotionally charged topic, leading many people to rely on their personal opinions and hearsay when drawing conclusions about people who are different from them. The website is highly interactive, featuring multimedia illustrations and online quizzes designed to increase visitors' knowledge of human variation. I encourage you to explore the website as you will likely find answers to several of the questions you may still be asking after reading this chapter.³

Before explaining why distinct biological races do not exist among humans, I must point out that one of the biggest reasons so many people continue to believe in the existence of biological human races is that the idea has been intensively **reified** in literature, the media, and culture for more than three hundred years. Reification refers to the process in which an inaccurate concept or idea is so heavily promoted and circulated among people that it begins to take on a life of its own. Over centuries, the notion of biological human races became engrained—unquestioned, accepted, and regarded as a concrete “truth.” Studies of human physical and cultural variation from a scientific and anthropological perspective have allowed us to move beyond reified thinking and toward an improved understanding of the true complexity of human diversity.

The reification of race has a long history. Especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philosophers and scholars attempted to identify various human races. They perceived “races” as specific divisions of humans who shared certain physical and biological features that distinguished them from other groups of humans. This historic notion of race may seem clear-cut and innocent enough, but it quickly led to problems as social theorists attempted to classify people by race. One of the most basic difficulties was the actual number of human races: how many were there, who were they, and what grounds distinguished them? Despite more than three centuries of such effort, no clear-cut

scientific consensus was established for a precise number of human races.

One of the earliest and most influential attempts at producing a racial classification system came from Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, who argued in *Systema Naturae* (1735) for the existence of four human races: *Americanus* (Native American / American Indian), *Europaeus* (European), *Asiaticus* (East Asian), and *Africanus* (African). These categories correspond with common racial labels used in the United States for census and demographic purposes today. However, in 1795, German physician and anthropologist Johann Blumenbach suggested that there were five races, which he labeled as *Caucasian* (white), *Mongolian* (yellow or East Asian), *Ethiopian* (black or African), *American* (red or American Indian), *Malayan* (brown or Pacific Islander). Importantly, Blumenbach listed the races in this exact order, which he believed reflected their natural historical descent from the “primeval” Caucasian original to “extreme varieties.”⁴ Although he was a committed abolitionist, Blumenbach nevertheless felt that his “Caucasian” race (named after the Caucasus Mountains of Central Asia, where he believed humans had originated) represented the original variety of humankind from which the other races had degenerated.

By the early twentieth century, many social philosophers and scholars had accepted the idea of three human races: the so-called *Caucasoid*, *Negroid*, and *Mongoloid* groups that corresponded with regions of Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia, respectively. However, the three-race theory faced serious criticism given that numerous peoples from several geographic regions were omitted from the classification, including Australian Aborigines, Asian Indians, American Indians, and inhabitants of the South Pacific Islands. Those groups could not be easily pigeonholed into racial categories regardless of

how loosely the categories were defined. Australian Ab-origines, for example, often have dark com-plexions (a trait they appeared to share with Africans) but reddish or blondish hair (a trait shared with northern Europeans). Likewise, many Indians living on the Asian subcon-tinent have complexions that are as dark or darker than those of many Africans and Af-rican Americans. Because of these seeming contradictions, some academics began to argue in favor of larger numbers of human races—five, nine, twenty, sixty, and more.⁵

During the 1920s and 1930s, some schol-ars asserted that Europeans were comprised of more than one “white” or “Caucasian” race: *Nordic*, *Alpine*, and *Mediterranean* (named for the geographic regions of Europe from which they descended). These European races, they alleged, exhibited obvious physical traits that distinguished them from one another and thus served as racial boundaries. For example, “Nordics” were said to consist of peoples of Northern Europe—Scandi-navia, the British Isles, and Northern Germany—while “Alpines” came from the Alps Mountains of Central Europe and included French, Swiss, Northern Italians, and Southern Germans. People from southern Europe—including Portuguese, Spanish, Southern Italians, Sicilians, Greeks, and Albanians—comprised the “Mediterranean” race. Most Americans today would find this racial classification system bizarre, but its proponents argued for it on the basis that one would observe striking physical differences between a Swede or Norwegian and a Sicilian.

Similar efforts were made to “carve up” the populations of Africa and Asia into geographically local, specific races.⁶

The fundamental point here is that any effort to classify human populations into racial categories is inherently arbitrary and subjective rather than scientific and objective. These racial classification schemes simply reflected their proponents’ desires to “slice the pie” of human physical variation according to the particular trait(s) they preferred to establish as the major, defining criteria of their classification system. Two major types of “race classifiers” have emerged over the past 300 years: *lumpers* and *splitters*. Lumpers have classified races by large geographic tracts (often continents) and produced a small number of broad, general racial categories, as reflected in Linnaeus’s original classification scheme and later three-race theories. Splitters have subdivided continent-wide racial categories into specific, more localized regional races and attempted to devise more “precise” racial labels for these specific groups, such as the three European races described earlier. Consequently, splitters have tried to identify many more human races than lumpers.

Racial labels, whether from a lumper or a splitter model, clearly attempt to identify and describe *something*. So why do these racial labels not accurately describe human physical and biological variation? To understand why, we must keep in mind that racial labels are distinct, discrete categories while human physical and biological variations (such as skin color, hair color and texture, eye color, height, nose shape, and distribution of blood types) are *continuous* rather than discrete.

Physical anthropologists use the term **cline** to refer

to differences in the traits that occur in populations across a geographical area. In a cline, a trait may be more common in one geographical area than another, but the variation is gradual and continuous with no sharp breaks. A prominent example of clinal variation among humans is skin color. Think of it this way: Do all “white” persons who you know actually share the same skin complexion? Likewise, do all “black” persons who you know share an identical skin complexion? The answer, obviously, is no, since human skin color does not occur in just 3, 5, or even 50 shades. The reality is that human skin color, as a continuous trait, exists as a spectrum from very light to very dark with every possible hue, shade, and tone in between.

Imagine two people—one from Sweden and one from Nigeria—standing side by side. If we looked only at those two individuals and ignored people who inhabit the regions between Sweden and Nigeria, it would be easy to reach the faulty conclusion that they represented two distinct human racial groups, one light (“white”) and one dark (“black”).⁷ However, if we walked from Nigeria to Sweden, we would gain a fuller understanding of human skin color because we would see that skin color generally became gradually lighter the further north we traveled from the equator. At no point during this imaginary walk would we reach a point at which the people abruptly changed skin color. As physical anthropologists such as John Relethford (2004) and C. Loring Brace (2005) have noted, the average range of skin color gradually changes over geographic space. North Africans are generally lighter-skinned than Central Africans, and southern Europeans are generally lighter-skinned than North Africans. In turn, northern Italians are generally lighter-skinned than Sicilians, and the Irish, Danes, and Swedes are

generally lighter-skinned than northern Italians and Hungarians. Thus, human skin color cannot be used as a definitive marker of racial boundaries.

There are a few notable exceptions to this general rule of lighter-complexioned people inhabiting northern latitudes. The Chukchi of Eastern Siberia and Inuits of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland have darker skin than other Eurasian people living at similar latitudes, such as Scandinavians. Physical anthropologists have explained this exception in terms of the distinct dietary customs of indigenous Arctic groups, which have traditionally been based on certain native meats and fish that are rich in Vitamin D (polar bears, whales, seals, and trout).

What does Vitamin D have to do with skin color? The answer is intriguing! Dark skin blocks most of the sun's dangerous ultraviolet rays, which is advantageous in tropical environments where sunlight is most intense. Exposure to high levels of ultraviolet radiation can damage skin cells, causing cancer, and also destroy the body's supply of folate, a nutrient essential for reproduction. Folate deficiency in women can cause severe birth defects in their babies. Melanin, the pigment produced in skin cells, acts as a natural sunblock, protecting skin cells from damage, and preventing the breakdown of folate. However, exposure to sunlight has an important positive health effect: stimulating the production of vitamin D. Vitamin D is essential for the health of bones and the immune system. In areas where ultraviolet radiation is strong, there is no problem producing enough Vitamin D, even as darker skin filters ultraviolet radiation.⁸

In environments where the sun's rays are much less intense, a different problem occurs: not enough sunlight penetrates the skin to enable the production of Vitamin D. Over the course of human evolution, natural selection favored the evolution of lighter skin as humans migrated and settled farther from the equator to ensure that weaker rays of sunlight could adequately penetrate our skin.

The diet of indigenous populations of the Arctic region provided sufficient amounts of Vitamin D to ensure their health. This reduced the selective pressure toward the evolution of lighter skin among the Inuit and the Chukchi. Physical anthropologist Nina Jablonski (2012) has also noted that natural selection could have favored darker skin in Arctic regions because high levels of ultraviolet radiation from the sun are reflected from snow and ice during the summer months.

Still, many people in the United States remain convinced that biologically distinct human races exist and are easy to identify, declaring that they can walk down any street in the United States and easily determine who is “white” and who is “black.” The United States was populated historically by immigrants from a small number of world regions who did not reflect the full spectrum of human physical variation. The earliest settlers in the North American colonies overwhelmingly came from Northern Europe (particularly, Britain, France, Germany, and Ireland), regions where skin colors tend to be among the lightest in the world. Slaves brought to the United States during the colonial period came largely from the western coast of Central Africa, a region where skin color tends to be among the darkest in the world. Consequently, when we look at today’s descendants of these groups, we are not looking at accurate, proportional representations of the total range of human skin color; instead, we are looking, in effect, at opposite ends of a spectrum, where striking differences are inevitable. More recent waves of immigrants who have come to the United States from other world regions have brought a wider range of skin colors, shaping a continuum of skin color that defies classification into a few simple categories.

Physical anthropologists have also found that there are no specific genetic traits that are exclusive to a “racial” group. For the concept of human races to have biological significance, an analysis of multiple genetic traits would have to consistently produce the same racial classifications. In other words, a racial classification scheme for skin color would also have to reflect classifications by

blood type, hair texture, eye shape, lactose intolerance, and other traits often mistakenly assumed to be “racial” characteristics. An analysis based on any one of those characteristics individually would produce a unique set of racial categories because variations in human physical and genetic are **nonconcordant**. Each trait is inherited independently, not “bundled together” with other traits and inherited as a package. There is no correlation between skin color and other characteristics such as blood type and lactose intolerance.

A prominent example of nonconcordance is sickle-cell anemia, which people often mistakenly think of as a disease that only affects Africans, African Americans, and “black” persons. In fact, the sickle-cell allele (the version of the gene that causes sickle-cell anemia when a person inherits two copies) is relatively common among people whose ancestors are from regions where a certain strain of malaria, *plasmodium falciparum*, is prevalent, namely Central and Western Africa and parts of Mediterranean Europe, the Arabian peninsula, and India. The sickle-cell trait thus is not exclusively African or “black.” The erroneous perceptions are relatedly primarily to the fact that the ancestors of U.S. African Americans came predominantly from Western Africa, where the sickle-cell gene is prevalent, and are therefore more recognizable than populations of other ancestries and regions where the sickle-cell gene is common, such as southern Europe and Arabia.⁹

Another trait commonly mistaken as defining race is the epicanthic eye fold typically associated with people of East Asian ancestry. The epicanthic eye fold at the outer corner of the eyelid produces the eye shape that people in the United States typically associate with people from China and Japan, but is also common in people from Central Asia, parts of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, some American Indian groups, and the Khoi San of southern Africa.

In college, I took a course titled “Nutri-tion” because I thought it would be an easy way to boost

my grade point average. The professor of the class, an authoritarian man in his late 60s or early 70s, routinely declared that “Asians can’t drink milk!” When this as-assertion was challenged by various students, including a woman who claimed that her best friend was Korean and drank milk and ate ice cream all the time, the professor only became more strident, doubling down on his dairy diatribe and defiantly vowing that he would not “ignore the facts” for “purposes of political correctness.” However, it is scientific accuracy, not political correctness, we should be concerned about, and lactose tolerance is a complex topic. Lactose is a sugar that is naturally present in milk and dairy products, and an enzyme, lactase, breaks it down into two simpler sugars that can be digested by the body. Ordinarily, humans (and other mammals) stop producing lactase after infancy, and approximately 75 percent of humans are thus lactose intolerant and cannot naturally digest milk. Lactose intolerance is a natural, normal condition. However, some people continue to produce lactase into adulthood and can naturally digest milk and dairy products. This lactose persistence developed through natural selection, primarily among people in regions that had long histories of dairy farming (including the Middle East, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, East Africa, and Northern India). In other areas and for some groups of people, dairy products were introduced relatively recently (such as East Asia, Southern Europe, and Western and Southern Africa and among Australian Aborigines and

American Indians) and lactose persistence has not developed yet.¹⁰

The idea of biological human races emphasizes differences, both real and perceived, *between* groups and ignores or overlooks differences *within* groups. The biological differences between “whites” and “blacks” and between “blacks” and “Asians” are assumed to be greater than the biological differences among “whites” and among “blacks.” The opposite is actually true; the overwhelming majority of genetic diversity in humans (88–92 percent) is found within people who live on the same continent.¹¹ Also, keep in mind that human beings are one of the most genetically similar of all species. There is nearly six times more genetic variation among white-tailed deer in the southern United States than in all humans! Consider our closest living relative, the chimpanzee. Chimpanzees’ natural habitat is confined to central Africa and parts of western Africa, yet four genetically distinct groups occupy those regions and they are far more genetically distinct than humans who live on different continents. That humans exhibit such a low level of genetic variation compared to other species reflects the fact that we are a relatively recent species; modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) first appeared in East Africa just under 200,000 years ago.¹²

Physical anthropologists today analyze human biological variation by examining specific genetic traits to understand how those traits originated and evolved over time and why some genetic traits are more common in certain populations. Since much of our biological

diversity occurs mostly within (rather than between) continental regions once believed to be the homelands of distinct races, the concept of race is meaningless in any study of human biology. Franz Boas, considered the father of modern U.S. anthropology, was the first prominent anthropologist to challenge racial thinking directly during the early twentieth century. A professor of anthropology at Columbia University in New York City and a Jewish immigrant from Germany, Boas established anthropology in the United States as a four-field academic discipline consisting of archaeology, physical/biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. His approach challenged conventional thinking at the time that humans could be separated into biological races endowed with unique intellectual, moral, and physical abilities.

In one of his most famous studies, Boas challenged craniometrics, in which the size and shape of skulls of various groups were measured as a way of assigning relative intelligence and moral behavior. Boas noted that the size and shape of the skull were not fixed characteristics within groups and were instead influenced by the environment. Children born in the United States to parents of various immigrant groups, for example, had slightly different average skull shapes than children born and raised in the homelands of those immigrant groups. The differences reflected relative access to nutrition and other socio-economic dimensions. In his famous 1909 essay “Race Problems in America,” Boas challenged the commonly held idea that immigrants to the United States from Italy, Poland, Russia, Greece, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and other southern and eastern European nations were a threat to America’s “racial purity.” He pointed out that the British, Germans, and Scandinavians (popularly believed at the time to be the “true white” heritages that gave the United States its superior qualities) were not themselves “racially pure.” Instead, many different tribal and cultural groups had intermixed over the centuries. ¹³ In fact, Boas asserted, the notion of “racial purity” was utter nonsense. As present-day anthropologist Jonathan Marks (1994) noted, “You may group

humans into a small number of races if you want to, but you are denied biology as a support for it.”¹⁴

Race as a Social Concept

Just because the idea of distinct biological human races is not a valid scientific concept does not mean, and should not be interpreted as implying, that “there is no such thing as race” or that “race isn’t real.” Race is indeed real but it is a concept based on arbitrary social and cultural definitions rather than biology or science. Thus, racial categories such as “white” and “black” are as real as categories of “American” and “African.” Many things in the world are real but are not biological. So, while race does not reflect biological characteristics, it reflects socially constructed concepts defined subjectively by societies to reflect notions of division that are perceived to be significant. Some sociologists and anthropologists now use the term *social races* instead, seeking to emphasize their cultural and arbitrary roots.

Race is most accurately thought of as a socio-historical concept. Michael Omi and Howard Winant noted that “Racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded.”¹⁵ In other words, racial labels ultimately reflect a society’s social attitudes and cultural beliefs regarding notions of group differences. And since racial categories are culturally defined, they can vary from one society to another as well as change over time within a society. Omi and Winant referred to this as **racial formation**—“the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories.”¹⁶

The process of racial formation is vividly illustrated by the idea

of “whiteness” in the United States. Over the course of U.S. history, the concept of “whiteness” expanded to include various immigrant groups that once were targets of racist beliefs and discrimination. In the mid 1800s, for example, Irish Catholic immigrants faced intense hostility from America’s Anglo-Protestant mainstream society, and anti-Irish politicians and journalists depicted the Irish as racially different and inferior. Newspaper cartoons frequently portrayed Irish Catholics in apelike fashion: overweight, knuckle dragging, and brutish. In the early twentieth century, Italian and Jewish immigrants were typically perceived as racially distinct from America’s Anglo-Protestant “white” majority as well. They were said to belong to the inferior “Mediterranean” and “Jewish” races. Today, Irish, Italian, and Jewish Americans are fully considered “white,” and many people find it hard to believe that they once were perceived otherwise. Racial categories as an aspect of culture are typically learned, internalized, and accepted without question or critical thought in a process not so different from children learning their native language as they grow up.

A primary contributor to expansion of the definition of “whiteness” in the United States was the rise of many members of those immigrant groups in social status after World War II. Hundreds of suburban housing developments were constructed on the edge of the nation’s major cities during the 1940s and 1950s to accommodate returning soldiers, the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 offered a series of benefits for military veterans, including free college education or technical training and cost-of-living stipends funded by the federal government for veterans pursuing higher education. In addition, veterans could obtain guaranteed low-interest loans for homes and for starting their own farms or businesses. The act was in effect from 1944 through 1956 and was *theoretically* available to all military veterans who served at least four months in uniform and were honorably discharged, but the legislation did not contain anti-discrimination provisions and most African American veterans were denied benefits because private banks refused to provide the loans and restrictive language

by homeowners' associations prohibited sales of homes to nonwhites. The male children and grandchildren of European immigrant groups benefited tremendously from the act. They were able to obtain college educations, formerly available only to the affluent, at no cost, leading to professional white-collar careers, and to purchase low-cost suburban homes that increased substantially in value over time. The act has been credited, more than anything else, with creating the modern middle class of U.S. society and transforming the majority of "white" Americans from renters into homeowners.¹⁸ As the children of Irish, Jewish, Italian, Greek, Anglo-Saxon, and Eastern European parents grew up together in the suburbs, formed friendships, and dated and married one another, the old social boundaries that defined "whiteness" were redefined.¹⁹

Race is a socially constructed concept but it is not a trivial matter. On the contrary, one's race often has a dramatic impact on everyday life. In the United States, for example, people often use race—their personal understanding of race—to predict "who" a person is and "what" a person is like in terms of personality, behavior, and other qualities. Because of this tendency to characterize others and make assumptions about them, people can be uncomfortable or defensive when they mistake someone's background or cannot easily determine "what" someone is, as revealed in statements such as "You don't look black!" or "You talk like a white person. Such statements reveal fixed notions about "blackness" and "whiteness" and what members of each race will be like, reflecting their socially constructed and seemingly "common sense" understanding of the world.

Since the 1990s, scholars and anti-racism activists have discussed "white privilege" as a basic feature of race as a lived experience in the United States. Peggy McIntosh coined the term in a famous 1988 essay, "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)," in which she identified more than two dozen accumulated unearned

benefits and advantages associated with being a “white” person in the United States. The benefits ranged from relatively minor things, such as knowing that “flesh color” Band-Aids would match her skin, to major determinants of life experiences and opportunities, such as being assured that she would never be asked to speak on behalf of her entire race, being able to curse and get angry in public without others assuming she was acting that way because of her race, and not having to teach her children that police officers and the general public would view them as suspicious or criminal because of their race. In 2015, MTV aired a documentary on white privilege, simply titled [White People](#), to raise awareness of this issue among Millennials. In the documentary, young “white” Americans from various geographic, social, and class backgrounds discussed their experiences with race.

White privilege has gained significant attention and is an important tool for understanding how race is often connected to everyday experiences and opportunities, but we must remember that no group is homogenous or monolithic. “White” persons receive varying degrees of privilege and social advantage, and other important characteristics, such as social class, gender, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability, shape individuals’ overall lives and how they experience society. John Hartigan, an urban anthropologist, has written extensively about these characteristics. His *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (1999) discusses the lives of “white” residents in three neighborhoods in Detroit, Michigan, that vary significantly socio-economically—one impoverished, one working class, and one upper middle class. Hartigan reveals that social class has played a major role in shaping strikingly different identities among these “white” residents and how, accordingly, social relations between “whites” and “blacks” in the neighborhoods vary from camaraderie and companionship to conflict.

RACE IN THREE NATIONS: THE UNITED STATES, BRAZIL, AND JAPAN

To better understand how race is constructed around the world,

consider how the United States, Brazil, and Japan define racial categories. In the United States, race has traditionally been rigidly constructed, and Americans have long perceived racial categories as discrete and mutually exclusive: a person who had one “black” parent and one “white” parent was seen simply as “black.” The institution of slavery played a major role in defining how the United States has classified people by race through the *one-drop rule*, which required that any trace of known or recorded non-European (“non-white”) ancestry was used to automatically exclude a person from being classified as “white.” Someone with one “black” grandparent and three “white” grandparents or one “black” great-grandparent and seven “white” great-grandparents was classified under the one-drop rule simply as “black.” The original purpose of the one-drop rule was to ensure that children born from sexual unions (some consensual but many forced) between slave-owner fathers and enslaved women would be born into slave status.²⁰

Consider President Barack Obama. Obama is of biracial heritage; his mother was “white” of Euro-American descent and his father was a “black” man from Kenya. The media often refer to Obama simply as “black” or “African American,” such as when he is referred to as the nation’s “first black President,” and never refer to him as “white.”²¹ Whiteness in the United States has long been understood and legally defined as implying “racial purity” despite the biological absurdity of the notion, and to be considered “white,” one could have no known ancestors of black, American Indian, Asian, or other “non-white” backgrounds. Cultural anthropologists also refer to the one-drop rule as **hypodescent**, a term coined by anthropologist Marvin Harris in the 1960s to refer to a socially constructed racial classification system in which a person of mixed racial heritage

is automatically categorized as a member of the less (or least) privileged group.²²

Another example is birth certificates issued by U.S. hospitals, which, until relatively recently, used a precise formula to determine the appropriate racial classification for a newborn. If one parent was “white” and the other was “non-white,” the child was classified as the race of the “non-white” parent; if neither parent was “white,” the child was classified as the race of the father.

Not until very recently have the United States government, the media, and pop culture begun to officially acknowledge and embrace biracial and multiracial individuals. The 2000 census was the first to allow respondents to identify as more than one race. Currently, a grassroots movement that is expanding across the United States, led by organizations such as Project RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally) and Swirl, seeks to raise public awareness of biracial and multiracial people who sometimes still experience social prejudice for being of mixed race and/or resentment from peers who disapprove of their decision to identify with all of their backgrounds instead of just one. Prominent biracial and multiracial celebrities such as Tiger Woods, Alicia Keys, Mariah Carey, Beyoncé Knowles, Bruno Mars, and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and the election of Barack Obama have also prompted people in the United States to reconsider the problematic nature of rigid, discrete racial categories.

In 1977, the U.S. government established five official racial categories under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive 15 that provided a basis for recordkeeping and compiling of statistical information to facilitate collection of demographic information by the Census Bureau and to ensure compliance with federal civil rights legislation and work-place anti-discrimination policies. Those categories and their definitions, which are still used today, are (a) “*White*: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East;” (b) “*Black or African American*: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;” (c) “*American Indian or Alaskan Native*: a person

having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment;” (d) “Asian: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent;” and (e) “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or the Pacific Islands.” In addition, OMB Directive 15 established *Hispanic or Latino* as a separate *ethnic* (not racial) category; on official documents, individuals are asked to identify their racial background and whether they are of Hispanic/Latino ethnic heritage. The official definition of Hispanic or Latino is “a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.”

OMB Directive 15’s terminology and definitions have generated considerable criticism and controversy. The complex fundamental question is whether such categories are practical and actually reflect how individuals choose to self-identify. Terms such as “non-Hispanic white” and “Black Hispanic,” both a result of the directive, are baffling to many people in the United States who perceive Hispanics/Latinos as a separate group from whites and blacks. Others oppose any governmental attempt to classify people by race, on both liberal and conservative political grounds. In 1997, the American Anthropological Association unsuccessfully advocated for a cessation of federal efforts to coercively classify Americans by race, arguing instead that individuals should be given the opportunity to identify their ethnic and/or national heritages (such as their country or countries of ancestry).

Brazil’s concept of race is much more fluid, flexible, and multifaceted. The differences between Brazil and the United States are particularly striking because the countries have similar histories. Both nations were born of European colonialism in the New World, established major plantation economies that relied on

large numbers of African slaves, and subsequently experienced large waves of immigration from around the world (particularly Europe) following the abolition of slavery. Despite those similarities, significant contrasts in how race is perceived in these two societies persist, which is sometimes summarized in the expression “The United States has a color line, while Brazil has a color continuum.”²³ In Brazil, races are typically viewed as points on a continuum in which one gradually blends into another; “white” and “black” are opposite ends of a continuum that incorporates many intermediate color-based racial labels that have no equivalent in the United States.

The Brazilian term for these categories, which correspond to the concept of race in the United States, is *tipos*, which directly translates into Portuguese as “types.”²⁴ Rather than describing what is believed to be a person’s biological or genetic ancestry, *tipos* describe slight but noticeable differences in physical appearance. Examples include *loura*, a person with a very fair complexion, straight blonde hair, and blue or green eyes; *sarará*, a light-complexioned person with tightly curled blondish or reddish hair, blue or green eyes, a wide nose, and thick lips; and *cabo verde*, an individual with dark skin, brown eyes, straight black hair, a narrow nose, and thin lips. Sociologists and anthropologists have identified more than 125 *tipos* in Brazil, and small villages of only 500 people may feature 40 or more depending on how residents describe one another. Some of the labels vary from region to region, reflecting local cultural differences.

Since Brazilians perceive race based on phenotypes or outward physical appearance rather than as an extension of geographically based biological and genetic descent, individual members of a family can be seen as different *tipos*. This may seem bewildering to those who think of race as a fixed identity inherited from one’s parents even though it is generally acknowledged that family members often have different physical features, such as sisters who have strikingly different eye colors, hair colors, and/or complexions. In Brazil, those differences are frequently viewed as significant enough to

assign different *tipos*. Cultural anthropologist Conrad Phillip Kottak, who conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Brazil, noted that something as minor as a suntan or sunburn could lead to a person temporarily being described as a different *tipo* until the effects of the tanning or burning wore off.²⁵

Another major difference in the construction of race in the United States and Brazil is the more fluid and flexible nature of race in Brazil, which is reflected in a popular Brazilian saying: “Money whitens.” As darker-complexioned individuals increase their social class status (by, for example, graduating from college and obtaining high-salaried, professional positions), they generally come to be seen as a somewhat lighter *tipo* and light-complexioned individuals who become poorer may be viewed as a slightly darker *tipo*. In the United States, social class has no bearing on one’s racial designation; a non-white person who achieves upward social mobility and accrues greater education and wealth may be seen by some as more “socially desirable” because of social class but does not change racial classification.

Brazil’s Institute of Geography and Statistics established five official racial categories in 1940 to facilitate collection of demographic information that are still in use today: *branco* (white), *prêto* (black), *pardo* (brown), *amarelo* (yellow), and *indígena* (indigenous). These racial categories are similar to the ones established in the United States under OMB Directive 15 and to Linnaeus’ proposed **taxonomy** in the 18th century. *Pardo* is unique to Brazil and denotes a person of both *branco* and *prêto* heritage. Many Brazilians object to these government categories and prefer *tipos*.

The more fluid construction of race in Brazil is accompanied by generally less hostile, more benign social interactions between people of different colors and complexions, which has contributed

to Brazil being seen as a “racial paradise” and a “racial democracy” rainbow nation free of the harsh prejudices and societal discrimination that has characterized other multiracial nations such as the United States and South Africa.²⁶ The “racial democracy” image has long been embraced by the government and elites in Brazil as a way to provide the country with a distinct identity in the international community. However, scholars in Brazil and the United States have questioned the extent to which racial equality exists in Brazil despite the appearance of interracial congeniality on the surface. Many light-complexioned Brazilians reject the idea that racial discrimination and inequalities persist and regard such claims as divisive while Afro-Brazilians have drawn attention to these inequalities in recent years. Though Afro-Brazilians comprise approximately half of the country’s population, they have historically accounted for less than 2 percent of all university students, and severe economic disparities between *tipos* remain prominent in Brazil to this day.²⁷ The majority of the country’s Afro-Brazilians lives in the less-affluent northern region, site of the original sugar cane plantations while the majority of Brazilians of European descent live in the industrial and considerably wealthier southern region.²⁸ The *favelas* (slums) located on the edge of major cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which often lack electricity or running water, are inhabited largely by Afro-Brazilians, who are half as likely to have a working toilet in their homes as the overall Brazilian population.

There are significant economic differences between Brazilians according to their official racial designation. According to government statistics, *prêtos* have higher unemployment and poverty rates than other groups in Brazil and *brancos* earn 57

percent more than *prêtos* for the same occupation. Furthermore, the vast majority of Brazilians in leadership positions in politics, the military, the media, and education are *branco* or *pardo*. Inter-racial marriage occurs more frequently in Brazil than in the United States, but most of the marriages are between *prêtos* and *pardos* and not between *brancos* and either *prêtos* or *pardos*. Another significant area of concern centers on brutality and mistreatment of darker-complexioned Brazilians. As a result, some scholars of race and racism describe Brazil as a prominent example of a **pigmentocracy**: a society characterized by a strong correlation between a person's skin color and their social class.

Afro-Brazilian activism has grown substantially since the 1980s, inspired in part by the successes of the Civil Rights movement in the United States and by actions taken by the Brazilian government since the early 2000s. One of the Brazilian government's strategies has been to implement U.S.-style affirmative action policies in education and employment to increase the number of Afro-Brazilians in the nation's professional ranks and decrease the degree of economic disparity. Those efforts sparked an intense backlash among lighter-complexioned Brazilians and created a complex social and political dilemma: who, exactly, should be considered "dark/black enough" for inclusion in affirmative action, who makes that decision, and on what grounds will the decision be based? Many Brazilian families include relatives whose complexions are quite different and the country has clear racial categories only in terms of its demographic statistics. Nevertheless, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's president from 2003 through 2011, made promotion of greater racial equality a prominent objective of his administration. In addition to supporting affirmative action policies, Lu la appointed four Afro-Brazilians to his cabinet, appointed the

first Afro-Brazilian justice to the nation's supreme court, and established a government office for promotion of racial equality. These recent developments have led many in Brazil and elsewhere to reconsider the accuracy of Brazil's designation as a racial democracy, which has been as a central component of its national identity for decades.

Scholars mostly agree that race relations are more relaxed and genteel in Brazil than in the United States. They tend to disagree about why that is the case. Some have suggested that the differences in racial constructions stem from important colonial-era distinctions that set the tone for years to come. A common expression describing the situation is: the United States had two British parents while Brazil had a Portuguese father and an African mother. British settlers who colonized North America thoroughly subjugated their slaves, intermarriage was rare, and African cultural influences on mainstream U.S. society were marginalized compared to British cultural traditions and customs. In Brazil, on the other hand, sexual and marital unions between the Portuguese settlers, who were overwhelmingly male, and female Africans were common, creating individuals who exhibit a wide range of physical appearances. Sexual unions certainly occurred in the United States between male European slave masters and female African slaves, but the one-drop rule ensured that any children born of such unions would be classified as "black" and as slaves. In Brazil in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the government and the Roman Catholic Church strongly encouraged European descended men to marry the African and indigenous women they impregnated in order to "whiten" the nation.²⁹ The United States government did not advocate for interracial families and most states had anti-miscegenation laws. The United States also implemented an official, government-sanctioned system of **Jim Crow** racial segregation laws in that had no equivalent in Brazil.

Japan represents an example of a third way of constructing race that is not associated with Western society or African slavery. Japanese society is more diverse than many people realize; the

number of Korean, Chinese, Indian, and Brazilian immigrants began to increase in the 1980s, and the number of children who had one Japanese and one non-Japanese parent has increased substantially since the 1950s, driven in part by children fathered by American military men stationed in Japan. Yet, one segment of Japan's population known as the *burakumin* (formerly called the *eta*, a word meaning “pure filth”) vividly illustrates the arbitrary nature of racial categories. Though physically and genetically indistinguishable from other Japanese people, the *burakumin* are a socially stigmatized and outcast group. They are descendants of people who worked dirty, low-prestige jobs that involved handling dead and slaughtered animals during the feudal era of Japan in the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s. In feudal times, they were forced to live in communities separated from the rest of society, had to wear a patch of leather on their clothing to symbolize their *burakumin* status, and were not permitted to marry non-*burakumin*s.³⁰

Japan no longer legally prohibits marriage between *burakumin* and non-*burakumin* (today, approximately 75 percent of *burakumin*s are married to non-*burakumin*s), but prejudices and discrimination persist, particularly among older generations, and the marriages remain socially stigmatized. Employment for the *burakumin* remains concentrated in low-paying occupations involving physical labor despite the relative affluence and advanced education in Japanese society overall. *Burakumin* earn only about 60 percent of the national average household income.³¹ Stereotypes of the *burakumin* as unintelligent, lazy, and violent still exist, but *burakumin* men account for a significant portion of Japan's professional athletes in popular sports such as baseball and sumo wrestling, an

interesting pattern that reflects events in the United States, where racially stigmatized groups have long found relatively abundant opportunities for upward mobility in professional sports.

ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The terms race and ethnicity are similar and there is a degree of overlap between them. The average person frequently uses the terms “race” and “ethnicity” interchangeably as synonyms and anthropologists also recognize that race and ethnicity are overlapping concepts. Both race and ethnic identity draw on an identification with others based on common ancestry and shared cultural traits.³² As discussed earlier, a *race* is a social construction that defines groups of humans based on arbitrary physical and/or biological traits that are believed to distinguish them from other humans. An **ethnic group**, on the other hand, claims a distinct identity based on cultural characteristics and a shared ancestry that are believed to give its members a unique sense of peoplehood or heritage.

The cultural characteristics used to define ethnic groups vary; they include specific languages spoken, religions practiced, and distinct patterns of dress, diet, customs, holidays, and other markers of distinction. In some societies, ethnic groups are geographically concentrated in particular regions, as with the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq and the Basques in northern Spain.

Ethnicity refers to the degree to which a person identifies with and feels an attachment to a particular ethnic group. As a component of a person’s identity, ethnicity is a fluid, complex phenomenon that is highly variable. Many individuals view their ethnicity as an important element of their personal and social identity. Numerous psychological, social, and familial factors play a role in ethnicity, and ethnic identity is most accurately understood as a range or continuum populated by people at every point. One’s sense of ethnicity can also fluctuate across time. Children of Korean im-

migrants living in an overwhelmingly white town, for example, may choose to self-identify simply as “American” during their middle school and high school years to fit in with their classmates and then choose to self-identify as “Korean,” “Korean American,” or “Asian American” in college or later in life as their social settings change or from a desire to connect more strongly with their family history and heritage. Do you consider your ethnicity an important part of your identity? Why do you feel the way you do?

In the United States, ethnic identity can sometimes be primarily or purely symbolic in nature. Sociologists and anthropologists use the term **symbolic ethnicity** to describe limited or occasional displays of ethnic pride and identity that are primarily *expressive*—for public display—rather than *instrumental* as a major component of their daily social lives. Symbolic ethnicity is pervasive in U.S. society; consider customs such as “Kiss Me, I’m Irish!” buttons and bumper stickers, Puerto Rican flag necklaces, decals of the Virgin of Guadalupe, replicas of the Aztec stone calendar, and tattoos of Celtic crosses or of the map of Italy in green, white, and red stripes. When I was a teenager in the early to mid-1990s, medallions shaped like the African continent became popular among young African Americans after the release of Spike Lee’s film *Malcolm X* in 1992 and in response to clothing worn by socially conscious rappers and rap groups of the era, such as Public Enemy. During that same time, I surprised workers in a pizzeria in suburban Philadelphia when I asked them, in Spanish, what part of Mexico they came from. They wanted to know how I knew they were Mexican as they said they usually were presumed to be Italian or Puerto Rican. I replied, “The Virgin of Guadalupe gave it away!” while pointing to the miniature figurine of the iconic national symbol of Mexico on the counter near the register.

In the United States, ethnic identity can sometimes be largely symbolic particularly for descendants of the various European immigrant groups who settled in the United States during the nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries. Regardless of whether their grandparents and great-grandparents mi-grated from Italy, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Greece, Scandinavia, or else-where, these third and fourth generation Americans likely do not speak their ancestors' languages and have lost most or all of the cultural customs and traditions their ancestors brought to the United States. A few traditions, such as favorite family recipes or distinct customs associated with the celebration of a holiday, that originated in their homelands may be retained by family members across generations, reinforcing a sense of ethnic heritage and identity today. More recent immigrants are likely to retain more of the language and cultural traditions of their countries of origin. Non-European immigrants groups from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean also experience significant linguistic and cultural losses over generations, but may also continue to self-identify with their ethnic backgrounds if they do not feel fully incorporated into U.S. society because they “stick out” physically from Euro-American society and experience prejudice and dis-crimination. Psychological, sociological, and anthropological studies have indicated that retaining a strong sense of ethnic pride and identification is common among ethnic minorities in the United States and other nations as a means of coping with and overcoming societal bigotry.

While there have been periods of inter-ethnic tension between

various European immigrant and ethnic groups in the United States, such as English-German and Irish-Italian conflicts, the descendants of these groups today have been assimilated, to a very large degree, into the general racial category of “white.”

Ethnic groups and ethnicity, like race, are socially constructed identities created at particular moments in history under particular social conditions. The earliest views of ethnicity assumed that people had innate, unchanging ethnic identities and loyalties. In actuality, ethnic identities shift and are recreated over time and across societies. Anthropologists call this process **ethnogenesis**—gradual emergence of a new, distinct ethnic identity in response to changing social circumstances. For example, people whose ancestors came from what we know as Ireland may identify themselves as Irish Americans and generations of their ancestors as Irish, but at one time, people living in that part of the world identified themselves as Celtic.

In the United States, ethnogenesis has led to a number of new ethnic identities, including African American, Native American, American Indian, and Italian American. Slaves brought to America in the colonial period came primarily from Central and Western Africa and represented dozens of ethnic heritages, including Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, and Chamba, that had unique languages, religions, and cultures that were quickly lost because slaves were not permitted to speak their own languages or practice their customs and religions. Over time, a new unified identity emerged among their descendants. But that identity continues to evolve, as reflected by the transitions in the label used to identify it: from “colored” (early 1900s) to “Negro” (1930s–1960s) to “Black” (late 1960s to the present) and “African American” (1980s to the present).

A MELTING POT OR A SALAD BOWL?

There is tremendous ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity throughout the United States, largely resulting from a long history and ongoing identification as a “nation of immigrants” that attracted millions of newcomers from every continent. Still, elected officials and residents ardently disagree about how the United States should

approach this diversity and incorporate immigrant, ethnic, and cultural minority groups into the larger framework of American society. The fundamental question is whether cultural minority groups should be encouraged to forego their ethnic and cultural identities and **acculturate** to the values, traditions, and customs of mainstream culture or should be allowed and encouraged to retain key elements of their identities and heritages. This is a highly emotional question. Matters of cultural identity are often deeply personal and associated with strongly held beliefs about the defining features of their countries' national identities. Over the past 400 years, three distinct social philosophies have developed from efforts to promote national unity and tranquility in societies that have experienced large-scale immigration: assimilation, multiculturalism, and amalgamation.

Assimilation encourages and may even demand that members of ethnic and immigrant minority groups abandon their native customs, traditions, languages, and identities as quickly as possible and adopt those of mainstream society—"When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Advocates of assimilation generally view a strong sense of national unity based on a shared linguistic and cultural heritage as the best way to promote a strong national identity and avoid ethnic conflict. They point, for example, to ethnic warfare and genocide in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s and to recent independence movements by French Canadians in Quebec and in Scotland as evidence of negative consequences of groups retaining a strong sense of loyalty and identification with their ethnic or linguistic communities. The "English as the Official Language" movement in the United States is another example. People are concerned that U.S. unity is weakened by immigrants who do not learn to speak English. In recent years, the U.S. Census Bureau has identified more than 300 languages spoken in the United States. In 2010, more than 60 million people representing

21 percent of the total U.S. population spoke a language other than English at home and 38 million of those people spoke Spanish.

Multiculturalism takes a different view of assimilation, arguing that ethnic and cultural diversity is a positive quality that enriches a society and encouraging respect for cultural differences. The basic belief behind multiculturalism is that group differences, in and of themselves, do not spark tension, and society should promote tolerance for differences rather than urging members of immigrant, ethnic, and cultural minority groups to shed their customs and identities. Vivid examples of multiculturalism can be seen in major cities across the United States, such as New York, where ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Little Italy border one another, and Los Angeles, which features many diverse neighborhoods, including Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Filipinotown, Little Armenia, and Little Ethiopia. The ultimate objective of multiculturalism is to promote peaceful coexistence while allowing each ethnic community to preserve its unique heritage and identity. Multiculturalism is the official governmental policy of Canada; it was codified in 1988 under the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which declares that “multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage.”³³

Amalgamation promotes hybridization of diverse cultural groups in a multiethnic society. Members of distinct ethnic and cultural groups freely intermingle, interact, and live among one another with cultural exchanges and, ultimately, inter-ethnic dating and intermarriage occurring as the social and cultural barriers between groups fade over time. Amalgamation is similar to assimilation in that a strong, unified national culture is viewed as the desired end result but differs because it represents a more thorough “melting pot” that blends the various groups in a society (the dominant/mainstream group and minority groups) into a new hybridized cultural identity rather than expecting minority groups to conform to the majority’s standards.

Debate is ongoing among sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and political pundits regarding the relative merits of each approach and which, if any, most accurately describes the United States. It is a complex and often contentious question because people may confuse their personal ideologies (what they think the United States should strive for) with social reality (what actually occurs). Furthermore, the United States is a large, complex country geographically that is comprised of large urban centers with millions of residents, moderately populated areas characterized by small towns, and mostly rural communities with only several hundred or a few thousand inhabitants. The nature of social and cultural life varies significantly with the setting in which it occurs.

ANTHROPOLOGY MEETS POPULAR CULTURE: SPORTS, RACE/ETHNICITY AND DIVERSITY

Throughout this chapter, I have stated that the concept of race is a socially constructed idea and explained why biologically distinct human races do not exist. Still, many in the United States cling to a belief in the existence of biological racial groups (regardless of their racial and ethnic back-grounds). Historically, the nature of popular sports in the United States has been offered as “proof” of biological differences between races in terms of natural athletic skills and abilities. In this regard, the world of sports has served as an important social institution in which notions of biological racial differences become reified—mistakenly assumed as objective, real, and factual. Specifically, many Americans have noted the large numbers of African Americans in Olympic sprinting, the National Football League (NFL), and the National Basketball Association (NBA) and interpreted their dis-proportionate number as perceived “evidence” or “proof” that “blacks” have unique genes, muscles, bone structures, and/or other biological qualities that make them superior athletes relative to people from other racial

backgrounds—that they are “naturally gifted” runners and jumpers and thus pre-dominate in sports.

This topic sparked intense media attention in 2012 during the lead-up to that year’s Olympics in London. Michael Johnson, a retired African American track star who won gold medals at the 1992, 1996, and 2000 Summer Olympic Games, declared that “black” Americans and West Indians (of Jamaican, Trinidadian, Barbadian, and other Caribbean descent) dominated international sprinting competitions because they possessed a “superior athletic gene” that resulted from slavery: “All my life, I believed I became an athlete through my own determination, but it’s impossible to think that being descended from slaves hasn’t left an imprint through the generations . . . slavery has benefitted descendants like me. I believe there is a superior athletic gene in us.”³⁴ Others have previously expressed similar ideas, such as writer John Entine, who suggested in his book, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We’re Afraid to Talk About It* (2000), that the brutal nature of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and harsh conditions of slavery in the Americas produced slaves who could move faster and who had stronger, more durable bodies than the general population and that those supposedly hardier bodies persisted in today’s African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans, giving them important athletic advantages over others. In a similar vein, former CBS sportscaster Jimmy “The Greek” Snyder claimed, on the eve of Super Bowl XXII in 1988, that African Americans comprised the majority of NFL players because they were “bred that way” during slavery as a form of selective breeding between bigger and stronger slaves much like had been done with racehorses. Snyder was fired from CBS shortly after amid a tidal wave of controversy and furor. Racial stereotypes regarding perceptions of innate differences in athletic ability were a major theme in the 1992 comedy film *White Men Can’t Jump*, which starred Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson as an inter-racial pair of basketball street hustlers.

Despite such beliefs, even among people who otherwise do not harbor racist sentiments, the notion of innate “black” athletic

supremacy is obviously misguided, fallacious, and self-contradictory when we examine the demographic composition of the full range of sports in the United States rather than focusing solely on a few extremely popular sports that pay high salaries and have long served as inspiration for upward mobility and fame in a society in which educational and employment opportunities for lower-income and impoverished minority groups (often concentrated in inner-city communities) have rarely been equivalent to those of middle-class and affluent “whites” living in small towns and suburban communities. Take the myth that “blacks” have an innately superior jumping ability. The idea that “white men can’t jump” stems from the relatively small number of white American players in the NBA and has been reified by the fact that only one “white” player (Brent Barry of the Los Angeles Clippers in 1996) has ever won the NBA’s annual slam-dunk contest. However, the stereotype would be completely inverted if we look at the demographic composition and results of high jump competitions. The high jump is arguably a better gauge of leaping ability than a slam-dunk contest since it requires raising the entire body over a horizontal bar and prohibits extension of the arms overhead, thus diminishing any potential advantage from height. For decades, both the men’s and the women’s international high jump competitions have been dominated by white athletes from the United States and Europe. Yet no one attributes their success to “white racial genes.” American society does not have a generational history of viewing people who are socially

identified as “white” in terms of body type and physical prowess as it does with African Americans.

The same dynamic is at play if we compare basketball with volleyball. Both sports require similar sets of skills, namely, jumping, speed, agility, endurance, and outstanding hand-eye coordination. Nevertheless, beach volleyball has tended to be dominated by “white” athletes from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe while indoor volleyball is more “racially balanced” (if we assume that biological human races actually exist) since the powerhouse indoor volleyball nations are the United States, China, Japan, Brazil, Cuba, and Russia.

Thus, a variety of factors, including cultural affinities and preferences, social access and opportunities, existence of a societal infrastructure that supports youth participation and development in particular sports, and the degree of prestige assigned to various sports by nations, cultures, and ethnic communities, all play significant roles in influencing the concentration of social and/or ethnic groups in particular sports. It is not a matter of individual or group skills or talents; important socio-economic dimensions shape who participates in a sport and who excels. Think about a sport in which you have participated or have followed closely. What social dynamics do you associate with that sport in terms of the gender, race/ethnicity, and social class of the athletes who predominate in it?

For additional insight into the important role that social dynamics play in shaping the racial/ ethnic, social class, and cultural dimensions of athletes, let us briefly consider three sports: basketball, boxing, and football. While basketball is a national sport played throughout the United States, it also has long been associated with urban/inner-city environments, and many professional American basketball players have come from working class and lower-income backgrounds. This trend dates to the 1930s, when Jewish players and teams dominated professional basketball

in the United States. That dominance was commonly explained by the media in terms of the alleged “scheming,” “flashiness,” and “artful dodging” nature of the “Jewish culture.” In other words, Jews were believed to have a fundamental talent for hoops that explained their over-representation in the sport. In reality, most Jewish immigrants in the early twentieth century lived in working class, urban neighborhoods such as New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago where basketball was a popular sport in the local social fabric of working-class communities.³⁵

By 1992, approximately 90 percent of NBA players were African American, and the league’s demographics once again fueled rumors that a racial/ethnic group was “naturally gifted” in basketball. However, within ten short years, foreign-born players largely from Eastern European nations such as Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Latvia, Serbia, Croatia, Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey accounted for nearly 20 percent of the starting line-ups of NBA teams. The first player selected in the 2002 NBA draft was seven-foot six-inch center Yao Ming, a native of Shanghai, China, and by the early 2000s, the United States had lost some of its traditional dominance of international basketball as several nations began to catch up because of the tremendous globalization of basketball’s popularity.

Like basketball, boxing has been an urban sport popular among working-class ethnic groups. During the early twentieth century, both amateur and professional boxing in the United States were dominated by European immigrant groups, particularly the Irish, Italians, and Jewish Americans. As with basketball, which inspired the “hoop dreams” of inner-city youths to escape poverty by reaching the professional ranks, boxing provided sons of lower-income European

immigrants with dreams of upward mobility, fame, and fortune. In fact, it was one of the few American sports that thrived during the Great Depression, attracting a wave of impoverished young people who saw pugilism as a ticket to financial security. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, intra-European ethnic rivalries (Irish vs. Italian, Italian vs. Jewish) were common in U.S. boxing; fighters were seen as quasi-ambassadors of their respective neighborhoods and ethnic communities.

The demographic composition of boxers began to change in the latter half of the twentieth century when formerly stigmatized and racialized Eastern European immigrant groups began to be perceived simply as “white” and mainstream. They attained middle-class status and relocated to the newly established suburbs, and boxing underwent a profound racial and ethnic transition. New urban minority groups—African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans who moved into inner-city neighborhoods vacated by Europeans began to dominate boxing.

Finally, consider football, which has surpassed baseball as the most popular spectator sport in the United States and is popular with all social classes, races/ethnicities, and regions. Collegiate and professional football rosters are also undergoing a demographic change; a growing number of current National College Athletic Association and NFL players were born outside the mainland United States. Since the 1980s, many athletes from American Samoa, a U.S. territory in the South Pacific, have joined U.S. football teams. A boy in American Samoa is an astounding 56 times more likely to make the NFL than a boy born and raised on the U.S. mainland!³⁶ American Samoa’s rapid transformation into a gridiron powerhouse is the result of several inter-related factors that dramatically increased the appeal of the sport across the tiny island, including the cultural influence of American missionaries who introduced

football. Expanding migration of Samoans to Hawaii and California in recent decades has also fostered their interest in football, which has trickled back to the South Pacific, and the NFL is working to expand the popularity of football in American Samoa.³⁷ Similarly, Major League Baseball has been promoting baseball in the Dominican Republic, Korea, and Japan in recent years.

CONCLUSION

Issues of race, racism, and ethnic relations remain among the most contentious social and political topics in the United States and throughout the world. Anthropology offers valuable information to the public regarding these issues, as anthropological knowledge encourages individuals to “think out-side the box” about race and ethnicity. This “thinking outside the box” includes understanding that racial and ethnic categories are socially constructed rather than natural, biological divisions of humankind and realizing that the current racial and ethnic categories that exist in the United States to-day do not necessarily reflect categories used in other countries. Physical anthropologists, who study human evolution, epidemiology, and genetics, are uniquely qualified to explain why distinct biological human races do not exist. Nevertheless, race and ethnicity—as social constructs—continue to be used as criteria for prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and stereotypes well into the twenty-first century. Cultural anthropologists play a crucial role in informing the public how the concept of race originated, how racial categories have shifted over time, how race and ethnicity are constructed differently within various nations across the world, and how the current racial and ethnic categories utilized in the United States were arbitrarily labeled and defined by the federal government under OMB Directive 15 in 1977. Understanding the complex nature of clines and continuous biological

human variation, along with an awareness of the distinct ways in which race and ethnicity have been constructed in different nations, enables us to recognize racial and ethnic labels not as self-evident biological divisions of humans, but instead as socially created categories that vary cross-culturally.

discussion questions

1. García describes the reasons that race is considered a “discredited concept in human biology.” Despite this scientific fact, most people continue to believe that race is “real.” Why do you think race has continued to be an important social reality even after it has been discredited scientifically?

2. The process of racial formation is different in every society. In the United States, the “one-drop rule” and hypodescent have historically affected the way people with multiracial backgrounds have been racialized. How have ideas about multiracial identity been changing in the past few decades? As the number of people who identify as “multiracial” increases, do you think there will be changes in the way we think about other racial categories?

3. Members of some ethnic groups are able to practice symbolic ethnicity, limited or occasional displays of ethnic pride and identity. Why can ethnicity be displayed in an optional way while race cannot?

4. There is no scientific evidence supporting the idea that racial or ethnic background provides a biological

advantage in sports. Instead, a variety of social dynamics, including cultural affinities and preferences as well as access and opportunities influence who will become involved in particular sports. Think about a sport in which you have participated or have followed closely. What social dynamics do you think are most responsible for affecting the racial, ethnic, gender, or social class composition of the athletes who participate?

glossary

Acculturation: loss of a minority group's cultural distinctiveness in relation to the dominant culture.

Amalgamation: interactions between members of distinct ethnic and cultural groups that reduce barriers between the groups over time.

Assimilation: pressure placed on minority groups to adopt the customs and traditions of the dominant culture.

Cline: differences in the traits that occur in populations across a geographical area. In a cline, a trait may be more common in one geographical area than another, but the variation is gradual and continuous, with no sharp breaks.

Ethnic group: people in a society who claim a distinct identity for themselves based on shared cultural characteristics and ancestry.

Ethnicity: the degree to which a person identifies with and feels an attachment to a particular ethnic group.

Ethnogenesis: gradual emergence of new ethnicities in response to changing social circumstances.

Hypodescent: a racial classification system that assigns a person with mixed racial heritage to the racial category that is considered least privileged.

Jim Crow: a term used to describe laws passed by state and local governments in the United States during the early twentieth century to enforce racial segregation of public and private places.

Multiculturalism: maintenance of multiple cultural traditions in a single society.

Nonconcordant: genetic traits that are inherited independently rather than as a package.

One-drop rule: the practice of excluding a person with any non-white ancestry from the white racial category.

Pigmentocracy: a society characterized by strong correlation between a person's skin color and his or her social class.

Race: an attempt to categorize humans based on observed physical differences.

Racial formation: the process of defining and redefining racial categories in a society.

Reified: the process by which an inaccurate concept or idea is accepted as "truth."

Socially constructed: a concept developed by society that is maintained over time through social interactions that make the idea seem "real."

Symbolic ethnicity: limited or occasional displays of

ethnic pride and identity that are primarily for public display.

Taxonomy: a system of classification.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, a public state-owned university located approximately 70 miles west of Philadelphia. I earned my Ph.D. in Anthropology from Temple University in 2011, with a specific focus in urban anthropology. I currently live in Chester County, Pennsylvania in sub-urban Philadelphia. My research interests include U.S. immigration, social constructs of race and ethnicity, urban social/cultural life, U.S. popular culture, human evolution/the hominid lineage, and anthropological theory. Aside from anthropology, my hobbies include lifting weights, watching sports (particularly boxing, football, and basketball) and movies, traveling, and playing video games (the Grand Theft Auto series is my personal favorite).

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NOTES

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2. More information about the social construction of racial categories in the United States can be found in Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007) and Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

3. More discussion of the material in this section can be found in Carol Mukhopadhyay, Rosemary Henze, and Yolanda Moses, *How Real Is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013). Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the cultural construction of racial categories as a form of classification. The *Race: Are We So Different* website and its companion resources for teachers and researchers also explore the ideas described here.

4. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind: De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1775).

5. For details about how these categories were established, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*.

6. For a discussion of the efforts to subdivide racial groups in the nineteenth century and its connection to eugenics, see Carol Mukhopadhyay, Rosemary Henze, and Yolanda Moses, *How Real Is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology*.

7. For more information about the genetic variation between human groups that puts this example in context see Sheldon Krimsky and Kathleen Sloan, *Race and the Genetic Revolution: Science, Myth, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 174-180.

8. Carol Mukhopadhyay et. al *How Real Is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology*, 43-48.

9. *Ibid.*, 50-52.

10. *Ibid.*, 50-51.

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12. Alan R. Templeton, "Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective" *American Anthropologist* 100 no. 3 (1998): 632-650.

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20. While the one-drop rule was intended to protect the institution of slavery, a more nuanced view of racial identity has existed throughout U.S. History. For a history of the racial categories used historically in the United States census, including several mixed-race categories, see the Pew Research Center's "What Census Calls Us: Historical Timeline."

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21. It is important to note that President Obama has also stated that he self-identifies as black. See for instance, Sam Roberts and Peter Baker. 2010. "Asked to Declare His Race, Obama Checks 'Black.'" *The New York Times*, April 2.

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27. Robert J. Cottrol, *The Long Lingered Shadow: Slavery, Race, and Law in the American Hemisphere* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 246.
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29. For more information about Brazil’s official policy toward mixed-race children during this era see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black Into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).
30. For a detailed discussion of stratification without race, see chapter 8 of Carol Mukhopadhyay et. al *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology*.
31. For more information about the status of Burakumin in Japan see Emily A. Su-lan Reber, “Buraku Mondai in Japan: Historical and Modern Perspectives and Directions for the Future.” *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 12 (1999): 298
32. The distinction between race and ethnicity is a complex and controversial one within anthropology. Some anthropologists combine these concepts in acknowledgement of the overlap between them. See for instance Karen Brodtkin. *How Jews Became White and What This Says About Race in America*.
33. Canadian Multicultural Act, 1985. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-18.7/FullText.html>

34. Rene Lynch, "Michael Johnson Says Slave Descendants Make Better Athletes" *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 2012.
35. The 2010 documentary *The First Basket* by David Vyorst describes the experiences of Jewish basketball players in the mid-twentieth century U.S.
36. Scott Pelley, America Samoa: Football Island. CBS News, September 17, 2010 <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ameri-can-samoa-football-island-17-09-2010/>
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27. Chapter 6: Religion

Learning Objectives

- Define religion and explain its significance in human cultures.
- Summarize theories developed by anthropologists to explain the importance of supernatural beliefs in human communities.
- Identify the four elements of religion (cosmology, belief in the supernatural, rules of behavior, and rituals) and explain how each element contributes to religious practices.
- Define rites of passage, rites of intensification, and rites of revitalization and explain the purpose of each type of ritual.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images from *Chapter 6: Religion*.

Humans have always wondered about the meaning of the life, the nature of the universe, and the forces that shape our lives. While it is impossible to know for sure how the people who lived thousands of years ago answered these kinds of questions, there are some clues. Fifty thousand years ago, human communities buried the dead with stone tools, shells, animal bones, and other objects, a practice that suggests they were preparing the deceased for an afterlife, or a world beyond this one. Thirty thousand years ago, artists entered the Chauvet cave in France and painted dramatic scenes of animals on the cave walls along with abstract symbols that suggest the images were part of a supernatural belief system,

possibly one focused on ensuring safety or success in hunting (Figure 1).¹ A few thousand years later, collections of small clay sculptures, known as Venus figurines, began appearing across Eurasia. They seem to express ideas about fertility or motherhood and may have been viewed as magical (Figure 2).²

Because ideas about the supernatural are part of every human culture, understanding these beliefs is important to anthropologists. However, studying supernatural beliefs is challenging for several reasons. The first difficulty arises from the challenge of defining the topic itself. The word “religion,” which is commonly used in the United States to refer to participation in a distinct form of faith such as Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, is not a universally recognized idea. Many cultures have no word for “religion” at all and many societies do not make a clear distinction between beliefs or practices that are “religious,” or “spiritual” and other habits that are an ordinary part of daily life. For instance, leaving an incense offering in a household shrine dedicated to the spirits of the ancestors may be viewed as a simple part of the daily routine rather than a “religious” practice. There are societies that believe in supernatural beings, but do not call them “gods.” Some societies do not see a distinction between the natural and the supernatural observing, instead, that the spirits share the same physical world as humans. Concepts like “heaven,” “hell,” or even “prayer” do not exist in many societies. The divide between “religion” and related ideas like “spirituality” or even “magic” is also murky in some cultural contexts.

To study supernatural beliefs, anthropologists must cultivate a

perspective of cultural relativism and strive to understand beliefs from an emic or insider's perspective. Imposing the definitions or assumptions from one culture on another is likely to lead to misunderstandings. One example of this problem can be found in the early anthropological research of Sir James Frazer who attempted to compose the first comprehensive study of the world's major magical and religious belief systems. Frazer was part of early generation of anthropologists whose work was based on reading and questionnaires mailed to missionaries and colonial officials rather than travel and participant-observation. As a result, he had only minimal information about the beliefs he wrote about and he was quick to apply his own opinions. In *The Golden Bough* (1890) he dismissed many of the spiritual beliefs he documented: "I look upon [them] not merely as false but as preposterous and absurd."³ His contemporary, Sir E.B. Tylor, was less dismissive of unfamiliar belief systems, but he defined religion minimally and, for some, in overly narrow terms as "the belief in supernatural beings." This definition excludes much of what people around the world actually believe.⁴ As researchers gained more information about other cultures, their ideas about religion became more complex. The sociologist Emile Durkheim recognized that religion was not simply a belief in "supernatural beings," but a set of practices and social institutions that brought members of a community together. Religion, he said, was "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set aside and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."⁵

Durkheim's analysis of religion emphasized the significance of spiritual beliefs for relationships between people. Subsequent anthropological research in communities around the world has confirmed that rituals associated with beliefs in the supernatural play a significant role in structuring community life, providing rules or guidelines for behavior, and bonding members of a community to one another. Interestingly, religious "beings," such as gods or spirits, also demonstrate social qualities.

Most of the time, these beings are imagined in familiar terms as entities with personalities, desires, and “agency,” an ability to make decisions and take action. Supernatural beings, in other words, are not so different from people.⁶ In keeping with this idea, **religion** can be defined as “the means by which human society and culture is extended to include the nonhuman.”⁷ This definition is deliberately broad and can be used to encompass many different kinds of belief systems.

Many religions involve ideas or rituals that could be described as “magical” and the relationship between religion and magic is complex. In his book *A General Theory of Magic* (1902), Marcel Mauss suggested that religion and magic were two opposite poles on a spectrum of spiritual beliefs. Magic was at one end of the spectrum; it was private, secret, and individual. Religion was at the opposite end of the spectrum; it was public and oriented toward bringing the community together.⁸ Although Mauss’ formulation presented religion and magic as part of the same general way of thinking, many contemporary anthropologists are convinced that making a distinction between religion and magic is artificial and usually not particularly useful. With this caution in mind, **magic** can be defined as practices intended to bring supernatural forces under one’s personal control. **Sorcerers** are individuals who seek to use magic for their own purposes. It is important to remember that both magic and sorcery are labels that have historically been used by outsiders, including anthropologists, to describe spiritual beliefs with which they are unfamiliar. Words from the local language are almost always preferable for representing how people think about themselves.

THEORIES OF RELIGION

Sir James Frazer’s effort to interpret religious mythology was the first of many attempts to understand the reasons why cultures develop various kinds of spiritual beliefs. In the early twentieth century, many anthropologists applied a functional approach to this problem by focusing on the ways religion addressed human needs. Bronislaw Malinowski (1931), who conducted research in the

Trobriland Islands located near Papua New Guinea, believed that religious beliefs met psychological needs. He observed that religion “is not born out of speculation or reflection, still less out of illusion or apprehension, but rather, out of the real tragedies of human life, out of the conflict between hu-man plans and realities.”⁹

At the time of Malinowski’s research, the Trobriand Islanders participated in an event called the kula ring, a tradition that required men to build canoes and sail on long and dangerous journeys between neighboring islands to exchange ritual items. Malinowski noticed that before these danger-ous trips several complex rituals had to be performed, but ordinary sailing for fishing trips required no special preparations. What was the difference? Malinowski concluded that the longer trips were not only more dangerous, but also provoked more anxiety because the men felt they had less control over what might happen. On long voyages, there were many things that could go wrong, few of which could be planned for or avoided. He argued that religious rituals provided a way to reduce or control anxiety when anticipating these conditions.¹⁰ The use of rituals to reduce anxiety has been documented in many other settings. George Gmelch (1971) documented forms of “baseball magic” among professional athletes. Baseball players, for instance, have rituals related to how they eat, dress, and even drive to the ballpark, rituals they believe contribute to good luck.¹¹

As a functionalist, Malinowski believed that religion provided shared values and behavioral norms that created solidarity between people. The sociologist Emile Durkheim also believed that religion played an important role in building connections between people by creating shared definitions of the sacred and profane. **Sacred** objects or ideas are set apart from the ordinary and treated with great respect or care while **profane** objects or ideas are ordinary and can be treated with disregard or contempt. Sacred things could include a God or gods, a natural phenomenon, an animal or many other things. Religion, Durkheim

concluded, was “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices that unite, into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”¹² Once a person or a thing was designated as sacred, Durkheim believed that celebrating it through ritual was a powerful way to unite communities around shared values.¹³ In addition, celebrating the sacred can create an intense emotional experience Durkheim referred to as **collective effervescence**, a passion or energy that arises when groups of people share the same thoughts and emotions. The experience of collective effervescence magnifies the emotional impact of an event and can create a sense of awe or wonder.¹⁴

Following Durkheim, many anthropologists, including Dame Mary Douglas, have found it useful to explore the ways in which definitions of sacred and profane structure religious beliefs. In her book *Purity and Danger* (1966), Douglas analyzed the way in which cultural ideas about things that were “dirty” or “impure” influenced religious beliefs. The kosher dietary rules observed by Jews were one prominent example of the application of this kind of thinking.¹⁵

The philosopher and historian Karl Marx famously called religion “the opium of the people.”¹⁶ He viewed religion as an ideology, a way of thinking that attempts to justify inequalities in power and status. In his view, religion created an illusion of happiness that helped people cope with the economic difficulties of life under capitalism. As an institution, Marx believed that the Christian church helped to legitimize and support the political and economic inequality of the working class by encouraging ordinary people to orient themselves toward the afterlife, where they could expect to receive comfort and

happiness. He argued that the obedience and conformity advocated by religious leaders as a means of reaching heaven also persuaded people not to fight for better economic or social conditions in their current lives. Numerous examples of the use of religion to legitimize or justify power differences have been documented cross-culturally including the existence of divine rulers, who were believed to be empowered by the Gods themselves, in ancient Egyptian and Incan societies. A glimpse of the legitimizing role of religion is also seen in the U.S. practice of having elected officials take an oath of office using the Bible or another holy book.

The psychologist Sigmund Freud believed that religion is the institution that prevents us from acting upon our deepest and most awful desires. One of his most famous examples is the Oedipal complex, the story of Oedipus who (unknowingly) had a sexual relationship with his mother and, once he discovered this, ripped out his own eyes in a violent and gory death. One possible interpretation of this story is that there is an unconscious sexual desire among males for their mothers and among females their fathers. These desires can never be acknowledged, let alone acted on, because of the damage they would cause to society.¹⁷ In one of his most well-known works, *Totem and Ta-boo*, Freud proposes that religious beliefs provide rules or restrictions that keep the worst anti-social instincts, like the Oedipal complex, suppressed. He developed the idea of “totemic religions,” belief systems based on the worship of a particular animal or object, and suggested that the purpose of these religions was to regulate interactions with socially significant and potentially disruptive objects and relationships.¹⁸

One interesting interpretation of religious beliefs that builds on the work of Durkheim, Marx, and Freud is Marvin Harris’ analysis of the Hindu prohibition against killing cows. In Hinduism, the cow is honored and treated with respect because of its fertility, gentle nature, and association with some Hindu deities. In his book *Cow, Pigs, Wars, and Witches* (1974), Harris suggested that these religious ideas about the cow were actually based in an economic reality. In India, cows are more

valuable alive as a source of milk or for doing work in the fields than they are dead as meat. For this reason, he argued, cows were defined as sacred and set apart from other kinds of animals that could be killed and eaten. The subsequent development of religious explanations for cows' specialness reinforced and legitimated the special treatment.¹⁹

A symbolic approach to the study of religion developed in the mid-twentieth century and presented new ways of analyzing supernatural beliefs. Clifford Geertz, one of the anthropologists responsible for creating the symbolic approach, defined religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations... by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”²⁰ Geertz suggested that religious practices were a way to enact or make visible important cultural ideas. The symbols used in any religion, such as a cross or even a cow, can be interpreted or “read” by anthropologists to discern important cultural values. At the same time, religious symbols reinforce values or aspirations in members of the religious community. The Christian cross, which is associated with both death and resurrection, demonstrates ideas about sacrifice and putting the needs of others in the community first. The cross also symbolizes deeper ideas about the nature of life itself: that suffering can have positive outcomes and that there is something beyond the current reality.

A symbolic approach to religion treats religious beliefs as a kind of “text” or “performance” that can be interpreted by outsiders. Like the other theories described in this section, symbolic approaches present some risk of misinterpretation. Religious beliefs involve complex combinations of personal and social values as well as embodied or visceral feelings that cannot always be appreciated or

even recognized by outsiders. The persistently large gap between emic (insider) and etic (outsider) explanations for religious beliefs and practices makes the study of religion one of the most challenging topics in cultural anthropology.

ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Despite the wide variety of supernatural beliefs found in cultures around the world, most belief systems do share some common elements. The first of these characteristic is **cosmology**, an explanation for the origin or history of the world. Religious cosmologies provide “big picture” explanations for how human life was created and provide a perspective on the forces or powers at work in the world. A second characteristic of religion is a belief in the **supernatural**, a realm beyond direct human experience. This belief could include a God or gods, but this is not a requirement. Quite a few religious beliefs, as discussed below, involve more abstract ideas about supernatural forces. Most religions also share a third characteristic: **rules governing behavior**. These rules define proper conduct for individuals and for society as a whole and are oriented toward bringing individual actions into harmony with spiritual beliefs. A fourth element is **ritual**, practices or ceremonies that serve a religious purpose and are usually supervised by religious specialists. Rituals may be oriented toward the supernatural, such as rituals designed to please the gods, but at the same time they address the needs of individuals or the community as a whole. Funeral rituals, for instance, may be designed to ensure the passage of a deceased person to the afterlife, but also simultaneously provide emotional comfort to those who are grieving and provide an outlet for the community to express care and support.

Religious Cosmologies

Religious cosmologies are ways of explaining the origin of the universe and the principles or “order” that governs reality. In its simplest form, a cosmology can be an origin story, an explanation for the history, present state, and possible futures of the world and the origins of the people, spirits, divinities, and forces that

populate it. The ancient Greeks had an origin story that began with an act of creation from Chaos, the first thing to exist. The deities Erebus, representing darkness, and Nyx, representing night, were born from Chaos. Nyx gave birth to Aether (light) and Hemera (day). Hemera and Nyx took turns exiting the underworld, creating the phenomenon of day and night. Aether and Hemera next created Gaia (Earth), the mother of all life, who gave birth to the sky, the mountains, the sea, and eventually to a pantheon of gods. One of these gods, Prometheus, shaped humans out of mud and gave them the gift of fire. This origin story reflects many significant cultural ideas. One of these is the depiction of a world organized into a hierarchy with gods at the top and humans obligated to honor them.

Traditional Navajo origin stories provide a different view of the organization of the universe. These stories suggested that the world is a set of fourteen stacked “plates” or “platters.” Creation began at the lowest levels and gradually spread to the top. The lower levels contained animals like insects as well as animal-people and bird-people who lived in their own fully-formed worlds with distinct cultures and societies. At the top level, First Man and First Woman eventually emerged and began making preparations for other humans, creating a sweat lodge, hoghan (traditional house), and preparing sacred medicine bundles. During a special ceremony, the first human men and women were formed and they created those who followed.²¹ Like the Greek origin story, the Navajo cosmology explains human identity and emphasizes the debt humans owe to their supernatural ancestors.

The first two chapters of the Biblical Book of Genesis, which is the foundation for both Judaism and Christianity, describe the creation of the world and all living creatures. The exact words vary in different translations, but describe a God responsible for creating the world and everything in it: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The six-day process began with the division of light from darkness, land from water, and heaven from earth. On the fifth day, “God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after

their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.”²² On the sixth day, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”²³ This cosmology differs from the others in describing an act of creation by a single deity, God, but shares with the Greek and Navajo versions a description of creation that emphasizes the relationship between people and their creator.

Reading these cosmologies also raises the question of how they should be interpreted. Are these origin stories regarded as literal truth in the cultures in which they originated? Or, are the stories metaphorical and symbolic? There is no simple answer to this question. Within any culture, individuals may disagree about the nature of their own religious traditions. Christians, for instance, differ in the extent to which they view the contents of the Bible as fact. Cultural relativism requires that anthropologists avoid making judgments about whether any cultural idea, including religious beliefs, is “correct” or “true.” Instead, a more useful approach is to try to understand the multiple ways people interpret or make sense of their religious beliefs. In addition it is important to consider the function a religious cosmology has in the wider society. As Bronislaw Malinowski observed, a myth or origin story is not an “idle tale, but a hard-worked active force.”²⁴

Belief in the Supernatural

Another characteristic shared by most religions is a concept of the supernatural, spirits, divinities, or forces not governed by natural laws. The supernatural can take many forms. Some supernatural entities are **anthropomorphic**, having human characteristics. Other supernatural forces are more generalized, seen in phenomena like the power of the wind. The amount of involvement that super-natural forces or entities have in the lives of humans varies cross-culturally.

Abstract Forces

Many cultures are organized around belief in an impersonal supernatural force, a type of religion known as **animatism**. The idea

of *mana* is one example. The word itself comes from Oceania and may originally have meant “powerful wind,” “lightning” or “storm.” Today, it still refers to power, but in a more general sense. Aram Oroï, a pastor from the Solomon Islands, has compared *mana* to turning on a flashlight: “You sense something powerful but unseen, and then—click—its power is made manifest in the world.”²⁵ Traditionally, the ability to accumulate *mana* in certain locations, or in one’s own body, was to become potent or successful.²⁶ Certain locations such as mountains or ancient sites (*marae*) have particularly strong *mana*. Likewise, individual behaviors, including sexual or violent acts, were traditionally viewed as ways to accumulate *mana* for oneself.

Interestingly, the idea of *mana* has spread far beyond its original cultural context. In 1993, Richard Garfield incorporated the idea in the card game *Magic: The Gathering*. Players of the game, which has sold millions of copies since its introduction, use *mana* as a source of power to battle wizards and magical creatures. *Mana* is also a source of power in the immensely popular computer game *World of Warcraft*.²⁷ These examples do show **cultural appropriation**, the act of copying an idea from another culture and in the process distorting its meaning. However, they also demonstrate how compelling animist ideas about abstract supernatural power are across cultures. Another well-known example of animism in popular culture is “the Force” depicted in the George Lucas *Star Wars* films. The Force is depicted as flowing through everything and is used by Luke Skywalker as a source of potency and insight when he destroys the Death Star.

Spirits

The line between the natural and the supernatural can be blurry. Many people believe that humans have a supernatural or spiritual element that coexists within their natural bodies. In Christianity, this element is called the soul. In Hinduism, it is the *atman*.²⁸ The Tausūg, a group who live in the Philippines, believe that the soul has four parts: a transcendent soul that stays in the spiritual realm even when a person is alive; a life-soul that is attached to the body, but

can move through dreams; the breath, which is always attached to the body, and the spirit-soul, which is like a person's shadow.²⁹

Many people believe that the spirit survives after an individual dies, sometimes remaining on Earth and sometimes departing for a supernatural realm. Spirits, or “ghosts,” who remain on Earth may continue to play an active role in the lives of their families and communities. Some will be well-intentioned and others will be malevolent. Almost universally, spirits of the deceased are assumed to be needy and to make demands on the living. For this reason, many cultures have traditions for the veneration of the dead, rituals intended to honor the deceased, or to win their favor or cooperation. When treated properly, ancestor spirits can be messengers to gods, and can act on behalf of the living **after receiving prayers or requests**. If they are displeased, ancestor spirits can become aggravated and wreak havoc on the living through illness and suffering. To avoid these problems, offerings in the form of favorite foods, drinks, and gifts are made to appease the spirits. In China, as well as in many other countries, **fil-ial piety** requires that the living continue to care for the ancestors. ³⁰ In Madagascar, where bad luck and misfortune can be attributed to spirits of the dead who believe they have been neglected, a body may be repeatedly exhumed and shown respect by cleaning the bones.³¹

If humans contain a supernatural spirit, essence, or soul, it is logical to think that non-human entities may have their own sparks of the divine. Religions based on the idea that plants, animals, inanimate objects, and even natural phenomena like weather have a spiritual or supernatural element are called **animism**. The first

anthropological description of animism came from Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, who believed it was the earliest type of religious practice to develop in human societies. 32 Tylor suggested that ordinary parts of the human experience, such as dreaming, formed the basis for spiritual beliefs. When people dream, they may perceive that they have traveled to another place, or may be able to communicate with deceased members of their families. This sense of altered consciousness gives rise to ideas that the world is more than it seems. Tylor suggested that these experiences, combined with a pressing need to answer questions about the meaning of life, were the basis for all religious systems.³³ He also assumed that animist religions evolved into what he viewed as more sophisticated religious systems involving a God or gods.

Today, Tylor's views about the evolution of religion are considered misguided. No belief system is inherently more sophisticated than another. Several animist religions exist today and have millions of adherents. One of the most well-known is Shintoism, the traditional religion of Japan. Shintoism recognizes spirits known as *kami* that exist in plants, animals, rocks, places and sometimes people. Certain locations have particularly strong connections to the *kami*, including mountains, forests, waterfalls, and shrines. Shinto shrines in Japan are marked by *torii* gates that mark the separation between ordinary reality and sacred space (Figure 4).

Gods

The most powerful non-human spirits are gods, though in practice there is no universal definition of a “god” that would be recognized by all people. In general, gods are extremely powerful and not part of nature—not human, or animal. Despite their unnaturalness, many gods have personalities or qualities that are recognizable and relatable to humans. They are often anthropomorphic, imagined in human form, or **zoomorphic**, imagined in animal form. In some religions, gods interact directly with humans while in others they are more remote.

Anthropologists categorize belief systems organized around a God or gods using the terms mono-theism and polytheism. **Monotheistic** religions recognize a single supreme God. The largest mono-theistic religions in the world today are Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Together these religions have more than 3.8 billion adherents worldwide.³⁴ **Polytheistic** religions include several gods. Hinduism, one of the world’s largest polytheistic religions with more than 1 billion practitioners, has a pantheon of deities each with different capabilities and concerns.³⁵

Rules of Behavior

Religious beliefs are an important element of social control because these beliefs help to define acceptable behaviors as well as punishments, including supernatural consequences, for misbehavior. One well-known example are the ideas expressed in the Ten Commandments, which are incorporated in the teachings of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and prohibit behaviors such as theft, murder, adultery, dishonesty, and jealousy while also emphasizing the need for honor and respect between people. Behavior that violates the commandments brings both social disapproval from other members of the religious community and potential punishment from God.

Buddhism, the world’s fourth largest religion, demonstrates the strong connection between spiritual beliefs and rules for everyday behavior. Buddhists follow the teachings of Buddha, who was an ordinary human who achieved wisdom through study and discipline. There is no God or gods in Buddhism. Instead, individuals

who practice Buddhism use techniques like meditation to achieve the insight necessary to lead a meaningful life and ultimately, after many lifetimes, to achieve the goal of *nirvana*, release from suffering.

Although Buddhism defies easy categorization into any anthropological category, there is an element of animatism represented by *karma*, a moral force in the universe. Individual actions have effects on one's karma. Kindness toward others, for instance, yields positive karma while acts that are disapproved in Buddhist teachings, such as killing an animal, create negative karma. The amount of positive karma a person builds-up in a lifetime is important because it will determine how the individual will be reborn. **Reincarnation**, the idea that a living being can begin another life in a new body after death, is a feature of several religions. In Buddhism, the form of a human's reincarnation depends on the quality of the karma developed during life. Rebirth in a human form is considered good fortune because humans have the ability to control their own thoughts and behaviors. They can follow the Noble Eightfold Path, rules based on the teachings of Buddha that emphasize the need for discipline, restraint, humility, and kindness in every aspect of life. 36

Rituals and Religious Practitioners

The most easily observed elements of any religious belief system are rituals. Victor Turner (1972) defined ritual as “a stereotyped sequence of activities ... performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests.”³⁷ Rituals have a concrete purpose or goal, such as a wedding ritual that results in a religiously sanctioned union between people, but rituals are also symbolic. The objects and activities involved in rituals “stand in for” or mean more than what they actually are. In a wedding ceremony in the United States, the white color of the wedding dress is a traditional symbol of purity.

A large amount of anthropological research has focused on identifying and interpreting religious rituals in a wide variety of

communities. Although the details of these practices differ in various cul-tural settings, it is possible to categorize them into types based on their goals. One type of ritual is a **rite of passage**, a ceremony designed to transition individuals between life stages.³⁸ A second type of ritual is a **rite of intensification**, actions designed to bring a community together, often following a period of crisis.³⁹ **Revitalization rituals**, which also often follow periods of crisis in a community, are ambitious attempts to resolve serious problems, such as war, famine, or poverty through a spiritual or supernatural intervention.⁴⁰

Rites of Passage

In his original description of rites of passage, Arnold Van Gennep (1909) noted that these rituals were carried out in three distinct stages: separation, liminality, and incorporation. During the first stage, individuals are removed from their current social identity and begin preparations to enter the next stage of life. The liminal period that follows is a time in which individuals often undergo tests, trials, or activities designed to prepare them for their new social roles. In the final stage of incorporation, individuals return to the community with a new socially recognized status. ⁴¹

Rites of passage that transition children into a new status as adults are common around the world. In Xhosa communities in South Africa, teenage boys were traditionally transitioned to manhood using a series of acts that moved them through each of the three ritual stages. In the separation stage, the boys leave their homes and are circumcised; they cannot express distress or signs of pain during the procedure. Following the circumcision, they live in isolation while their wounds heal, a liminal phase during which they do not talk to anyone other than boys who are also undergoing the rite of passage. This stressful time helps to build bonds between the boys that will follow them through their lives as adult men. Before their journey home, the isolated living quarters are burned to the ground, symbolizing the loss of childhood. When the participants return to their community, the incorporation phase, they are

recognized as men and allowed to learn the secret stories of the community.⁴²

Rites of Intensification

Rites of intensification are also extremely common in communities worldwide. These rituals are used to bind members of the community together, to create a sense of **communitas** or unity that encourages people to see themselves as members of community. One particularly dramatic example of this ritual is the Nagol [land diving](#) ceremony held each spring on the island of Pentecost in Vanuatu in the South Pacific. Like many rituals, land diving has several goals. One of these is to help ensure a good harvest by impressing the spirits with a dramatic display of bravery. To accomplish this, men from the community construct wooden towers sixty to eighty feet high, tie ropes made from tree vines around their ankles, and jump head-first toward the ground (Figure 5). Preparations for the land diving involve almost every member of the community. Men spend a month or more working together to build the tower and collect the vines. The women of the community prepare special costumes and **Figure 5:** Land Diving on Pentecost Island, Vanuatu. dances for the occasion and everyone takes care of land divers who may be injured during the dive. Both the preparations for the land diving and the festivities that follow are a powerful rite of intensification. Interestingly, the ritual is simultaneously a rite of passage; boys can be recognized as men by jumping from high portions of the tower witnessed by elders of the community.⁴³

Rites of Revitalization

All rites of revitalization originate in difficult or even catastrophic

circumstances. One notable example is a ritual that developed on the island of Tanna in the South Pacific. During World War II, many islands in the South Pacific were used by the U.S. military as temporary bases. Tanna was one of these locations and this formerly isolated community experienced an extremely rapid transformation as the U.S. military introduced modern conveniences such as electricity and automobiles. In an attempt to make sense of these developments, the island's residents developed a variety of theories about the reason for these changes. One possible explanation was that the foreign materials had been given to the islanders by a powerful deity or ancestral spirit, an entity who eventually acquired the name John Frum. The name may be based on a common name the islanders would have encountered while the military base was in operation: "John from America."

When the war ended and the U.S. military departed, the residents of Tanna experienced a kind of trauma as the material goods they had enjoyed disappeared and the [John Frum ritual began](#). Each year on February fifteenth, many of the island's residents construct copies of U.S. airplanes, runways, or towers and march in military formation with replicas of military rifles and American blue jeans. The ritual is intended to attract John Frum, and the material wealth he controls, back to the island. Although the ritual has not yet had its intended transformative effect, the participants continue the ritual. When asked to explain his continued faith, one village elder explained: "You Christians have been waiting 2,000 years for Jesus to return to Earth, and you haven't given up hope."⁴⁴ This John Frum custom is sometimes called a **cargo cult**, a term used to describe rituals that seek to attract material prosperity. Although the John Frum ritual is focused on commodities, or "cargo," the term cargo cult is generally not preferred by anthropologists because it oversimplifies the complex motivations involved in the ritual. The word "cult" also has connotations with fringe or dangerous beliefs and this association also distorts understanding of the practice.

Religious Practitioners

Since rituals can be extremely complicated and the outcome is of vital importance to the community, specialist practitioners are often charged with responsibility for supervising the details. In many settings, religious specialists have a high social status and are treated with great respect. Some may become relatively wealthy by charging for their services while others may be impoverished, some-times deliberately as a rejection of the material world. There is no universal terminology for religious practitioners, but there are three important categories: priests, prophets, and shamans.

Priests, who may be of any gender, are full-time religious practitioners. The position of priest emerges only in societies with substantial occupational specialization. Priests are the intermediaries between God (or the gods) and humans. Religious traditions vary in terms of the qualifications required for individuals entering the priesthood. In Christian traditions, it is common for priests to complete a program of formal higher education. Hindu priests, known as *pujari*, must learn the sacred language Sanskrit and spend many years becoming proficient in Hindu ceremonies. They must also follow strict lifestyle restrictions such as a vegetarian diet. Traditionally, only men from the Brahmin caste were eligible to become *pujari*, but this is changing. Today, people from other castes, as well as women, are joining the priesthood. One notable feature of societies that utilize full-time spiritual practitioners is a separation between ordinary believers and the God or gods. As intermediaries, priests have substantial authority to set the rules associated with worship practice and to control access to religious rites.⁴⁵

The term **shaman** has been used for hundreds of years to refer to a part time religious practitioner. Shamans carry out religious rituals when needed, but also participate in the normal work of the community. A shaman's religious practice depends on an ability to engage in direct communication with the spirits, gods, or supernatural realm. An important quality of a shaman is the ability to transcend normal reality in order to communicate with and perhaps even manipulate supernatural forces in an alternate world.

This ability can be inherited or learned.⁴⁶ Transcending from the ordinary to the spiritual realm gives shamans the ability to do many things such as locate lost people or animals or heal the sick by identifying the spiritual cause of illness.

Among the Chukchi, who live in northern Russia, the role of the shaman is thought to be a special calling, one that may be especially appropriate for people whose personality traits seem abnormal in the context of the community. Young people who suffer from nervousness, anxiety, or moodiness, for example may feel a call to take up shamanistic practice.⁴⁷ There has been some research suggesting that shamanism may be a culturally accepted way to deal with conditions like schizophrenia.⁴⁸ If true, this might be because achieving an altered state of consciousness is essential for shamanic work. Entering an altered state, which can be achieved through dreams, hallucinogenic drugs, rhythmic music, exhaustion through dance, or other means, makes it possible for shamans to directly engage with the supernatural realm.

Shamans of the upper Amazon in South America have been using *ayahuasca*, a drink made from plants that have hallucinogenic effects, for centuries. The effects of *ayahuasca* start with the nervous system: One under the control of the narcotic sees unroll before him quite a spectacle: most lovely landscapes, monstrous animals, vipers which approach and wind down his body or are entwined like rolls of thick cable, at a few centimeters distance; as well, one sees who are true friends and those who betray him or who have done him ill; he observes the cause of the illness which he sustains, at the same time being presented with the most advantageous remedy; he takes part in fantastic hunts; the things which he most dearly loves or abhors acquire in these moments extraordinary vividness and color, and the scenes in which his life normally develop adopt the most beautiful and emotional expression.⁴⁹

Among the Shipibo people of Peru, *ayahuasca* is thought to be the

substance that allows the soul of a shaman to leave his body in order to retrieve a soul that has been lost or stolen. In many cultures, soul loss is the predominant explanation for illness. The Shipibo believe that the soul is a separate entity from the body, one that is capable of leaving and returning at will. Shamans can also steal souls. The community shaman, under the influence of ayahuasca, is able to find and retrieve a soul, perhaps even killing the enemy as revenge.⁵⁰

Anthropologist Scott Hutson (2000) has described similarities between the altered state of consciousness achieved by shamans and the mental states induced during a rave, a large dance party characterized by loud music with repetitive patterns. In a rave, bright lights, exhausting dance, and sometimes the use of hallucinogenic drugs, induce similar psychological effects to shamanic trancing. Hutson argues that through the rave individuals are able to enter altered states of consciousness characterized by a “self-forgetfulness” and an ability to transcend the ordinary self. The DJ at these events is often called a “techno-shaman,” an interesting allusion to the guiding role traditional shamans play in their cultures.⁵¹

A **prophet** is a person who claims to have direct communication with the supernatural realm and who can communicate divine messages to others. Many religious communities originated with prophecies, including Islam which is based on teachings revealed to the prophet Muhammad by God. In Christianity and Judaism, Moses is an example of a prophet who received direct revelations from God. Another example of a historically significant prophet is Joseph Smith who founded the Church of Latter Day Saints, after receiving a prophecy from an angel named Moroni who guided him to the location of a buried set of golden plates. The information from the golden plates became the basis for the Book of Mormon.

The major distinction between a priest and the prophet is the source of their authority. A priest gets his or her authority from the scripture and occupational position in a formally organized religious institution. A prophet derives authority from his or her direct

connection to the divine and ability to convince others of his or her legitimacy through charisma. The kind of insight and guidance prophets offer can be extremely compelling, particularly in times of social upheaval or suffering.

One prophet who had enormous influence was David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians, a schism of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The Branch Davidians were **millenarians**, people who believe that major transformations of the world are imminent. David Koresh was extremely charismatic; he was handsome and an eloquent speaker. He offered refuge and solace to people in need and in the process he preached about the coming of an apocalypse, which he believed would be caused by the intrusion of the United States government on the Branch Davidian's lifestyle. Koresh was so influential that when the United States government did eventually try to enter the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in 1993 to search for illegal weapons, members of the group resisted and exchanged gunfire with federal agents. Eventually, under circumstances that are still disputed, a fire erupted in the compound and eighty-six people, including Koresh, were killed.⁵² Ultimately, the U.S. government helped to fulfill the apocalyptic vision of the group and David Koresh became a martyr. The Branch Davidians evolved into a new group, "Branch, Lord our Righteousness," and today many await Koresh's return.⁵³

CONCLUSION

Religion is of central importance to the lives of people in the majority of the world's cultures; more than eight-in-ten people worldwide identify with a religious group.⁵⁴ However, it is also true that the number of people who say that they have no religious affiliation is growing. There are now about as many people in the world who consider themselves religiously "unaffiliated" as there are Roman Catholics.⁵⁵ This is an important reminder that religions, like culture itself, are highly dynamic and subject to constant changes in interpretation and allegiance. Anthropology offers a unique perspective for the study of religious beliefs, the way

people think about the supernatural, and how the values and behaviors these beliefs inspire contribute to the lives of individuals and communities. No single set of theories or vocabulary can completely capture the richness of the religious diversity that exists in the world today, but cultural anthropology provides a toolkit for understanding the emotional, social, and spiritual contributions that religion makes to the human experience.

discussion questions

1. This chapter describes theories about religion developed by Durkheim, Marx, and Freud. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each theory? Which theory would be the most useful if you were attempting to learn about the religious beliefs of another culture?
2. Rites of passage and rites of intensification are an important part of many religious traditions, but these same rituals also exist in secular (non-religious) contexts. What are some examples of these rituals in your own community? What role do these rituals play in bringing people together?
3. Durkheim argued that a distinction between the sacred and the profane was a key characteristic of religion. Thinking about your own culture, what are some examples of ideas or objects that are considered “sacred”? What are the rules concerning how these objects or ideas should be treated? What are the penalties for people who do not follow these rules?

glossary

Animatism: a religious system organized around a belief in an impersonal supernatural force.

Animism: a religious system organized around a belief that plants, animals, inanimate objects, or natural phenomena have a spiritual or supernatural element.

Anthropomorphic: an object or being that has human characteristics.

Cargo cult: a term sometimes used to describe rituals that seek to attract material prosperity. The term is generally not preferred by anthropologists.

Collective effervescence: the passion or energy that arises when groups of people share the same thoughts and emotions.

Cosmology: an explanation for the origin or history of the world.

Cultural appropriation: the act of copying an idea from another culture and in the process distort-ing its meaning.

Filial piety: a tradition requiring that the young provide care for the elderly and in some cases an-cestral spirits.

Magic: practices intended to bring supernatural forces under one's personal control.

Millenarians: people who believe that major transformations of the world are imminent.

Monotheistic: religious systems that recognize a single supreme God.

Polytheistic: religious systems that recognize several gods.

Priests: full-time religious practitioners.

Profane: objects or ideas are ordinary and can be treated with disregard or contempt.

Prophet: a person who claims to have direct communication with the supernatural realm and who can communicate divine messages to others.

Reincarnation: the idea that a living being can begin another life in a new body after death.

Religion: the extension of human society and culture to include the supernatural.

Revitalization rituals: attempts to resolve serious problems, such as war, famine or poverty through a spiritual or supernatural intervention.

Rite of intensification: actions designed to bring a community together, often following a period of crisis.

Rite of passage: a ceremony designed to transition individuals between life stages.

Sacred: objects or ideas are set apart from the ordinary and treated with great respect or care.

Shaman: a part time religious practitioner who carries out religious rituals when needed, but also participates in the normal work of the community.

Sorcerer: an individual who seeks to use magic for his or her own purposes.

Supernatural: describes entities or forces not governed by natural laws.

Zoomorphic: an object or being that has animal characteristics.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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28. Chapter 4: Gender and Sexuality Study Guide

Gender and Sexuality

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Agta (cultural group)
- Aka (cultural group)
- Androgyny
- Bemba (cultural group)
- Binary model of gender
- Biologic sex
- Biological determinism
- Candomblé
- Cisgender
- Dyad
- Dyads
- Extended family
- Foragers
- Gender
- Gender ideology
- Heteronormativity
- Hijra (cultural group)
- Intersex
- Lahu (cultural group)
- Legitimizing ideologies
- Marriage
- Masculinity studies

- Matrifocal
 - Matrilineal
 - Matrilocal
 - Na (cultural group)
 - Non-binary gender system
 - Nsaw (cultural group)
 - Patriarchy Patrifocal Patrilineal
 - Patrilocal
 - Polygyny
 - Purdah
 - Sambia (cultural group)
 - Status
 - Third gender
 - Transgender
 - Warriors
 - Zuni (cultural group)
-

29. Chapter 5: Race and Ethnicity Study Guide

Race and Ethnicity

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Acculturation
- Amalgamation
- Assimilation
- Blumenbach
- Boas
- Brazil: official categories of “race”
- Burakumin (cultural group)
- Chukchi (cultural group)
- Cline
- Cultural markers of ethnicity
- Epicanthic eye fold
- Eta (cultural group)
- Ethnic group
- Ethnicity
- Ethnogenesis
- Genetic variation
- Hypodescent
- Jim Crow
- Lactose intolerance
- Linnaeus
- Malaria
- Multiculturalism

- Nonconcordant
- OMB Directive 15
- One-drop rule
- Pardo
- Pigmentocracy
- Race
- Racial categories and labels are socially constructed
- Racial formation
- Reification San (cultural group)
- Sickle-cell anemia
- Skin color and latitude
- Social races
- Socially constructed
- Symbolic ethnicity
- Taxonomy
- Tipos
- Vitamin D
- White privilege

30. Chapter 6: Religion Study Guide

Religion

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Atman
- Animatism
- Animism
- Anthropomorphic
- Ayahuasca
- Buddhism
- Cargo cult
- Collective effervescence
- Communitas
- Cosmology
- Cultural appropriation
- Filial piety
- Freud
- Geertz
- Gmelch
- Harris
- Hinduism
- Islam
- John Frum
- Kami
- Karma
- Kula ring

- Madagascar
 - Magic
 - Malinowski
 - Mana
 - Marx
 - Millenarians
 - Monotheistic
 - Nagal (cultural group)
 - Navajo (cultural group)
 - Nirvana
 - Polytheistic
 - Priest
 - Profane
 - Prophet
 - Reincarnation
 - Religion
 - Religious ideology
 - Revitalization rituals
 - Rite of intensification
 - Rite of passage
 - Sacred
 - Shaman
 - Sorcerer
 - Supernatural
 - Totemic religious system
 - Trobriand Islanders (cultural group)
 - van Gennep
 - Xhosa (cultural group)
 - Zoomorphic
-

31. Virtual Field Trip: Two-Spirits

Virtual Field Trip: Two-Spirits

Native Americans traditionally assign no moral gradient to love or sexuality; a person was judged for their contributions to their tribe and for their character. It was also a custom for parents to not interfere with nature and so among some tribes, children wore gender-neutral clothes until they reached an age where they decided for themselves which path they would walk and the appropriate ceremonies followed. The Two Spirit people in pre-contact Native America were highly revered and families that included them were considered lucky. Indians believed that a person who was able to see the world through the eyes of both genders at the same time was a gift from The Creator. Traditionally, Two Spirit people held positions within their tribes that earned them great respect, such as Medicine Men/Women, shamans, visionaries, mystics, conjurers, keepers of the tribe's oral traditions, conferrers of lucky names for children and adults (it has been said that Crazy Horse received his name from a Winkte), nurses during war expeditions, cooks, matchmakers and marriage counselors, jewelry/feather regalia makers, potters, weavers, singers/artists in addition to adopting orphaned children and tending to the elderly. Female-bodied Two Spirits were hunters, warriors, engaged in what was typically men's work and by all accounts, were always fearless. ([Indian Country Media Network, Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders](#))

-

[Drawing of a group of Indians in traditional dress dancing.](#)

[Two Native Americans sitting side by side in a black and white photo.](#)

[Man in aboriginal dress playing a didgeridoo.](#)

[Two American Indian men sitting closely together.](#)

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Website

- Website: [Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders](#)
For European settlers the Original Peoples way of life was perplexing, including the the Two Spirits tradition

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

In addition to the required resources, choose one of these topics to dive deeper. Use these links, to learn more about your topic:

People

- Article: [We'Wha the Revered Zuni Man-Woman](#)
- Movie: Two-Spirits

Two Spirit Powwow

- Video: [Largest Two-Spirit Pow Wow in the Nation](#)
- Video: [Two great Vids Sharing Two-Spirit Pride](#) Powwows.com
- Video: [BAAITS Two-Spirit Powwow Grand Entry 2016](#)
- Video: [2017 San Manuel Powwow – Sweetheart Couple, Two Spirit](#), FNX Native Television
Meet Sean Synder (Navajo & Southern Ute) and Adrian Matthias Stevens (Shoshone Bannock, Ute, Apache), who entertained the crowd at the San Manuel Powwow during the sweethearts couple performance.
- Video: [Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist](#), AJ+
“Two-spirit” is how some Native Americans describe people whose gender identity doesn’t fit as strictly male or female. Meet Ty DeFoe, who’s using traditional dance to take this gender identity back from the negative connotations established during colonization.

32. Virtual Field Trip: The Ainu, Japan

Virtual Field Trip: The Ainu, Japan

The indigenous people of northern Japan call themselves Ainu, meaning “people?” or “humans?” in their language. Recent DNA evidence suggests that the Ainu are the direct descendants of the ancient Jomon people who inhabited Japan as early as 12,000 years ago. Astonishingly, the Jomon culture existed in Japan for some 10,000 years, and today many artistic traditions of the Ainu seem to have evolved from the ancestral Jomon. As such, this artistic continuum represents one of the oldest ongoing cultural traditions in the world spanning at least ten millennia. – Lars Krutak, [Tattooing Among Japan’s Ainu People](#)

Select an image to view larger:

- [Ainu man and woman with a bear skin.](#) -
- [An Ainu family - husband wife and child.](#) -
- [A gathering of people in a ceremony.](#) -
- [Ainu woman with a tattoo on her mouth.](#)
- [Ainu man outside his house.](#) -
- [An Ainu woman playing a large wooden instrument.](#)
-
- [Modern Ainu man in traditional dress.](#)
- [Ainu couple seated under a cover around a smoking fire pit, surrounded by people in a mix of modern and traditional dress, one man playing guitar.](#)

The practice of modifying one’s body by marking it has been present from ancient times. And the evidences of tattoo practice are scattered worldwide. Here the question arise

what made people think of marking their body? Tattoo in many indigenous community is a part of their culture and it is done on men, women and sometimes on the children too, but they signify a different meaning to the different members of the society. Tattoo is often associated with spirituality, power, and gender. Therefore, to trace back the necessity of marking the body could be possibly for gaining control over something through a symbol that is tattoo and it is done on the body as body is the only thing that we own, therefore the marks that are tattooed in the body is the symbol of owning something. In tribal community tattoos are done after puberty as the symbol of being sexually matured or sometime after achieving some certain ranks in the society in case of men, and often married women are marked by tattoo as a symbol of marriage.”

-Archita Dey and Kaustav Das, Department of Anthropology University of Calcutta, from *Why We Tattoo? Exploring the Motivation and Meaning*

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Websites

- Website: [Ainu, Spirit of a Northern People](#) (requires Flash)
- Video: [AINU: Indigenous People of Japan](#), United Nations
- Website: [Lars Krutak, Tattoo Anthropologist](#)

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

In addition to the required resources, choose one of these topics to dive deeper. Use these links, to learn more about your topic:

History and Culture

- Website: [Ainu Museum: History and Culture](#)
- Website: NOVA [Island of the Spirits: Origins of the Ainu](#)
- Website: NOVA: [Island of the Spirits: Ainu Legends](#)
- Article: [Japan: Ainu recognized as indigenous people](#) Global Voices
- Video: [The Ainu People of Japan](#) Older educational film of unknown origin – Ainu women talking about her people, showing customs and music

Tattoos

- Slideshow: [Looking at the World's Tattoos](#), Smithsonian Magazine
- Images: [Indigenous Tattooing, Dion Kaszaz](#) Galleries of Indigenous Tattoos, and tattoo practices

33. Virtual Field Trip: Cultural Appropriation

Virtual Field Trip: Cultural Appropriation

People and cultures have always exchanged and borrowed ideas from each other to create new forms of art and symbolic expression. Whether intentionally or not, most if not all human creations reflect varied sources of inspiration.

Why, then, are some products negatively labeled “cultural appropriation” or their creators accused of disrespecting the very cultures they found inspiring? And why do products inspired from Indigenous cultural heritage seem to spark particularly strong reactions and pushback? ([Think Before You Appropriate](#))

- [Child in a costume depicting a native American.](#)

- [A photograph of singer Jonsi performing at Coachella in what appears to be Native American headdress.](#)

[Cartoon of a stereotyped Indian.](#)

[Actor Mickey Rooney portraying a Japanese man by wearing a bandana and squinting his eyes, and showing his teeth.](#)

[Poster with heading Wm. H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee with 2 drawings of an actor one without makeup, and one in Blackface. The caption reads Billy Van. The Monologue Comedian.](#)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- e-Book: [Think Before you appropriate Things to know and questions to ask in order to avoid misappropriating Indigenous cultures](#), A guide for creators and designers
- Article: [The do's, don'ts, maybes, and I-don't-knows of cultural appropriation](#).

Choose ONE and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of these two topics.

Use the suggested links below to explore your topic more deeply or select your own [scholarly resources](#):

Arts

- Website: [Inspired Natives: Not Native Inspired](#), Eighth Generation: Through the Inspired Natives Project, Eighth Generation creates opportunities for cultural artists who, like Louie a short 8 years ago, struggle to meet demand for their handmade cultural art.

Fashion

- Article: [the critical fashion lover's \(basic\) guide to cultural appropriation](#)
- Article: [Native Fashion Now](#), Portland Art Museum
- Article: [Why the 'Native' Fashion Trend is Pissing Off Real Native Americans](#), Collectors Weekly

Costumes

- Video: [Japanese Women Try On Geisha Halloween Costumes](#)
- Article: [Clown Costumes Banned, Racist Native American Costumes Still OK?](#) Indian Country Today

Sports

- Article: [Who Made that Redskins Logo?](#) New York Times Magazine
- Article: [The Cleveland Indians' Logo Is Changing After Decades Of Debate](#) Study Breaks
- Article: [Cleveland Indians Will Abandon Chief Wahoo Logo Next Year](#) New York Times

Entertainment

Article: [When white actors play other races](#), BBC Culture

34. Virtual Field Trip: Coming of Age Ceremonies

Where do you want to go?

Virtual Field Trip: Coming of Age Ceremonies

How did you know when you were an ‘adult?’ Does your culture have a way to mark the transition from being a child . . . to being an adult with adult responsibilities?

Explore this great overview of coming of age ceremonies in cultures around the world [13 Amazing Coming of Age Ceremonies Around the World](#) as the transition from childhood to adulthood is marked and celebrated as a community.

Then, choose one of the two ceremonies below for your Field Trip, to explore a coming of age ceremony more deeply! [map showing locations of Apache people across Arizona and New Mexico](#)

- [The scars designed to look like crocodile skin on a tribesman's back](#)

- [The scars designed to look like crocodile skin on a tribesman's back](#)

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Resources

- Article: [13 Amazing Coming of Age Ceremonies Around the World](#), Global Citizen

Choose A Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose ONE of these two topics.

Use the suggested links below to explore your topic more deeply or select your own **[scholarly resources](#)**:

Apache Nai'és Ceremony (Woman's Coming of Age Ceremony)

- Article: [Apache Puberty Rites: 6 Girls Attain Womanhood](#) Indian Country Today
- Website: [White Mountain Apache Tribe](#)
- Article: [An Apache dance into Womanhood](#), AZ Central
- Website: [Mescalero Apache Tribe, Culture](#)
- Website: [Yavapai Apache Nation: History](#)
- Website: [Fort Sill Apache Tribe, Oklahoma](#)

Kaningara Skin Cutting Ritual (Man's Coming of Age Ceremony)

- Article: [Making Boys Into Men: Kaningara Skin-Cutting Ritual](#)
- Video: [Crocodile Scars](#) National Geographic (contains graphic

images)

35. Virtual Field Trip: Indigenous Dances of North and South America

Virtual Field Trip: Indigenous Dances of North and South America

Music and dance have always been essential to the spiritual, cultural, and social lives of Native peoples. Unique forms of ritual, ceremonial, and social dancing remain a vital part of contemporary community life. Everywhere dance is found, it is accompanied by distinctive Native musical styles. Rich music and dance traditions create strong ties that bind American Indian communities to all living things, to the earth, spirit world, and—when people have deep ancestral claims to their dances—to the past. ([National Museum of the American Indian: Circle of Dance](#)).
[Woman in a blue feathered Aztek Headdress.](#)

-

[A photograph of four men in Indian regalia at a powwow.](#)

-

[Cartoon of a stereotyped Indian.](#)

[Man in feathered Indian regalia dances.](#)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Website: [Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian: Circle of Dance](#)
Circle of Dance presents Native dance as a vibrant, meaningful, and diverse form of cultural expression. Featuring ten social and ceremonial dances from throughout the Americas, the exhibition illuminates the significance of each dance and highlights the unique characteristics of its movements and music.
- Article: [An Evolving Ritual](#), Smithsonian,
The National Powwow showcases a mixture of tradition and competition.

Pow Wow

- Website: [Powwows.com](#)
Online community for Native American Tribes, Native American History, Pow Wows, Native American Culture, Native American Music and Native American Art. Pow Wows are the Native American people's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships, and making new ones. This is a time method to renew Native American culture and preserve the rich heritage of American Indians.
 - [Dance Styles](#)

- [Watch Powwows online](#)
- Video: [Community Members Tell Why We Dance](#)
- Video: [Oglala Lakota Nation Powwow](#), National Geographic
- Video: [Making Regalia](#)
It's the premier edition of Making Regalia with your host, Juaquin Lonelodge. Juaquin is a former national Men's Fancy Dance champion and master regalia craftsman. Join him as he takes you step by step through the processes of Making Regalia!
- Article: [Nelly Furtado's "Big Hoops" Video: Native Dancers Represent!](#)

36. Virtual Field Trip: Toward a Deeper Understanding of Refugees: Past and Present

Virtual Field Trip: Toward a Deeper Understanding of Refugees: Past and Present

We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.

An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

There are also 10 million stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

In a world where nearly 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution, our work at UNHCR is more important than ever before.”

-UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency_

[Large group of people in colorful traditional clothing gathered together.](#)

- [Large group of people walking, escorted by police.](#)

[Long line of people walking along a small river some carrying umbrellas.](#)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Video: [The UN Refugee Agency: Our Story](#)
- Video: [The Island of Tears](#) this video shows the experience of refugees and aid workers, cross cultural cooperation
- Simulation: [Asylum, Exit Australia](#) (requires Flash)

United Nations

- Website: United Nations
 - [Global Issues: Refugees](#)
- Website: [UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency](#)
 - [Study finds refugee businesses play vital role in community,](#)
 - [Videos](#)

United States

- Website: [United States Refugee Information](#)

Arizona

- Website: [Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program](#) Arizona

Department of Economic Security

- Article: [African refugee family makes the most of new life in Tucson](#) Arizona Daily Star
- Article: [Lost Boys of Sudan find home in Tucson](#), Arizona Daily Sun

37. Virtual Field Trip: Know Your Sources

KNOW YOUR SOURCES

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING SOURCES

When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From tweets to newspaper articles, this tool provides a brief description of each and breaks down 6 factors of what to consider when selecting a source.

Tweets

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics that enables brief dialogue between distinct groups of people across geographic, political, cultural and economic boundaries.

Tumblr blog

An avenue for sharing both developed and unpolished ideas and interests with a niche community with relative ease.

Youtube video

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos that are shared rapidly and widely.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed of daily events, sports, and current news. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Popular magazine

A glossy compilation of informative, entertaining stories with unique themes intended for a specific interests—or lifestyles—from celebrities to gardening to gaming.

Professional journal

A collection of work-related articles that keep professionals up-to-date on the latest trends, breakthroughs and controversies in their field.

Scholarly journal

A collection of analytic reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

A book in which the information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author, and the editor pulls them all together into a whole. Often these types of books have a narrow and specific focus.

Encyclopedia

A book or set of books giving information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject. Some are intended as an entry point into research for a general audience, some provide detailed information. Most list relevant books and articles for further information on a topic.

TOTAL NUMBER PUBLISHED PER DAY

When an idea can be published quickly, we end up with many ideas that we have to sift through before we find what we're looking for. As the selectivity of a medium increases, the value and uniqueness of the contribution typically increases too. However, on the flip side,

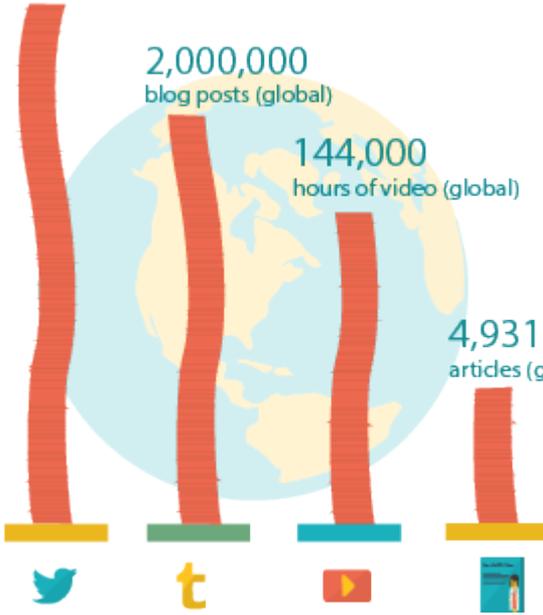
when the selectivity increases, fewer diverse ideas or voices may be published.

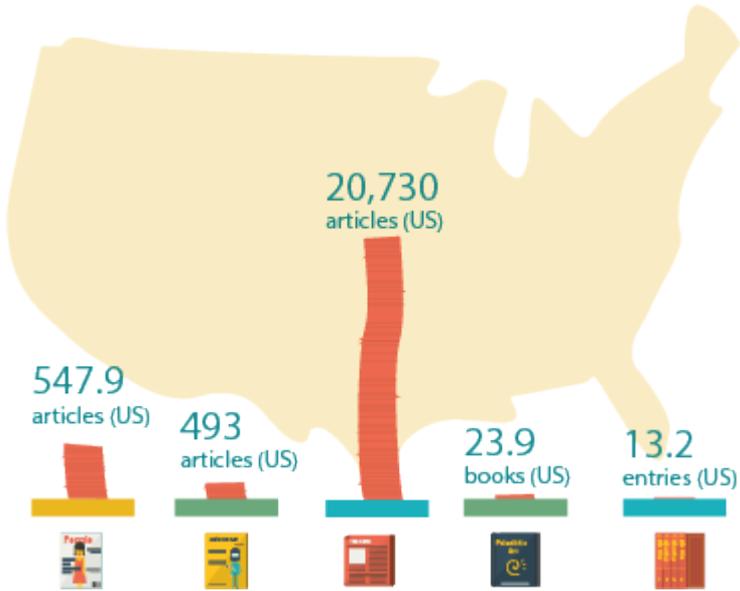
500,000,000
tweets (global)

2,000,000
blog posts (global)

144,000
hours of video (global)

4,931
articles (global)





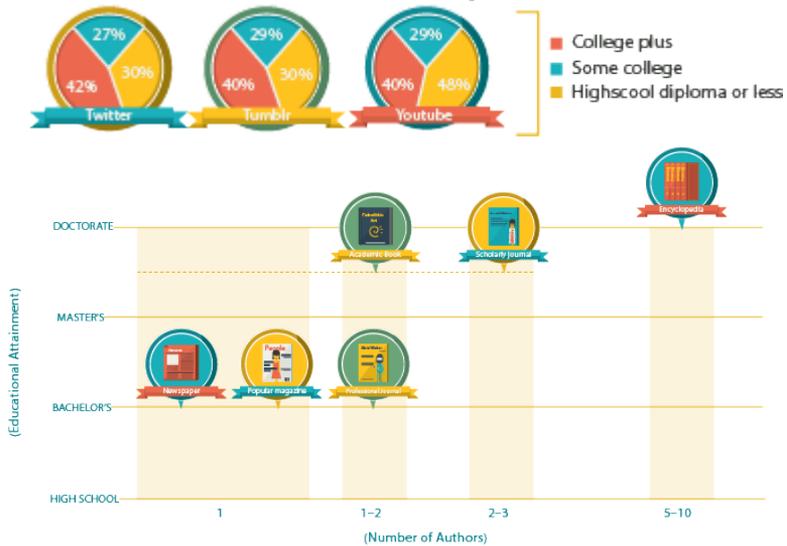
DEGREE OF SCRUTINY BEFORE A SOURCE IS PUBLISHED

Two factors contribute to the amount of scrutiny that a source receives before it might be published: The **number of reviewers** fact-checking the written ideas and the **total time** spent by reviewers as they fact-check the ideas. The more people pulled into the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Youtube, tumblr and twitter enable dialogue with outside “reviewers” after an idea has been published. The comments section of a Youtube video might receive hundreds of comments from outside voices.

DEGREE OF AUTHOR EDUCATION

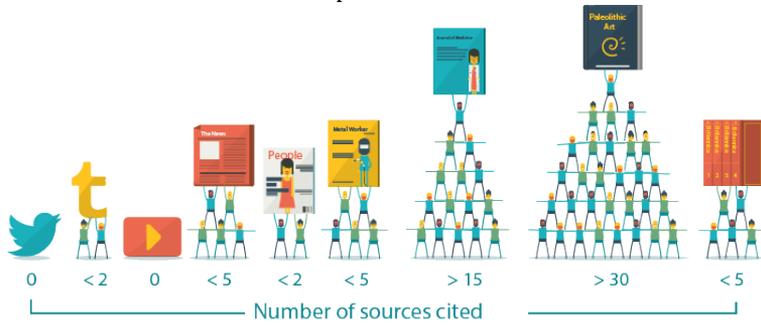
One factor contributing to the amount of knowledge used to produce a source is the **number of authors** collaborating on the article. When more people contribute their viewpoints or ideas to the writing, the quality and breadth are likely strengthened. A second factor to consider is the **number of years of formal education** that the author(s) received prior to writing the article. The more combined education that the authors have, the more knowledgeable we can assume the team of authors to be. What other factors can contribute to author expertise?



NUMBER OF OUTSIDE SOURCES

When an author pulls many outside sources into her writing, she demonstrates familiarity with ideas beyond her own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more

comprehensive and reliable. Below, we show the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.



15, Academic books: >30, Encyclopedias: <5." width="703" height="298">

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER SOURCE

When an source uses more words to convey its points, those words are likely used to document a more thorough, well-reasoned argument that is better supported with existing research or past claims. Below, you will find the typical number of words used by an author when expressing ideas in each source.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Every source makes some assumptions about the reader's knowledge of the subject. The level of technical words and ideas rises when the author is targeting readers in a niche field. In advanced sources, the reader can expect the information and writing to go beyond the basics. When the author is writing for a general audience, terms are typically defined and background

information is provided to make the content understandable to an average reader. Here, we convey the typical level of knowledge assumed by authors for each type of source.

DATA SOURCES

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- Calcagno, V., Demoinet, E., Gollner, K., Guidi, L., Ruths, D. and de Mazancourt, C. (2012, November 23). Flows of Research Manuscripts Among Scientific Journals Reveal Hidden Submission Patterns. *Science*: 338.
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[Images/En/Peer_review_process.gif](#)

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2007 Annual Report. The Andrew Mellon Foundation. <http://www.mellon.org/about/annual-reports/2007-scholarly-publishing-initiatives/>

- WebWire. (2012). Trade Publications by Industry. <https://www.webwire.com/IndustryList.asp>

38. Virtual Field Trip Essay - Assignment

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Website

- Website: [Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders](#)
For European settlers the Original Peoples way of life was perplexing, including the the Two Spirits tradition

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

In addition to the required resources, choose one of these topics to dive deeper. Use these links, to learn more about your topic:

People

- Article: [We'Wha the Revered Zuni Man-Woman](#)
- Movie: Two-Spirits

Two Spirit Powwow

- Video: [Largest Two-Spirit Pow Wow in the Nation](#)
- Video: [Two great Vids Sharing Two-Spirit Pride](#) Powwows.com
- Video: [BAAITS Two-Spirit Powwow Grand Entry 2016](#)
- Video: [2017 San Manuel Powwow – Sweetheart Couple, Two Spirit](#), FNX Native Television
Meet Sean Synder (Navajo & Southern Ute) and Adrian Matthias Stevens (Shoshone Bannock, Ute, Apache), who entertained the crowd at the San Manuel Powwow during the sweethearts couple performance.
- Video: [Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist](#), AJ+
“Two-spirit” is how some Native Americans describe people whose gender identity doesn’t fit as strictly male or female. Meet Ty DeFoe, who’s using traditional dance to take this

gender identity back from the negative connotations established during colonization.

Instructions

Welcome to the Module Two “virtual field trip” assignment! As with the previous field trip, it consists of a visit to online websites and articles – but this one has a new twist:

As you write up your “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned – you will also be asked to compare and contrast this culture and topic with the **one you studied in your first Field Trip** (or another option from Field Trip One). This is part of the holistic and comparative approach used by anthropologists: As we see similarities between cultures, we also see what makes each culture unique.

1. Choose one of the Field Trip Options to visit for your field trip.
 - Look at the weblinks and articles that are listed. Explore all the areas of the website(s).
 - Listen to interviews and watch videos, if available.
2. Once you have finished your Field Trip, write up your Field Trip Essay to submit as a Discussion post by the date listed in the Syllabus.
 - Write a 350-word essay, with two internal citations and a Bibliography.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your Field Trip, and include the name of at least one source you visited in the Field Trip Option – a website or an article (add the internal citation!).

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following two areas in your essay, to share what you learned during your Field

Trip assignment. Each of these should be at least one paragraph (6-7 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 - Compare AND contrast what you have learned about this culture/topic with one other culture/topic you have studied in this class. Be sure to explain at least one similarity AND one difference between the two cultures/topics.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip options, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Websites

- Website: [Ainu, Spirit of a Northern People](#) (requires Flash)
- Video: [AINU: Indigenous People of Japan](#), United Nations
- Website: [Lars Krutak, Tattoo Anthropologist](#)

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

In addition to the required resources, choose one of these topics to dive deeper. Use these links, to learn more about your topic:

History and Culture

- Website: [Ainu Museum: History and Culture](#)

- Website: NOVA [Island of the Spirits: Origins of the Ainu](#)
- Website: NOVA: [Island of the Spirits: Ainu Legends](#)
- Article: [Japan: Ainu recognized as indigenous people](#) Global Voices
- Video: [The Ainu People of Japan](#) Older educational film of unknown origin – Ainu women talking about her people, showing customs and music

Tattoos

- Slideshow: [Looking at the World's Tattoos](#), Smithsonian Magazine
- Images: [Indigenous Tattooing, Dion Kaszaz](#) Galleries of Indigenous Tattoos, and tattoo practices

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Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- e-Book: [Think Before you Appropriate Things to know and questions to ask in order to avoid misappropriating Indigenous cultures](#), A guide for creators and designers
- Article: [The do's, don'ts, maybes, and I-don't-knows of cultural appropriation.](#)

Choose ONE and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of these two topics.

Use the suggested links below to explore your topic more deeply or select your own [scholarly resources](#):

Arts

- Website: [Inspired Natives: Not Native Inspired](#), Eighth Generation: Through the Inspired Natives Project, Eighth Generation creates opportunities for cultural artists who, like Louie a short 8 years ago, struggle to meet demand for their handmade cultural art.

Fashion

- Article: [the critical fashion lover's \(basic\) guide to cultural appropriation](#)
- Article: [Native Fashion Now](#), Portland Art Museum
- Article: [Why the 'Native' Fashion Trend is Pissing Off Real Native Americans](#), Collectors Weekly

Costumes

- Video: [Japanese Women Try On Geisha Halloween Costumes](#)
- Article: [Clown Costumes Banned, Racist Native American Costumes Still OK?](#) Indian Country Today

Sports

- Article: [Who Made that Redskins Logo?](#) New York Times Magazine
- Article: [The Cleveland Indians' Logo Is Changing After Decades Of Debate](#) Study Breaks
- Article: [Cleveland Indians Will Abandon Chief Wahoo Logo Next Year](#) New York Times

Entertainment

- Article: [When white actors play other races](#), BBC Culture

Instructions

Welcome to the Module Two “virtual field trip” assignment! As with the previous field trip, it consists of a visit to online websites and articles – but this one has a new twist:

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 - Look at the weblinks and articles that are listed. Explore all the areas of the website(s).
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1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 - Compare AND contrast what you have learned about this culture/topic with one other culture/topic you have studied in this class. Be sure to explain at least one similarity AND one difference between the two cultures/topics.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip options, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

Your Field Guide

Explore the Required Resources

- Article: [13 Amazing Coming of Age Ceremonies Around the](#)

[World](#), Global Citizen

Choose A Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose ONE of these two topics.

Use the suggested links below to explore your topic more deeply or select your own [scholarly resources](#):

Apache Nai'ees Ceremony (Woman's Coming of Age Ceremony)

- Article: [Apache Puberty Rites: 6 Girls Attain Womanhood](#) Indian Country Today
- Website: [White Mountain Apache Tribe](#)
- Article: [An Apache dance into Womanhood](#), AZ Central
- Website: [Mescalero Apache Tribe, Culture](#)
- Website: [Yavapai Apache Nation: History](#)
- Website: [Fort Sill Apache Tribe, Oklahoma](#)

Kaningara Skin Cutting Ritual (Man's Coming of Age Ceremony)

- Article: [Making Boys Into Men: Kaningara Skin-Cutting Ritual](#)
- Video: [Crocodile Scars](#) National Geographic (contains graphic images)

Instructions

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As you write up your “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned – you will also be asked to compare and contrast this culture and topic with the **one you studied in your first Field Trip** (or another option from Field Trip One). This is part of the holistic and comparative approach used by anthropologists: As we see similarities between cultures, we also see what makes each culture unique.

1. Choose one of the Field Trip Options to visit for your field trip.

- Look at the weblinks and articles that are listed. Explore all the areas of the website(s).
 - Listen to interviews and watch videos, if available.
2. Once you have finished your Field Trip, write up your Field Trip Essay to submit as a Discussion post by the date listed in the Syllabus.
- Write a 350-word essay, with two internal citations and a Bibliography.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your Field Trip, and include the name of at least one source you visited in the Field Trip Option – a website or an article (add the internal citation!).

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following two areas in your essay, to share what you learned during your Field Trip assignment. Each of these should be at least one paragraph (6-7 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 - Compare AND contrast what you have learned about this culture/topic with one other culture/topic you have studied in this class. Be sure to explain at least one similarity AND one difference between the two cultures/topics.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip options, and one from our text readings for this module.

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- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Website: [Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian: Circle of Dance](#)
Circle of Dance presents Native dance as a vibrant, meaningful, and diverse form of cultural expression. Featuring ten social and ceremonial dances from throughout the Americas, the exhibition illuminates the significance of each dance and highlights the unique characteristics of its movements and music.
- Article: [An Evolving Ritual](#), Smithsonian,
The National Powwow showcases a mixture of tradition and competition.

Pow Wow

- Website: [Powwows.com](#)
Online community for Native American Tribes, Native American History, Pow Wows, Native American Culture, Native American Music and Native American Art. Pow Wows are the Native American people's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships, and making new ones. This is a time method to renew Native American culture and preserve the rich heritage of American Indians.
 - [Dance Styles](#)
 - [Watch Powwows online](#)

- Video: [Community Members Tell Why We Dance](#)
- Video: [Oglala Lakota Nation Powwow](#), National Geographic
- Video: [Making Regalia](#)

It's the premier edition of Making Regalia with your host, Juaquin Lonelodge. Juaquin is a former national Men's Fancy Dance champion and master regalia craftsman. Join him as he takes you step by step through the processes of Making Regalia!

- Article: [Nelly Furtado's "Big Hoops" Video: Native Dancers Represent!](#)

Instructions

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1. Choose one of the Field Trip Options to visit for your field trip.
 - Look at the weblinks and articles that are listed. Explore all the areas of the website(s).
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 - Write a 350-word essay, with two internal citations and a Bibliography.

Essay Requirements

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- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites below to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

- Video: [The UN Refugee Agency: Our Story](#)

- Video: [The Island of Tears](#) this video shows the experience of refugees and aid workers, cross cultural cooperation
- Simulation: [Asylum, Exit Australia](#) (requires Flash)

United Nations

- Website: United Nations
 - [Global Issues: Refugees](#)
- Website: [UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency](#)
 - [Study finds refugee businesses play vital role in community,](#)
 - [Videos](#)

United States

- Website: [United States Refugee Information](#)

Arizona

- Website: [Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program](#) Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Article: [African refugee family makes the most of new life in Tucson](#) Arizona Daily Star
- Article: [Lost Boys of Sudan find home in Tucson,](#) Arizona Daily Sun

Instructions

Welcome to the Module Two “virtual field trip” assignment! As with the previous field trip, it consists of a visit to online websites and articles – but this one has a new twist:

As you write up your “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned – you will also be asked to compare and contrast this culture and topic with the **one you studied in your first Field Trip** (or another option from Field Trip One). This is part of the holistic and comparative approach used by

anthropologists: As we see similarities between cultures, we also see what makes each culture unique.

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 - Look at the weblinks and articles that are listed. Explore all the areas of the website(s).
 - Listen to interviews and watch videos, if available.
2. Once you have finished your Field Trip, write up your Field Trip Essay to submit as a Discussion post by the date listed in the Syllabus.
 - Write a 350-word essay, with two internal citations and a Bibliography.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your Field Trip, and include the name of at least one source you visited in the Field Trip Option – a website or an article (add the internal citation!).

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following two areas in your essay, to share what you learned during your Field Trip assignment. Each of these should be at least one paragraph (6-7 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information about the topic.
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Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip options, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

39. Virtual Field Trip Essay - Discussion

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip options, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and post a comment to **two peers** (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

40. Semester Research Project Instructions

This assignment is your opportunity to more deeply explore an indigenous or other “non-Western” culture or group. You are encouraged to “follow your own path” in research! There are two parts to this assignment, due in two different modules (check the Schedule of Work for due dates):

- Module 2: Semester Research Project Proposal
- Module 4: Semester Research Project Essay

Module 2: Proposal

How do professional anthropologists “follow their own path” when starting original research? They begin by creating a proposal outlining the type of research they want to pursue when they do field work.

The Semester Research Project Study Proposal is your first step in the Semester Research Project assignment. Check the Schedule of Work for due date.

Instructions

- Choose a cultural group, a topic, and two anthropological concepts from the lists below. You may choose other groups, topics, or concepts, but they must be approved by the instructor.
- Conduct preliminary research on the cultural group, topic,

concepts, and outside [scholarly resources](#). See your librarian for research help, and consult the text for the concepts.

Write a 150-word, one to two paragraph overview of your ideas, for your research. Your proposal should include:

- the culture you will study,
- the topic you will investigate,
- two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, citing our text) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and,
- one outside source you can use in your research (give the name and author of the source, and include internal citation).
- At the end, add a bibliography listing both sources, and any others you choose to use.

Your proposal should include:

- two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, **citing our text**) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and,
- one outside source you can use in your research (include internal citation),
- bibliography listing both sources, and any others you choose to use.

Cultural Groups

- Agta (Philippines)
- Ainu (Japan)
- Diné/Navajo (U.S. southwest)
- Dinka (Africa) Hadza (Africa)
- !Kung San (also called Ju/hoansi) (Kalahari Desert, Africa)
- Maasai (Africa)
- Maori (New Zealand)
- Maya (southern Mexico, Central America)

- Mbuti (also called Mbuti Pygmies, or Ba Mbuti) (Africa)
- Munduruku (Amazon, South America)
- Nuer (Africa)
- O'dham (Sonoran desert, U.S. and Mexico)
- Quiché (Peru/Bolivia, South America)
- Sámi (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia)
- Yanomami (Amazon, South America) Yaqui (Sonoran desert, U.S. and Mexico)

You may select another non-Western or indigenous group from your textbook. If you choose another group, you need to email your instructor for approval.

Topics

Think broadly about what topic you would like to investigate!

Suggested topics include:

- Artistic practices
- Beliefs (may be separate from religious ideology)
- Clothing styles
- Death/Funerary Customs
- Gender
- Indigenous rights issues
- Kinship
- Marriage practices
- Religion
- Ritual
- Socio-political organization

If you choose another topic, you need to email your instructor for approval.

Anthropological Concepts

“Anthropological concepts” are ideas we use in anthropology that help us understand what we see – like ritual, tribe, gender, etc. Here is a list of some anthropological concepts that may be useful to you.

Use the definition and theory of the concept from the textbook to understand and analyze the topic you choose...

- Band
- Chiefdom
- Colonialism
- Cultural Loss
- Cultural Relativism
- Cultural Revitalization
- Division of Labor
- Enculturation
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Innovation
- Kinship
- Language Revitalization
- Marriage
- Pastoralism
- Power (and types of power)
- Racial Thinking (remember: “race” is a social construct)
- Reciprocity (and types of reciprocity)
- Religion
- Revitalization movement
- Rite of passage
- Ritual
- Subculture
- Tradition
- Tribe

Module 4: Essay

Earlier this semester, you selected a group and related topic in your

“Follow Your Own Path” Proposal. Now it is time to expand these into a full paper through research and writing!

Research

As you research and collect information about the cultural group and topic you chose for your Proposal, remember to locate TWO [scholarly resources](#), in addition to your textbook, to supplement your information and knowledge. These should be professional or academic sources.

Instructions

Write a 1500-word essay (no more than 1750 words), on the specific cultural group and topic you have proposed and researched.

- Include at least 7 internal citations within your essay (with at least one from each of your three sources: your text and two outside sources), in support of your explanations.
- Quotations should be 10 words or less.

The essay assignment should include:

- **A general introduction** to the essay. Introduce the cultural group, including its geographic location. Introduce the topic you have chosen for the focus of the essay. Explain why you chose this cultural group and this topic.
- **A detailed discussion** of the specific topic you have chosen. This is the body of your essay assignment. Support and document your findings with citations from your sources.

1. You should have a **minimum of five points in your**

discussion of the topic, with at least one paragraph for each of these points. Each paragraph should have at least one citation as a source for the information you provide.

2. You should use a **minimum of two anthropological concepts (be sure to define them according to your textbook, and cite your text)**, to help explain and analyze the topic you have chosen. These should be woven into the five main paragraphs.
 3. The seven internal citations are spread throughout the essay, and are the way you show that you conducted research! There is one for each of the five main points, and one for each of the anthropological concepts.
- **A concluding paragraph** summing up the findings of your research.
 - **Bibliography or References** List at the end of the essay.

Formatting

- Your essay should be a minimum of 1500 words (no more than 1,750 words), double-spaced. Include the word count after the last sentence in the paper for only the body of the paper. Don't count the words in the heading, title or Works Cited/ Bibliography. Remember, the assignment is graded for word count, not page length.
- Include a Works Cited or Bibliography. Be sure to use full bibliographic references for all sources, including websites, according to correct style.
 - Use the following links for each of the citations styles (MLA, Chicago, APA)
 - [MLA Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)
 - [APA Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)
 - [Chicago Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)

- Remember to proofread and edit for spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Use the spell and grammar check!
- Type your full name and “Semester Research Project” at the top of the first page.

Submission

Save your work as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf file only. Other formats might not transmit and cannot be guaranteed on time or graded. Submit this assignment in the “Semester Research Project” Assignment Folder in our website.

Grading

The Proposal and the Semester Research Project will be graded based on the Writing Assignment Rubric below and be checked against anti-plagiarism software applications such as Turnitin.

Refer to the Schedule of Work for due dates on these written assignments.

Proposal: Semester Research Project Rubric (10 Points)

Exceeds Expectations (10 points)	Meets Expectations (8 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (7 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (6 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
150 words or more.	150 words.	Less than 150 words.	Less than 150 words.	
Ideas are clear, specific, and meet or exceed minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed and cited.	Ideas are clear, but not specific. Meets minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed.	Ideas are not clear or specific. Does not meet minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed.	Does not address all required topics. Does not meet minimum word requirement. No outside source is mentioned.	Not submitted.

Essay: Semester Research Project Rubric

Exceeds Expectations (100 points)	Meets Expectations (76 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (54 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (32 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Ideas/Content (40 points) Anthropological ideas are clear, specific, and paper exceeds minimum word requirement. Main ideas stand out along with details. Clearly illustrates critical and reflective thinking.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (30 points) Anthropological ideas are clear but information is general and predictable. Paper meets minimum word count. Shows some critical and reflective thinking.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (20 points) Anthropological ideas are clear but more information is needed. Paper meets minimum word count. Poorly thought out response.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (10 points) Anthropological information is limited and text is repetitious. Paper does not meet minimum word count. No central theme. No evidence of having given the assignment real thought.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (0 points) Not submitted.</p>
<p>Anthropological Concepts (40 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through an in-depth application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (30 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through a strong application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (20 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through an adequate application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (10 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through a superficial application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>
<p>Organization (10 points) Organization (including introduction and conclusion) enhances the central theme. Sequencing is logical and transitions are smooth.</p>	<p>Organization (8 points) Organization is adequate and introduction needs more anticipation. Conclusion leaves no closure. Connections are faint.</p>	<p>Organization (7 points) Organization is not clear. Introduction is present, but has no lead. Conclusion is present but not clear.</p>	<p>Organization (6 points) No clear direction with no lead or conclusion. Connections are confusing or incomplete.</p>	<p>Organization (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>

Exceeds Expectations (100 points)	Meets Expectations (76 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (54 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (32 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Conventions (10 points) There are few or no errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar and spelling. Paragraphing adds to organizational structure. Properly and explicitly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (8 points) There are a few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Paragraphing may create problems. Properly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (7 points) Some usage, grammar, or paragraphing problems are more frequent. Spelling and end-of-sentence punctuation are almost always correct. Internal punctuation may be incorrect or missing. Improperly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (6 points) Errors in grammar and usage affect meaning. Paragraphing is missing or does not relate to organization of text. Frequent spelling errors. Punctuation is often missing or incorrect. Improperly cited or no citations present.</p>	<p>Conventions (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>

4I. Semester Research Project Proposal

PART IV
MODULE 3

42. Introduction: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology

As we move forward into Module Three, we will learn about important areas that help us to understand the cultures we are studying:

- **Economics**

Economic anthropology offers us a unique view into our own and other cultures! Explore the characteristics of the three modes of production: domestic, tributary, and capitalist. Consider the ways humans use reciprocity, redistribution, and market modes of exchange. Reflect on the significance of general purpose money for economic exchange, and the ways in which commodities become personally and socially meaningful. Go further afield as a global citizen, and use a political economy perspective to assess examples of global economic inequality and structural violence.

- **Subsistence**

Subsistence: How do you put food on the table?! Delve into the four modes of subsistence and explore the major activities associated with obtaining food in each system. Think about how subsistence is related to private property, wealth differences, and gender roles. How has human intervention in the environment made it difficult to separate the “natural” from the human-influenced environment?

- **Political Anthropology**

Explore the characteristics of the four levels of sociocultural

integration (band, tribe, chiefdom, and state). Learn about systems of leadership around the world: Examine egalitarian and non-egalitarian societies; look at how tribes and chiefdoms to achieve social integration and encourage connections between people; and take a deeper look at the benefits and problems associated with state-level political organizations. Lastly, examine the extent to which the Islamic State meets the formal criteria for a state-level political organization.

43. Chapter 8: Subsistence

Learning Objectives

- Identify the four modes of subsistence and describe the major activities associated with obtaining food in each system.
- Explain the difference between wild and domesticated resources and how plants and animals are domesticated.
- Explain the relationship between the subsistence system used in a society and the amount of private property or wealth differences that develop.
- Assess the ways in which subsistence systems are linked to expectations about gender roles.
- Categorize the social and economic characteristics associated with agriculture and describe the benefits and drawbacks of the agricultural subsistence system.
- Analyze the ways in which the global agricultural system separates producers from consumers and contributes to wealth differences.
- Appraise the ways in which human intervention in the environment has made it difficult to separate the “natural” from the human-influenced environment.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 8: Subsistence*.

Think about the last meal you ate. Where did the ingredients come from? If it was a cheeseburger, where did the cow live and die? Now think about all the food you consume in a normal week.

Can you identify the geographic origin of all the ingredients? In other words, how much do you know about the trip your food took to arrive at your plate? How much you know about where your food comes from would tell an anthropologist something about the **subsistence system** used in your community. A subsistence system is the set of practices used by members of a society to acquire food. If you are like me and you cannot say much about where your food comes from, then you are part of an agricultural society that separates food production from consumption, a recent development in the history of humans. People who come from nonagricultural societies have a more direct connection to their food and are likely to know where 100 per-cent of their food comes from.

Finding food each day is a necessity for every person no matter where that person lives, but food is not just a matter of basic survival. Humans assign symbolic meaning to food, observing cultural norms about what is considered “good” to eat and applying taboos against the consumption of other foods. Catholics may avoid meat during Lent, for instance, while Jewish and Islamic communities forbid the consumption of certain foods such as pork. In addition to these attitudes and preferences, every society has preferred methods for preparing food and for consuming it with others. The cultural norms and attitudes surrounding food and eating are known as **foodways**. By studying both the subsistence system used by a society to acquire food and the foodway associated with consuming it, anthropologists gain insight into the most important daily tasks in every society.

STUDYING SUBSISTENCE SYSTEMS

Since the need to eat is one of the few true human universals, anthropologists have studied subsistence systems from a variety of perspectives. One way to think about the importance of food for human populations is to consider the number of calories an individual must obtain every day in order to survive. Anthropologists use the term **carrying capacity** to quantify the number of calories that can be

extracted from a particular unit of land to support a human population. In his 1798 publication *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Thomas Malthus argued, “the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.”¹ He suggested that human populations grow at an exponential rate, meaning the population climbs at a rate that is constantly increasing. However, the availability of resources in the environment increases at only an arithmetic rate, which means that left unchecked human populations would soon outstrip the environment’s ability to provide sustenance. Malthus famously argued that war, famine, and disease were “good” or at least “functional” in the sense that they kept populations from growing too large.

While Malthus presented a grim view of humanity’s future, research suggests that the rate of human population growth, currently about one percent per year, is actually slowing. It is also not necessarily true that population growth has an entirely negative impact on human communities. The Danish economist Ester Boserup, for example, argued that human history reveals a connection between population growth and cultural innovation, particularly innovation in farming techniques. Because necessity is the mother of invention, she reasoned, the pressure of having more mouths to feed could be the dynamic that drives societies to develop new solutions.²

Modern anthropological studies of subsistence systems draw on insights and perspectives from several different fields, including biology, chemistry, and ecology, as well as a range of ethnographic techniques. This interdisciplinary perspective allows for cross-cultural comparison of human diets. In several decades of anthropological research on subsistence systems, anthropologists

have observed that the quest for food affects almost every aspect of daily life. For instance, every person plays a role in society as a producer, distributor, or consumer of food. In the journey of a fish from the sea to the plate, for instance, we can see that in some societies, the same person can fill more than one of those roles, while in other societies there is more specialization. In a small fishing village, the same person might catch the fish, distribute some extra to friends and family, and then consume the bounty that same day. In a city, the consumer of the fish at a fancy restaurant is not the same person who caught the fish. In fact, that person almost certainly has no knowledge of who caught, cleaned, distributed, and prepared the fish he or she is consuming. The web of social connections that we can trace through subsistence provide a very particular kind of anthropological insight into how societies function at their most basic level.

MODES OF SUBSISTENCE

Like all human systems, a society's subsistence system is intricately linked to other aspects of culture such as kinship, politics, and religion. Although we can study these systems in isolation, it is important to remember that in the real world all aspects of culture overlap in complex ways. Consider harvest rituals, for example, which are religious ceremonies focused on improving the food supply. These rituals are shaped by religious beliefs as well as the demands and challenges of obtaining food. Likewise, subsistence systems are the economic base of every society. Working to put food on the table is the essential task of every family or household, and this work is the basis of a **domestic economy** that interacts with the modes of production and modes of exchange described in the Economics chapter.

When anthropologists first began to examine subsistence

systems, they started like all scientists do, with classification. Early on, anthropologists saw the benefit of grouping similar societies into types, or categories, based on the range of practices they used in the quest for food. These groupings allowed for comparisons between cultures. At a basic level, societies can be divided into those that have an **immediate return system** for finding food and those that have a **delayed return system**. The residents of a small fishing village who eat the fish they catch each day have an immediate return on their labor. Farmers who must wait several months between the time they plant seeds and the time they harvest have a delayed return system.

Beyond this basic division, anthropologists recognize four general types of food system known as **modes of subsistence**. The four modes of subsistence are foraging, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture. Each mode is defined by the tasks involved in obtaining food as well as the way members of the society are organized socially to accomplish these tasks. Because each mode of subsistence is tailored to particular ecological conditions, we can think of each culture's subsistence system as an **adaptation**, or a set of survival strategies uniquely developed to suit a particular environment. Because culture shapes the way we view and interact with the environment, different societies can adapt to similar environments in different ways. **Foraging**, sometimes known as hunting and gathering, describes societies that rely primarily on "wild" plant and animal food resources. **Pastoralism** is a subsistence system in which people raise herds of domesticated livestock. **Horticulture** is the small-scale cultivation of crops intended primarily for subsistence. **Agriculture**, the subsistence system used in the United States, involves the cultivation of domesticated plants and animals using technologies that allow for intensive use of the land.

Can all societies be categorized neatly into one of these modes? No. In fact, almost every society combines one or more of these strategies into their subsistence practices. For example, in the United States there are individuals who participate in all of these subsistence modes, including foraging. When anthropologists analyze a subsistence system, they look for the dominant mode of subsistence, or the most typical way that members of a society procure food. So, while some people in the United States grow their own food or hunt wild animals, the dominant mode of subsistence is agriculture, and people obtain food primarily by purchasing it.

Foraging

“Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongos in the world?” —/Xashe, !Kung forager³

Foraging is a mode of subsistence defined by its reliance on wild plant and animal food resources already available in the environment rather than on domesticated species that have been altered by human intervention. Foragers use a remarkable variety of practices to procure meals. Hunting for animal protein is central to the foraging lifestyle and foragers capture and consume a wide variety of animals, from squirrels caught with a bow and arrow or blow dart to buffalo once killed by the dozens in communal hunts. Fishing for marine resources forms the basis for acquiring protein in many foraging communities and includes a range of practices from exploiting coastal shellfish and crab, to harvesting offshore resources such as deep sea fish and marine mammals such as whales and seals. Augmenting the protein from hunting or fishing, gathered wild plant resources, such as fruits, nuts, roots, tubers, and berries typically provide a large percentage of the calories that go into any meal. Gathering requires expert knowledge of where

plant resources can be found, when they will be best to harvest, and how to prepare them for consumption. Foraging is the only immediate return subsistence system.

Foraging societies tend to have what is called a **broad spectrum diet**: a diet based on a wide range of resources. Many of the foods regularly eaten by foragers, such as insects and worms, would not necessarily be considered edible by many people in the United States. For example, many people do not know that earthworms are a good source of iron and high-quality protein, roughly equivalent to eggs, but that is exactly what anthropologists learned by studying the diet of foraging societies in Venezuela.⁴ Foragers are scientists of their own ecosystems, having acquired extensive knowledge of the natural world through experience that allows them to exploit many kinds of food resources. The Aché, a foraging group living in the subtropical rainforest in Paraguay, eat 33 different kinds of mammals, more than 15 species of fish, the adult forms of 5 insects, 10 types of larvae, and at least 14 kinds of honey. This is in addition to finding and collecting 40 species of plants.⁵ The !Kung foragers, who live in the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, treasure the mongongo nut, which is tasty, high in protein, and abundant for most of the year, but they also hunt giraffes, six species of antelope, and many kinds of smaller game like porcupine.⁶

In general, foraging societies are small, with low population densities of less than 5 people per square mile. Large families and communities are not necessarily desirable since more mouths to feed can equate to increased pressure to find food. Another factor that contributes to a lower population density is the fact that it is more difficult for the young and the elderly to participate in food procurement. Children only gradually acquire the skills necessary to successfully find food and generally do not make significant contributions to the group until their teenage years. Likewise, elders who can no longer produce enough food themselves expect to be cared for by others.⁷

One important hallmark of foraging societies is their egalitarian social structure. Stark differences in wealth, which characterize many societies, are rare in foraging communities. One reason for this is that foragers have a different perspective on private property. Foraging societies tend to move their camps frequently to exploit various resources, so holding on to a lot of personal possessions or “wealth” is impractical. Foragers also place a high cultural value on generosity. Sharing of food and other resources is a social norm and a measure of a person’s goodness. Those who resist sharing what they have with others might be ridiculed, or could even become social outcasts.⁸ Over the long term, daily habits of giving and receiving reinforce social equality. This practice is also an important survival strategy that helps groups get through times of food scarcity.

Though foragers have high levels of social equality, not everyone is treated exactly the same. Gender inequality exists in many communities and develops from the fact that work among foragers is often divided along gender lines. Some jobs, such as hunting large animals, belong to men whose success in hunting gives them high levels of respect and prestige. While women do hunt in many communities and often contribute the majority of the group’s food through gathering, their work tends not to be as socially prestigious.⁹ Likewise, elders in foraging communities tend to command respect and enjoy a higher social status, particularly if they have skills in healing or ritual activities.

Rule-Breaking Foragers

Nomadic lifestyles are the norm for most foragers, but there have been some societies that have broken this rule and developed large-scale sedentary societies. This was possible in areas with abundant natural resources, most often fish. Historically, fishing formed the foundation of large-scale foraging societies in Peru, the Pacific Northwest (the Kwakwaka’wakw), and Florida (the Calusa). These societies all developed advanced fishing technologies that provided enough food surplus that some people could stop participating in food procurement activities.

The Kwakwaka'wakw of the Pacific Northwest provide an excellent example. In that region, the salmon that spawn in the rivers are so abundant that they could support sedentary populations of a size that would normally be associated with intensive agriculture. Because there was a surplus of food, some members of society were able to pursue other full-time occupations or specializations such as working as artisans or even becoming "chiefs." This led to wealth differences and social inequality that would not normally be found in a foraging community. Conscious of the corrosive effect of wealth and status differences on their community, the Kwakwaka'wakw developed a tradition of [potlatch](#), a kind of "extreme gift-giving" to neutralize some of these tensions.

Assessing the Foraging Lifestyle

In 1651, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes became one of the first scholars to comment on foragers, describing their lifestyle as "nasty, brutish, and short." We now realize that his viewpoint was colored by ethnocentrism and, more specifically, Eurocentrism. Hobbes, as well as many scholars that came after him, viewed Western societies as the pinnacle of social evolution and viewed less technologically advanced societies as deficient, antiquated, or primitive, a perspective that persisted well into the twentieth century.

In the 1960s, the anthropological perspective on foragers changed when Marshall Sahlins suggested that these communities were "the original affluent society." He argued that foragers had an idyllic life, in which only a small percentage of the day was spent "working" or acquiring resources, and most of the day was spent in leisure and socializing, leading to stronger community and family bonds:

Hunter-gatherers consume less energy per capita per year than any other group of human beings. Yet when you come to examine it the original affluent society was none other than the hunter's—in which all the people's material wants were easily satisfied. To accept that hunters are affluent is therefore to recognize that the present human condition of man slaving to bridge the gap between his

unlimited wants and his insufficient means is a tragedy of modern times.¹⁰

Today anthropologists recognize that foraging, far from being primitive, is one of the most effective and dynamic subsistence systems humans have ever developed, yet Sahlins' conception of the original affluent society is overly romantic. Foraging is a challenging lifestyle; some groups spend up to 70 hours per week collecting food. The amount of leisure time and relative comfort of the foraging lifestyle vary significantly based on differences in the availability of food and environmental conditions.¹¹

Contemporary studies of foraging also recognize that foragers have rarely lived in isolation. Throughout the world, foragers have lived near farming populations for hundreds or even thousands of years. Conflicts and competition for resources with non-foraging societies have characterized the foraging experience and foragers, with their relatively small population size and limited technology, have often been on the losing end of these confrontations. Government policies containing foragers to small "reservation" areas or forcing them to settle in towns have had catastrophic effects on foragers, as has the destruction through agricultural and industrial development of the ecosystems on which many groups once depended. A sad worldwide pattern of exploitation and marginalization is the reason that many foragers today live in dwindling communities in marginal ecological zones.¹²

The Built Environment and Domesticated Landscapes

None of us live in a natural environment. Current research on the causes of global climate change have demonstrated that humans are having a profound effect on the Earth and its ecosystems, but it would be a mistake to conclude that human effects on the environment are a recent development. Humans have been making environmental alterations for a long time and we have been engaged in a process of domesticating the planet for several thousand years. For this reason, no part of the planet can really be considered 100 percent "natural." When anthropologists study subsistence, they gain a

window into the ways in which cultures have co-evolved with their environments, a field of study known as **historical ecology**. Analysis of the ways in which cultures and the environment are mutually interconnected, demonstrates that there is no way to separate the “natural” world from the human-influenced world, or what anthropologists refer to as the **built environment**.

This can be seen by considering the historical ecology of the Nukak, a group of foragers who live in the Amazon rainforest near the headwaters of the Rio Negro along the southern border between Colombia and Venezuela and whose subsistence demonstrates the blurry line between foraging and agriculture and “natural” and “domesticated.” [The Nukak](#) are a small linguistic and ethnic group who are part of the larger culture known as Makú. The Nukak were the last among the Makú to be contacted by the outside world and perhaps owing to this fact, they practice the most “traditional” way of life. The Nukak were not known to the public at large until 1988, when a group of 41 individuals came in contact with a school in the rural town of Calamar, in southeastern Colombia.

The Nukak are a highly mobile group of foragers who make an average of between 70 and 80 residential moves a year. The frequency of their moves changes seasonally: infrequent short-distance moves in the wet season, and more frequent long-distance moves occurring in the dry season. Anthropologist Gustavo Politis, who spent years living with the Nukak, observed that the Nukak will never occupy the same camp twice, even if they are moving to an area where an old camp is still in good shape. When they establish a camp, they remove all the light brush and some of the medium-sized trees, leaving a few medium-sized trees and all the large trees intact.

Due to the selective nature of the forest clearing, a habitat, which can most readily be described as a “wild orchard,” is produced. This wild orchard offers nearly perfect conditions for the germination

and growth of seeds because the large trees provide enough shade to prevent the invasion of vines and shrubs. As the Nukak use the camp and consume fruit they have gathered, they discard the uneaten portions, including the seeds. Significantly, the kinds of fruit the Nukak tend to eat in their camps are the ones that have hard outer seed cases. Once discarded in a Nukak campsite, these seeds have a higher chance of germinating and growing in the abandoned camp than they do in other parts of the rainforest. The result is that Nukak territory is peppered with wild orchards that have high concentrations of edible plants, and the forest reflects a pattern of human intervention long after the Nukak have departed.¹³

The Nukak are an important case study in the Amazon for a number of reasons. They are a testament to the ability of small foraging groups to domesticate landscapes in active ways that greatly increase the productivity of the environment. They do this even though they are not “farmers” and will not always utilize the resources they help create. In addition, the Nukak demonstrate that no place in the Amazon can be considered *pristine* if a group such as the Nukak have ever lived there. The same can be said for the rest of the planet.

The Domestication of the Dog and Cooperative Hunting

Although the transition from foraging to agriculture is often described as the Agricultural Revolution, archaeological evidence suggests this change took a long time. The earliest species humans chose to domesticate were often not staple crops such as wheat, corn, rice, or cows, but utilitarian species. For instance, bottle gourds were domesticated for use as water containers before the invention of pottery. Dogs were domesticated as early as 15,000 years ago in eastern Asia from their wild ancestor the wolf. Although it is unlikely that dogs were an important source of food, they did play a role in subsistence by aiding humans who relied on hunting the Ice Age megafauna such as woolly mammoths. Dogs played such a critical role in hunting that some archaeologists believe they may

have contributed to the eventual extinction of the woolly mammoths.¹⁴ Dogs were also valued for their role as watchdogs capable of protecting the community from predators and invaders.

Pastoralism

“To us, a co-wife is something very good, because there is much work to do. When it rains . . . the village gets mucky. And it’s you who clears it out. It’s you who . . . looks after the cows. You do the milking . . . and your husband may have very many cows. That’s a lot of work. . . So Maasai aren’t jealous because of all this work.”

—Maiyani, Maasai woman 15

Pastoralism is a subsistence system that relies on herds of domesticated livestock. Over half of the world’s pastoralists reside in Africa, but there are also large pastoralist populations in Central Asia, Ti-bet, and arctic Scandinavia and Siberia. The need to supply grazing fields and water for the livestock requires moving several times a year. For that reason, this subsistence system is sometimes referred to as nomadic pastoralism. In Africa, for instance, a nomadic lifestyle is an adaptation to the frequent periods of drought that characterize the region and put stress on the grazing pastures. Pastoralists may also follow a nomadic lifestyle for other reasons such as avoiding competition and conflict with neighbors or avoiding government restrictions.

Pastoralists can raise a range of different animals, although most often they raise herd animals such as cows, goats, sheep, and pigs. In some parts of South America, alpaca and llama have been domesticated for centuries to act as beasts of burden, much like camels, horses, and donkeys are used in Asia and Africa. Pastoralists who raise alpacas, donkeys, or camels, animals not typically considered food, demonstrate an important point about the pastoralist subsistence system. The goal of many pastoralists is not to produce animals to slaughter for meat, but instead to use other resources such as milk, which can be transformed into butter, yogurt, and

cheese, or products like fur or wool, which can be sold. Even animal dung is useful as an alternate source of fuel and can be used as an architectural product to seal the roofs of houses. In some pastoral societies, milk and milk products comprise between 60 and 65 percent of the total caloric intake. However, very few, if any, pastoralist groups survive by eating only animal products. Trade with neighboring farming communities helps pastoralists obtain a more balanced diet and gives them access to grain and other items they do not produce on their own.

A community of animal herders has different labor requirements compared to a foraging community. Caring for large numbers of animals and processing their products requires a tremendous amount of work, chores that are nonexistent in foraging societies. For pastoralists, daily chores related to caring for livestock translate into a social world structured as much around the lives of animals as around the lives of people.

The Maasai, a society of east African pastoralists whose livelihood depends on cows, have been studied extensively by anthropologists. Among the Maasai, domestic life is focused almost entirely around tasks and challenges associated with managing the cattle herds. Like many pastoralist communities, the Maasai measure wealth and social status according to the number of animals a person owns. However, raising cattle requires so much work that no one has the ability to do these jobs entirely on his or her own. For the Maasai, the solution is to work together in family units organized around polygynous marriages. A household with multiple wives and large numbers of children will have more labor power available for raising animals.

Pastoralism and Gender Dynamics

The example of the Maasai demonstrates the extent to which a

subsistence system can structure gender roles and the division of labor between the sexes. In Maasai society, women do almost all of the work with the cows, from milking several times each day to clearing the muck the cows produce. Despite doing much of the daily work with cattle, Maasai women are not permitted to own cattle. Instead, the cattle belong to the men, and women are given only “milking rights” that allow them to use the products of the female animals and to assign these animals to their sons. Men make all decisions about slaughtering, selling, and raising the cattle. Lack of cattle ownership means that women do not have the same opportunities as men to build wealth or gain social status and the woman’s role in Maasai society is subordinate to man’s. This same pattern is repeated in many pastoralist societies, with women valued primarily for the daily labor they can provide and for their role as mothers.

While women lack the political and economic power enjoyed by Maasai men, they do exercise some forms of power within their own households and among other women. They support each other in the daily hard work of managing both cattle and domestic responsibilities, for instance sharing in childcare, a practice based on the belief that “men care about cattle while women care about children.”¹⁶ Because most marriages are arranged by elders, it is common for women to engage in love affairs with other men, but women keep each other’s secrets; telling anyone about another woman’s adultery would be considered an absolute betrayal of solidarity. Women who resist their husband’s authority by having love affairs are also resisting larger claims of male authority and ownership over them.¹⁷

Pastoralism and Private Property

As discussed previously, foragers tend to have little private property. Obtaining food from the natural environment and living a highly mobile lifestyle does not provide the right conditions for hoarding wealth, while the strong value on sharing present in foraging communities also limits wealth differences. Pastoralists, in contrast, have a great deal of personal property: most of it in the

form of animals, a kind of “money on legs,” but also in the form of household objects and personal items like clothing or jewelry that pastoralists can keep more easily than foragers because they do not move as frequently.

Ownership of the grazing land, water supply, and other resources required for livestock is a trick-ier matter. Generally, these natural resources are treated as communal property shared by everyone in the society. Pastoralists may range over hundreds of miles throughout the year, so it would be highly impractical to “own” any particular plot of land or to try fencing it to exclude outsiders as is commonly done by agriculturalists. Sharing resources can lead to conflict, however, both within pastoralist societies and between pastoralists and their neighbors. In an influential essay, *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), Garrett Hardin pointed out that people tend not to respect resources they do not own. For instance, pastoralists who have a personal interest in raising as many cattle of their own as possible may not be particularly motivated to preserve grass or water resources in the long term. Do pastoralists destroy the environments in which they live? Evidence from anthropological studies of pastoralist communities suggests that pastoralists do have rules that regulate use of land and other resources and that these restrictions are effective in conserving environmental resources.

The Maasai, for instance, have a complex land-management system that involves rotating pastures seasonally and geographically to preserve both grass and water. Research conducted in Kenya and Tanzania suggests that these grazing practices improve the health and biodiversity of the ecosystem because grazing cattle cut down the tall grasses and make habitats for warthogs, Thomson’s gazelle, and other species. In addition, the large swaths of community land managed by the Maasai stabilize and support the vast Serengeti ecosystem. Ecologists estimate that if this land

were privately owned and its usage restricted, the population of wildebeest would be reduced by one-third. Since thousands of tourists visit the Serengeti each year to view wildlife, particularly the migration of the wildebeest, which is the largest mammal migration in the world, the Maasai's communal land management is worth an estimated \$83.5 million to the tourist economies of Kenya and Tanzania.¹⁸

Despite the sophistication of their land and animal management techniques, pastoralists today face many pressures. The growth of the tourism industry in many countries has led to increased demand for private land ownership to support safari centers, wild game parks, and ecolodges. The steady growth of human populations and intensive agriculture has also led to the widespread encroachment of cities and farms into traditional pastoralist territories. Persistent drought, famine, and even civil war threaten some pastoralist groups, particularly in central Africa. Meanwhile, pastoralists continue to experience tense relationships with their agricultural neighbors as both groups compete for resources, disputes that are intensifying as global warming leads to more intense heat and drought in many world regions.

Horticulture

"Yams are persons with ears. If we charm they hear." —Alo, Trobriand Island farmer¹⁹

Have you ever grown a garden in your backyard? How much time did you put into your garden? How much of your diet did the garden yield? People whose gardens supply the majority of their food are known as **horticulturalists**. Horticulture differs in three ways from other kinds of farming. First, horticulturalists move their farm fields periodically to use locations with the best growing conditions. For this reason, horticulture is sometimes known as shifting cultivation. Second, horticultural societies use limited mechanical technologies to farm, relying on physical labor from people and

animals, like oxen that may be used to pull a plow, instead of mechanical farm equipment. Finally, horticulture differs from other kinds of farming in its scale and purpose. Most farmers in the United States sell their crops as a source of income, but in horticultural societies crops are consumed by those who grow them or are exchanged with others in the community rather than sold for profit.

Horticultural societies are common around the world; this subsistence system feeds hundreds of thousands of people, primarily in tropical areas of south and central America, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. A vast array of horticultural crops may be grown by horticulturalists, and farmers use their specialized knowledge to select crops that have high yield compared to the amount of labor that must be invested to grow them. A good example is manioc, also known as cassava. Manioc can grow in a variety of tropical environments and has the distinct advantage of being able to remain in the ground for long periods without rotting. Compared to corn or wheat, which must be harvested within a particular window of time to avoid spoiling, manioc is flexible and easier to grow as well as to store or distribute to others. Bananas, plantains, rice, and yams are additional examples of popular horticultural crops. One thing all these plants have in common, though, is that they lack protein and other important nutrients. Horticultural societies must supplement their diets by raising animals such as pigs and chickens or by hunting and fishing.

Growing crops in the same location for several seasons leads to depletion of the nutrients in the soil as well as a concentration of insects and other pests and plant diseases. In agricultural systems like the one used in the United States, these problems are addressed through the use of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and other technologies that can increase crop yields even in bad conditions. Horticulturalists respond to these problems by moving their farm fields to new locations. Often this means clearing a section of the forest to make room for a new garden, a task many horticulturalists accomplish by cutting down trees and setting controlled fires to

burn away the undergrowth. This approach, some-times referred to as “slash-and-burn,” sounds destructive and has often been criticized, but the ecological impact is complex. Once abandoned, farm fields immediately begin to return to a forested state; over time, the quality of the soil is renewed. Farmers often return after several years to reuse a former field, and this recycling of farmland reduces the amount of forest that is disturbed. While they may relocate their farm fields with regularity, horticulturalists tend not to move their residences, so they rotate through gardens located within walking distance of their homes.

Horticulturalists practice multi-cropping, growing a variety of different plants in gardens that are biodiverse. Growing several different crops reduces the risk of relying on one kind of food and allows for intercropping, mixing plants in ways that are advantageous. A well-known and ingenious example of intercropping is the practice of growing beans, corns, and squash together. Native American farmers in the pre-colonial period knew that together these plants, sometimes called “the three sisters,” were healthier than they were if grown separately. Rather than completely clearing farmland, horticulturalists often maintain some trees and even weeds around the garden as a habitat for predators that prey on garden pests. These practices, in addition to skillful rotation of the farmland itself, make horticultural gardens particularly resilient.

Food as Politics

Because daily life for horticulturalists revolves around care for crops, plants are not simply regarded as food but also become the basis for social relationships. In the Trobriand Islands, which are located in the Solomon Sea north of Papua New Guinea, yams are the staple crop. Just as a Maasai pastoralist gains respect by raising a large herd of animals, Trobriand Island farmers earn their reputations by having large numbers of yams. However, this is not as easy as it might seem. In Trobriand Island society every man maintains a yam garden, but he is not permitted to keep his entire crop. Women “own” the yams and men must share

what they grow with their daughters, their sisters, and even with their wives' family members. Other yams must be given to the chief or saved to exchange on special occasions such as weddings, funerals, or festivals. With so many obligations, it is not surprising that the average man would have trouble building an impressive yam pile on his own. Fortunately, just as men have obligations to others, so too can they expect gifts from their sisters' husbands and their friends in the community.

A large pile of yams, displayed proudly in a man's specially constructed yam house, is an indication of how well he is respected by his family and friends. Maintaining these positive relationships requires constant work, and men must reciprocate gifts of yams received from others or risk losing those relationships. Men who are stingy or mean spirited will not receive many yams, and their lack of social approval will be obvious to everyone who glances at their empty yam houses. The chief has the largest yam house of all, but also the most obligations. To maintain the goodwill of the people, he is expected to sponsor feasts with his yam wealth and to support members of the community who may need yams throughout the year.

So central are yams to Trobriand Island life that yams have traditionally been regarded not as mere plants, but as living beings with minds of their own. Farmers talk to their yams, using a special tone and soft voice so as not to alarm the vegetables. Men who have been initiated into the secret practices of yam magic use incantations or magical charms to affect the growth of the plants, or alternatively to discourage the growth of a rival's crop. Yams are believed to have the ability to wander away from their fields at night unless magic is used to keep them in place. These practices show the close social and spiritual association between farmers and their crops.

Civilizing Beans

Beans are often associated with gastrointestinal problems, namely flatulence. It turns out that this is related to the history of the domestication of the bean. Beans, along with maize and squash, were one of the most important crops domesticated by Native Americans in the New World. The benefits of eating beans are best understood when viewed in relation to maize cultivation. From a purely nutritional point of view, beans are a good source of protein while corn is not. Corn is also deficient in the essential amino acids lysine and tryptophan. Eating maize and beans together provides more protein for hardworking farm-ers. In addition, maize and beans have a mutually beneficial relationship in the garden. Thanks to a symbiotic relationship with a bacteria known as Rhizobium, beans and almost all legumes fix usable nitrogen in the soil, increasing fertility for other plants grown nearby. When intercropped, maize benefits from this nitrogen fixing, and beans benefit from being able to attach their vines to the strong stalks of the maize. Squash, which grows large leaves that spread widely across the ground, are also beneficial to intercrop with maize and beans because the leaves reduce pest and weed invasion by providing ground cover.

Despite being nutritious and useful in the garden, beans were domesticated relatively late. In Mexico, there is evidence of bean domestication around 1000 BC, a thousand years later than the domestication of corn.²⁰ This is probably because of the gastrointestinal problems that come with eating beans. The flatulence is the result of certain chemicals found in the wild beans that were ancestral to today's domesticated species. The lack of digestibility surely made beans an unappetizing food in early human communities. However, soaking beans before cooking them and then boiling them over direct heat for several hours reduces these chemicals and makes beans much easier to stomach. The ability to boil water was the key to bringing beans to the table.

Archaeological studies in Central America have revealed that the invention of pottery was the

technological breakthrough need-ed to boil beans. A particular type of pottery known as the “culinary shoe pot” was one of these technological innovations. The pots are used by placing the “foot” of the pot in the coals of a fire so heat can be transmitted through the vessel for long periods of time. Pots of this design have been found in the archaeological record throughout Central America in sites dating to the same period as the beginning of bean domestication and pots of similar design continue to be used throughout that region today. This example demonstrates the extent to which the expansion of the human diet has been linked to innovations in other areas of culture.

Agriculture

“The adoption of agriculture, supposedly our most decisive step toward a better life, was in many ways a catastrophe from which we have never recovered.”

—Jared Diamond 21

Agriculture is defined as the cultivation of domesticated plants and animals using technologies such as irrigation, draft animals, mechanization, and inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides that allow for intensive and continuous use of land resources. About 10,000 years ago, human societies entered a period of rapid innovation in subsistence technologies that paved the way for the emergence of agriculture. The transition from foraging to farming has been described as the **Neolithic Revolution**. Neolithic means “new stone age,” a name referring to the very different looking stone tools produced during this time period. The Neolithic was characterized by an explosion of new

technologies, not all of them made from stone, which were geared toward agricultural tasks, rather than hunting or processing gathered plant foods. These new tools included scythes for harvesting plants, and adzes or hoes for tilling the soil. These technological developments began to dramatically improve yields and allow human communities to support larger and larger numbers of people on food produced in less space. It is important to remember that the invention of agriculture was not necessarily an advance in efficiency, because more work had to go in to producing more food. Instead, it was an *intensification* of horticultural strategies. As a subsistence system, agriculture is quite different from other ways of making a living, and the invention of agriculture had far-ranging effects on the development of human communities. In analyzing agriculture and its impacts, anthropologists focus on four important characteristics shared by agricultural communities.

The first characteristic of agriculture is reliance on a few **staple crops**, foods that form the back-bone of the subsistence system. An example of a staple crop would be rice in China, or potatoes in Ireland. In agricultural societies, farmers generally grow a surplus of these staple crops, more than they need for their own tables, which are then sold for profit. The reliance on a single plant species, or **mono-cropping**, can lead to decreased dietary diversity and carries the risk of malnutrition compared to a more diverse diet. Other risks include crop failure associated with bad weather conditions or blight, leading to famine and malnutrition, conditions that are common in agricultural communities.

A second hallmark of agriculture is the link between intensive farming and a rapid increase in human population density. The archaeological record shows that human communities grew quickly around the time agriculture was developing, but this raises an interesting question. Did the availability of more food lead to increases in human population? Or, did pressure to provide for a growing population spur humans to develop better farming techniques? This question has been debated for many years. Ester Boserup, who studied the emergence of agriculture, concluded that growth in human populations preceded the development of agriculture, forcing communities to develop innovations in technology. However, the improved productive capabilities of agriculture came at a cost. People were able to produce more food with agriculture, but only by working harder and investing more in the maintenance of the land. The life of a farmer involved more daily hours of work compared to the lifestyle of a forager, so agricultural communities had an incentive to have larger families so that children could help with farm labor. However, the presence of more children also meant more mouths to feed, increasing the pressure to further expand agricultural production. In this way, agriculture and population growth became a cycle.

A third characteristic of agriculture is the development of a division of labor, a system in which individuals in a society begin to specialize in certain roles or tasks. Building houses, for instance, becomes a full-time job separate from farming. The division of labor was possible because higher yields from agriculture meant that the quest for food no longer required everyone's participation. This feature of agriculture is what has allowed nonagricultural occupations such as scientists, religious specialists, politicians, lawyers, and academics to emerge and flourish.

The emergence of specialized occupations and an agricultural system geared toward producing surplus rather than subsistence changed the economics of human communities. The final characteristic of agriculture is its tendency to create wealth differences. For anthropologists,

agriculture is a critical factor explaining the origins of social class and wealth inequality. The more complex an economic system becomes, the more opportunities individuals or factions within the society have to manipulate the economy for their own benefit. Who do you suppose provided the bulk of the labor power needed in early agricultural communities? Elites found ways to pass this burden to others. Agricultural societies were among the first to utilize enslaved and indentured labor.

Although the development of agriculture is generally regarded as a significant technological achievement that made our contemporary way of life possible, agriculture can also be viewed as a more ominous development that forced us to invest more time and labor in our food supply while yielding a lower quality of life.²² Agriculture created conditions that led to the expansion of social inequality, violent conflict between communities, and environmental degradation. For these reasons, some scientists like Jared Diamond have argued that the invention of agriculture was humanity's worst mistake.

The Origins of Agriculture

Some of the most contested and exciting questions in anthropology center on the origins of agriculture. How did humans come to adopt an agricultural way of life? What came first, permanent settlements or agriculture? Did agriculture develop first in places with rich natural resources, or in places where making a living from the land was more difficult? Why did agriculture arise nearly simultaneously in so many world regions? These questions are primarily investigated by archaeologists, anthropologists who study cultures of the past by recovering the material remains of their settlements. Archaeological evidence suggests that the transition to agriculture occurred over a long period of time, across many generations.

Lewis Binford, an archaeologist who studied the origins of agriculture, observed that humans were living in permanent settlements before the end of the last ice age 10,000–12,000 years ago. He believed that as human populations grew, some communities were forced into marginal natural environments where it was difficult to get food from foraging, pastoralism, or horticulture. He argued that the pressure of living in these “tension zones” led to agricultural innovation.²³ Although inventing agriculture might seem like a challenge for humanity, the cultural anthropologist Leslie White pointed out that by this time in human history all communities had substantial practical knowledge of the natural world and the plant and animal species they depended on for survival. “The cultivation of plants required no new facts or knowledge. Agriculture was simply a new kind of relationship between man—or more properly, woman—and plants.”²⁴ By moving plants into new environments and controlling their growth, people were able to ensure a better food supply.

This may explain why domestication arose, but why did it take so long for humans to develop agriculture? Why did many societies all over the world develop agriculture nearly simultaneously? One possible answer is found in the climate change that followed the end of the last ice age. Warming temperatures and shifting environmental zones led to the extinction of the megafauna human hunters had been relying upon such as musk ox, woolly mammoth and woolly rhinoceros, and giant deer. Many animals once preyed on these species, such as the cave lion and spotted hyena, but humans may have adapted culturally by reorienting their diets toward domesticated plant and animal species.

There are some other interesting theories about how and why agriculture developed. Brian Hayden, an archaeologist specializing in political ecology, the use of resources to achieve political goals, has suggested that agriculture arose as some members of society began to accumulate resources in order to sponsor feasts and give gifts designed to influence others. This “feasting theory” suggests that

agriculture was not a response to the necessities of survival, but part of a quest for power among some members of society.²⁵ This model is intriguing because it explains why some of the earliest domesticates such as chili peppers and avocados are not staple foods and are not even particularly nutritious. In fact, many of the earliest plants cultivated were not intended to produce food for meals, but rather to produce ingredients for alcoholic beverages.

For example, the wild ancestor of corn, a plant called teosinte, has an edible “ear” so small that it would have cost more calories to chew than the nutrition it provided. This led some archaeologists to theorize that it was in fact the sweetness in the stalk of the plant that farmers wanted to utilize to ferment a corn -based alcoholic beverage still consumed in many parts of Central America called *chicha*. It might have been that only after years of cultivating the crop for its stalk that farmers found uses for the ear, which later was selectively bred to grow to the sizes we are familiar with today.

THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURE SYSTEM

“We can indeed eliminate the scourge of hunger in our lifetime. We must be the Zero Hunger generation.”

—José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations ²⁶

Despite agriculture’s tremendous productivity, food shortages, malnutrition, and famines are common around the world. How can this be? Many people assume that the world’s agricultural systems are not capable of producing enough food for everyone, but this is incorrect. Evidence from agricultural research demonstrates that there is enough worldwide agricultural capacity to feed everyone on the planet.²⁷ The problem is that this

capacity is unevenly distributed. Some countries produce much more food than they need, and others much less. In addition, distribution systems are inefficient and much food is lost to waste or spoilage. It is also true that in an agricultural economy food costs money, and worldwide many people who are starving or undernourished lack food because they cannot pay for it, not because food itself is unavailable. Let's return for a moment to the concept of meals and where our food actually comes from. Walk-ing down the aisles of our local grocery store, we are surrounded by products that come from far away: apples from Chile, coffee from Guatemala, beans from India. This is evidence that our econ-omy is organized around what anthropologists refer to as a **world system**, a complex web through which goods circulate around the globe. In the world system, complex chains of distribution separate the producers of goods from the consumers. Agricultural products travel long distances from their points of origin to reach consumers in the grocery store, passing through many hands along the way. The series of steps a food like apples or coffee takes from the field to the store is known as a **com-modity chain**.

The commodity chain for agricultural products begins in the farms where plant and animal foods are produced. Farmers generally do not sell their produce directly to consumers, but instead sell to large food processors that refine the food into a more useable form. Coffee beans, for instance, must be roasted before they can be sold. Following processing, food moves to wholesalers who will package

it for sale to retail establishments like grocery stores. As foods move through the commodity chain, they become more valuable. Coffee beans harvested fresh from the field are worth \$1.40 per pound to the farmer, but sell for \$10–\$20 at Starbucks.²⁸

The fact that food is more valuable at the end of the commodity chain than at the beginning has several consequences for human communities. The most obvious of these is the reality that farming is not a particularly lucrative occupation, particularly for small-scale farmers in developing countries. Though their labor makes profit for others, these farmers see the lowest financial returns. Another effect of global commodity chains is that food moves very far from its point of origin. For wealthy people, this means having access to a variety of foods in the grocery store, including things like strawberries or mangos in the middle of winter, but in order to serve markets in wealthy countries, food is diverted away from the locales where it is grown. When quinoa, a high-protein grain grown in Bolivia, became popular with health enthusiasts in wealthy countries, the price of this food more than tripled. Local populations began to export their quinoa crop rather than eating it, replacing this nutritious traditional food with white bread and Coca-Cola, which were much cheaper, but contributed to increased rates of obesity and diabetes.²⁹ The global travels of the food supply have also affected social relations that were once strengthened by participation in food growing and sharing. Distance and competition have replaced these communal experiences. Many people yearn for more connection with their food, a sentiment that fuels things like “foodie culture,” farm-to-table restaurants, and farmer’s markets.

CONCLUSION

This chapter began with a consideration of meals, but revealed that each individual meal is part of a diet generated through a particular subsistence system. Many of our daily experiences, including our attitudes, skills, and relationships with others, are

influenced by our subsistence system. Knowing that the Earth has been transformed for thousands of years by human subsistence activities, we must also consider the ways in which our future will be shaped by the present. Are we managing our re-sources in a sustainable way? How will we continue to feed growing populations in the future? Think about it next time you sit down to eat a meal.

discussion questions

1. A hallmark of agriculture is the separation of food production from food consumption; many people know almost nothing about where their food has come from. How does this lack of knowledge affect the food choices people make? How useful are efforts to change food labels to notify shoppers about the use of farming techniques such as genetic modification or organic growing for consumers? What other steps could be taken to make people more knowledgeable about the journey that food takes from farm to table?
2. The global commodity chains that bring food from many countries to grocery stores in the United States give wealthy consumers a great variety of food choices, but the farmers at the beginning of the commodity chain earn very little money. What kinds of solutions might help reduce the concentration of wealth at the end of the commodity chain?
3. Mono-cropping is a feature of industrial food production and has the benefit of producing staple foods like wheat and corn in vast quantities, but mono-cropping makes our diet less diverse. Are the effects of agricultural mono-cropping reflected in your own everyday diet? How

many different plant foods do you eat on a regular basis?
How difficult would it be for you to obtain a more diverse diet by shopping in the same places you shop now?

glossary

Agriculture: the cultivation of domesticated plants and animals using technologies that allow for intensive use of the land.

Broad spectrum diet: a diet based on a wide range of food resources.

Built environment: spaces that are human-made, including cultivated land as well as buildings.

Carrying capacity: a measurement of the number of calories that can be extracted from a particular unit of land in order to support a human population.

Commodity chain: the series of steps a food takes from location where it is produced to the store where it is sold to consumers.

Delayed return system: techniques for obtaining food that require an investment of work over a period of time before the food becomes available for consumption. Farming is a delayed return system due to the passage of time between planting and harvest. The opposite is an

immediate return system in which the food acquired can be immediately consumed. Foraging is an immediate return system.

Domestic economy: the work associated with obtaining food for a family or household.

Foodways: the cultural norms and attitudes surrounding food and eating.

Foraging: a subsistence system that relies on wild plant and animal food resources. This system is sometimes called “hunting and gathering.”

Historical ecology: the study of how human cultures have developed over time as a result of inter-actions with the environment.

Horticulture: a subsistence system based on the small-scale cultivation of crops intended primarily for the direct consumption of the household or immediate community.

Modes of subsistence: the techniques used by the members of a society to obtain food. Anthropologists classify subsistence into four broad categories: foraging, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture.

Mono-cropping: the reliance on a single plant species as a food source. Mono-cropping leads to decreased dietary diversity and carries the risk of malnutrition compared to a more diverse diet.

Neolithic Revolution: a period of rapid innovation in subsistence technologies that began 10,000 years ago and led to the emergence of agriculture. Neolithic means “new stone age,” a name referring to the stone tools produced during this time period.

Pastoralism: a subsistence system in which people raise herds of domesticated livestock.

Staple crops: foods that form the backbone of the subsistence system by providing the majority of the calories a society consumes.

Subsistence system: the set of skills, practices, and technologies used by members of a society to acquire and distribute food.

World system: a complex economic system through which goods circulate around the globe. The world system for food is characterized by a separation of the producers of goods from the consumers.

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44. Chapter 9: Political Anthropology: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Learning Objectives

- Identify the four levels of socio-cultural integration (band, tribe, chiefdom, and state) and describe their characteristics.
- Compare systems of leadership in egalitarian and non-egalitarian societies.
- Describe systems used in tribes and chiefdoms to achieve social integration and encourage connections between people.
- Assess the benefits and problems associated with state-level political organizations.
- Evaluate the extent to which the Islamic State meets the formal criteria for a state-level political organization.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 9: Political Anthropology: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*.

All cultures have one element in common: they some-how exercise social control over their own members. Even small foraging societies such as the Ju/'hoansi or !Kung, the Inuit (or “Eskimo”) of the Arctic north, and aboriginal Australians experience disputes that must be contained if inter-personal conflicts are to be reduced

or eliminated. As societies become more complex, means of control increase accordingly. The study of these means of control are the subject of political anthropology.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Like the “invisible hand” of the market to which Adam Smith refers in analyzing the workings of capitalism, two forces govern the workings of politics: power—the ability to induce behavior of others in specified ways by means of coercion or use or threat of physical force—and author-ity—the ability to induce behavior of others by persua-sion.¹ Extreme examples of the exercise of power are the gulags (prison camps) in Stalinist Russia, the death camps in Nazi-ruled Germany and Eastern Europe, and so-called Su-permax prisons such as Pelican Bay in California and the prison for “enemy combatants” in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the United States. In all of these settings, prisoners com-ply or are punished or executed. At the other extreme are most forager societies, which typically exercise authority more often than power. Groups in those societies comply with the wishes of their most persuasive members.

In actuality, power and authority are points on a contin-uum and both are present in every society to some degree. Even Hitler, who exercised absolute power in many ways, had to hold the Nuremberg rallies to generate popular sup-port for his regime and persuade the German population that his leadership was the way to national salvation. In the Soviet Union, leaders had a great deal of coercive and physical power but still felt the need to hold parades and mass rallies on May Day every year to persuade people to remain attached to their vision of a communal society. At the other end of the political spectrum, societies that tend to use persuasion through authority also have some forms of coercive power. Among the Inuit, for example, individuals who flagrantly violated group norms could be punished, including by homicide.²

A related concept in both politics and law is **legitimacy**: the

perception that an individual has a valid right to leadership. Legitimacy is particularly applicable to complex societies that require centralized decision-making. Historically, the right to rule has been based on various principles. In agricultural states such as ancient Mesopotamia, the Aztec, and the Inca, justification for the rule of particular individuals was based on hereditary succession and typically granted to the eldest son of the ruler. Even this principle could be uncertain at times, as was the case when the Inca emperor Ata-hualpa had just defeated his rival and brother Huascar when the Spaniards arrived in Peru in 1533.³

In many cases, supernatural beliefs were invoked to establish legitimacy and justify rule by an elite. Incan emperors derived their right to rule from the Sun God and Aztec rulers from Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird-to-the-Left). European monarchs invoked a divine right to rule that was reinforced by the Church of England in Britain and by the Roman Catholic Church in other countries prior to the Reformation. In India, the dominance of the Brahmin elite over the other **castes** is justified by karma, cumulative forces created by good and evil deeds in past lives. Secular equivalents also serve to justify rule by elites; examples include the promise of a worker's paradise in the former Soviet Union and racial purity of Aryans in Nazi Germany. In the United States and other democratic forms of government, legitimacy rests on the consent of the governed in periodic elections (though in the United States, the incoming president is sworn in using a Christian Bible despite alleged separation of church and state).

In some societies, dominance by an individual or group is viewed as unacceptable. Christopher Boehm (1999) developed the concept of **reverse dominance** to describe societies in which people rejected attempts by any individual to exercise power.⁴ They achieved this aim using ridicule, criticism, disobedience, and strong disapproval and could banish extreme offenders. Richard Lee encountered this phenomenon when he presented the !Kung with whom he had worked over the preceding year with a fattened ox.⁵ Rather than praising or thanking him, his hosts ridiculed the beast

as scrawny, ill fed, and probably sick. This behavior is consistent with reverse dominance.

Even in societies that emphasize equality between people, decisions still have to be made. Some-times particularly persuasive figures such as headmen make them, but persuasive figures who lack formal power are not free to make decisions without coming to a consensus with their fellows. To reach such consensus, there must be general agreement. Essentially, then, even if in a backhanded way, legitimacy characterizes societies that lack institutionalized leadership.

Another set of concepts refers to the reinforcements or consequences for compliance with the directive and laws of a society. **Positive reinforcements** are the rewards for compliance; examples include medals, financial incentives, and other forms of public recognition. **Negative reinforcements** punish noncompliance through fines, imprisonment, and death sentences. These reinforcements can be identified in every human society, even among foragers or others who have no written system of law. Reverse dominance is one form of negative reinforcement.

LEVELS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION

If cultures of various sizes and configurations are to be compared, there must be some common basis for defining political organization. In many small communities, the family functions as a political unit. As Julian Steward wrote about the Shoshone, a Native American group in the Nevada basin, “all features of the relatively simple culture were integrated and functioned on a family level. The family was the reproductive, economic, educational, political, and religious unit.”⁶ In larger more complex societies, however, the functions of the family are taken over by larger social institutions. The resources of the economy, for example, are managed by authority figures outside

the family who demand taxes or other tribute. The educational function of the family may be taken over by schools constituted under the authority of a government, and the authority structure in the family is likely to be subsumed under the greater power of the state. Therefore, anthropologists need methods for assessing political organizations that can be applied to many different kinds of communities. This concept is called levels of socio-cultural integration.

Elman Service (1975) developed an influential scheme for categorizing the political character of societies that recognized four levels of socio-cultural integration: **band**, **tribe**, **chiefdom**, and **state**.⁷ A band is the smallest unit of political organization, consisting of only a few families and no formal leadership positions. Tribes have larger populations but are organized around family ties and have fluid or shifting systems of temporary leadership. Chiefdoms are large political units in which the chief, who usually is determined by heredity, holds a formal position of power. States are the most complex form of political organization and are characterized by a central government that has a monopoly over legitimate uses of physical force, a sizable bureaucracy, a system of formal laws, and a standing military force.

Each type of political integration can be further categorized as **egalitarian**, **ranked**, or **stratified**. Band societies and tribal societies generally are considered egalitarian—there is no great difference in status or power between individuals and there are as many valued status positions in the societies as there are persons able to fill them. Chiefdoms are ranked societies; there are substantial differences in the wealth and social status of individuals based on how closely related they are to the chief. In ranked societies, there are a limited number of positions of power or status, and only a few can occupy them. State societies are stratified. There are large differences in the wealth, status, and power of individuals based

on unequal access to resources and positions of power. Socio-economic classes, for instance, are forms of stratification in many state societies.⁸

EGALITARIAN SOCIETIES

We humans are not equal in all things. The status of women is low relative to the status of men in many, if not most, societies as we will see. There is also the matter of age. In some societies, the aged enjoy greater prestige than the young; in others, the aged are subjected to discrimination in employment and other areas. Even in Japan, which has traditionally been known for its respect for elders, the prestige of the aged is in decline. And we vary in terms of our abilities. Some are more eloquent or skilled technically than others; some are expert craft persons while others are not; some excel at conceptual thought, whereas for the rest of us, there is always the *For Dummies* book series to manage our computers, software, and other parts of our daily lives such as wine and sex.

In a complex society, it may seem that **social classes**—differences in wealth and status—are, like death and taxes, inevitable: that one is born into wealth, poverty, or somewhere in between and has no say in the matter, at least at the start of life, and that social class is an involuntary position in society. However, is social class universal? As they say, let's look at the record, in this case ethnographies. We find that among foragers, there is no advantage to hoarding food; in most climates, it will rot before one's eyes. Nor is there much personal property, and leadership, where it exists, is **informal**. In forager societies, the basic ingredients for social class do not exist. Foragers such as the !Kung, Inuit, and aboriginal Australians, are **egalitarian** societies in which there are few differences between members in wealth, status, and power. Highly skilled and less skilled hunters do not belong to different strata in the way that the captains of industry do from you and me. The less skilled hunters in egalitarian societies receive a

share of the meat and have the right to be heard on important decisions. Egalitarian societies also lack a government or centralized leadership. Their leaders, known as headmen or big men, emerge by consensus of the group. Foraging societies are always egalitarian, but so are many societies that practice horticulture or pastoralism. In terms of political organization, egalitarian societies can be either bands or tribes.

BAND-LEVEL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Societies organized as a band typically comprise foragers who rely on hunting and gathering and are therefore nomadic, are few in number (rarely exceeding 100 persons), and form small groups consisting of a few families and a shifting population. Bands lack formal leadership. Richard Lee went so far as to say that the Dobe! Kung had no leaders. To quote one of his informants, “Of course we have headmen. Each one of us is headman over himself.”⁹At most, a band’s leader is *primus inter pares* or “first among equals” assuming anyone is first at all. Modesty is a valued trait; arrogance and competitiveness are not acceptable in societies characterized by reverse dominance. What leadership there is in band societies tends to be transient and subject to shifting circumstances. For example, among the Paiute in North America, “rabbit bosses” coordinated rabbit drives during the hunting season but played no leadership role otherwise. Some “leaders” are excellent mediators who are called on when individuals are involved in disputes while others are perceived as skilled shamans or future-seers who are consulted periodically. There are no formal offices or rules of succession.¹⁰

Bands were probably the first political unit to come into existence outside the family itself. There is some debate in anthropology about how the earliest bands were organized. Elman Service argued that patrilineal bands organized around groups of related men served as the prototype, reasoning that groups centered on male family relationships made sense because male cooperation was

essential to hunting.¹¹ M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies pointed out in rebuttal that gathering vegetable foods, which typically was viewed as women's work, actually contributed a greater number of calories in most cultures and thus that matrilineal bands organized around groups of related women would be closer to the norm.¹² Indeed, in societies in which hunting is the primary source of food, such as the Inuit, women tend to be subordinate to men while men and women tend to have roughly equal status in societies that mainly gather plants for food.

Law in Band Societies

Within bands of people, disputes are typically resolved informally. There are no formal mediators or any organizational equivalent of a court of law. A good mediator may emerge—or may not. In some cultures, duels are employed. Among the Inuit, for example, disputants engage in a duel using songs in which, drum in hand, they chant insults at each other before an audience. The audience selects the better chanter and thereby the winner in the dispute.¹³ The Mbuti of the African Congo use ridicule; even children berate adults for laziness, quarreling, or selfishness. If ridicule fails, the Mbuti elders evaluate the dispute carefully, determine the cause, and, in extreme cases, walk to the center of the camp and criticize the individuals by name, using humor to soften their criticism—the group, after all, must get along.¹⁴

Warfare in Band Societies

Nevertheless, conflict does sometimes break out into war between bands and, sometimes, within them. Such warfare is usually sporadic and short-lived since bands do not have formal leadership structures or enough warriors to sustain conflict for long. Most of the conflict arises from inter-personal arguments. Among the Tiwi of Australia, for example, failure of one band to reciprocate another band's wife-giving with one of its own female relative led to abduction of women by the aggrieved band, precipitating a "war" that involved some spear-throwing (many did

not shoot straight and even some of the onlookers were wounded) but mostly violent talk and verbal abuse.¹⁵ For the Dobe !Kung, Lee found 22 cases of homicide by males and other periodic episodes of violence, mostly in disputes over women—not quite the gentle souls Elizabeth Marshall Thomas depicted in her *Harmless People* (1959).¹⁶

TRIBAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Whereas bands involve small populations without structure, tribal societies involve at least two well-defined groups linked together in some way and range in population from about 100 to as many as 5,000 people. Though their social institutions can be fairly complex, there are no centralized political structures or offices in the strict sense of those terms. There may be headmen, but there are no rules of succession and sons do not necessarily succeed their fathers as is the case with chiefdoms. Tribal leadership roles are open to anyone—in practice, usually men, especially elder men who acquire leadership positions because of their personal abilities and qualities. Leaders in tribes do not have a means of coercing others or formal powers associated with their positions. Instead, they must persuade others to take actions they feel are needed. A Yanomami headman, for instance, said that he would never issue an order unless he knew it would be obeyed. The headman Kaobawä exercised influence by example and by making suggestions and warning of consequences of taking or not taking an action.¹⁷

Like bands, tribes are egalitarian societies. Some individuals in a tribe do sometimes accumulate personal property but not to the extent that other tribe members are deprived. And every (almost always male) person has the opportunity to become a headman or leader and, like bands, one's leadership position can be situational. One man may be a good mediator, another an exemplary warrior, and a third capable of leading a hunt or finding a more ideal area for cultivation or grazing herds. An example illustrating this kind of leadership is the **big man** of New Guinea; the term is derived from the languages of New Guinean tribes (literally meaning "man of influence"). The big man is one who has acquired followers by doing favors they cannot possibly repay, such as settling their debts

or providing bride-wealth. He might also acquire as many wives as possible to create alliances with his wives' families. His wives could work to care for as many pigs as possible, for example, and in due course, he could sponsor a pig feast that would serve to put more tribe members in his debt and shame his rivals. It is worth noting that the followers, incapable of repaying the Big Man's gifts, stand metaphorically as beggars to him.¹⁸

Still, a big man does not have the power of a monarch. His role is not hereditary. His son must demonstrate his worth and acquire his own following—he must become a big man in his own right.

Furthermore, there usually are other big men in the village who are his potential rivals. Another man who proves himself capable of acquiring a following can displace the existing big man. The big man also has no power to coerce—no army or police force. He cannot prevent a follower from joining another big man, nor can he force the follower to pay any debt owed. There is no New Guinean equivalent of a U.S. marshal. Therefore, he can have his way only by diplomacy and persuasion—which do not always work.¹⁹

Tribal Systems of Social Integration

Tribal societies have much larger populations than bands and thus must have mechanisms for creating and maintaining connections between tribe members. The family ties that unite members of a band are not sufficient to maintain solidarity and cohesion in the larger population of a tribe. Some of the systems that knit tribes together are based on family (kin) relationships, including various kinds of marriage and family lineage systems, but there are also ways to foster tribal solidarity outside of family arrangements through systems that unite members of a tribe by age or gender.

Integration through Age Grades and Age Sets

Tribes use various systems to encourage solidarity or feelings

of connectedness between people who are not related by family ties. These systems, sometimes known as **sodalities**, unite people across family groups. In one sense, all societies are divided into age categories. In the U.S. educational system, for instance, children are matched to grades in school according to their age—six-year-olds in first grade and thirteen-year-olds in eighth grade. Other cultures, however, have established complex age-based social structures. Many pastoralists in East Africa, for example, have age grades and age sets. **Age sets** are named categories to which men of a certain age are assigned at birth. **Age grades** are groups of men who are close to one another in age and share similar duties or responsibilities. All men cycle through each age grade over the course of their lifetimes. As the age sets advance, the men assume the duties associated with each age grade.

An example of this kind of tribal society is the Tiriki of Kenya. From birth to about fifteen years of age, boys become members of one of seven named age sets. When the last boy is recruited, that age set closes and a new one opens. For example, young and adult males who belonged to the “Juma” age set in 1939 became warriors by 1954. The “Mayima” were already warriors in 1939 and became elder warriors during that period. In precolonial times, men of the warrior age grade defended the herds of the Tiriki and conducted raids on other tribes while the elder warriors acquired cattle and houses and took on wives. There were recurring reports of husbands who were much older than their wives, who had married early in life, often as young as fifteen or sixteen. As solid citizens of the Tiriki, the elder warriors also handled decision-making functions of the tribe as a whole; their legislation affected the entire village while also representing their own kin groups. The other age sets also moved up through age grades in the fifteen-year period. The elder warriors in 1939, “Nyonje,” became the judicial elders by 1954. Their function was to resolve disputes that arose between individuals, families, and kin groups, of which some elders were a part. The “Jiminigayi,” judicial elders in 1939, became ritual elders in 1954, handling supernatural functions that involved the entire Tiriki

community. During this period, the open age set was “Kabalach.” Its prior members had all grown old or died by 1939 and new boys joined it between 1939 and 1954. Thus, the Tiriki age sets moved in continuous 105-year cycles. This age grade and age set system encourages bonds between men of similar ages. Their loyalty to their families is tempered by their responsibilities to their fellows of the same age.²⁰

Integration through Bachelor Associations and Men’s Houses

Among most, if not all, tribes of New Guinea, the existence of men’s houses serves to cut across family lineage groups in a village. Perhaps the most fastidious case of male association in New Guinea is the bachelor association of the Mae-Enga, who live in the northern highlands. In their culture, a boy becomes conscious of the distance between males and females before he leaves home at age five to live in the men’s house. Women are regarded as potentially unclean, and strict codes that minimize male-female relations are enforced. *Sanggai* festivals reinforce this division. During the festival, every youth of age 15 or 16 goes into seclusion in the forest and observes additional restrictions, such as avoiding pigs (which are cared for by women) and avoiding gazing at the ground lest he see female footprints or pig feces.²¹ One can see, therefore, that every boy commits his loyalty to the men’s house early in life even though he remains a member of his birth family. Men’s houses are the center of male activities. There, they draw up strategies for warfare, conduct ritual activities involving magic and honoring of ancestral spirits, and plan and rehearse periodic pig feasts.

Integration through Gifts and Feasting

Exchanges and the informal obligations associated with them are primary devices by which bands and tribes maintain a degree of order and forestall armed conflict, which was viewed as the “state of nature” for tribal societies by Locke and Hobbes, in the absence of exercises of force by police or an army. Marcel Mauss, nephew and student of eminent French sociologist Emile Durkheim, attempted

in 1925 to explain gift giving and its attendant obligations cross-culturally in his book, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. He started with the assumption that two groups have an imperative to establish a relationship of some kind. There are three options when they meet for the first time. They could pass each other by and never see each other again. They may resort to arms with an uncertain outcome. One could wipe the other out or, more likely, win at great cost of men and property or fight to a draw. The third option is to “come to terms” with each other by establishing a more or less permanent relationship.²² Exchanging gifts is one way for groups to establish this relationship.

These gift exchanges are quite different from Western ideas about gifts. In societies that lack a central government, formal law enforcement powers, and collection agents, the gift exchanges are obligatory and have the force of law in the absence of law. Mauss referred to them as “total prestations.”

Though no Dun and Bradstreet agents would come to collect, the potential for conflict that could break out at any time reinforced the obligations.²³ According to Mauss, the first obligation is to give; it must be met if a group is to extend social ties to others. The second obligation is to receive; refusal of a gift constitutes rejection of the offer of friendship as well. Conflicts can arise from the perceived insult of a rejected offer. The third obligation is to repay. One who fails to make a gift in return will be seen as in debt—in essence, a beggar. Mauss offered several ethnographic cases that illustrated these obligations. Every gift conferred power to the giver, expressed by the Polynesian terms *mana* (an intangible supernatural force) and *hau* (among the Maori, the “spirit of the gift,” which must be returned to its owner).²⁴

Marriage and its associated obligations also can be viewed as a form of gift-giving as one family “gives” a bride or groom to the other.

Basics of Marriage, Family, and Kinship

Understanding social solidarity in tribal societies requires knowledge of family structures, which are also known as kinship systems. The romantic view of marriage in today’s mass media is largely a product of Hollywood movies and romance novels from mass-market publishers such as Harlequin. In most cultures around the world, marriage is largely a device that links two families together; this is why arranged marriage is so common from a cross-cultural perspective. And, as Voltaire admonished, if we are to discuss anything, we need to define our terms.

Marriage is defined in numerous ways, usually (but not always) involving a tie between a woman and a man. Same-sex marriage is also common in many cultures. Nuclear families consist of parents and their children. Extended families consist of three generations or more of relatives connected by marriage and descent.

In the diagrams below, triangles represent males and circles represent females. Vertical lines represent a **generational link** connecting, say, a man with his father. Horizontal lines above two figures are **sibling links**; thus, a triangle connected to a circle represents a brother and sister. Equal signs connect husbands and wives. Sometimes a diagram may render use of an equal sign unrealistic; in those cases, a horizontal line drawn *below* the two figures shows a marriage link.

Most rules of descent generally fall into one of two categories. **Bilateral descent** (commonly used in the United States) recognizes both the mother’s and the father’s “sides” of the family while **unilineal descent** recognizes only one sex-based “side” of the family. Unilineal descent can be **patrilineal**, recognizing only relatives through a line of male ancestors, or **matrilineal**, recognizing only relatives through a line of female ancestors.

Groups made up of two or more extended families can be

connected as larger groups linked by kinship ties. A **lineage** consists of individuals who can trace or demonstrate their descent through a line of males or females to the founding ancestor.

For further discussion of this topic, consult the Family and Marriage chapter.

Integration through Marriage

Most tribal societies' political organizations involve marriage, which is a logical vehicle for creating alliances between groups. One of the most well-documented types of marriage alliance is bilateral cross-cousin marriage in which a man marries his cross-cousin—one he is related to through two links, his father's sister and his mother's brother. These marriages have been documented among the

Yanomami, an indigenous group living in Venezuela and Brazil. Yanomami villages are typically populated by two or more extended family groups also known as lineages. Disputes and disagreements are bound to occur, and these tensions can potentially escalate to open conflict or even physical violence. Bilateral cross-cousin marriage provides a means of linking lineage groups together over time through the exchange of brides. Because cross-cousin marriage links people together by both marriage and blood ties (kinship), these unions can reduce tension between the groups or at least provide an incentive for members of rival lineages to work together.

To get a more detailed picture of how marriages integrate family groups, consider the following family diagrams. In these diagrams, triangles represent males and circles represent females. Vertical lines represent a generational link connecting, say, a man to his father. Horizontal lines above two figures are sibling links; thus, a triangle connected to a circle by a horizontal line represents a brother and sister. Equal signs connect husbands and wives. In some diagrams in which use of an equal sign is not realistic, a horizontal line drawn *below* the two figures shows their marriage link.

Figure 2 depicts the alliance created by the

bilateral cross-cousin marriage system. In this figure, uppercase letters represent males and lowercase letters represent females, Thus, X refers to all of the males of Lineage X and Y refers to all of the males of Lineage Y; likewise, x refers to all of the females of Lineage X and y refers to all of the females of Lineage Y.

Consider the third generation in the diagram. X3 has married y3 (the horizontal line below the figures), creating an **affinal** link. Trace the relationship between

X3 and y3 through their matrilineal links—the links between a mother and her brother. You can see from the diagram that X3's mother is x2 and her brother is Y2 and his daughter is y3. Therefore, y3 is X3's mother's brother's daughter.

Now trace the patrilineal links of this couple—the links between a father and his sister. X3's father is X2 and X2's sister is x2, who married Y2, which makes her daughter y3—his father's sister's daughter. Work your way through the description and diagram until you are comfortable understanding the connections.

Now do the same thing with Y3 by tracing his matrilineal ties with his wife x3. His mother is x2 and her brother is X2, which makes his mother's brother's daughter x3. On the patrilineal, his father is Y2, and Y2's sister is y2, who is married to X2 Therefore, their daughter is x3.

This example represents the ideal **bilateral cross-cousin marriage**: a man marries a woman who is *both* his mother's brother's daughter and his father's sister's daughter. The man's matrilineal cross-cousin and patrilineal cross-cousin are the same woman! Thus, the two lineages have discharged their obligations to one another in the same generation. Lineage X provides a daughter to lineage Y and lineage Y reciprocates with a daughter. Each of the lineages therefore retains its potential to reproduce **in the next**

generation. The obligation incurred by lineage Y from taking lineage X's daughter in marriage has been repaid by giving a daughter in marriage to lineage X.

This type of marriage is what Robin Fox, following Claude Lévi-Strauss, called **restricted ex-change**.²⁵ Notice that only two extended families can engage in this exchange. Society remains relatively simple because it can expand only by splitting off. And, as we will see later, when daughter villages split off, the two lineages move together.

Not all marriages can conform to this type of exchange. Often, the patrilateral cross-cousin is not the same person; there may be two or more persons. Furthermore, in some situations, a man can marry either a matrilateral or a patrilateral cross-cousin but not both. The example of the ideal type of cross-cousin marriage is used to demonstrate the logical outcome of such unions.

Integration through a Segmentary Lineage

Another type of kin-based integrative mechanism is a segmentary lineage. As previously noted, a lineage is a group of people who can trace or demonstrate their descent from a founding ancestor through a line of males or a line of females. A **segmentary lineage** is a hierarchy of lineages that contains both close and relatively distant family members. At the base are several minimal lineages whose members trace their descent from their founder back two or three generations. At the top is the founder of all of the lineages, and two or more maximal lineages can derive from the founder's lineage. Between the maximal and the minimal lineages are several intermediate lineages. For purposes of simplicity, we will discuss only the maximal and minimal lineages.

One characteristic of segmentary lineages is complementary opposition. To illustrate, consider the chart in Figure 3, which presents two maximal lineages, A and B, each having two minimal lineages: A1 and A2 for A and B1 and B2 for B.

Suppose A1 starts a feud with A2 over cattle theft. Since A1 and A2

are of the same maximal lineage, their feud is likely to be contained within that lineage, and B1 and B2 are likely to ignore the conflict since it is no concern of theirs. Now suppose A2 attacks B1 for cattle theft. In that case, A1 might unite with A2 to feud with B1, who B2 join in to defend. Thus, the feud would involve everyone in maximal lineage A against everyone in maximal lineage B. Finally, consider an attack by an outside tribe against A1. In response, both maximal lineages might rise up and defend A1.

The classic examples of segmentary lineages were described by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940) in his discussion of the Nuer, pastoralists who lived in southern Sudan.²⁶ Paul Bohannan (1989) also described this system among the Tiv, who were West African pastoralists, and Robert Murphy and Leonard Kasdan (1959) analyzed the importance of these lineages among the Bedouin of the Middle East.²⁷ Segmentary lineages often develop in environments in which a tribal society is surrounded by several other tribal societies. Hostility between the tribes induces their members to retain ties with their kin and to mobilize them when external conflicts arise. An example of this is ties maintained between the Nuer and the Dinka. Once a conflict is over, segmentary lineages typically dissolve into their constituent units. Another attribute of segmentary lineages is local genealogical segmentation, meaning close lineages dwell near each other, providing a physical reminder of their genealogy.²⁸ A Bedouin proverb summarizes the philosophy behind segmentary lineages:

I against my brother

I and my brother against my cousin

I, my brother, and my cousin against the world

Segmentary lineages regulate both warfare and inheritance and property rights. As noted by Sah-lins (1961) in studies of the Nuer, tribes in which such lineages occur typically have relatively large populations of close to 100,000 persons.²⁹

Law in Tribal Societies

Tribal societies generally lack systems of **codified law** whereby

damages, crimes, remedies, and punishments are specified. Only state-level political systems can determine, usually by writing formal laws, which behaviors are permissible and which are not (discussed later in this chapter). In tribes, there are no systems of law enforcement whereby an agency such as the police, the sheriff, or an army can enforce laws enacted by an appropriate authority. And, as already noted, headman and big men cannot force their will on others.

In tribal societies, as in all societies, conflicts arise between individuals. Sometimes the issues are equivalent to crimes—taking of property or commitment of violence—that are not considered legitimate in a given society. Other issues are civil disagreements—questions of ownership, damage to property, an accidental death. In tribal societies, the aim is not so much to determine guilt or innocence or to assign criminal or civil responsibility as it is to resolve conflict, which can be accomplished in various ways. The parties might choose to avoid each other. Bands, tribes, and kin groups often move away from each other geographically, which is much easier for them to do than for people living in complex societies.

One issue in tribal societies, as in all societies, is guilt or innocence. When no one witnesses an offense or an account is deemed unreliable, tribal societies sometimes rely on the supernatural. **Oaths**, for example, involve calling on a deity to bear witness to the truth of what one says; the oath given in court is a holdover from this practice. An **ordeal** is used to determine guilt or innocence by submitting the accused to dangerous, painful, or risky tests believed to be controlled by supernatural forces. The poison oracle used by the Azande of the Sudan and the Congo is an ordeal based on their belief that most misfortunes are induced by witchcraft (in this case, witchcraft refers to ill feeling of one person toward another). A chicken is force fed a strychnine concoction known as *benge* just as

the name of the suspect is called out. If the chicken dies, the suspect is deemed guilty and is punished or goes through reconciliation.³⁰

A more commonly exercised option is to find ways to resolve the dispute. In small groups, an unresolved question can quickly escalate to violence and disrupt the group. The first step is often negotiation; the parties attempt to resolve the conflict by direct discussion in hope of arriving at an agreement. Offenders sometimes make a ritual apology, particularly if they are sensitive to community opinion. In Fiji, for example, offenders make ceremonial apologies called *i soro*, one of the meanings of which is “I surrender.” An intermediary speaks, offers a token gift to the offended party, and asks for forgiveness, and the request is rarely rejected.³¹

When negotiation or a ritual apology fails, often the next step is to recruit a third party to mediate a settlement as there is no official who has the power to enforce a settlement. A classic example in the anthropological literature is the Leopard Skin Chief among the Nuer, who is identified by a leopard skin wrap around his shoulders. He is not a chief but is a mediator. The position is hereditary, has religious overtones, and is responsible for the social well-being of the tribal segment. He typically is called on for serious matters such as murder. The culprit immediately goes to the residence of the Leopard Skin Chief, who cuts the culprit’s arm until blood flows. If the culprit fears vengeance by the dead man’s family, he remains at the residence, which is considered a sanctuary, and the Leopard Skin Chief then acts as a go-between for the families of the perpetrator and the dead man.

The Leopard Skin Chief cannot force the parties to settle and cannot enforce any settlement they reach. The source of his influence is the desire for the parties to avoid a feud that could escalate into an ever-widening conflict involving kin descended from different ancestors. He urges the aggrieved family to accept compensation, usually in the form of cattle. When such an agreement is reached, the chief collects the 40 to 50 head of cattle

and takes them to the dead man's home, where he performs various sacrifices of cleansing and atonement.³²

This discussion demonstrates the preference most tribal societies have for mediation given the potentially serious consequences of a long-term feud. Even in societies organized as states, mediation is often preferred. In the agrarian town of Talea, Mexico, for example, even serious crimes are mediated in the interest of preserving a degree of local harmony. The national authorities often tolerate local settlements if they maintain the peace.³³

Warfare in Tribal Societies

What happens if mediation fails and the Leopard Skin Chief cannot convince the aggrieved clan to accept cattle in place of their loved one? War. In tribal societies, wars vary in cause, intensity, and duration, but they tend to be less deadly than those run by states because of tribes' relatively small populations and limited technologies.

Tribes engage in warfare more often than bands, both internally and externally. Among pastoralists, both successful and attempted thefts of cattle frequently spark conflict. Among pre-state societies, pastoralists have a reputation for being the most prone to warfare. However, horticulturalists also engage in warfare, as the film *Dead Birds*, which describes warfare among the highland Dani of west New Guinea (Irian Jaya), attests. Among anthropologists, there is a "protein debate" regarding causes of warfare. Marvin Harris in a 1974 study of the Yanomami claimed that warfare arose there because of a protein deficiency associated with a scarcity of game, and Kenneth Good supported that thesis in finding that the game a Yanomami villager brought in barely supported the village.³⁴ He could not link this variable to warfare, however. In rebuttal, Napoleon Chagnon linked warfare among the Yanomami with abduction of women rather than disagreements over hunting territory, and findings from other cultures have tended to agree with Chagnon's theory.³⁵

Tribal wars vary in duration. **Raids** are short-term uses of physical

force that are organized and planned to achieve a limited objective such as acquisition of cattle (pastoralists) or other forms of wealth and, often, abduction of women, usually from neighboring communities.³⁶ **Feuds** are longer in duration and represent a state of recurring hostilities between families, lineages, or other kin groups. In a feud, the responsibility to avenge rests with the entire group, and the murder of any kin member is considered appropriate because the kin group as a whole is considered responsible for the transgression. Among the Dani, for example, vengeance is an obligation; spirits are said to dog the victim's clan until its members murder someone from the perpetrator's clan.³⁷

RANKED SOCIETIES AND CHIEFDOMS

Unlike egalitarian societies, **ranked societies** (sometimes called “rank societies”) involve greater differentiation between individuals and the kin groups to which they belong. These differences can be, and often are, inherited, but there are no significant restrictions in these societies on access to basic resources. All individuals can meet their basic needs. The most important differences between people of different ranks are based on **sumptuary rules**—norms that permit persons of higher rank to enjoy greater social status by wearing distinctive clothing, jewelry, and/or decorations denied those of lower rank. Every family group or lineage in the community is ranked in a hierarchy of prestige and power. Furthermore, within families, siblings are ranked by birth order and villages can also be ranked.

The concept of a ranked society leads us directly to the characteristics of **chiefdoms**. Unlike the position of headman in a band, the position of **chief** is an *office*—a permanent political status that demands a successor when the current chief dies. There are, therefore, two concepts of **chief**: the man (women rarely, if ever, occupy these posts) and the office. Thus the expression “The king is dead, long live the king.” With the New Guinean big man, there is no formal succession. Other big men will be recognized and eventually take the place of one who dies, but there is no rule stipulating that

his eldest son or any son must succeed him. For chiefs, there *must* be a successor and there are rules of succession.

Political chiefdoms usually are accompanied by an economic exchange system known as redistribution in which goods and services flow from the population at large to the central authority represented by the chief. It then becomes the task of the chief to return the flow of goods in another form. The chapter on economics provides additional information about redistribution economies.

These political and economic principles are exemplified by the potlatch custom of the Kwakwa-ka'wakw and other indigenous groups who lived in chiefdom societies along the northwest coast of North America from the extreme northwest tip of California through the coasts of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and southern Alaska. Potlatch ceremonies observed major events such as births, deaths, marriages of important persons, and installment of a new chief. Families prepared for the event by collecting food and other valuables such as fish, berries, blankets, animal skins, carved boxes, and copper. At the potlatch, several ceremonies were held, dances were performed by their "owners," and speeches delivered. The new chief was watched very carefully. Members of the society noted the eloquence of his speech, the grace of his presence, and any mistakes he made, however egregious or trivial. Next came the distribution of gifts, and again the chief was observed. Was he generous with his gifts? Was the value of his gifts appropriate to the rank of the recipient or did he give valuable presents to individuals of relatively low rank? Did his wealth allow him to offer valuable objects?

The next phase of the potlatch was critical to the chief's validation of his position. Visitor after visitor would arise and give long speeches evaluating the worthiness of this successor to the chieftain-ship of his father. If his performance had so far met their

expectations, if his gifts were appropriate, the guests' speeches praised him accordingly. They were less than adulatory if the chief had not performed to their expectations and they deemed the formal eligibility of the successor insufficient. He had to perform. If he did, then the guests' praise not only legitimized the new chief in his role, but also it ensured some measure of peace between villages. Thus, in addition to being a festive event, the potlatch determined the successor's legitimacy and served as a form of diplomacy between groups.³⁸

Much has been made among anthropologists of rivalry potlatches in which competitive gifts were given by rival pretenders to the chieftainship. Philip Drucker argued that competitive potlatches were a product of sudden demographic changes among the indigenous groups on the northwest coast.³⁹ When smallpox and other diseases decimated hundreds, many potential successors to the chieftainship died, leading to situations in which several potential successors might be eligible for the chieftainship. Thus, competition in potlatch ceremonies became extreme with blankets or copper repaid with ever-larger piles and competitors who destroyed their own valuables to demonstrate their wealth. The events became so raucous that the Canadian government outlawed the displays in the early part of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Prior to that time, it had been sufficient for a successor who was chosen beforehand to present appropriate gifts.⁴¹

Kin-Based Integrative Mechanisms: Conical Clans

With the centralization of society, kinship is most likely to continue playing a role, albeit a new one. Among Northwest Coast Indians, for example, the ranking model has every lineage ranked, one above the other, siblings ranked in order of birth, and even villages in a ranking scale. Drucker points out that the further north one goes, the more rigid the ranking scheme is. The most northerly of these coastal peoples trace their descent matrilineally; indeed, the Haida consist of four clans. Those further south tend to be patrilineal, and some show characteristics of an ambilineal descent group. It is still unclear, for example, whether the

Kwakiutl *numaym* are patrilineal clans or ambilineal descent groups.

In the accompanying diagram (Figure 4), assuming patrilineal descent, the eldest male within a given lineage becomes the chief of his district, that is, Chief a in the area of Local Lineage A, which is the older intermediate lineage (Intermediate Lineage I) relative to the founding clan ancestor. Chief b is the oldest male in Local Lineage B, which, in turn, is the oldest intermediate lineage (again Intermediate Lineage I) relative to the founding clan ancestor. Chief c is the oldest male of local Lineage C descended from the second oldest intermediate lineage (Intermediate Lineage II) relative to the founding clan ancestor, and Chief d is the oldest male of Local Lineage D, descended from the second oldest intermediate Lineage (Intermediate Lineage II) relative to the founding clan ancestor.

Nor does this end the process. Chief a, as head of Local Lineage A, also heads the district of Intermediate Lineage I while Chief c heads Local Lineage C in the district of Intermediate lineage II. Finally, the entire chiefdom is headed by the eldest male (Chief a) of the entire district governed by the descendants of the clan ancestor.

Integration through Marriage

Because chiefdoms cannot enforce their power by controlling resources or by having a monopoly on the use of force, they rely on integrative mechanisms that cut across kinship groups. As with tribal societies, marriage provides chiefdoms with a framework for encouraging social cohesion. However, since chiefdoms have more-elaborate status hierarchies than tribes, marriages tend to reinforce ranks.

A particular kind of marriage known as **matrilateral cross-cousin** demonstrates this effect and is illustrated by the diagram in Figure 4. The figure shows three **patrilineages** (family lineage groups based on descent from a common male ancestor) that are labeled A, B, and C. Consider the marriage between man B2 and woman a2. As you can see, they are linked by B1 (ego's father) and his sister (a2), who is married to A1 and bears daughter a2. If you look at other partners,

you will notice that all of the women move to the right: a2 and B2's daughter, b3, will marry C3 and bear a daughter, c4.

Viewed from the top of a flow diagram, the three lineages marry in a circle and at least three lineages are needed for this arrangement to work. The Purum of India, for example, practiced ma-trilateral cross-cousin marriage among seven lineages. Notice that lineage B cannot return the gift of A's daughter with one of its own. If A2 married b2, he would be marrying his patrilateral cross-cousin who is linked to him through A1, his sister a1, and her daughter b2. Therefore, b2 must marry C2 and lineage B can never repay lineage A for the loss of their daughters—trace their links to find out why. Since lineage B cannot meet the third of Mauss' obligations. B is a beggar relative to A. And lineage C is a beggar relative to lineage B. Paradoxically, lineage A (which gives its daughters to B) owes lineage C because it obtains its brides from lineage C. In this system, there appears to be an equality of inequality.

The patrilineal cross-cousin marriage system also operates in a complex society in highland Burma known as the Kachin. In that system, the wife-giving lineage is known as *mayu* and the wife-receiving lineage as *dama* to the lineage that gave it a wife. Thus, in addition to other mechanisms of dominance, higher-ranked lineages maintain their superiority by giving daughters to lower-ranked lineages and reinforce the relations between social classes through the *mayu-dama* relationship.⁴²

The Kachin are not alone in using interclass marriage to reinforce dominance. The Natchez peoples, a matrilineal society of the Mississippi region of North America, were divided into four classes: Great Sun chiefs, noble lineages, honored lineages, and inferior "stinkards." Unlike the Kachin, however, their marriage system was a way to upward mobility. The child of a woman who married a man of lower status assumed his/her mother's status. Thus, if a Great Sun woman married a stinkard, the child would become a Great Sun. If a stinkard man were to marry a Great Sun woman, the child would become a stinkard. The same relationship obtained between

women of noble lineage and honored lineage and men of lower status. Only two stinkard partners would maintain that stratum, which was continuously replenished with people in warfare.⁴³

Other societies maintained status in different ways. Brother-sister marriages, for example, were common in the royal lineages of the Inca, the Ancient Egyptians, and the Hawaiians, which sought to keep their lineages “pure.” Another, more-common type was **patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage** in which men married their fathers’ brothers’ daughters. This marriage system, which operated among many Middle Eastern nomadic societies, including the Rwala Bedouin chiefdoms, consolidated their herds, an important consideration for lineages wishing to maintain their wealth.⁴⁴

Integration through Secret Societies

Poro and **sande** secret societies for men and women, respectively, are found in the Mande-speaking peoples of West Africa, particularly in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast, and Guinea. The societies are illegal under Guinea’s national laws. Elsewhere, they are legal and membership is universally mandatory under local laws. They function in both political and religious sectors of society. So how can such societies be secret if all men and women must join? According to Beryl Bellman, who is a member of a *poro* association, the standard among the Kpelle of Liberia is an *ability* to keep secrets. Members of the community are entrusted with the political and religious responsibilities associated with the society only after they learn to keep secrets.⁴⁵ There are two political structures in *poros* and *sandes*: the “secular” and the “sacred.” The secular structure consists of the town chief, neighborhood and kin group headmen, and elders. The sacred structure (the *zo*) is composed of a hierarchy of “priests” of the *poro* and the *sande* in the neighborhood, and among the Kpelle the *poro* and *sande zo* take turns dealing with in-town fighting, rapes, homicides, incest, and land disputes. They, like leopard skin chiefs, play an important role in mediation. The *zo* of both the *poro* and *sande* are held in great respect and even feared. Some authors have suggested that sacred structure strengthens the secular political authority because chiefs

and landowners occupy the most powerful positions in the zo.46 Consequently, these chiefdoms seem to have developed formative elements of a stratified society and a state, as we see in the next section.

STRATIFIED SOCIETIES

Opposite from egalitarian societies in the spectrum of social classes is the stratified society, which is defined as one in which elites who are a numerical minority control the strategic resources that sustain life. Strategic resources include water for states that depend on irrigation agriculture, land in agricultural societies, and oil in industrial societies. Capital and products and resources used for further production are modes of production that rely on oil and other fossil fuels such as natural gas in industrial societies. (Current political movements call for the substitution of solar and wind power for fossil fuels.)

Operationally, **stratification** is, as the term implies, a social structure that involves two or more largely mutually exclusive populations. An extreme example is the caste system of traditional Indian society, which draws its legitimacy from Hinduism. In **caste systems**, membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life, and social mobility—moving from one social class to another—is not an option. Nor can persons of different castes marry; that is, they are endogamous. Although efforts have been made to abolish castes since India achieved independence in 1947, they still predominate in rural areas.

India's caste system consists of four *varna*, pure castes, and one collectively known as *Dalit* and sometimes as *Harijan*—in English, “untouchables,” reflecting the notion that for any *varna* caste member to touch or even see a *Dalit* pollutes them. The topmost *varna* caste is the *Brahmin* or priestly caste. It is composed of

priests, governmental officials and bureaucrats at all levels, and other professionals. The next highest is the *Kshatriya*, the warrior caste, which includes soldiers and other military personnel and the police and their equivalents. Next are the *Vaishyas*, who are craftsmen and merchants, followed by the *Sudras* (pronounced “shudra”), who are peasants and menial workers. Metaphorically, they represent the parts of *Manu*, who is said to have given rise to the human race through dismemberment. The head corresponds to *Brahmin*, the arms to *Kshatriya*, the thighs to *Vaishya*, and the feet to the *Sudra*.

There are also a variety of subcastes in India. The most important are the hundreds, if not thousands, of occupational subcastes known as *jatis*. Wheelwrights, ironworkers, landed peasants, landless farmworkers, tailors of various types, and barbers all belong to different *jatis*. Like the broader castes, *jatis* are endogamous and one is born into them. They form the basis of the *jajmani* relationship, which involves the provider of a particular service, the *jajman*, and the recipient of the service, the *kamin*. Training is involved in these occupations but one cannot change vocations. Furthermore, the relationship between the *jajman* and the *kamin* is determined by previous generations. If I were to provide you, my *kamin*, with haircutting services, it would be because my father cut your father’s hair. In other words, you would be stuck with me regardless of how poor a barber I might be. This system represents another example of an economy as an instituted process, an economy embedded in society.⁴⁷

Similar restrictions apply to those excluded from the *varna* castes, the “untouchables” or *Dalit*. Under the worst restrictions, *Dalits* were thought to pollute other castes. If the shadow of a *Dalit* fell on a *Brahmin*, the *Brahmin* immediately went home to bathe. Thus, at various times and locations, the untouchables were also unseeable, able to come out only at night.⁴⁸ *Dalits* were born into jobs considered polluting to other castes, particularly work involving dead animals, such as butchering (Hinduism discourages consumption of meat so the clients were Muslims, Christians, and

believers of other religions), skinning, tanning, and shoemaking with leather. Contact between an upper caste person and a person of any lower caste, even if “pure,” was also considered polluting and was strictly forbidden.

The theological basis of caste relations is *karma*—the belief that one’s caste in this life is the cumulative product of one’s acts in past lives, which extends to all beings, from minerals to animals to gods. Therefore, though soul class mobility is nonexistent during a lifetime, it is possible between lifetimes. *Brahmins* justified their station by claiming that they must have done good in their past lives. However, there are indications that the untouchable *Dalits* and other lower castes are not convinced of their legitimation.⁴⁹

Although India’s system is the most extreme, it is not the only caste system. In Japan, a caste known as *Burakumin* is similar in status to *Dalits*. Though they are no different in physical appearance from other Japanese people, the *Burakumin* people have been forced to live in ghettos for centuries. They descend from people who worked in the leather tanning industry, a low-status occupation, and still work in leather industries such as shoemaking. Marriage between *Burakumin* and other Japanese people is restricted, and their children are excluded from public schools.⁵⁰

Some degree of social mobility characterizes all societies, but even so-called open-class societies are not as mobile as one might think. In the United States, for example, actual movement up the social ladder is rare despite Horatio Alger and rags-to-riches myths. Stories of individuals “making it” through hard work ignore the majority of individuals whose hard work does not pay off or who actually experience downward mobility. Indeed, the Occupy Movement, which began in 2011, recognizes a dichotomy in American society of the 1 percent (millionaires and billionaires) versus the 99 percent (everyone else), and self-styled socialist Bernie Sanders made this the catch phrase of his campaign for

the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. In India (a closed-class society), on the other hand, there are exceptions to the caste system. In Rajasthan, for example, those who own or control most of the land are not of the warrior caste as one might expect; they are of the lowest caste and their tenants and laborers are *Brahmins*.⁵¹

STATE LEVEL OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The state is the most formal of the four levels of political organization under study here. In states, political power is centralized in a government that exercises a monopoly over the legitimate use of force.⁵² It is important to understand that the exercise of force constitutes a last resort; one hallmark of a weak state is frequent use of physical force to maintain order. States develop in societies with large, often ethnically diverse populations—hundreds of thousands or more—and are characterized by complex economies that can be driven by command or by the market, social stratification, and an intensive agricultural or industrial base.

Several characteristics accompany a monopoly over use of legitimate force in a state. First, like tribes and chiefdoms, states occupy a more or less clearly defined territory or land defined by boundaries that separate it from other political entities that may or not be states (exceptions are associated with the Islamic State and are addressed later). Ancient Egypt was a state bounded on the west by desert and possibly forager or tribal nomadic peoples. Mesopotamia was a series of city-states competing for territory with other city-states.

Heads of state can be individuals designated as kings, emperors, or monarchs under other names or can be democratically elected, in fact or in name—military dictators, for example, are often called presidents. Usually, states establish some board or group of councilors (e.g., the cabinet in the United States and the politburo in the former Soviet Union.) Often, such councils are supplemented with one or two legislative assemblies. The Roman Empire had a senate (which originated as a body of councilors) and as many as four assemblies that combined patrician (elite) and plebian (general

population) influences. Today, nearly all of the world's countries have some sort of an assembly, but many rubber-stamp the executive's decisions (or play an obstructionist role, as in the U.S. Congress during the Obama administration).

States also have an administrative bureaucracy that handles public functions provided for by executive orders and/or legislation. Formally, the administrative offices are typically arranged in a hierarchy and the top offices delegate specific functions to lower ones. Similar hierarchies are established for the personnel in a branch. In general, agricultural societies tend to rely on interpersonal relations in the administrative structure while industrial states rely on rational hierarchical structures.⁵³

An additional state power is taxation—a system of redistribution in which all citizens are required to participate. This power is exercised in various ways. Examples include the *mitá* or labor tax of the Inca, the tributary systems of Mesopotamia, and monetary taxes familiar to us today and to numerous subjects throughout the history of the state. Control over others' resources is an influential mechanism undergirding the power of the state.

A less tangible but no less powerful characteristic of states is their **ideologies**, which are designed to reinforce the right of powerholders to rule. Ideologies can manifest in philosophical forms, such as the divine right of kings in pre-industrial Europe, karma and the caste system in India, consent of the governed in the United States, and the metaphorical family in Imperial China. More often, ideologies are less indirect and less perceptible as propaganda. We might watch the Super Bowl or follow the latest antics of the Kardashians, oblivious to the notion that both are diversions from the reality of power in this society. Young Americans, for example, may be drawn to military service to fight in Iraq by patriotic ideologies just as their parents or grandparents were drawn to service during the Vietnam War. In a multitude of ways across many cultures, Plato's parable of the shadows in the

cave—that watchers misperceive shadows as reality—has served to reinforce political ideologies.

Finally, there is delegation of the state's coercive power. The state's need to use coercive power be-trays an important weakness—subjects and citizens often refuse to recognize the powerholders' right to rule. Even when the legitimacy of power is not questioned, the use and/or threat of force serves to maintain the state, and that function is delegated to agencies such as the police to maintain internal order and to the military to defend the state against real and perceived enemies and, in many cases, to expand the state's territory. Current examples include a lack of accountability for the killing of black men and women by police officers; the killing of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, is a defining example.

State and Nation

Though **state** and **nation** are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. A state is a coercive political institution; a nation is an ethnic population. There currently are about 200 states in the world, and many of them did not exist before World War II. Meanwhile, there are around 5,000 nations identified by their language, territorial base, history, and political organization.⁵⁴ Few states are conterminous with a nation (a nation that wholly comprises the state). Even in Japan, where millions of the country's people are of a single ethnicity, there is a significant indigenous minority known as the Ainu who at one time were a distinct biological population as well as an ethnic group. Only recently has Japanese society opened its doors to immigrants, mostly from Korea and Taiwan. The vast majority of states in the world, including the United States, are multi-national.

Some ethnicities/nations have no state of their own. The Kurds, who reside in adjacent areas of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, are one such nation. In the colonial era, the Mande-speaking peoples ranged across at least four West African countries, and borders between the countries were drawn without respect to the tribal identities of the people living there. Diasporas, the scattering of a people of

one ethnicity across the globe, are another classic example. The diaspora of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews is well-known. Many others, such as the Chinese, have more recently been forced to flee their homelands. The current ongoing mass migration of Syrians induced by formation of the Islamic State and the war in Syria is but the most recent example.

Formation of States

How do states form? One precondition is the presence of a **stratified society** in which an elite minority controls life-sustaining strategic resources. Another is increased agricultural productivity that provides support for a larger population. Neither, however, is a sufficient cause for development of a state. A group of people who are dissatisfied with conditions in their home region has a motive to move elsewhere—unless there is nowhere else to go and they are circumscribed. **Circumscription** can arise when a region is hemmed in by a geographic feature such as mountain ranges or desert and when migrants would have to change their subsistence strategies, perhaps having to move from agri-culture back to foraging, herding, or horticulture or to adapt to an urban industrialized environment. The Inca Empire did not colonize on a massive scale beyond northern Chile to the south or into the Amazon because indigenous people there could simply pick up and move elsewhere. Still, the majority of the Inca population did not have that option. Circumscription also results when a desirable adjacent region is taken by other states or chiefdoms.⁵⁵

Who, then, were the original subjects of these states? One short answer is **peasants**, a term derived from the French *paysan*, which means “countryman.” Peasantry entered the anthropological literature relatively late. In his 800-page tome *Anthropology* published in 1948, Alfred L. Kroeber defined peasantry in less than a sentence: “part societies with part cultures.”⁵⁶ Robert Redfield defined peasantry as a “little tradition” set against a “great tradition” of national state society.⁵⁷ Louis Fallers argued in 1961 against

calling African cultivators “peasants” because they had not lived in the context of a state-based civilization long enough.⁵⁸

Thus, peasants had been defined in reference to some larger society, usually an empire, a state, or a civilization. In light of this, Wolf sought to place the definition of peasant on a structural footing.⁵⁹ Using a funding metaphor, he compared peasants with what he called “primitive cultivators.” Both primitive cultivators and peasants have to provide for a “caloric fund” by growing food and, by extension, provide for clothing, shelter, and all other necessities of life. Second, both must provide for a “replacement fund”—not only reserving seeds for next year’s crop but also repairing their houses, replacing broken pots, and rebuilding fences. And both primitive cultivators and peasants must provide a “ceremonial fund” for rites of passage and fiestas. They differ in that peasants live in states and primitive cultivators do not. The state exercises domain over peasants’ resources, requiring peasants to provide a “fund of rent.” That fund appears in many guises, including tribute in kind, monetary taxes, and forced labor to an empire or lord. In Wolf’s conception, primitive cultivators are free of these obligations to the state.⁶⁰

Subjects of states are not necessarily landed; there is a long history of landless populations. Slavery has long coexisted with the state, and forced labor without compensation goes back to chiefdoms such as Kwakwaka’wakw. Long before Portuguese, Spanish, and English seafarers began trading slaves from the west coast of Africa, Arab groups enslaved people from Africa and Europe.⁶¹

For peasants, **proletarianization**—loss of land—has been a continuous process. One example is landed gentry in eighteenth century England who found that shepherding was more profitable than tribute from peasants and removed the peasants from the land.⁶² A similar process occurred when Guatemala’s liberal president privatized the land of Mayan peasants that, until 1877, had been held communally.⁶³

Law and Order in States

At the level of the state, the law becomes an increasingly formal process. Procedures are more and more regularly defined, and categories of breaches in civil and criminal law emerge, together with remedies for those breaches. Early agricultural states formalized legal rules and punishments through codes, formal courts, police forces, and legal specialists such as lawyers and judges. Mediation could still be practiced, but it often was supplanted by adjudication in which a judge's decision was binding on all parties. Decisions could be appealed to a higher authority, but any final decision must be accepted by all concerned.

The first known system of codified law was enacted under the warrior king Hammurabi in Bab-ylon (present day Iraq). This law was based on standardized procedures for dealing with civil and criminal offenses, and subsequent decisions were based on precedents (previous decisions). Crimes became offenses not only against other parties but also against the state. Other states developed similar codes of law, including China, Southeast Asia, and state-level Aztec and Inca societies. Two interpretations, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, have arisen about the political function of codified systems of law. Fried (1978) argued, based on his analysis of the Hammurabi codes, that such laws reinforced a system of inequality by protecting the rights of an elite class and keeping peasants subordinates.⁶⁴ This is consistent with the theory of a stratified society as already defined. Another interpretation is that maintenance of social and political order is crucial for agricultural states since any disruption in the state would lead to neglect of agricultural production that would be deleterious to all members of the state regardless of their social status. Civil laws ensure, at least in theory, that all disputing parties receive a hearing—so long as high legal expenses and bureaucratic logjams do not cancel out the process. Criminal laws, again in theory, ensure the protection of all citizens from offenses ranging from theft to homicide.

Inevitably, laws fail to achieve their aims. The United States, for

example, has one of the highest crime rates in the industrial world despite having an extensive criminal legal system. The number of homicides in New York City in 1990 exceeded the number of deaths from colon and breast cancer and all accidents combined.⁶⁵ Although the rate of violent crime in the United States declined during the mid-1990s, it occurred thanks more to the construction of more prisons per capita (in California) than of schools. Nationwide, there currently are more than one million prisoners in state and federal correctional institutions, one of the highest national rates in the industrial world.⁶⁶ Since the 1990s, little has changed in terms of imprisonment in the United States. Funds continue to go to prisons rather than schools, affecting the education of minority communities and expanding “slave labor” in prisons, according to Michelle Alexander who, in 2012, called the current system the school-to-prison pipeline.⁶⁷

Warfare in States

Warfare occurs in all human societies but at no other level of political organization is it as wide-spread as in states. Indeed, warfare was integral to the formation of the agricultural state. As govern-ing elites accumulated more resources, warfare became a major means of increasing their surpluses.⁶⁸ And as the wealth of states became a target of nomadic pastoralists, the primary motivation for warfare shifted from control of resources to control of neighboring populations.⁶⁹

A further shift came with the advent of industrial society when industrial technologies driven by fossil fuels allowed states to invade distant countries. A primary motivation for these wars was to establish economic and political hegemony over foreign populations. World War I, World War II, and lesser wars of the past century have driven various countries to develop ever more sophisticated and deadly technologies, including wireless communication devices for remote warfare, tanks, stealth aircraft, nuclear weapons, and unmanned

aircraft called drones, which have been used in conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Competition among nations has led to the emergence of the United States as the most militarily powerful nation in the world.

The expansion of warfare by societies organized as states has not come without cost. Every nation-state has involved civilians in its military adventures, and almost everyone has been involved in those wars in some way—if not as militarily, then as member of the civilian workforce in military industries. World War II created an unprecedented armament industry in the United States, Britain, Germany, and Japan, among others, and the aerospace industry underwent expansion in the so-called Cold War that followed. Today, one can scarcely overlook the role of the process of globalization to explain how the United States, for now an empire, has influenced the peoples of other countries in the world.

Stability and Duration of States

It should be noted that states have a clear tendency toward instability despite trappings designed to induce awe in the wider population. Few states have lasted a thousand years. The American state is more than 240 years old but increases in extreme wealth and poverty, escalating budget and trade deficits, a war initiated under false pretenses, escalating social problems, and a highly controversial presidential election suggest growing instability. Jared Diamond's book *Collapse* (2004) compared the decline and fall of Easter Island, Chaco Canyon, and the Maya with contemporary societies such as the United States, and he found that overtaxing the environment caused the collapse of those three societies.⁷⁰ Chalmers Johnson (2004) similarly argued that a state of perpetual war, loss of democratic institutions, systematic deception by the state, and financial overextension contributed to the decline of the Roman Empire and will likely contribute to the demise of the United States “with the speed of FedEx.”⁷¹

Why states decline is not difficult to fathom. Extreme disparities

in wealth, use of force to keep populations in line, the stripping of people's resources (such as the enclosures in England that removed peasants from their land), and the harshness of many laws all should create a general animosity toward the elite in a state.

Yet, until recently (following the election of Donald Trump), no one in the United States was taking to the streets calling for the president to resign or decrying the government as illegitimate. In something of a paradox, widespread animosity does not necessarily lead to dissolution of a state or to an overthrow of the elite. Thomas Frank addressed this issue in *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004). Despite the fact that jobs have been shipped abroad, that once-vibrant cities like Wichita are virtual ghost towns, and that both congress and the state legislature have voted against social programs time and again, Kansans continue to vote the Republicans whose policies are responsible for these conditions into office.

Nor is this confined to Kansas or the United States. That slaves tolerated slavery for hundreds of years (despite periodic revolts such as the one under Nat Turner in 1831), that workers tolerated extreme conditions in factories and mines long before unionization, that there was no peasant revolt strong enough to reverse the enclosures in England—all demand an explanation. Frank discusses reinforcing variables, such as propaganda by televangelists and Rush Limbaugh but offers little explanation beside them.⁷² However, recent works have provided new explanations. Days before Donald Trump won the presidential election on November 8, 2016, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild released a book that partially explains how Trump appealed to the most marginalized populations of the United States, residents around Lake Charles in southwestern Louisiana. In the book, *Strangers in Their Own Land* (2016), Hochschild contends that the predominantly white residents there saw the federal government providing preferential

treatment for blacks, women, and other marginalized populations under affirmative action programs while putting white working-class individuals further back in line for governmental assistance. The people Hochschild interviewed were fully aware that a corporate petroleum company had polluted Lake Charles and hired nonlocal technicians and Filipino workers to staff local positions, but they nonetheless expressed their intent to vote for a billionaire for president based on his promise to bring outsourced jobs back to “America” and to make the country “great again.” Other books, including Thomas Frank’s *Listen Liberal* (2016), Nancy Isenberg’s *White Trash* (2016), and Matt Wray’s *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (2006), address the decline of the United States’ political power domestically and worldwide. These books all link Trump’s successful election to marginalization of lower-class whites and raise questions about how dissatisfaction with the state finds expression in political processes.

Stratification and the State: Recent Developments

States elsewhere and the stratified societies that sustain them have undergone significant changes and, in some instances, dramatic transformations in recent years. Consider ISIS, formed in reaction to the ill-advised U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Other states have failed; Somalia has all but dissolved and is beset by piracy, Yemen is highly unstable due in part to the Saudi invasion, and Syria is being decimated by conflict between the Bashar As-sad government and a variety of rebel groups from moderate reform movements to extremist jihadi groups, al-Nusra and ISIS. Despite Myanmar’s

(formerly Burma) partial transition from a militarized government to an elective one, the Muslim minority there, known as Rohingya, has been subjected to discrimination and many have been forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has been unable to enforce safety regulations to foreign investors as witnessed by the collapse of a clothing factory in 2013 that took the lives of more than 1,100 workers.

ISIS OR THE ISLAMIC STATE: A STATE IN FORMATION?

Around the beginning of 2014, a new state arguably began to form as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) metamorphosed into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and then to simply the Islamic State (IS) (In the following discussion, I use the terms ISIS and Islamic State interchangeably.). Though it may be controversial to claim that ISIS has achieved formal political organization as a state, many of the elements that characterize a state-level organization apply. ISIS has an armed force that has initially proven successful in one battle after another, resources and revenue (however ill-gotten its money and assets such as oil may be), an administrative structure, a body of law, and its own banking system and currency. Despite recent losses of territory, its operations have been extended well beyond the boundaries of Iraq and Syria, and territorial control is not the only measure of its influence. From this perspective, the Islamic State is of value for testing our definitions of a state and assessing the extent to which the characteristics of a state described here apply to this new political formation.

Though few people worldwide approve ISIS's activities or ideology, the damage the group has unleashed is not necessarily inconsistent with a new state in formation. Few, if any, states were conceived without violence in one form or another. The United States was formed by theft of land from indigenous people, a revolutionary war, and the kidnapping and sale of entire populations from the region we now know as West Africa into slavery. Most of the founders were slave owners and many, such as George Washington, obtained their wealth from speculating on stolen land. This history was replicated

in Canada and Australia and, earlier, in the Near East and China. All states, at some point, have perpetrated what today are defined as crimes. We should think carefully when considering the Islamic State as an exception to the historical pattern.

The Islamic State, if it is indeed a state, came into being following the American invasion of Iraq. The process began with the Gulf War in 1991 in which Iraq invaded Kuwait and was expelled by an alliance led by the United States. Then, in March 2003, the George W. Bush administration chose to invade Iraq, deposing the regime of Saddam Hussein the following month and occupying the country; U.S. troops finally withdrew in 2011. Some consider the outcome of the decision to invade and occupy Iraq a worst-case blowback to a military action—the unintended negative consequence of waging war against a Third World country creating a Frankenstein's monster known as ISIS, the Islamic State, the Islamic Caliphate, and a host of other names.

ISIS is a theocracy organized as a self-styled caliphate that formally came into being on June 29, 2014, the first day of the holy month of Ramadan. Kidnapped journalists were beheaded, the so-called apostates were crucified, and the second city of Iraq, Mosul, fell to a rag-tag group of fighters numbering fewer than 1,500. The Caliphate of Ibrahim in the person of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi came to be known around the world.⁷³

What is the Islamic State? Loretta Napoleoni (2014) offers a concise definition differentiating it from other terrorist and Al Qaeda inspired movements:

Where IS [the Islamic State] does outmatch past armed organizations is in military prowess, media manipulation, social programs, and, above all, nation building . . . These enhancements spring from the ability of the Islamic State to adapt to a fast-changing, post-Cold-War environment.⁷⁴

In short, the Islamic State began not with advanced weaponry—it has no navy, no air force, no nuclear missiles—but with the latest communication technology along with the techniques of persuasion via the internet it attempts to create a nation-state based

on the Salafist model of the four caliphs who succeeded the prophet Muhammad in the late seventh century, which is based on strict interpretation of the Qu'ran.⁷⁵

So, is ISIS a state in formation?⁷⁶ First of all, as Abdel Bari Atwan and Malcolm Nance both point out, ISIS is well organized and staffed by numerous experienced military officials. Many, if not most, are former Iraqi Ba'athist administrators who were fired after Saddam Hussein was toppled in late April 2003.⁷⁷ Second, ISIS has established a banking system based in Mosul with its own currency of gold, silver, and copper coins. Third, it is well-financed; its assets range from oil to purloined currency, though it has been strapped for cash recently. Fourth, it has a long-term strategy of ethnic cleansing in the hope of creating a unitary population of Sunni believers steeped in the Salafist ideological tradition akin to the Saudis' Wahabi tradition. Fifth, it has a solid strategy for expanding its forces by recruiting foreign fighters from around the world and educating its young people in the ways of Salafist Islam. Based on those facts, I argue that the Islamic State is a state in formation.⁷⁸

Citing the Montevideo Convention of Rights and Duties of States held in 1933, Atwan contends that there are two types of states: declaratory and constitutive. A declaratory entity has a clearly defined territory, a permanent population, and a government capable of controlling the population, its territory, and its resources, and it is recognized by other states. A constitutive state has the same attributes but is not necessarily recognized by other states. ISIS is more like a constitutive state since it is not recognized by any other states.⁷⁹ Napoleoni added the concept of a shell state, which she defined as an "armed organization [that] assembles the socio-economic infrastructure" such as tax-ation and employment services among others of a state "without the political one. i.e., no territory, no self-determination."⁸⁰

Administrative Apparatus and Functions

The best way to understand ISIS as a formative state is to analyze its administrative apparatus and the functions of its subdivisions.

As Atwan and Nance point out, ISIS is highly centralized with the caliph—Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also known as Ibrahim—as representative and, arguably, a descendant of the prophet Muhammad and so constitutes the ultimate authority of the state.⁸¹ However, ISIS’s organization is such that if he or any other authority is killed in war, other trained individuals can readily take his place. There are two deputies in each of two senior positions, and they make the final decisions concerning the affairs of ISIS. Reports of the killing of ISIS senior staff members have tended to overlook this arrangement.⁸² Decisions are carried out by lower-level deputies in the administration who are allowed discretion in how those orders are implemented, allowing officials to use local knowledge to best execute the directives. These attributes—ready replacement of staff and local decision-making power—provide flexibility to the centralized administrative structure associated with ISIS.⁸³

Baghdadi and his deputies rely on various councils and department committees that form their “cabinet.” The top level of administration also has a powerful Shura (consultative) council that endorses the Sharia (religious legal) council’s choice of caliph and then provides advice to him. The Shura council oversees the affairs of state, manages communication, and issues orders to the chain of command and ensures that they are implemented. The twelve-member Shura council is made up of members selected by Baghdadi and is headed by one of the senior deputies.⁸⁴

The Sharia council is charged with formulating regulations and administrative routines consistent with law as spelled out in the Qu’ran and with selecting the caliphs, who are endorsed by the Shura council. It also oversees all matters related to the administration as a whole and manages the judicial affairs of the body politic. Although the Western press has emphasized the more draconian penalties categorized as *hudd* such as amputations for theft and capital punishment by beheadings and crucifixion, ISIS’s legal system also allows judges to impose less-severe *tazeer* punishments designed to publicly shame a miscreant with the aim of reform and rehabilitation. How frequently these two types of

enforcement are used is a statistical question that would require a survey that simply cannot be conducted at this time.⁸⁵

What is the relationship of the top administrators and their councils to the regional and local administrative bodies? The story begins with incorporation of those bodies into the state. When a city, town, or administrative unit is first occupied by ISIS forces, the first order of business in addition to maintaining the existing police force is to establish a Sharia police force that aims to work toward the “purity” of the Islamic State. Thus, women are enjoined to wear black robes and to veil and men are likewise ordered to wear modest clothing. The “moral police” are dispatched to ensure acceptable behavior and dress, and both the regular and the moral police (the *hisbah*) are outfitted with black uniforms bearing a white Islamic State insignia.⁸⁶

Several councils handle the main issues of Islamic State polity and society. The innumerable challenges to the Islamic State’s authority are dealt with by the security and intelligence council. Its functions include growing networks throughout the Islamic State and beyond, maintaining border controls, imposing punishments on dissidents, and eliminating borders set by treaties such as the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. The military council is charged with defending ISIS’s existing borders, expanding into new areas, and incorporating foreign fighters into the ranks.⁸⁷ It is also charged with ethnic cleansing of non-Sunni Muslims, Yazidis, Jews, and Christians to ensure a single ethnic group to facilitate effective control even though the Qu’ran explicitly accommodates all “people of the book,” which includes all Christians, Jews, and Muslims.⁸⁸ Writes Napoleoni:

In particular, cleansing its territory of Shia from its territory offers many advantages for nation-building, gaining support of local Sunni populations, producing a more homogeneous population with fewer opportunities for sectarianism, and freeing up resources to offer fighters the spoils of war.⁸⁹

Coordinating with the military council is the Islamic State Institution for Public Information, which is the main source of ISIS information, covering everything from current events to announcements of ISIS polities. Detractors have dubbed it the ministry of propaganda. The public information institute conducts outreach via the media and internet to contact potential recruits from abroad as foreign fighters and women as wives of fighters.

ISIS also has an economic council that oversees the wealth it has obtained by taking over oil fields in the region, assimilating local governments and nongovernment banks in regions it has overrun, demanding ransom for captured foreign supporters from allies such as Saudi Arabia (its formal connection has been questioned), and collecting Islamic taxes: *jieya* from non-Muslim residents and *zakat*, taxes that are part of obligatory alms provided for in the Qu'ran, from Muslims who can afford it. The economic council's accounting system consists of an annual budget and monthly reports. Analysts concur that, in Atwan's words, "this level of bureaucratic process and accountability is indicative of a large, well-organized, state-like entity."⁹⁰

Finally, to sustain ISIS, the Education Council oversees the provision of education and the curriculum, which promote strict Salafist interpretation of the Qu'ran. Several topics are banned from the curriculum, including the evolutionary model of biology and philosophy. The curriculum includes training in warfare for boys at sixteen years of age and training in domestic skills for girls.⁹¹

The final significant institution under ISIS, the Islamic Service Council, oversees public services such as maintenance of infrastructures—roads, bridges, electricity lines. In towns and cities under its control, the council operates a rationing system for consumer goods and discourages traders from selling to people who do not carry the card with the group's logo on it. Napoleoni argues that filling potholes, restoring electricity and phone lines, and providing other public services are important components in securing the loyalty of residents of territories overrun by ISIS.

Decline or a Change in Strategy?

Over the past two years, there has been a massive emigration of Syrians and Iraqis out of the region. Why is this occurring? Is the Islamic State in a period of decline or is it adapting its guerilla strategy and tactics. During this period, ISIS lost territory in Iraq and Syria. The city of Sinjar, Syria, fell to the Kurdish Peshmerga army in late 2015, followed by the fall of Tikrit, Anbar, and Fallujah to the Iraqi army early in 2016. The battle for Mosul in Iraq started October 17, 2016, and ISIS has been pursuing a scorched-earth defense, including using residents as human shields. As this chapter was being written, ISIS had been ejected from East Mosul but only after massive property destruction and massacres of its residents by ISIS. Reports from Syria noted that the de facto capital of ISIS, Raqqa in Syria has been subjected to attacks; one of ISIS's supply routes passed through Sinjar. In addition, Aleppo in Syria was destroyed as ISIS competed with other rebel groups and with the Syrian army under Bashar Assad. Aleppo was eventually reclaimed by the Syrian government, but tens of thousands of the city's residents were killed or displaced.

Despite recent setbacks, ISIS has so far retained significant territories in Syria and Iraq and gained control of areas in northern Libya (which it later lost), the Sinai region in Egypt, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It has established alliances with Boko Haram in West Africa and with other groups in Gaza, Lebanon, and Algeria, and ISIS units have been identified in places as far away as Brazil and Norway. ISIS attacks have occurred in France—twice in Paris and once in Nice—and in Brussels, Belgium, and future attacks against the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy

have been threatened. ISIS also claimed responsibility for attacks in the United States on a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, a staff party in San Bernardino, California, on students and staff at Ohio State University, and threatened to attack the Macy's Thanksgiving parade, leading to exceptionally tight security there. What ISIS lacks in territory, it makes up for with alliances and operations abroad.

Atwan has noted that ISIS strategists took these potential defeats into account long before they occurred. The military council has generally avoided defending sites ISIS could not hold and concentrated on theatres they could win or defend. These incidents and countless others appear to be part of the so-called Snake in the Rocks strategy cited by Napoleoni, which is similar to the strategy used by China's Mao Zedong, who concentrated his Communist forces in the countryside rather than in cities. Ho Chi Minh used a similar strategy in the Vietnam War against France and the United States.

A cardinal rule of the guerrilla strategy, painfully established by drawn-out conflicts in China, Vietnam, and Cuba, is that one must elicit the support of the people. In this regard, ISIS's imposition of the Salafist/Wahabi model of Islam is proving problematic. Cockburn provides a laundry list of constraints associated with strict Salafist Islam, including prohibitions against wearing jeans and makeup, smoking cigarettes or hubble-bubbles (hookahs), and keeping stores open during times of prayer. Women are required to wear the abaya (black robe) and veil and are not permitted to gather in public places, including stores. Men must wear beards, and barbers who agree to shave their beards off are punished. The punishments for violating these rules are whipping, amputation of limbs, and beheading.⁹²

Life under ISIS

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strict Salafist Islam, including prohibitions against wearing jeans and makeup, smoking cigarettes or hubble-bubbles (hookahs), and keeping stores open during times of prayer. Women are required to wear the abaya (black robe) and veil and are not permitted, unless accompanied by a man, to gather in public places, including stores. Men must wear beards, and barbers who agree to shave their beards off are punished. The punishments for violating these rules are whipping, amputation of limbs, and beheading.⁹³

Recent accounts on the retaking of Mosul, first in the eastern district and (as of this writing), parts of the western district, report both on the fleeing of hundreds of residents from the city and the dis-covery of mass graves in and around Mosul. Two recent case studies are provided here.

According to Patrick Cockburn, author of *Chaos and Caliphate*, Hamza is a 33-year-old man from Fallujah, Iraq, who joined ISIS fighters when they took over the city. He was initially attracted to ISIS because of his religious beliefs. Two months before he was interviewed by Cockburn, however, he defected because he was repulsed by initiation rites in which ISIS fighters killed prisoners, some of whom were people he knew, and the raping of Yazidi women who were forced into sex slavery as what ISIS called “pagans.” When he balked at executing a Sunni prisoner who had worked with the Shia Iraqi government (also called “pagans”), he was not punished; instead, he was also offered sexual services by a Yazidi woman who, as a pagan, was a suitable target for ISIS fighters. The rapes and executions finally compelled him to leave, and after five days (with help from reliable friends), he arrived safely to his destination outside ISIS-controlled territory. Hamza recalled that “At the begin-ning, I thought they were fighting for Allah, but later I discovered they were far from the principles of Islam...The justice they were calling for when they first arrived in Fallujah turned out to be only words.”⁹⁴

New literature has also surfaced that contradicts in part the claims by Napoleoni and Atwan about life in the ISIS-controlled areas of Iraq and Raqqa. The *Raqqa Diaries*, authored by “Samer” and edited by the BBC’s Mike Thomson, shows how daily life is closely monitored in a running diary. Samer himself was sentenced to forty lashes for speaking out against the beheadings, his father was killed in an airstrike of a house next door, and his mother, wounded in the same air raid, was hospitalized. He notes the spiraling high costs of food, the restrictions on purchasing a television set, lest the viewer sees what is going on in the West, and the frequent executions for minor offenses. He reports the stoning to death of a woman. Even the length of a man’s pants is monitored. In the end, Samer escaped to northern Syria and contacted the BBC to provide his account.⁹⁵

Recent Updates

As of late March 2017, the Iraqi invasion of Mosul has resulted in its control of the eastern district and an attack on western parts of the city. Mass graves have been discovered in and near Mosul, and there is a massive emigration of its residents. Indeed, this emigration of Syrians and Iraqis that has occupied the headlines for the past year is in part the product of the ISIS conflict. Raqqa is under siege and has been bombed for several months, according to recent reports, but remains under ISIS control. In the meantime, in addition to battles in Syria and Iraq, in which ISIS has lost substantial ground—Fallujah, Anbar province, Tikrit—ISIS has resorted to terror attacks, not only in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Orlando, and San Bernardino, but also in other parts of the globe, from Brazil and Norway to Chechnya in Russia, Mindanao in the Philippines, and even in China. In the past two days of this writing, ISIS attacks have elicited Afghanistan’s request for U.S. military intervention against not only the Taliban but also the Islamic State. Finally, a stolen minivan driven by Khalid Masood ran over a group of pedestrians in front of the British Parliament on March 22, 2017, the day this text was edited. The ISIS press agency Aamaq claimed the Islamic State’s responsibility for the attack on March 23; its claim is yet to be verified.

Based on all of this evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that ISIS is well-organized and has at least some of the attributes of a state. Though there have been setbacks, some quite extensive, the organization has extended its operations and alliances in territories well outside Syria and Iraq. However, it is also evident that the attempt to impose strict Islamic order is alienating many people despite various incentives for loyalty in ISIS-captured territory. The desire to impose a strict Wahabi-Salafist model of Islam on the populations it conquers could thwart its efforts as those societies are not accustomed to living according to such rules.

CONCLUSION

Citing both state and stateless societies, this chapter has examined levels of socio-cultural integration, types of social class (from none to stratified), and mechanisms of social control exercised in various forms of political organization from foragers to large, fully developed states. The chapter offers explanations for these patterns, and additional theories are provided by the works in the bibliography. Still, there are many more questions than answers. Why does socio-economic inequality arise in the first place? How do states reinforce (or generate) inequality? Societies that have not developed a state have lasted far longer—about 100,000 to 150,000 years longer—than societies that became states. Will states persist despite the demonstrable disadvantages they present for the majority of their citizens?

A Chinese curse wishes that you may “live in interesting times.” These are interesting times indeed.

discussion questions

1. In large communities, it can be difficult for people to feel a sense of connection or loyalty to people outside their immediate families. Choose one of the social-integration techniques used in tribes and chiefdoms and explain why it can successfully encourage solidarity between people. Can you identify similar systems for encouraging social integration in your own community?

2. Although state societies are efficient in organizing people and resources, they also are associated with many disadvantages, such as extreme disparities in wealth, use of force to keep people in line, and harsh laws. Given these difficulties, why do you think the state has survived? Do you think human populations can develop alternative political organizations in the future?

3. McDowell presents detailed information about the organization of the Islamic State. Does the Islamic State meet the seven criteria for a state-level society? Why is it important to understand whether ISIS is or is not likely to become a state?

glossary

Affinal: family relationships created through marriage.

Age grades: groups of men who are close to one another in age and share similar duties or responsibilities.

Age sets: named categories to which men of a certain age are assigned at birth.

Band: the smallest unit of political organization, consisting of only a few families and no formal leadership positions.

Big man: a form of temporary or situational leadership; influence results from acquiring followers.

Bilateral cross-cousin marriage: a man marries a woman who is *both* his mother's brother's daughter and his father's sister's daughter.

Bilateral descent: kinship (family) systems that recognize both the mother's and the father's "sides" of the family.

Caste system: the division of society into hierarchical levels; one's position is determined by birth and remains fixed for life.

Chieftdom: large political units in which the chief, who usually is determined by heredity, holds a formal position of power.

Circumscription: the enclosure of an area by a geographic feature such as mountain ranges or desert or by the boundaries of a state.

Codified law: formal legal systems in which damages, crimes, remedies, and punishments are specified.

Egalitarian: societies in which there is no great difference in status or power between individuals and there are as many valued status positions in the societies as there are persons able to fill them.

Feuds: disputes of long duration characterized by a state of recurring hostilities between families, lineages, or other kin groups.

Ideologies: ideas designed to reinforce the right of powerholders to rule.

Legitimacy: the perception that an individual has a valid right to leadership.

Lineage: individuals who can trace or demonstrate their descent through a line of males or females back to a founding ancestor.

Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage: a man marries a woman who is his mother's brother's daughter.

Matrilineal: kinship (family) systems that recognize only relatives through a line of female ancestors.

Nation: an ethnic population.

Negative reinforcements: punishments for noncompliance through fines, imprisonment, and death sentences.

Oaths: the practice of calling on a deity to bear witness to the truth of what one says.

Ordeal: a test used to determine guilt or innocence by submitting the accused to dangerous, painful, or risky tests believed to be controlled by supernatural forces.

Patrilineal: kinship (family) systems that recognize only relatives through a line of male ancestors.

Peasants: residents of a state who earn a living through farming.

Poro and sande: secret societies for men and women, respectively, found in the Mande-speaking peoples of West

Africa, particularly in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast, and Guinea.

Positive reinforcements: rewards for compliance; examples include medals, financial incentives, and other forms of public recognition.

Proletarianization: a process through which farmers are removed from the land and forced to take wage labor employment.

Raids: short-term uses of physical force organized and planned to achieve a limited objective.

Ranked: societies in which there are substantial differences in the wealth and social status of individuals; there are a limited number of positions of power or status, and only a few can occupy them.

Restricted exchange: a marriage system in which only two extended families can engage in this exchange.

Reverse dominance: societies in which people reject attempts by any individual to exercise power.

Segmentary lineage: a hierarchy of lineages that contains both close and relatively distant family members.

Social classes: the division of society into groups based on wealth and status.

Sodality: a system used to encourage solidarity or feelings of connectedness between people who are not related by family ties.

State: the most complex form of political organization characterized by a central government that has a monopoly

over legitimate uses of physical force, a sizeable bureaucracy, a system of formal laws, and a standing military force.

Stratified: societies in which there are large differences in the wealth, status, and power of individuals based on unequal access to resources and positions of power.

Sumptuary rules: norms that permit persons of higher rank to enjoy greater social status by wearing distinctive clothing, jewelry, and/or decorations denied those of lower rank.

Tribe: political units organized around family ties that have fluid or shifting systems of temporary leadership.

Unilineal descent: kinship (family) systems that recognize only one sex-based “side” of the family.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul McDowell (Ph.D. University of British Columbia, 1974) examined the transition of the civil-religious hierarchy in a factory and peasant community in Guatemala to a secular town government and church organization called Accion Catolica. He is the author of *Cultural Anthropology: A Concise Introduction* and *Cultures Around the World: An Ethnographic Reader*; he has also read several papers on the political globalization of Guatemala.

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20. Walter Sangree, “The Bantu Tiriki of Western Kenya,” in *Peoples of Africa*, James Gibbs, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 71. The reader will notice the discrepancies between Sangree’s description of age grades and sets—15 year for each, totaling a cycle of 105 years—and his chart from which the one shown here is extrapolated to 1994. First, the age grade “small boys,” is 10 years, not 15. Second, the age grade “ritual elders” is 20 years, not 15. Why this discrepancy exists, Sangree does not answer. This discrepancy demonstrates the questions raised when ideal types do not match all the ethnographic information. For example, if the Jiminigayi ranged 15 years in 1939, why did they suddenly expand to a range of 20 years in 1954? By the same token, why did the Sawe age set cover 10 years in 1939 and expand to 15 years in 1954? It is discrepancies such as this that raise questions and drive further research
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22. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*.
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24. *Ibid.*
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information about potlatch traditions and the impact of the ban:
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41. Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast*.

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 71. Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empires: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), 285.
 72. Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).
 73. See, for instance, an end-times interpretation of ISIS by William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martins, 2015); a backgrounder on the crises by Patrick Cockburn, *Jihadis and the West in the Struggle for the Middle East* (New York: OR Books, 2016); an update by Patrick Cockburn that details ISIS's role in the crisis, *Age of Jihad: The Islamic State and the Great War for the Middle East* (London: Verso, 2016); and a comprehensive text on ISIS by Malcolm Nance, *Defeating Isis: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016).
 74. Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamic Phoenix: The Islamic State and the Redrawing of the Middle East*. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2014), 3.
 75. Ibid.
 76. For this initial analysis, the ethnographic present is the time period from July 2014 to February 2015.
 77. Malcolm Nance, *Defeating Isis: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016). Abdel Bari

- Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (London: Saqi Books, 2015), 132–136 and Malcolm Nance, *Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016), 28.
78. The information comes from Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (London: Saqi Books, 2015), 132–136 and Malcolm Nance, *Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016), 28.
 79. Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State*, 3–4.
 80. Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamic Phoenix*, 124.
 81. Malcolm Nance, *Defeating Isis: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016).
 82. Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State*, 131–137; Nance, *Defeating Isis*, 50–67.
 83. *Ibid.*, 132.
 84. *Ibid.*, 132.
 85. *Ibid.*, 134.
 86. *Ibid.*, 133.
 87. *Ibid.*, 134–135
 88. *Ibid.*, and Patrick Cockburn, *Chaos and Caliphate: Jihadis and the West in the Struggle for the Middle East*.
 89. Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamic Phoenix*, 96.
 90. Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State*, 135.
 91. *Ibid.*
 92. Patrick Cockburn, *Chaos and Caliphate*, 397.
 93. *Ibid.*
 94. *Ibid.*, 382–386.
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45. Chapter 7: Economics Study Guide

Chapter 7 Study Guide

Economics

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Balanced reciprocity
- Capitalist mode of production
- Chinese Imperial System
- Community economies
- Consumption
- Dobe Ju/'hoansi (cultural group)
- Economic anthropology
- Eric Wolf
- Fair Trade
- Foraging
- Gender-linked names
- General purpose money
- Generalized reciprocity
- Geographical Indication Status
- Homo economicus
- Informal economy
- Informal work
- Kula ring system

- Market exchanges
- Mauss Means of production
- Mode of Production
- Moral economy
- Negative reciprocity
- Political economy
- Potlatch system
- Production
- Reaffirmation
- Reciprocity
- Redistribution
- Salaula
- Small-scale semi-subsistence farmers
- Social life of objects
- Structural violence
- Subsistence farmers
- Three distinct modes of production
- Three phases of economic activity
- Tiv (cultural group)
- Tiv: Spheres of exchange
- Transactions
- Trobriand Islanders (cultural group)
- World Trade Organization

46. Chapter 8: Subsistence Study Guide

Chapter 8 Study Guide

Subsistence

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Aché
- Agriculture
- Boserup
- Broad spectrum diet
- Built environment
- Calusa (cultural group)
- Carrying capacity
- Commodity chain
- Delayed return system
- Domestic economy
- Egalitarian social structure
- Farming
- Foodways
- Foraging
- Historical ecology
- Horticulture
- Immediate return system
- Intercropping

- Kalahari Desert
- !Kung (cultural group)
- Kwakwaka'wakw (cultural group)
- Large-scale agricultural communities
- Maasai (cultural group)
- Malthus
- Modes of subsistence
- Mono-cropping
- Multi-cropping
- Neolithic Revolution
- Pastoralism
- Potlatch
- Sahlins
- Shifting cultivation
- Staple crops
- Subsistence system
- “Three sisters” (crops) Typical population density for a group of foragers
- World system
- Yams

47. Chapter 9: Political Anthropology: A Cross-Cultural Comparison Study Guide

Chapter 9 Study Guide

Political Anthropology

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Age sets
- Affinal
- Age grades
- Atwan, Abdel Bari
- Authority
- Azande (cultural group)
- Band
- Bedouins (cultural group)
- Big man
- Bilateral descent, and bilateral cross-cousin marriage
- Burakumin (cultural group)
- Caste system
- Chiefdom
- Circumscription

- Codified law; Code of Hammurabi
- Diaspora
- Duels
- Egalitarian
- Feud
- Foragers
- Haida (cultural group)
- Hau
- Hereditary succession
- Hisbah
- Ideologies
- ISIS
- Jajmani
- Karma
- Legitimacy
- Leopard skin chief (Note: chief is older term)
- Lineage
- Manu
- Maori (cultural group)
- Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage
- Matrilineal
- Maus, Marcel
- Maya (cultural group)
- Mbuti (cultural group)
- Men's house
- Natchez (cultural group)
- Nation
- Oaths
- Ordeal
- Patrilineal
- Peasants
- Poro and sande
- Potlatch
- Power
- Proletarianization

- Raid
- Ranked societies
- Reinforcement: positive; negative
- Restricted exchange
- Reverse dominance
- Segmentary lineage
- Service, Elman
- Shoshone (cultural group)
- Social classes
- Sodality State (definition; and types of states)
- Stratified societies
- Sumptuary rules
- Supernatural beliefs
- Theocracy Tiriki (cultural group)
- Total prestations
- Tribe
- Unilineal descent
- Varna
- Warfare

48. Virtual Field Trip: Ethnocide and Genocide

Where do you want to go?

Virtual Field Trip: Ethnocide and Genocide

In this Virtual Field Trip assignment, we look at the cultural dynamics of genocide and ethnocide:

- Genocide is “the destruction of a group or society by harming, killing, or preventing the birth of its members” (Eller 2016:345).
- Ethnocide is “the destruction of a group’s culture, without necessarily killing any of the members of the culture” (Eller 2016:343).

These are difficult topics. Consider the words from the documentary, “Never Again? Genocide Since the Holocaust” (2001): “Most people will see genocide ... as a crime of vast scale ... this term ... loses the sense of the individual human tragedy that takes place countless times ... as something that would never happen here...”

It is important to look beyond the statistics, to understand the root causes of genocide and ethnocide; hear from individuals who were affected; learn how people are coping with the aftermath of tragedy and rebuilding their lives; and how communities and governments are seeking reconciliation. Lastly, we should contemplate our role in helping to prevent such tragedies.

As you begin this assignment, consider the words of Rwandan genocide survivor, Frida Umuhoza:

Every time genocide happens in the world we say 'never again.' But it's not a matter of just saying it; it's a matter of doing it. And I believe that the international community has the power, has what it takes to stop genocide when it starts to boil up. When the world is watching, that's the time to take action. Instead of waiting until a million people are gone, and saying 'never again'" (UN News 2016).

Select an image to view larger:

[Two photos of TOM Torlino one in traditonal American Indian dress with long hair, the second in an American suit with a short cropped haircut](#)

-
[AMERICAN Indian students in white American clothing and hairstyles. Caption reads Educating the Indian Race. Graduating Class of Carlisle, PA.](#)

-
[boys in dress shirts and pants with suspenders boxing and doing gymnastics in a gym with other boys watching](#)

-
[a church altar in rubble of broken pews, and human bones and clothing](#)
[rows of skulls on display](#)

49. Virtual Field Trip: Know Your Sources

KNOW YOUR SOURCES

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING SOURCES

When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From tweets to newspaper articles, this tool provides a brief description of each and breaks down 6 factors of what to consider when selecting a source.

Tweets

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics that enables brief dialogue between distinct groups of people across geographic, political, cultural and economic boundaries.

Tumblr blog

An avenue for sharing both developed and unpolished ideas and interests with a niche community with relative ease.

Youtube video

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos that are shared rapidly and widely.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed of daily events, sports, and current news. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Popular magazine

A glossy compilation of informative, entertaining stories with unique themes intended for a specific interests—or lifestyles—from celebrities to gardening to gaming.

Professional journal

A collection of work-related articles that keep professionals up-to-date on the latest trends, breakthroughs and controversies in their field.

Scholarly journal

A collection of analytic reports that outline the objectives,

background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

A book in which the information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author, and the editor pulls them all together into a whole. Often these types of books have a narrow and specific focus.

Encyclopedia

A book or set of books giving information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject. Some are intended as an entry point into research for a general audience, some provide detailed information. Most list relevant books and articles for further information on a topic.

TOTAL NUMBER PUBLISHED PER DAY

When an idea can be published quickly, we end up with many ideas that we have to sift through before we find what we're looking for. As the selectivity of a medium increases, the value and uniqueness of the contribution typically increases too. However, on the flip side, when the selectivity increases, fewer diverse ideas or voices may be published.

500,000,000

tweets (global)

2,000,000

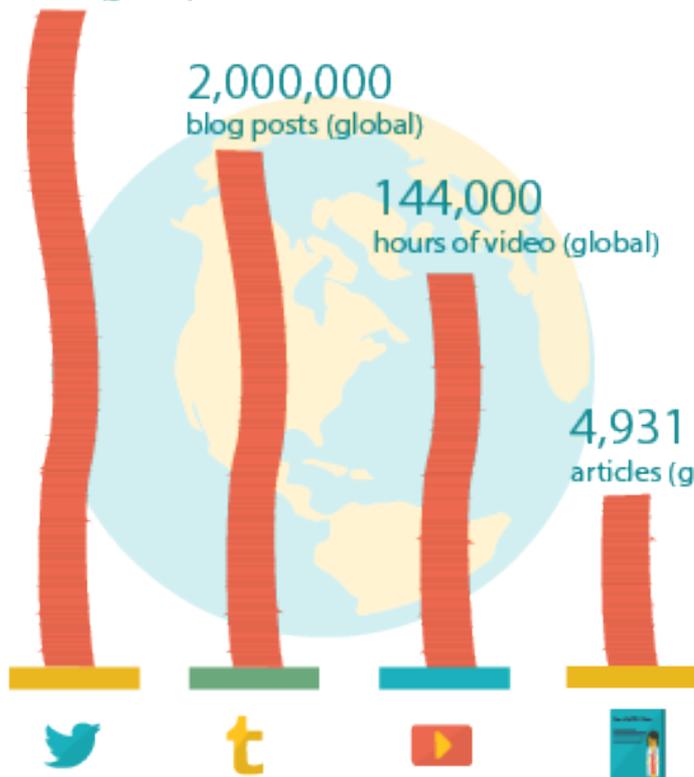
blog posts (global)

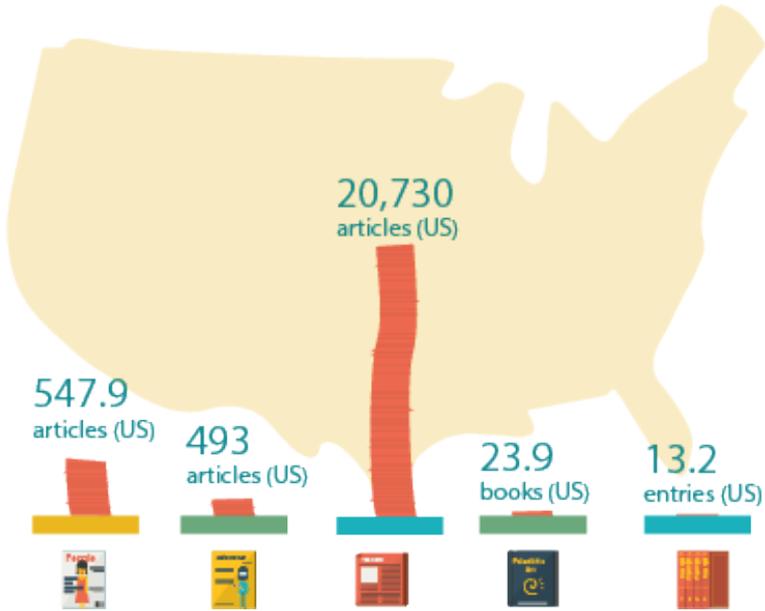
144,000

hours of video (global)

4,931

articles (global)





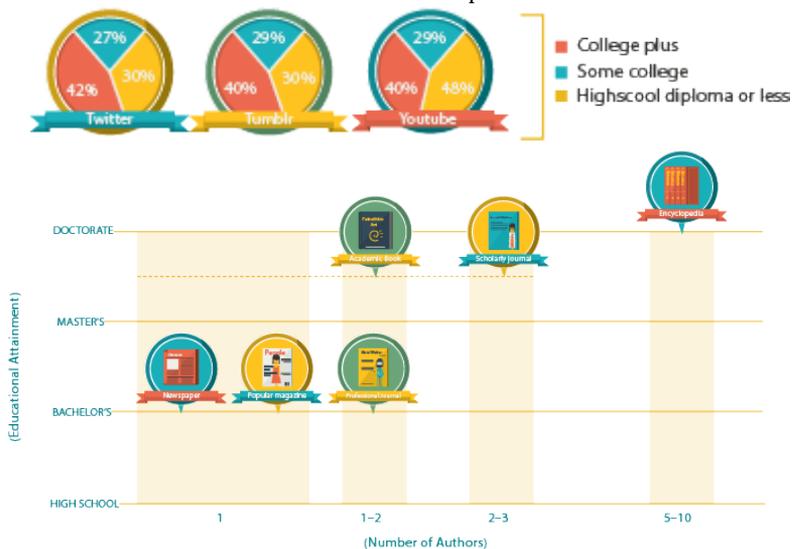
DEGREE OF SCRUTINY BEFORE A SOURCE IS PUBLISHED

Two factors contribute to the amount of scrutiny that a source receives before it might be published: The **number of reviewers** fact-checking the written ideas and the **total time** spent by reviewers as they fact-check the ideas. The more people pulled into the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Youtube, tumblr and twitter enable dialogue with outside “reviewers” after an idea has been published. The comments section of a Youtube video might receive hundreds of comments from outside voices.

DEGREE OF AUTHOR EDUCATION

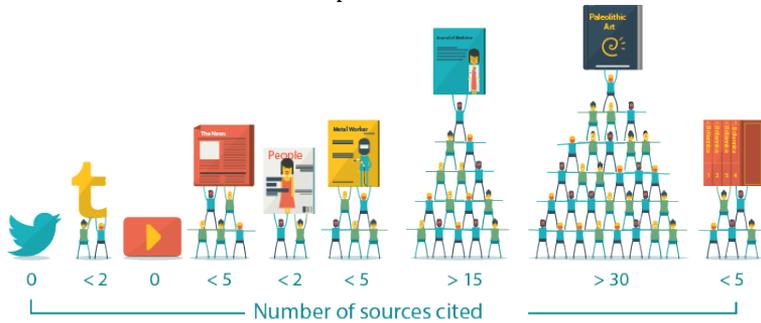
One factor contributing to the amount of knowledge used to produce a source is the **number of authors** collaborating on the article. When more people contribute their viewpoints or ideas to the writing, the quality and breadth are likely strengthened. A second factor to consider is the **number of years of formal education** that the author(s) received prior to writing the article. The more combined education that the authors have, the more knowledgeable we can assume the team of authors to be. What other factors can contribute to author expertise?



NUMBER OF OUTSIDE SOURCES

When an author pulls many outside sources into her writing, she demonstrates familiarity with ideas beyond her own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more

comprehensive and reliable. Below, we show the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.



15, Academic books: >30, Encyclopedias: <5">

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER SOURCE

When an source uses more words to convey its points, those words are likely used to document a more thorough, well-reasoned argument that is better supported with existing research or past claims. Below, you will find the typical number of words used by an author when expressing ideas in each source.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Every source makes some assumptions about the reader's knowledge of the subject. The level of technical words and ideas rises when the author is targeting readers in a niche field. In advanced sources, the reader can expect the information and writing to go beyond the basics. When the author is writing for a general audience, terms are typically defined and background information is provided to make the content understandable to

an average reader. Here, we convey the typical level of knowledge assumed by authors for each type of source.

DATA SOURCES

- Bosch, S. & Henderson, K. (2013, April 25). The Winds of Change: Periodicals Price Survey, 2013. *The Library Journal*. Accessed at <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/publishing/the-winds-of-change-periodicals-price-survey-2013/#>
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- Newspaper Circulation Statistics. (2012, September 4). Newspaper Circulation of America. Newspaper Association of America. <http://www.naa.org/Trends-and-Numbers/Circulation-Volume/Newspaper-Circulation-Volume.aspx>
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- Waters, D. & Meisel, J. (2007). Scholarly Publishing Initiatives: 2007 Annual Report. The Andrew Mellon

Foundation. <http://www.mellon.org/about/annual-reports/2007-scholarly-publishing-initiatives/>

- WebWire. (2012). Trade Publications by Industry. <https://www.webwire.com/IndustryList.asp>

50. Virtual Field Trip Essay-Assignment

Your Field Guide

Warning: The resources for this module may contain graphic images and descriptions.

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of these topics to gain a deeper understanding of this important issue. Use the suggested websites below, or select other [scholarly resources](#) to get started:

Native American Boarding Schools

- Website: [Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools](#) KUED Local Productions
- Podcast with Transcript: [American Indian Boarding Schools Haunt Many](#) National Public Radio
- Article: [Boarding Schools: Struggling with Cultural Oppression](#) National Museum of the American Indian, Native Words Native Warriors
- Website: [The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#)
- e-booklet: [Intergenerational Trauma: Understanding Natives' Inherited Pain](#)

Australian Aboriginal Culture

- Infographic: [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples](#), Australian Human Rights Commission
- Website: [The Koori History Website](#)
 - Video: [First Australians](#), Australian Perspectives
- Video: [Marjorie Woodrow talks about her experiences](#) Creative Spirits
Stolen from her parents when she was 2 years old, Marjorie suffered abuse in many children's homes.
- Article: [National Sorry Day: An Important Part of Healing](#) Reconciliation Australia

Rwanda

- Story and Videos: [After two decades, genocide survivor opens up about her anger and forgiveness](#) Read the full story and watch all of the videos.
- Website: [Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations](#)
- Multimedia: [Frontline: Ghosts of Rwanda](#)
- Timeline: [Outreach Program on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations](#)

Pay attention to:

- how the **prejudice was instilled** in people, long before the genocide occurred;
- the personal account of the genocide as told by this survivor;
- the impact the event on Ms. Umuhoza; and her life now.

Pay attention to the:

- **roots** of this genocide that go back over 100 years (decisions made by colonizers);
 - **the history of the event as it unfolded;**
 - and the **reconciliation efforts in Rwanda**, with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.
-

Instructions

In this module you will learn about ethnocide and genocide. Choose a topic to explore more deeply:

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above. Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the cultural group and the event that took place. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. Give an overview of the history of the genocide or ethnocide.

Explain one historical root cause of this genocide (choose one: race/racial thinking, such as ideas of racial 'superiority'; OR colonization by outside groups).

2. Give a specific example of how this genocide or ethnocide affected the survivors.
3. Give a specific example of how the survivors are moving forward in their lives, and/or how communities are seeking reconciliation (Examples: survivors making new lives for themselves; community or government efforts to promote reconciliation, etc.).
4. In your conclusion, address what we can do to prevent this from happening again (2-3 sentences).

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

51. Virtual Field Trip

Essay-Discussion

Your Field Guide

Warning: The resources for this module may contain graphic images and descriptions.

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of these topics to gain a deeper understanding of this important issue. Use the suggested websites below, or select other [scholarly resources](#) to get started:

Native American Boarding Schools

- Website: [Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools](#) KUED Local Productions
- Podcast with Transcript: [American Indian Boarding Schools Haunt Many](#) National Public Radio
- Article: [Boarding Schools: Struggling with Cultural Oppression](#) National Museum of the American Indian, Native Words Native Warriors
- Website: [The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#)
- e-booklet: [Intergenerational Trauma: Understanding Natives' Inherited Pain](#)

Australian Aboriginal Culture

- Infographic: [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples](#), Australian Human Rights Commission
- Website: [The Koori History Website](#)
 - Video: [First Australians](#), Australian Perspectives
- Video: [Marjorie Woodrow talks about her experiences](#) Creative Spirits
Stolen from her parents when she was 2 years old, Marjorie suffered abuse in many children's homes.
- Article: [National Sorry Day: An Important Part of Healing](#) Reconciliation Australia

Rwanda

- Story and Videos: [After two decades, genocide survivor opens up about her anger and forgiveness](#) Read the full story and watch all of the videos.
- Website: [Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations](#)
- Multimedia: [Frontline: Ghosts of Rwanda](#)
- Timeline: [Outreach Program on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations](#)

Pay attention to:

- how the **prejudice was instilled** in people, long before the genocide occurred;
- the personal account of the genocide as told by this survivor;
- the impact the event on Ms. Umuhoza; and her life now.

Pay attention to the:

- **roots** of this genocide that go back over 100 years (decisions made by colonizers);
- **the history of the event as it unfolded;**
- and the **reconciliation efforts in Rwanda**, with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

Instructions

In this module you will learn about ethnocide and genocide. Choose a topic to explore more deeply:

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above. Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the cultural group and the event that took place. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. Give an overview of the history of the genocide or ethnocide. Explain one historical root cause of this genocide (choose one:

race/racial thinking, such as ideas of racial 'superiority'; OR colonization by outside groups).

2. Give a specific example of how this genocide or ethnocide affected the survivors.
3. Give a specific example of how the survivors are moving forward in their lives, and/or how communities are seeking reconciliation (Examples: survivors making new lives for themselves; community or government efforts to promote reconciliation, etc.).
4. In your conclusion, address what we can do to prevent this from happening again (2-3 sentences).

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

PART V
MODULE 4

52. Introduction: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology

Module 4 Introduction

Welcome to Module Four!

As we journey into our last Module, we have two main roads to explore:

1. The road you choose to travel! This Module allows you to devote your writing time to your Semester Research Project! This essay will be the culmination of your research into a culture and topic of your own choosing.
2. Explore the last three chapters of our textbook. Gain a deeper understanding of other cultures, and the complex interactions between different peoples around the world.

We will finish this course by exploring these important areas that help us to understand the cultures we are studying :

- **Globalization**

Learn about: the 5 “scapes” of global flows or exchanges, neoliberalism, neocolonialism, globalization, and the new “glocal” lifestyles and forms of consumption. Consider how people use agency to respond to globalization, including

syncretism and participation in alternative markets like “fair trade.”

- **Culture and Sustainability; Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene**

Learn about the concept of the Anthropocene and how anthropology contributes to understanding the human role in environmental destruction, and also read examples of how people are working to create more sustainable lifeways! Anthropology contributes to public discussions and the creation of public policy with lawmakers, activists, corporations, and others regarding major environmental challenges.

- **Health and Medicine**

Learn about the biocultural perspective (how interactions between biology and culture affect human biology); the four ethno-etologies (personalistic, naturalistic, emotionalistic, and biomedical) and how each is used to explain the root causes of illness. Reflect on the significance of faith in healing; the relationship between mental health and cultural factors, including stigma, that affect the way people with mental health conditions are perceived; culture-bound syndromes; and evaluate the positive and negative effects of biomedical technologies.

Module 4 Assignments

Reading

- [Globalization](#)
- [Culture and Sustainability; Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene](#)
- [Health and Medicine](#)

Use the Study Guides as you read the chapters to help you focus on important terms, concepts, people, and places. This will also help you prepare for the quizzes in this module.

Study Guides and Quizzes

- [Globalization Study Guide](#)
- [Culture and Sustainability; Environmental Anthropology Study Guide](#)
- [Health and Medicine Study Guide](#)

There is a 15 question quiz for each chapter. You can find these in the Quizzes tool.

Research Project – Follow Your Own Path

In this module you will submit your Semester Research Project.

This assignment is your opportunity to more deeply explore an indigenous or other “non-Western” culture or group. You have already stated your selection of a group and related topic in your Semester Research Project Proposal. Now, you are going to expand these into a full paper through research and writing!

Semester Research Project

As you research and collect information about the cultural group and topic you chose for your Proposal, remember to locate TWO scholarly sources, in addition to your textbook, to supplement your information and knowledge. These should be professional or academic sources.

Websites are tricky. In general, stay away from .com’s and .org’s as well as open-source or commercial reference sites such as Wikipedia, Askme.com or About.com. These are fine for initial consultation, and entries in Wikipedia often have their own bibliographies you can mine. But don’t use them as ultimate sources on the paper. For more about assessing websites, see the ANT112 Library/Research Guide.

You will write a 1500 word essay (no more than 1750 words), on the specific cultural group and topic you have researched. Include at least 7 internal citations within your essay (with at least one from each of your three sources: your text and two outside sources), in support of your explanations.

There are VERY specific instructions for this assignment. Please read them thoroughly on the [Semester Research Project page](#) before starting.

53. Chapter 10: Globalization

Learning Objectives

- Define globalization and the 5 “scapes” that can be used to characterize global flows or exchanges.
- Explain the relationship between globalization and the creation of new “glocal” lifestyles and forms of consumption.
- Describe some of the ways people use agency to respond to globalization including syncretism and participation in alternative markets.
- Assess the relationship between globalization, neoliberalism, and neocolonialism.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the intensification of globalization.
- Discuss the implications of globalization for anthropology.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images of *Chapter 10: Globalization*.

It is Tuesday on campus as you enter the dining hall. The day’s hot lunch entrées include Caribbean jerk pork with mango salsa and a side of collard greens. The next station is offering made-to-order Asian stir-fry. At the sandwich counter, tuna salad, an all-American classic, is being served in a pita. Now, are these dishes authentic? That, of course, depends on how you define authenticity.¹ A similar question was asked at Oberlin College in December 2015 when a

group of students claimed that adapting foreign cuisines constituted a form of social injustice.² Their claim, which raised a great deal of controversy, was that the cafeteria's appropriation and poor execution of ethnic dishes was disrespectful to the cultures from which those recipes were taken. Many people dismissed the students' concerns as either an overreaction or as an attempt to rephrase a perennial com-plaint (bad cafeteria food) in a politically loaded language of social justice likely to garner a response from the administration. Regardless of what one thinks about this case, it is revealing of how college campuses—as well as the larger societies in which they are situated—have changed over time. The fact that dishes like sushi and banh mi sandwiches are even available in an Ohio college cafeteria suggests that globalization has intensified. The fact that the students would be reflexive enough to question the ethical implications of appropriating foreign cuisine suggests that we are truly in a new era. But what, in fact, is globalization?

OVERVIEW AND EARLY GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a word commonly used in public dis-course, but it is often loosely defined in today's society (much like the word “culture” itself). First appearing in the English language in the 1940s, the term “globalization” is now commonplace and is used to discuss the circulation of goods, the fast and furious exchange of ideas, and the movement of people.³ Despite its common use, it seems that the many people using the term are often not defining it in the same way. Some treat globalization as simply an economic issue while others focus more on the social and political aspects. What is clear, however, is that globalization has influenced many different facets of contemporary social life. This actually makes globalization an ideal topic of study for anthropologists, who pride themselves on taking a holistic approach to culture (see the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter). For our

purposes, we adopt political scientist Manfred Steger’s definition of globalization: “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.”⁴

It is challenging to determine precisely when globalization began. Although some people discuss globalization as if it was an entirely new process without historical antecedents, in truth its precursors have been going on for a very long time. In this chapter, we argue that the distinguishing feature of globalization in the contemporary era is the speed, rather than the scope, of global interactions. Early modern technological innovations hastened globalization.⁵ For instance, the invention of the wheel created a need for permanent roads that would facilitate transport of animal drawn carts. These wheeled vehicles increased people’s mobility, which in turn facilitated the sharing of both goods and ideas. Even before the invention of the wheel, the creation of written communication systems allowed ideas to be shared between people in distant locations.

Certainly extensive empires have existed at various times throughout human history, including [Chinese dynasties](#) (the Han dynasty, 206 BCE-220 CE, for instance, reached the same size the Ro-man Empire achieved much later); the [Ottoman Empire](#), and the [Roman Empire](#). Most recently in world history, European colonial expansion into Africa, Asia and the Americas marked another landmark of globalization. As discussed in the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter, *colonialism* refers to the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended period of time. Technically, colonialism can be practiced by any group that is powerful enough to subdue other groups—and this certainly would be an accurate term for Ottoman and Roman imperial expansion—but as a term, colonialism is typically associated with

the actions of European countries starting in the 1500s and lasting through the 1900s. During this period, European colonial powers divided up “unclaimed” land with little regard for ethnic groups who already lived in those places, their political structures, belief systems, or lifeways. By 1914, European nations ruled more than 85 percent of the world, and it is not by accident that the image of the world most often seen on conventional maps continues to be very Eurocentric in its orientation ([see map](#)).

Colonialism in the Americas was the result of European conquest of newly “discovered” territories during the Age of Exploration. Columbus was likely not the first explorer to reach the Americas, but his “discovery” intensified Europeans’ desires to colonize this “new” territory. European leaders began expanding their spheres of influence in Europe before turning their attention to lands further afield; the successes they had in colonizing nearby lands, amplified by a growing demand for trade items found in “the Orient,” fueled their enthusiasm for exploration outside the region. The Catholic Church also supported this economically motivated mission, as it coincided with a weakening of their religious stronghold in places like England, Germany, and France.

One of the most devastating features of the colonial period was the forced labor of both indigenous Americans and Africans who were enslaved and shipped off as chattel. Between 1525 and 1866, 12.5 million slaves were sent to the New World from Africa. Treated as chattel, only 10.7 million Africans survived until arriving in the Americas. The U.S. imported approximately 450,000 of these slaves. It is not by coincidence that the ethically irredeemable shipment of slaves to the Americas corresponded to massive shipments of goods to Europe and down the west coast of Africa. As far as the total scope of international flows, however, European colonialism pales in comparison to the scope of globalization that has transpired since the 1990s.

Contemporary globalization, at least in terms of economics, is perhaps best pinpointed as coinciding with the conclusion of

World War II and the Bretton Woods Conference.⁶ The agreements made at the Bretton Woods Conference led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which later became the World Bank (WB). It also laid the groundwork for the World Trade Organization (WTO). Taken together, these three organizations have had a tremendous role in accelerating globalization and in shaping the lives of people in the developing world. The very idea of governing bodies like the United Nations, or regulatory institutions like the IMF and WB, that exist outside the confines of a specific nation-state—now widely referenced as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)—contributes to undermining local sovereignty.⁷ Although local, regional, and national identities and affiliations retain salience in the global era, their importance has shifted relative to the growing sense many people have of being citizens of the world.

THE ACCELERATION OF GLOBALIZATION The 5 “Scapes” of Globalization

As we have already established, globalization refers to the increasing pace and scope of interconnections crisscrossing the globe. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has discussed this in terms of five specific “scapes” or flows: ethnoscaples, technoscapes, ideoscapes, financescapes, and mediascapes. Thinking of globalization in terms of the people, things, and ideas that flow across national boundaries is a productive framework for understanding the shifting social landscapes in which contemporary people are often embedded in their daily lives. Questions about where people migrate, their reasons for migration, the pace at which they travel, the ways their lives change as a result of their travels, and how their original communities change can all be addressed within this framework. Questions about goods and ideas that travel without the accompaniment of human agents can also be answered using Appadurai’s notion of scapes.

Ethnoscape refers to the flow of people across boundaries. While people such as labor migrants or refugees (see case study below)

travel out of necessity or in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families, leisure travelers are also part of this scape. The World Tourism Organization, a specialized branch of the United Nations, argues that tourism is one of the fastest growing commercial sectors and that approximately one in eleven jobs is related to tourism in some way.⁸ Tourism typically puts people from developed parts of the world in contact with people in the developing world, which creates both opportunities and challenges for all involved. While there is the potential for tourists to be positively affected by their experiences with “the Other” while travelling, the tourism industry has also received its share of criticisms. Individuals from wealthier countries like the U.S., even if they are not wealthy themselves by the standards of the United States, are able to indulge in luxuries while traveling abroad in poorer nations like those found in the Caribbean. There is a fine line between a) tourists expecting service while on vacation and b) tourists treating local people like *servants*. This latter scenario exemplifies the unequal power relationships that develop in these kinds of situations, and such power relationships concern responsible social scientists.⁹

Technoscape refers to flows of technology. Apple’s iPhone is just one example of how the movement of technologies across boundaries can radically affect day-to-day life for people all along the commodity chain. Sales records are surpassed with each release of a new iPhone, with lines of customers spilling out of Apple stores and snaking around the block. Demand for this new product drives a fast and furious pace of production. Workers who are struggling to keep up with demand are subjected to labor conditions most iPhone users would find abhorrent; some even commit [suicide as a result](#). The revenue associated with the production and export of technological goods is drastically altering the international

distribution of wealth. As the pace of technological innovation increases, so does the flow of technology. This is not, of course, an entirely new phenomenon; earlier technologies have also drastically and irrevocably changed the human experience. For example, the large-scale production and distribution of the printing press throughout Europe (and beyond) dramatically changed the ways in which people thought of themselves—as members not only of local communities, but of national communities as well.¹⁰

Ideoscape refers to the flow of ideas. This can be small-scale, such as an individual posting her or his personal views on Facebook for public consumption, or it can be larger and more systematic. Missionaries provide a key example. Christian missionaries to the Amazon region made it their explicit goal to spread their religious doctrines. As the experiences of missionary-turned-anthropologist Daniel Everett show, however, local people do not necessarily interpret the ideas they are brought in the way missionaries expect.¹¹ In addition to the fact that all people have agency to accept, reject, or adapt the ideologies that are introduced to or imposed on them (see syncretism below). The structure of the language spoken by the Pirahã makes it difficult to provide direct translations of the gospel.¹²

Financescape refers to the flow of money across political borders. Like the other flows discussed by Appadurai, this phenomenon has been occurring for centuries. The Spanish, for example, conscripted indigenous laborers to mine the silver veins of the Potosí mines of Bolivia. The vast riches extracted from this region were used to pay Spain's debts in northern Europe. The pace of the global transfer of money has only accelerated and today transactions in the New York Stock Exchange, the Nikkei index, and other such

finance hubs have nearly immediate effects on economies around the world.

Mediascape refers to the flow of media across borders. In earlier historic periods, it could take weeks or even months for entertainment and education content to travel from one location to another. From the telegraph to the telephone, and now the Internet (and myriad other digital communication technologies), media are far more easily and rapidly shared regardless of geographic borders. For example, Brazilian telenovelas may provide entertainment on long-distance African bus trips, Bollywood films are shown in Canadian cinemas, and people from around the world regularly watch mega-events such as the World Cup and the Olympics from wherever they may live.

While the five scapes defined by Appadurai provide useful tools for thinking about these various forms of circulation, disentangling them in this way can also be misleading. Ultimately, the phenomena studied by most anthropologists will involve more than one of these scapes. Take clothing for instance. Kelsey Timmerman, an author whose undergraduate concentration was in anthropology, was inspired to find out more about the lives of the people who made his clothing.¹³ In a single day, he found, the average American might be wearing clothes made in Honduras, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and China. Something as seemingly simple as a T-shirt can actually involve all five of Appadurai's scapes. The transnational corporations responsible for the production of these shirts themselves are part of capitalism, an idea which has become part of the international ideoscape. The financescape is altered by a company in the U.S. contracting a production facility in another country where labor costs are cheaper. The equipment needed to create these T-shirts is purchased and delivered to the production facility, thus altering the technoscape. The ethnoscapescape is affected by individuals migrating from their homes in rural villages to city centers, often disrupting traditional residence patterns in the process. Finally, the

mediascape is involved in the marketing of these T-shirts.

SELECTIVE IMPORTATION AND ADAPTATION: GLOCALIZATION

Globalization most certainly changes the landscape of contemporary social life (see our discussion of Appadurai above). Yet it would be a mistake to think of globalization as a state that emerges without human agency. In most cases, people make decisions regarding whether or not they want to adopt a new product or idea that has been made available to them via globalization. They also have the ability to determine the ways in which that product or idea will be used, including many far different from what was originally intended. A cast-off Boy Scout uniform, for example, may be adopted by a Maasai village leader as a symbol of his authority when dealing with Tanzanian government officials.¹⁴

First emerging in the late 1980s, the term **glocalization** refers to the adaptation of global ideas into locally palatable forms.¹⁵ In some instances, this may be done as a profit-generating scheme by transnational corporations. For example, McDonald's [offers vastly different menu items](#) in different countries. While a Big Mac may be the American favorite, when in India you might try a [McAloo Tikki](#)TM (a breadcrumb-coated potato and pea patty), in Hong Kong [mixed veggies and egg mini twisty pasta](#) in a chicken broth for breakfast, in Thailand [corn pies](#) or [pineapple pies](#), or a [Steak Mince 'N' Cheese](#) pie in New Zealand. In other cases, people rather than corporations find innovative ways to adopt and adapt foreign ideas. The Zapotec of Oaxaca, Mexico, for example, have found a way to adapt globally available consumer goods to fit their longstanding cultural traditions. Traditionally, when a member of the community dies, that individual's relatives have an obligation to ease his or her passing to the afterlife. One part of this obligation is making an extraordinary number of tamales for the mourners who come to pay their respects at the home altar that has been erected for the deceased. These tamales are intended to be taken home and were once shared in traditional earthen containers. Rather than

disrupting this tradition, the introduction of modern consumer goods like Tupperware has made the old tradition of sharing food easier.¹⁶ In this case, Zapotec culture is not threatened by the introduction of foreign goods and ideas because the community incorporates new things into their pre-existing practices without completely trading old ideas for new ones. Practices like these provide evidence that fears about globalization leading to nothing but cultural homogenization may be exaggerations. Yet, other communities refuse these products precisely because they equate modernization and globalization with culture loss. For example, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Rigoberta Menchu recounts how adamantly the Maya elders where she was raised warned the youth away from consuming Coca-Cola or even using modern corn mills rather than the traditional *mano* and *metate*.¹⁷

Case Study: Both Global and Local –Salsa Dancing Around the World

While there are a variety of texts regarding the histories of salsa music and dancing, as it exists today the salsa scene is inseparable from the five flows of globalization described above.¹⁸ Take for instance the vast number of salsa “congresses” and festivals held world-wide throughout the year. People from near and far travel to these events as dance students, social participants, performers, and instructors (the *ethnoscape*). Travel to and from these events, often internationally, depends on modern transportation (the *technoscape*). What is being taught, shared, and communicated at these events is, primarily ideas about different dancing style and techniques (the *ideoscape*). In addition to the costs of gas/parking/airfare or the like, registration, hotel rooms, lessons, DJs/bands, and other services are all available because they are being paid for (the *financescape*). Finally, these events could not exist as they do today without online advertising (see

Figure 1 for an example), work-shop and performance schedules, and event registration, let alone video-clips of the featured teachers and performers (the *mediascape*). Indeed, the very fact that dancers can come from disparate locations and all successfully dance with each other—even in the absence of a common spoken language—testifies to the globalization involved in such dance forms today.¹⁹

The widely shared patterning of movement to music in this dance genre does not, however, ne-gate the very real differences between local iterations. Featured in the very title of ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchinson’s recent edited volume, *Salsa World: A Global Dance in Local Contexts*, real differences between local contexts, practices, and meanings are shown in chapters dedicated to the salsa scenes in New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles, rural America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia (Cali), Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), France, Spain (Barcelona), and Japan.²⁰ Learning to dance at family gatherings is different from learning in a studio. Learning to dance to music that plays in every building on the street is different from learning in a setting with entirely different local instruments. Learning to dance is different when everyone comes from the same general socioeconomic and ethnic background compared to learning in extremely heterogeneous urban settings. This set of comparisons could continue for quite some time. The point is that even global forms take on local shapes.²¹

Lifestyle, Taste, and Conspicuous Consumption

While some aspects of globalization are best studied at the societal level, others are best examined at smaller scales such as the trends visible within specific socio-economic strata or even at the level of individual decision-making. The concept of “lifestyle” refers to the creative, reflexive, and sometimes even ironic ways in which individuals perform various social identities (see the Performance

chapter in this volume). Sociologist David Chaney describes lifestyles as “characteristic modes of social engagement, or narratives of identity, in which the actions concerned can embed the metaphors at hand.”²² The lifestyles we live and portray, then, can be seen as reflexive projects (see the Fieldwork chapter for more information about reflexivity) in the sense that they display both to ourselves and to our audiences who we think we are, who we want to be, and who we want to be seen to be.

Chaney argues that people only feel the need to differentiate themselves when confronted with an array of available styles of living.²³ Societies organized via organic solidarity (versus mechanical) are predicated on different goods, skills, and tasks. Within this framework, the rise of a consumerist economy enables individuals to exhibit their identities through the purchase and conspicuous use of various goods.²⁴ Globalization has increased the variety of goods available for individuals to purchase—as well as people’s awareness of these products—thus expanding the range of identities that can be performed through their consumption habits (see the Gender and Sexuality chapter for more on performance of identity). In some situations, identity is an individual project, with conspicuous consumption used to display one’s sense of self. For example, a student who feels alienated by the conservative, “preppy,” students at her East Coast school can cultivate an alternative identity by growing dreadlocks, wearing Bob Marley T-shirts, and practicing djembe drumming, all of which are associated with the African diaspora outside the United States.

Critics have argued that a consequence of globalization is the homogenization of culture. Along similar lines, some have worried that the rapid expansion of the leisure market would decrease the diversity of cultural products (e.g. books, movies) consumed by the populace. The disappearance of small-scale shops and restaurants has certainly been an outcome of the rise of global conglomerates, but the homogenization of culture is not a foregone conclusion.²⁵

Globalization enables individuals in far-flung corners of the world to encounter new ideas, commodities, belief systems, and voluntary groups to which they might choose to belong. At times these are at the expense of existing options, but it is also important to acknowledge that people make choices and can select the options or opportunities that most resonate with them. The concept of lifestyle thus highlights the degree of decision-making available to individual actors who can pick and choose from global commodities, ideas, and activities. At the same time as individual choices are involved, the decisions made and the assemblages selected are far from random. Participating in a lifestyle implies knowledge about consumption; knowing how to distinguish between goods is a form of symbolic capital that further enhances the standing of the individual.²⁶

How much free will, freedom of choice, or autonomy an individual actually has is an age-old question far beyond the scope of this chapter, but in many cases a person's consumption patterns are actually a reflection of the social class in which she or he was raised—even when an individual thinks he or she is selectively adopting elements from global flows that fit with his or her unique identity. In other words, an individual's "taste" is actually an outgrowth of his or her **habitus**, the embodied dispositions that arise from one's enculturation in a specific social setting.²⁷ Habitus results in a feel-ing of ease within specific settings. For example, children who have been raised in upper-class homes are able to more seamlessly integrate into elite boarding schools than classmates on scholarships who might find norms of dining, dress, and overall comportment to be unfamiliar.²⁸ Habitus, the generative grammar for social action, generates tastes and, by extension, lifestyles.²⁹

Recall the vignette that opened this chapter. The fact that the students of this prestigious liberal arts college are in the position to critique the ethical implications of specific recipes suggests that their life experiences are far different from the roughly one in seven households (totaling 17.5 million households) in the United States

with low or very low food security.³⁰ Inevitably then, what people choose to consume from global offerings—and the discourses they generate around those consumption choices—are often indicative of their social status. Once a commodity becomes part of these global flows, it is theoretically available to all people regardless of where they live. In actual practice, however, there are additional gatekeeping devices that ensure continued differentiation between social classes. Price will prevent many people from enjoying globally traded goods. While a Coca-Cola may seem commonplace to the average college student in the U.S., it is considered a luxury good in other parts of the world. Likewise, although Kobe steaks (which come from the Japanese *wagyu* cattle) are available in the U.S., it is a relatively small subgroup of Americans who would be able and willing to spend hundreds of dollars for a serving of meat. Having the knowledge necessary to discern between different goods and then utilize them according to socially prescribed norms is another mark of distinction between social classes, as anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work on taste made clear.³¹

GLOBALIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Although some within the discipline argue that anthropologists should report objectively on the cultures and social phenomena they study, given the structure of the discourse surrounding globalization, it is increasingly difficult to avoid being pigeonholed as “pro” or “anti” globalization. In truth though, globalization has had both positive and negative impacts.

Advantages of the Intensification of Globalization

As optimists, we will start with the “glass-half-full” interpretation of globalization. Political Scientist Manfred Steger has argued that

“humane forms of globalization” have the potential to help us deal with some of the most pressing issues of our time, like rectifying the staggering inequalities between rich and poor or promoting conservation.³² The mediascape has made people in the **Global North** increasingly aware of the social injustices happening in other parts of the world. In his book on the global garment industry, Kelsey Timmerman highlights the efforts undertaken by activists in the U.S., ranging from public demonstrations decrying the fur industry to boycotts of products produced in socially unsustainable ways.³³ While many of these efforts fall short of their intended outcome—and typically overlook the complexities of labor situations in the **Global South** where families often rely upon the labor of their children to make ends meet—such examples nonetheless underscore the connections people in one location now feel with others (who they will likely never meet) through the commodity chains that link them.

Globalization has also facilitated the rise of solidarity movements that would not have been likely in an earlier era. To take a recent example, within hours of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, individuals from different nations and walks of life had changed their Facebook profile pictures to include the image of the French flag. This movement was criticized because of its Eurocentrism; the victims of a bombing in Beirut just the day before received far less international support than did the French victims. Shortcomings aside, it still stands as a testament to how quickly solidarity movements can gain momentum thanks to technological innovations like social media.

Micro-loan programs and crowd-source fundraising are yet more ways in which individuals from disparate circumstances are becoming linked in the global era. Kiva, for example, is a microfinance organization that enables anyone with an Internet connection to make a small (\$25) donation to an individual or cooperative in various parts of the developing world. The projects for which individuals/groups are seeking funding are described on the Kiva website and donors choose one or more specific projects

to support. The recipient must then repay the loan to Kiva with interest.

Crowd-source fundraising follows a similar principle, though without the requirement that money be paid back to the donors. One small-scale example involves funds gathered in this way for a faculty led applied visual research class in Dangriga, Belize in 2014. By generating a small pool of additional funding, 100 percent of the students' project fees could be dedicated to producing materials for local community partners (compared to other groups, who used some of these fees for student lunches or other items). As a result, the team was able to over-deliver on what had been promised to the community. The Sabal Cassava Farm (Belize's sole commercial cassava farm) had requested a new road sign as well as full-color marketing flyers. The Austin Rodriguez Drum Shop—a cultural resource center, and producer of traditional Garifuna drums—had wanted help updating their educational poster (see Figure 2a and 2b). For both groups the team was able to a) provide digital frames with all the research images (so that the local community partners had something “in hand” and could use as they wanted; b) use higher grade production materials, and c) start work on large-format, coffee-table style documents to be provided to each family *and* also copies to be donated to the local Gulisi Garifuna Museum.

Advances in transportation technologies, combined with an increased awareness of humanitarian crises abroad (an awareness that is largely facilitated by advances in communication technologies) also create new ethnoscapes. Programs like the Peace

Corps have a relatively long history of sending Westerners into foreign nations to assist with humanitarian efforts on a regular basis. Other volunteers are mobilized in times of crisis. Medical professionals may volunteer their services during a disease epidemic, flocking to the regions others are trying to flee. Engineers may volunteer their time to help rebuild cities in the wake of natural disasters. And even lay people without a specialized skill set may lend their energy to helping others in the aftermath of a disaster, or by collecting and/or donating goods to be used in various relief efforts. In 2010, a devastating, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, affecting an estimated three million people. Thanks to widespread coverage of the crisis, the international response was immediate and intense with more than twenty countries contributing resources and personnel to assist in the recovery efforts. Clearly, then, there are also benefits facilitated by globalization.

Disadvantages of the Intensification of Globalization

In the previous section, we concluded by noting how the intensification of globalization can bring benefits to people in times of crisis. Yet it bears remembering and reiterating that sometimes such crises are themselves brought about by globalization. The decimation of indigenous tribes in the Americas, who had little to no resistance to the diseases carried by European explorers and settlers, is but one early example of this. Such changes to the world's ethnoscapes may also be accompanied by changes to local health. As epidemic after epidemic wreaked havoc on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, death rates in some tribes reached as high as 95 percent. Addressing a current instance, the research program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) coordinated by the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, has called attention

to the role of human-caused climate change in creating the current Syrian refugee crisis (see case study by Laurie King below).³⁴

Similarly, a current example of how globalization can spell disaster from a public health standpoint would be the concern in 2014 about infected airplane passengers bringing the Ebola virus from Africa to the U.S. In March 2014, the country of Guinea experienced an outbreak of the Ebola virus. From there, it spread into many countries in the western part of Africa. Medical professionals from the U.S. traveled to West Africa to assist with patient care. In October 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed that a man who traveled from Liberia to the U.S. while asymptomatic became ill several days after reaching the U.S. and eventually succumbed to the disease. Several health workers in the U.S. also became ill with the virus, but were successfully treated. In response to this outbreak, the CDC increased screening efforts at the major ports of entry to the U.S.³⁵ However, these precautions did not quell the fears of many Americans who heatedly debated the possibility of instituting travel bans to and from countries with confirmed cases of Ebola.

The debates about travel bans to and from West Africa were a reminder of the xenophobic attitudes held by many Americans even in this age of globalization. There are many reasons for this. Racial prejudice is still very much a reality in today's world (see the Race and Ethnicity chapter) as is prejudice against other religions, non-normative gender identity, the differently abled, and others. In some ways, these fears have been heightened by globalization rather than diminished. Especially after the global recession of 2008, some nation-states have become fearful for their economic security and have found it easy to use marginalized populations as scapegoats. While advances in communication technology have enabled social justice focused solidarity movements (as discussed above), unfortunately the same media have been used as a platform for hate-mongering by others. Social media enables those who had previously only been schoolyard bullies to broadcast their taunts further than ever before. Terrorists post videos of unspeakable

violence online and individuals whose hateful attitudes might have been curbed through the informal sanctions of gossip and marginalization in a smaller-scale society can now find communities of like-minded bigots in online chat rooms. By foregrounding the importance of the hypothetical “average” person, populist politics has engaged in scapegoating of minority ethnic and religious groups. This has been most apparent in the successful campaigns for the British Brexit vote on June 23, 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as President in the United States.

A portmanteau of “British” and “exit,” Brexit refers to the vote to leave the European Union. (Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, the European Union is an economic and political union of 28 nation-states founded on November 1, 1993 in Maastricht, Netherlands.) Both this and the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the U.S. represent backlash against some of the inequities generated by globalization. At the world scale, the Global North continues to extract wealth from the Global South. More tellingly though is the widening wealth-gap even in “rich” countries. Without sufficient social protection, capitalism—a system wherein profit motivates political and economic decision making—has led to a situation in which the world’s eight richest men (note the gendering) now control as much wealth as the bottom 50 percent of the entire world’s population. In other words, eight men now have just as much money as 3.75 *billion* people combined and no nation in the world has a larger wealth-gap (the difference between those with the most and the least in a society) than the United States. So, while globalization has facilitated advantages for some, more and more people are being left behind. Social scientists often use the term “re-trenchment” to describe efforts people make to reassert their traditional values and ways of life.

While this impulse is understandable, many of these people are susceptible to the rhetoric of scapegoating: being told some other group is at fault for the problems they are facing. This is the double-edged sword of globalization. Additionally, in some cases globalization is forced on already marginal populations in peripheral nations through institutions like the IMF and World Bank. In these instances, globalization facilitates and amplifies the reach and impact of **neoliberalism**, a multi-faceted political and economic philosophy that emphasizes privatization and unregulated markets (see below).

GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERALISM

Latin America provides a good example of how the shift from colonialism to neoliberalism has been disseminated through and exacerbated by globalization. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Latin American colonies' independence from Spain and Portugal was secure, but the re-lations of power that prevailed during the colonial period had largely been replicated with local elites controlling the means of production. During this period, citizens individually and collectively endeavored to establish a new national identity. Despite nominal commitments to democracy throughout the region, patron/client relationships functioned as the primary political mechanism. Internal divisions ran deep in many Latin American countries, with the supporters (or clients) of rival elites periodically drawn into violent contests for rule on behalf of their patrons. In the last decade of the 1800s and the first decade of the 1900s, people in Latin America began to question the right of the elites to rule, as well as the hidden costs of modernization. Peasant uprisings, like the one that took place at Canudos in Brazil in 1896, were evidence of the shifting political framework. People also saw the imperialistic tendencies of the U.S. as a negative force

of modernization which they hoped to avoid. Together, this led to a situation in which people in Latin America sought a national identity that resonated with their sense of self.

During this same period there was a slight but significant change in the economic structure of the region. The economy was still based on exports of agriculture and natural resources like minerals, and the profits remained in the hands of the elite. What was new, however, was the introduction and modest growth of manufacturing in the cities, which created new job opportunities. Economic diversification led to a more complex class structure and an emerging middle class. Unfortunately, this period of relative prosperity and stability soon ended. Because of the plentiful natural resources and the captive labor source “available” for exploitation in Latin America, wealthy landowners were able to undersell their European competitors on agricultural products and provide “exotic” minerals. The privileged position of Latin American landowner compared to European farmers led to widespread poverty among farmers in Europe, which led to out-migration and political instability in Europe. As locally born Latin American peasants migrated from the countryside to the cities and the cities filled with European immigrants, the landowning elite began to lose control, or at least the kind of power they used to hold over the farmers who worked their land and had no other work options.

While city living provided certain opportunities, it also introduced new challenges. In the city, for instance, people rarely had access to land for subsistence agriculture. This made them far more vulnerable to economic fluctuations, and the vulnerability of city living necessitated the adoption of new political philosophies. Urban poverty and desperation created a climate in which many people found socialist philosophies appealing, starting as early as the 1920s in some places like Brazil. Initially, union leaders and European immigrants who spread socialist ideas among the urban poor were punished by the state and often deported. Eventually such

repressive tactics proved insufficient to curtail the swelling disruptions caused by strikes and related actions by the unions. Faced with a new political reality, the elite co-opted the public rhetoric of the urban masses. Realizing the need to cast themselves as allies to the urban workforce, the elites ushered in a period of modest reform with more protection for workers.

During this period, and as an extension of their work-related activism, the middle class also clamored for expansions of the social services provided by the state. Pressure from the middle class for more social services for citizens unfortunately played into growing xenophobia (fear of foreigners) resulting from the immigration of so many foreigners *and* faulty ideas about racial superiority communicated through a growing discourse of nationalism. In some places, the elites aligned with the middle classes if they saw it as politically advantageous. In other places, however, elites resisted incorporating the middle classes into the ruling structure and the elites' power ultimately was wrested away through military coups. While emerging leaders from the middle class continued relying on the export economic model, they directed a greater percentage of the profits back into social programs. Only after the stock market crash of the 1930s—and the resulting global recession—did those in power start to question the export model.

In the early part of the 1900s, Latin American countries largely supported free trade because they believed they had a competitive advantage. They believed that by producing the products their country/region was best suited to produce they would prosper on the world market. However, changing world circumstances meant that Latin American countries soon lost their advantage; average family size in industrialized countries began to decrease, lowering demand for Latin American commodities. When other countries with similar climates and topography began to grow the same crops, a global oversupply of agricultural products led to lower prices and worsened the decline of Latin America's financial status in the world market.

This economic downturn was amplified by the loss of British hegemony after World War II. Before the war, Great Britain and Latin America had enjoyed a stable exchange relationship with Latin America sending agricultural goods to Great Britain and the British sending manufactured goods to Latin America. As the U.S. rose in global power, Americans looked to Latin America as a new market for U.S. manufactured goods. In contrast to Great Britain though, the U.S. did not need to import Latin American agricultural goods because the U.S. produced enough of its own, production that was further protected by high import tariffs. Even if a consumer wanted to buy Latin American commodities, the commodities would be more expensive than domestic ones—even if actual costs were lower. Overall, Latin America sold its agricultural goods to Europe, including Great Britain, but Latin American exporters had to accept lower prices than ever before.

The United States' economic strategy toward Latin America was different than Great Britain's had been. For those commodities that could not be produced in the U.S., like bananas, U.S. companies went to Latin America so they could directly control the means of production. Although these commodities were grown and/or produced in Latin America, the profits were taken by foreign companies rather than local ones. This same process also happened with mining interests like tin and copper; U.S. companies purchased the mines in order to extract as much profit as possible. American companies were in a position to exploit the natural resources of these countries because the U.S. had the financial capital local communities lacked *and* the technological expertise needed to sustain these industries. This pattern curtailed the rate of economic growth throughout Latin America as well as in other regions where similar patterns developed.

The late 1920s through the 1950s saw many Latin American countries turning to nationalism— often through force—as both a cultural movement and an economic strategy. The middle classes were in a favor of curtailing the export economy that had been preferred by the elites, but did not have the political clout to win elections. Indeed, their agenda was regularly blocked by the elites who used their influence (i.e. with their clients) to press their interests, especially in the rural areas. With time, however, middle class men increasingly came to occupy military officer positions and used their newfound authority to put nationalist leaders in the presidencies. Nationalists argued that an over-dependence on agriculture had led to Latin America's vulnerable position in the international economy and called for a build-up of industry. They hoped to start producing the goods that they had been importing from the U.S. and Europe. Their goal: industrial self-sufficiency.

The state was instrumental in this economic reorganization, both helping people buy local goods and discouraging them from buying foreign goods. Doing this was far from as easy as it may sound. The state imposed high duties on goods destined for the export market in order to entice producers to sell their goods at home. At the same time, the state imposed high tariffs on the imports they wanted to replace with local products. With time (and struggle) these measures had their intended effects, making the locally produced goods comparatively more affordable—and therefore appealing—to local consumers.

As already noted, developing factories required capital and technological expertise from abroad, which in turn made the goods produced much more expensive. To help people afford such expensive goods, the state printed more money, generating massive inflation. (In some places this inflation would eventually reach 2,000 percent!) The combination of chronic inflation with high foreign debt emerged as an enduring problem in Latin America and other parts of the Global South. Countries crippled by high inflation and debt have turned to international institutions like the IMF and WB for relief and while the intentions may be good, borrowing money

from these global institutions always comes with strings attached. When a country accepts a loan from the IMF or the WB, for instance, they must agree to a number of conditions such as privatizing state enterprises (see the case study on Bolivia's water crisis, below) and cutting spending on social services like healthcare and education. Borrowing countries are also required to adopt a number of policies intended to encourage free trade, such as the reduction or elimination of tariffs on imported goods and subsidies for domestically produced goods. Policies are put into place to encourage foreign investment. Transnational corporations have now reached the point that many of them rival nations in terms of revenue. In fact, as of 2009, "forty-four of the world's hundred largest economies are corporations."³⁶ It is an understatement to note that the policies forced on countries by lenders are often disruptive—if not entirely destructive—of locally preferred lifeways and preferences. Although the IMF and WB measures are intended to spark economic growth, the populace often winds up suffering in the wake of these changes. Colonialism has given way to a neocolonialism in which economic force achieves what used to require military force with transnational corporations benefiting from the exploitation of poorer nations.

Case Study: Privatization and Bolivia's Water Crisis

In 2000, Bolivians in the city of Cochabamba took to the streets to protest the exploitative practices of a transnational company that had won the right to provide water services in the city.³⁷ Anti-globalization activists celebrated this victory of mostly poor mestizo and indigenous people over capitalist giants, but the situation on the ground today is more complicated.

Water is one of the most essential elements on this planet. So how is it that a foreign company was given the right to determine who would have access to Bolivian water supplies and what the water would cost? The answer serves to highlight the fact that many former colonies like Bolivia have existed in a perpetual state of subordination to global superpowers. When Bolivia was a colony,

Spain claimed the silver and other precious commodities that could be extracted from Bolivia's landscape, but after Bolivia became independent structural adjustment policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank paved the way for foreign companies to plunder the country's natural resources. In other words, colonial style relationships have been replicated in a global system that forces impoverished countries to sell resources to satisfy creditors; "resource extraction is facilitated by debt relations."³⁸

Like many countries in the Global South, Bolivia is deep in debt. A failed program of social reforms, coupled with government corruption, was worsened by a severe drought affecting Bolivian agriculture. In order to pay its debts in the 1980s, Bolivia agreed to structural adjustments mandated by the conditions of the country's World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans. One of the mandates of these loans was privatization of state-run enterprises like the water system. Proponents of privatizing such resources argue that the efficiency associated with for-profit businesses will also serve to conserve precious natural resources. Some have gone so far as to suggest that increases in water prices would help customers better grasp the preciousness of water and thereby encourage conservation. Of course, if customers conserve water too much the company managing water delivery will fail to make a profit, thus initiating a dangerous cycle. When companies anticipate that they will not see a return on their investment in infrastructure, they simply refuse to extend services to certain areas of the community.

What made the privatization of water in Bolivia so disastrous for the people of urban areas like Cochabamba was the rapid population growth they experienced starting in the latter half of the twentieth century (growth that continues in the present). Population pressures layered on top of the scarcity of water in the Bolivian natural environment makes access to potable water a perennial concern. Migration to urban areas was hastened by many different factors including land reform, privatization of mines and resultant layoffs,

and severe droughts. This influx of migrants put pressure on urban infrastructure. To make matters worse, climate change led to a decline in the amount of surface water available. In 2015, Lake Poopó, the second largest lake in Bolivia, went dry and researchers are [doubtful it will ever fully recover](#) (see Figure 3).³⁹ In Cochabamba, organizing began in late 1999. Community members formed an organization called Coordinator for the Defense of Water and for Life, which was run using a direct form of democracy wherein everyone had an equal voice. This was empowering for peasants who were accustomed to being silenced and ignored in a centuries-old social hierarchy. This organization, in contrast, coordinated actions that cut across ethnic and class lines. As the situation came to a head, activists blockaded the roads in and out of the city and riot police were brought in from the capital. After several days of confrontations between the people and the military, local activists ousted the transnational company and reclaimed their water source.

Despite local's reclaiming control, however, they still lacked the infrastructure needed to effectively deliver what was once again "their" water. This forced them to look to international donors for assistance, which could recreate the very situation against which they so recently fought. Access to increasingly scarce water supplies is a growing problem. For example, plans to seize surface water from lakes creates conflicts with rural peasants who depend on these water sources for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, such problems have emerged in many other places as well (such as throughout Africa and the Middle East), and are increasing in prevalence and severity amidst ongoing climate change. The question of whether or not water is a human right remains one that is heatedly debated by activists, CEOs, and others. (See [a discussion](#) of the position taken by Nestlé Chairman Peter Brabeck, who argues for the privatization of water, a position clearly at odds with the

position taken by the United Nations General Assembly which, in 2010, recognized [water and sanitation as human rights](#).)

RESPONSES TO GLOBALIZATION

Cultures are dynamic and respond to changes in both the social and physical environments in which they are embedded. While culture provides a template for action, people are also active agents who respond to challenges and opportunities in a variety of ways, some of which may be quite creative and novel. As such, it would be inaccurate to only see globalization as an impersonal force dictating the lives of people in their various localities. Rather, people regularly use a variety of strategies in responding to global forces. While a comprehensive catalog of these strategies is beyond the scope of this chapter, here we outline two key responses.

Syncretism

Syncretism refers to the combination of different beliefs—even those that are seemingly contradictory—into a new, harmonious whole. Though syncretism arises for a variety of reasons, in many cases it is as a response to globalization. In this section, we use the example of *Candomblé* as a way of demonstrating that syncretism is a form of agency used by people living under oppression.

Most often, anthropologists discuss syncretism within the context of religion. Anthropologists define religion as the cultural knowledge of the spiritual realm that humans use to cope with the ultimate problems of human existence (see the Religion chapter). *Candomblé* is an Afro-Brazilian spirit-possession religion, in which initiates serve as conduits between the human and supernatural realm. It is also an excellent example of a syncretic religion. The many gods in *Candomblé*, known as *orixás*, are personified: they all have personalities; experience the full range of human emotions like love, hatred, jealousy, and anger; and have individual histories that are known to practitioners. Each *orixá* is associated with a particular color, and practitioners of the religion often wear bead necklaces that correspond to the specific deity with whom they feel a connection (see Figure 4). Unlike Christianity (a monotheistic religion), *Candomblé* does not stress the duality of good and evil

(or heaven and hell). Although on the surface these two religious traditions may seem very different, in actual practice, many adherents of Candomblé also identify as Christians, specifically Catholics. So how can this be?

Much like the orixás, Catholic saints are personified and have unique roles within the Catholic tradition. This feature of Catholicism—more so than any other major Christian denomination—facilitated a fairly seamless overlay with orixá worship. For example, *Iemanjá*, the orixá who rules over the seas and is associated with fertility, is syncretized with Our Lady of Conception. *Ogum*, whose domain is war and whose ritual implements are the sword and shield, is syncretized with Saint Anthony.

Just to be clear, syncretism is in no way unique to Brazil or the African Diaspora; it frequently occurs when one group is confronted with and influenced by another (and typically one with more power). The reason syncretism is particularly common within Latin American religious systems is due to 1) the tenacity with which African slaves clung to their traditional beliefs; 2) the fervor of the Spanish and Portuguese belief that slaves *should* receive instruction in Catholicism, and 3) the realities of colonial life in which religious instruction for slaves was haphazard at best. This created the perfect climate within which African slaves could hide their traditional religious practices in plain sight.

Syncretism serves as a response to globalization insofar as it mediates overlapping frameworks. It would be unnecessary if people lived in a world where boundaries were clearly defined with no ideological exchanges taking place across those boundaries (if such a world ever existed). Since that is far from the lived reality for most people though, syncretism often serves as what James C. Scott categorizes as a “weapon of the weak”—a concept referring to the ways in which marginalized peoples can resist without directly challenging their oppressors (which could incite retaliation).⁴⁰

Examples might include mocking the elite behind their backs, subtle subversion, sabotage, or participation in alternative economies that bypass the elite. In the classroom, it can be rolling one's eyes behind the professor's back, or thinking that you are "getting away with something" when texting in class. So too in the case of Candomblé. Syncretism allowed the slaves and their descendants, who continue the tradition today, to create a façade of compliance with mandated worship within the Catholic tradition, while still continuing to pay homage to their own beliefs—and thus perpetuate their own ethnic identity—behind closed doors.

Participation in Alternative Markets

As discussed earlier, structural adjustments mandated by international bodies like the IMF and WB have left farmers in developing nations particularly vulnerable to the whims of global markets. Within this framework, "fair trade" has emerged as a way for socially-conscious consumers to support small farmers and artisans who have been affected by these policies. To be certified as fair trade, vendors must agree to a "fair" price, which will be adjusted upwards if the world market price rises above the fair trade threshold. If the world market price drops, fair trade farmers still make a decent living, which allows them to continue farming rather than abandon their fields for wage labor. While admirable in its intent, and unassailably beneficial to many, anthropological research reminds us that every situation is complex and that there is never a "one size fits all" perfect solution.

As you read about in the Fieldwork chapter, and have seen demonstrated throughout this text, anthropologists focus on the lived experience of people closest to the phenomenon they are studying. In the case of fair trade, then, anthropologists focus primarily on the farmers or artisans (although an anthropologist could also study the consumers or people who import fair trade goods or facilitate their sale). Looked at from farmers' perspectives,

setting and maintaining fair wages for commodities like coffee or bananas ensures that farmers will not abandon farming when the world market prices drop. On the plus side, this helps ensure at least some stability for producers and consumers alike. One of the key features of fair trade is the social premium generated by fair trade contracts: the commitment that a certain percentage of the profit goes back into beneficial community projects such as education, infrastructure development, and healthcare. But, in order for this to be successful, it is the local community and not an outside entity (however well intentioned) that must get to decide how these premiums are used.

Although fair trade is very appealing, it bears remembering that not everyone benefits from fair trade in the same way. Individuals in leadership positions within fair trade cooperatives tend to have stronger relationships with the vendors than do average members, leading them to have more positive associations with the whole business of fair trade.⁴¹ Similarly, people with more cultural and social capital will have more access to the benefits of fair trade. A cacao farmer with whom Lauren works in Belize, for example, pointed out that farmers with less education will always be taken advantage of by predatory traders, which is why they need the assistance of a well-structured growers' association when entering the free trade market. Also of concern is that in some communities fair trade disrupts traditional roles and relationships. For example in a Maya village in Guatemala, traditional gender roles were compromised, with men becoming even more dominant because their commodity (coffee) had a fair trade market whereas the women's main commodity (weaving) did not.⁴²

In addition to the challenge of finding a market for one's goods, there are additional barriers to becoming involved in fair trade. For example, it used to be that farmers could sell relatively low quality coffee to fair trade organizations interested in social justice. Now, however, fair trade coffee must be of exceptional quality to compete with specialty coffees.⁴³ In and of itself this is not a bad thing, but remember that some of the elite coffee producers of

today were once the low quality producers of old. In other words, the first generation of fair trade coffee farmers benefited from the many ways in which fair trade companies invested in their farms, their processing equipment, and their education in a way that newer participants cannot replicate. Indeed, once these initial farmers achieved a high quality coffee bean, there was less incentive for fair trade vendors to invest in new farms. Now that the bar has been set so high, it is much more difficult for new farmers to break into the fair trade market because they lack the equipment, experience, knowledge, and networks of farmers who have more longstanding relationships with fair trade companies.

Also worth noting are the many situations in which global standards conflict with local norms of decision making. To be labeled as fair trade within the European Union banana market, for example, bananas must be of an exceptionally high quality. Banana farms must conform to a number of other guidelines such as avoiding pesticides and creating a buffer zone between the banana trees and water sources. While this all may make sense in theory, it can be problematic in practice, such as in parts of the Caribbean where land is customarily passed from one generation to the next without being subdivided into individual parcels. In these cases, decisions about land use have to be made collectively. If some of the landowners want to farm according to fair trade guidelines but other individuals refuse to meet these globally mandated standards, the whole family is blocked from entering the fair trade market.⁴⁴

IMPLICATIONS FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

As has been argued throughout this text, culture is dynamic. So too is anthropology as the field of study dedicated to culture. Although many students of anthropology (let alone the public at large) may have romantic visions of the lone ethnographer immersing her or himself in the rich community life of a rural village in a remote land, this is not the reality for most

anthropologists today. An increasing number of anthropologists find themselves working in applied settings (see the Seeing Like an Anthropologist chapter), but even many of the more strictly identified “academic” anthropologists—those employed at colleges and universities—have begun working in settings that might well be familiar to the average person. Now that anthropologists understand the importance of global flows of money, people, and ideas the importance of doing research everywhere that these issues play out—at home (wherever that may be) as much as abroad—is clear.

Urban Anthropology

Globalization has become a powerful buzzword in contemporary society and it would be difficult to find anyone who has not been affected by it in at least some small way. The widespread influence of globalization on daily life around the world—whether directly (such as through multinational businesses) or indirectly (such as via climate change)—raises a number of questions that anthropologists have begun to ask. For example, an anthropologist might investigate the effects of global policies on people in different regions of the world. Why is it that the monetary policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank typically result in rich countries getting richer and the poor countries getting poorer? In her book *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora* (1997), for example, Norma Iglesias Prieto gives an up-close portrait of the lives of Mexican women working in factories in the infamous border zone of Tijuana.⁴⁵ Although the working conditions in these factories are dangerous and the women are subjected to invasive scrutiny by male supervisors, many of the women profiled in the book nonetheless appreciate the little luxuries afforded by their work. Others value the opportunity to support their household or gain a small degree of financial independence from the male figures in their life. Unable to offer any artificially flat answer concerning whether globalization has been “good” or “bad” for such individuals, anthropologists focus on the lived experience of the people most affected by these global forces. What is it like to live in such

environments? How has it changed over time? What have been the costs and benefits?

Especially amidst the overlapping flows of people and ideas, questions concerning mobility, trans-nationalism, and identity have all become increasingly important to the field of anthropology. Although some exceptions exist (see quinoa case study below), the general trend is for globalization to result in urbanization. With neoliberalism comes the loss of state-funded programs and jobs, the unsustainability of small farms, and the need for economic alternatives that are most commonly found in urban areas. While anthropologists have long studied cities and urban life, the concentration of populations in urban centers has added increasing importance to anthropologies of the city/ metropolis in recent years.⁴⁶ Indeed, the term urban anthropology came into use to describe experiences of living in cities and the relationships of city life to broader social, political, and economic contexts including issues of globalization, poverty, and neoliberalism.⁴⁷ The heightened focus on the city in global context has also heightened awareness of and attention to issues of transnationalism: the understanding that people's lives may be lived and/or significantly influenced by events that cross the geopolitical borders of nation states.⁴⁸

Case Study: Global Demand for Quinoa

When a group of people is afforded little status in a society, their food is often likewise denigrated.⁴⁹ Until recently, this held true for quinoa in Bolivian society, which was associated with indigenous peasants.⁵⁰ Mirroring “first world” patterns from the U.S. and Europe, city dwellers preferred foods like pasta and wheat-based products. Conspicuous consumption of these products provided them with an opportunity to showcase their “sophisticated” choices and tastes. Not surprisingly, there was little local demand for quinoa in Bolivian markets. Further undercutting the appeal of producing

quinoa, the Bolivian government's adoption of neoliberal policies eliminated the meager financial protections available to peasant farmers. If that was not bad enough, a significant drought in the early 1980s spelled disaster for many small farmers in the southern Altiplano region of Bolivia. As a result of these overlapping and amplifying obstacles, many people moved to 1) cities, like La Paz; 2) nearby countries, like Chile, and even 3) to Europe.

The situation faced by Bolivian peasants is not unique. More than half of the world's people currently live in cities. This is the result of widespread urbanization that began at the end of World War II and stretched into the 1990s. As a result, many peasants lost access to their traditional modes of subsistence. Although migration to the city can provide benefits like access to education, infrastructure, and wage-labor, it can also result in a loss of identity and many peasants who migrate into cities are forced to subsist on the margins in substandard conditions, especially as they most often arrive without the social and cultural capital necessary to succeed in this new environment.

Fortuitously for indigenous Bolivians, the structural adjustments adopted by their government coincided with foreigners' growing interest in organic and health foods. Although it is often assumed that rural peasants only produce food for their own subsistence and for very local markets, this is not always the case. In some situations, peasants may bypass local markets entirely and export their commodities to places where they have more cultural capital, and hence financial value (see discussion of taste above). In the 1970s, the introduction of tractors to the region enabled farmers to cultivate quinoa in the lowlands in addition to the hillside terraces they had previously favored. In the 1980s, cooperative groups of farmers were able to find buyers in the Global North who were willing to import quinoa (see Figure 5). These cooperatives researched the best ways to expand production and invested in machines to make the process more efficient. Now, quinoa is such a valuable commodity that many of those individuals who had previously abandoned the region are now returning to the Altiplano.

Yet this is not a simple success story, especially because there are serious issues associated with the re-peasantization of the Bolivian countryside and with the fact that a healthy local crop has been removed from many people's regular diets since it can be sold to the Global North.

Another serious issue raised by the reverse migration from the cities back to the Altiplano concerns environmental sustainability. It is easier to grow large quantities of quinoa in the flat lowlands than it is on the steep hillsides, but the lowland soil is much less conducive to its growth. The use of machinery has helped a great deal, but has also led to a decline in the use of llamas, which have a symbiotic relationship with quinoa. Farmers must now invest in fertilizer rather than using manure provided by their own animals. The global quinoa boom also raises questions about identity and communal decision-making. Conflict has arisen between families that stayed in the region and those that are returning from the cities. Pedro, a farmer who stayed in the region, says of the others "those people have returned – but as strangers."⁵¹ The two groups often clash in terms of what it means to respect the land and how money from this new cash crop should be used.

So has the international demand for quinoa been a good thing for rural Bolivian peasants? In some ways yes, but in other ways no; on the whole, it may be too soon to know for sure.

Changes in How—and “Where”—We Conduct Research

Globalization has changed not only what anthropologists research, but also how they approach those topics. Foregrounding the links between global processes and local settings, multi-sited ethnography examines specific topics and issues across different geographic field sites.⁵² Multi-sited ethnography may be conducted when the subject of one's study involve and/or impact

multiple locations and can be best understood by accounting for those multiple geographic contexts. For example, in her study of yoga, *Positioning Yoga: Balancing Acts Across Cultures*, Sarah Strauss (2005) found that her study would be incomplete if she focused only on Indians studying yoga. To understand this trans-national phenomenon, she recognized the importance of also focusing on non-Indian practitioners of yoga who had gone to study yoga in its homeland.⁵³ Work such as that of Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, who studies news media correspondents, highlights the ways that people can be on the move, creating a community of study that is both multi-sited and multilocal.⁵⁴ Further work has expanded on these models, highlighting various *translocal* fieldsites: “locations” that cannot be geographically defined. Such models include calls for an activity-based anthropology (where it is the activity itself that is the “site” of the culture and/or the basis of the community)⁵⁵ and digital anthropology (where the field site exists online).⁵⁶

Globalization in Application: The Syrian Situation Today (courtesy of Laurie King)

Syria today presents us with an apocalyptic landscape: major cities such as Homs have been reduced to rubble and anyone remaining there is starving. Since 2011, over 250,000 civilians have been killed by barrel bombs, shelling, internecine terrorist attacks, drone strikes, the use of chemical weapons, and Russian aerial assaults. Well-armed and well-funded Islamist militias control large swathes of the country and have, for all intents and purposes, erased the border between Syria and Iraq, thereby undoing the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement that established the new nation-states of the modern Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The so-called Islamic State (IS/Daesh) has destroyed world heritage sites such as Pal-myra (Tadmur), ethnically cleansed non-Muslim towns, enslaved women, and flooded the global media with horrific images of beheadings, immolations, and mass executions. Alep-po, a city of stunning architectural beauty with a rich multi-

cultural heritage, is now damaged beyond repair and largely uninhabitable as the result of fighting between IS, Syrian regime forces, and a diverse but largely Islamist Syrian opposition.

Farming in the Syrian countryside has come to a virtual halt. Since 2003, Syrian agriculture had been suffering from a prolonged drought, pushing many rural families into urban centers such as Damascus and Aleppo.⁵⁷ In 2015, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (the “Doomsday Seed Vault”) in Norway was accessed for the first time to obtain seeds needed for crops to feed the Syrian population.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, as any glance at the evening news demonstrates, millions of refugees continue to flow out of the country, mostly through the Syrian-Turkish border, before making dangerous trips in unsafe boats to Greece, hoping to get their families to Europe and away from the hell-scape that their country has become.

Five years ago, no scholar of Syrian society and politics could have predicted the dire conditions Syria now faces. Given the Assad regime’s iron grip on all aspects of Syrian society since 1970, the dramatic transformations of the last five years were inconceivable at the beginning of 2011. The scapes and flows of globalization enumerated by Appadurai were largely absent from Syria over the last 40 years. The hardline Baathist regime of Hafez al-Assad, who came to power in 1970 through a bloodless coup, was profoundly insular and not open to the world—whether regionally or internationally—in the realms of finance and commerce. Never a major petroleum power, and not blessed with vast tracts of fertile land for farming, Syria’s economy centered largely on industry and commerce.

Up until the mid-1980s, Syria had a highly centralized economy that eschewed private ownership of industry or services. With the end of the Cold War (during which Syria had been a client state of the USSR), and the ensuing dramatic shifts in regional power dynamics—most notably the 1991 Iraq war, which saw the rout of Saddam Hussein’s forces from Kuwait and the diminution of the Iraqi Baathist regime’s power—Syria emerged as a key regional player capable of leveraging concessions from other Arab states

as well as the West. In exchange for joining the US-led coalition against Iraq, the United States and the international community raised no objections to Syria asserting direct and indirect control over its neighbor (and former mandatory province) Lebanon, where a series of interconnected civil, regional, and global wars had raged for fifteen years.

Syrian political and military control effectively put the Lebanese wars into a deep freeze between 1992 and 2005. While freedom of speech in Lebanon declined significantly under Syria's tutelage, an unregulated market economy flourished, centering on the massive post-war reconstruction boom. The Syrian economic elite—largely coterminous with the regime—benefited significantly from business deals in Lebanon, while thousands of Syrian workers flooded into Lebanon to do construction work on the new city center and infrastructural repairs. The influx of money from Lebanon strengthened and entrenched the patron-client ties between the Syrian regime (whose members were also relatives by blood or marriage) and a growing class of wealthy businessmen, who owed their wealth to the regime. As Bassam Haddad notes, the insularity of and corruption within the regime and big business blurred the line between private and public domains, while sharpening class divisions within Syria.⁵⁹ Any attempts to foster political reform, economic transparency, and international commerce were viewed suspiciously by Syria's political, commercial, and military/intelligence elite.

In June 2000, Hafez Al- Assad died. His son Bashar, an ophthalmologist who had lived in London for many years, succeeded him. Local and international observers wondered if the new, foreign-educated young president would launch an era of economic reform and political decentralization. Bashar seemed keen to bring Syria into the Internet era, and his first years in power witnessed relatively free discussion of the need for economic and political reforms, heralded by the closing of the infamous Mezzeh prison, where many political prisoners had been tortured and killed. But power remained in the hands of the few in the upper reaches of

the Baath party, some of whom did not know whether or not to trust Bashar, who lacked the steely reserve and unquestioned authority of his father.

Although Syria lacked the sort of material and financial capital enjoyed by its neighbors, such as the oil-rich Gulf states, it enjoyed the benefits of symbolic capital as the sole, front-line Arab nationalist state opposing Israel and resisting any normalization of ties with the Jewish state in the post-Cold war era, even as the Palestinian Liberation organization and Jordan joined Egypt in establishing peace treaties with Israel. In the hope that Syria would come into the fold, the United States did not make harsh demands on Syria for internal reforms or regional economic integration.

In February 2005, in the wake of growing Lebanese dissatisfaction with Syria's control of the country, Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri and over a dozen of his colleagues were killed in a massive suicide bomb while traveling in a motorcade through downtown Beirut. (To this day, no one knows decisively who was behind the car bomb, though many suspect Syrian involvement.) Massive, largely peaceful, demonstrations erupted in Beirut immediately, and within a matter of weeks, Syria was forced to end its occupation of Lebanon and retreat.

While Syria had not experienced a significant flow of people and wealth in and out of its borders for years, media and technology flows were growing in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The flow of ideas and images from Tunisia and Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings of 2010-11 heralded Syria's first sustained experience with the dynamics of globalization, described in this text by political scientist Manfred Steger as: "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa."⁶⁰

In February 2011, the regime lifted the ban on Facebook and YouTube following unprecedented street protests on January 26, the day after the Egyptian protests began. (Before this, Syrians contravened the ban through proxy servers.) Soon, Facebook groups

were organizing and even calling for a “Day of Rage” and encouraging people to come out to the streets to protest against the regime. Nothing came of this, though. Despite garnering thou-sands of “likes,” no one seemed to be following the directives of the new Facebook pages.⁶¹ The Internet’s impact in the Arab world has built upon the phenomenon of satellite television, particularly that of Al- Jazeera, which opened up new spaces of discourse and debate about political and human rights issues in the Arab world, thereby undermining the legitimacy and validity of state-owned news programs and the power structures underpinning them. While Al Jazeera instilled a powerful reformist spirit, blogs were particularly crucial in advancing and fortifying Arab activism efforts.

Before blogs, there were chat rooms, listservs, and email communication, all of which enhanced and expanded a cyber world of public discourse in some Arab states, but not in Syria. Some Egyptian bloggers called the Internet and social media “our lungs. If they cut them off, we will suffocate.” As a result of Internet communications technology (ICT), social isolation in the Arab world began to give way to the formation of communities of conversation and debate, which ultimately evolved into social movements that took to the streets and made history in the real world. Our “networked society,” to use Manuel Castell’s phrase, connects us horizontally and allows us not only to communicate, but to self-com-municate and self-create.⁶² We not only consume the news, we now evaluate, filter, and respond to the news. We not only read headlines, our networked actions and reactions to breaking news can ripple out across countries and continents and make headlines.

While Western media paid considerable attention to Egypt’s uprising, the Syrian upris-ings were not as well covered. Perhaps

this is because Egypt is part of the West's cultural imaginary. (Hollywood movies such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and popular culture depictions of pyramids, pharaohs, and the Valley of the Kings are all evidence of this.) Syria, a tightly controlled authoritarian state, had not been a destination for Western tourists, scholars, film producers, or even journalists for decades, so its street protests and popular struggles did not loom large in Western media coverage. While every major American news agency covered the uprising in Tahrir Square in Cairo in real time, news of protests and civil society activism in Syria did not always reach the rest of the world.

It seems that the Syrian regime underestimated its ability to channel or harness public opinion by lifting the ban on social media. Vigils, protests, and marches, all initially peaceful, began to appear on Syria's streets, drawing larger and larger crowds. The response of the regime, unaccustomed to public political expression, was quick and brutally repressive. Rather than scaring people into silence, the regime now confronted an armed opposition. Within just one year, social media protests had become street protests, which became street battles between pro – and anti-regime forces. Globalization, as experienced in Syria, has revealed the limits of an authoritarian regime's ability to control and constrain social action in the age of social media.

Syria is now experiencing flows of people across borders. Syrians are escaping to Turkey, Europe, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq by the millions, creating the world's worst refugee crisis. Meanwhile, drawn to the message of the Islamic State (IS), young men and women from across the Middle East and as far afield as Europe and North America are traveling to the IS controlled territories of eastern Syria and Western Iraq to join in a "global jihad."

As the high-quality and gory video productions of IS demonstrate, technological and media resources, skills, and knowledge are flowing in and out of Syria's borders. Financial flows in oil wealth are now in the hands of IS, and food resources are flowing into the country when possible from international non-governmental

organizations such as Mercy Corps. Syria is an example of the disadvantages of globalization, as well as an illustration of how quickly one country's crises can become global crises.

CONCLUSION

The term “globalization” is not simply a verbal shortcut for talking about contact, transmission, and transportation on the global scale. This chapter has shown that contact has existed across disparate locations throughout much of human history. As it is used and understood today, however, globalization is about much more than the total scope of contact; it references the speed and scale of such contact. Understood in this way, globalization is a modern phenomenon; it is not just how many places are connected, but in how many ways and with what frequency.

Where people once had to rely on horses or sail-driven ships to bring them to new locations, mass transportation (especially air travel) makes such commutes a part of many people's daily lives, and someone who had never seen a TV one week might end up visiting Jakarta, Cairo, or Toronto the next. News, which might have raced ahead via carrier pigeons can now be transmitted in a virtual instant, and information once confined to physical libraries can now be accessed on the smart phones carried by peoples around the world. Neither “good” nor “bad,” globalization is a fact of life today. Whether a business woman flies between international hubs on a weekly basis or a man tends his garden on a remote plateau, both of their lives may be equally influenced by how a specific crop is received on the world market. Providing both opportunities and constraints, globalization now serves as the background—if not the stage—for how life gets lived, on the ground, by us all.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In his research, Kelsey Timmerman discovered that the average American is wearing clothes made in many different countries. This demonstrates how everyday items can involve all five of Arjun Appadurai's scapes. Choose another product that is part of your everyday life. How many scapes can you connect it to?

2. Globalization makes new forms of consumption possible, but the effects of globalization on an individual's lifestyle vary based on many factors including socioeconomic status. In what ways is globalization experienced differently by people from wealthy countries compared to people in developing countries? How are producers of commodities like clothing or food affected differently by globalization than consumers?

3. In Latin America, globalization and neoliberalism have led to the development of policies, such as the privatization of the water supply, that reduce local control over important resources. In what ways is globalization a “double-edged” sword that brings both benefits and problems to developing countries?

4. Globalization presents the possibility of engaging in activity-based anthropology, where it is the activity itself that is the “site” studied, or digital anthropology, where the field site exists online. What kinds of activities or digital environments do you think would be interesting to study using this approach?

GLOSSARY

Commodity chain: the series of steps a food takes from location where it is produced to the store where it is sold to consumers.

Ethnoscape: the flow of people across boundaries.

Financescape: the flow of money across political borders.

Glocalization: the adaptation of global ideas into locally palatable forms

Habitus: the dispositions, attitudes, or preferences that are the learned basis for personal “taste” and lifestyles.

Ideoscape: the global flow of ideas.

Mediascape: the flow of media across borders.

Neoliberalism: the ideology of free-market capitalism emphasizing privatization and unregulated markets.

Syncretism: the combination of different beliefs, even those that are seemingly contradictory, into a new, harmonious whole.

Technoscape: the global flows of technology.

Global North: refers to the wealthier countries of the world. The

definition includes countries that are sometimes called “First World” or “Highly Developed Economies.”

Global South: refers to the poorest countries of the world. The definition includes countries that are sometimes called “Third World” or “Least Developed Economies.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Lauren Miller Griffith is an assistant professor of anthropology at Texas Tech University. Her research agenda focuses on the intersections of performance, tourism, and education in Brazil, Belize, and the USA. Specifically, she focuses on the Afro-Brazilian martial art *capoeira* and how non-Brazilian practitioners use travel to Brazil, the art’s homeland, to increase their legitimacy within this genre. Dr. Griffith’s current interests include the links between tourism, cultural heritage, and sustainability in Belize. She is particularly interested in how indigenous communities decide whether or not to participate in the growing tourism industry and the long-term effects of these decisions.

Dr. Jonathan S. Marion is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology and a member of the Gender Studies Steering Committee at the University of Arkansas, and the author of *Ballroom: Culture and Costume in Competitive Dance* (2008), *Visual Research: A Concise Introduction to Thinking Visually* (2013, with Jerome Crowder), and *Ballroom*

Dance and Glamour (2014). Currently the President of the Society for Humanistic Anthropology, and a Past-president of the Society of Visual Anthropology, Dr. Marion’s ongoing research explores the interrelationships between performance, embodiment, gender, and identity, as well as issues of visual research ethics, theory, and methodology.

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54. Chapter 11: Culture and Sustainability: Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene

Learning Objectives

- Identify the methods and theories anthropologists use to examine human interactions with the environment.
- Define political ecology and explain its relationship to anthropology.
- Describe the Anthropocene and discuss how anthropology contributes to understanding the human role in environmental destruction.
- Explain how anthropology contributes to public discussions and the creation of public policy with lawmakers, activists, corporations, and others regarding major environmental challenges.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 11: Culture and Sustainability: Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene*.

LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

We live on a planet where the climate—winds, precipitation, weather, temperatures—is being modified by the collective impact of the human species. I arrived at anthropology through an interest

in understanding human impacts on the environment. I began by studying ethnobotany as an undergraduate and received a master's degree in environmental science. As I researched human-environmental dynamics, I realized that scientists had largely identified what needed to be done to address many of the world's pressing environmental problems, but few of the recommended changes had been adopted, thwarted by political, cultural, and economic forces. Anthropologists' approach is holistic; they seek to simultaneously understand all of the interactions of political, cultural, and economic factors to fully explore the complexity of human-environmental interactions. Thus, I felt that anthropology provided a good place to start to understand and begin to address some of the most important questions facing our species. For example, how can we provide for basic human needs while not sacrificing the welfare of other species? Why do many people say that they care about protecting the environment but then do nothing about it? What political, economic, and cultural factors are prohibiting world leaders from agreeing on solutions to global environmental challenges? To answer such questions, we must understand how humans think and act as groups, our socially and culturally mediated ways of interacting with each other, other species, and the world around us.

Arriving at Environmental Anthropology

In many ways, anthropology as a discipline is only now starting to address these questions. In December 2014, Bruno Latour, a French anthropologist, spoke to a stand-ing-room-only audience at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., to discuss the relationship between the **Anthropocene** and anthropology.¹ Anthropocene is a term used to describe the period (or epoch) in geological time in which the effects of human activities have altered the fundamental geochemical cycles of the earth as a result of converting forests into fields and pastures

and burning oil, gas, and coal on a large scale. Because human activities have changed the earth's atmosphere, anthropologists can make important contributions to studies of geology, chemistry, and meteorology by considering the effects of humans and their cultural systems. As Latour noted, the discipline of anthropology is uniquely qualified to provide insight into key components of current environmental crises by determining the reasons behind choices various groups of humans make, bridging the social and natural sciences, and studying contradictions between cultural universals (traits all humans have in common) and particularities (interesting cultural differences).

This chapter summarizes how anthropologists have contributed to analysis and resolution of environmental concerns. I begin with a brief overview of anthropological analysis of human interactions with the environment and then explore how anthropological perspectives toward human-environmental interactions have changed over time. I end the chapter with a call to action—an invitation for students to use lessons they have learned from anthropology to challenge the kinds of thinking that have produced current environmental crises and see where those anthropological approaches take them. Environmental anthropology is an exciting subfield that will grow in importance as questions of environmental sustainability become increasingly central to scientific and popular conversations about the future of our species and the planet.

Humans and the Environment

If we think about anthropology from the classic four-field approach, which includes both physical anthropology and archaeology, many of the questions with which those disciplines have historically wrestled were related to our species' long-term relationship with the environment. Around two million years ago,

climate changes decreased the amount of forest and expanded grasslands in Africa, which led to the early **Hominin** radiation (the geographic expansion of multiple Hominin species). It also led hominin species to walk upright, which freed their hands to make and use tools. Subsequent climate changes, particularly expansions and contractions of glaciers associated with ice ages, also contributed to *Homo sapiens* expanding to new parts of the globe.

Fast-forwarding to the beginning of human agriculture roughly 10,000 years ago, we can see how the global expansion of *Homo sapiens* and their first permanent settlements and urban centers led to the development of agriculture, a profound new way of interacting with the environment. The ability of early humans to shape the landscape, first by simply encouraging wild plants to grow and later by planting and irrigating crops and domesticating plants and animals, set humans on the path toward our current problematic relationship with the planet. Archaeologists' questions about human diets, tools, and architecture inevitably explore how ancient civilizations interacted with their environments. For example, archaeologists examine the relative frequency of different kinds of pollen and tree rings over thousands of years to understand how landscapes changed over time through both human and natural processes.

Many archaeologists credit increased productivity that came with agriculture as the foundation of civilization, allowing humans to live in larger settlements, specialize in craft production, and develop social hierarchies and eventually math, writing, and science. From this perspective, the seeds of social complexity were contained within the first grains domesticated in the hills surrounding the Fertile Crescent. Others have questioned the idea that the effects of agriculture were purely beneficial. For example, Marshall Sahlins called foraging (hunter-gatherer) societies “the original affluent societies” and noted that hunter-gatherers had more leisure time, healthier diets, more time to socialize, and greater social equality

than agricultural or even industrial societies.² He also noted that they were affluent not because they had everything, but because they could easily meet their basic needs of food, shelter, and sociality. Others have looked at the advances in science, medicine, and communication technology and disagreed with Sahlins, arguing that we are better off with the developments brought by agriculture. Sahlins' critique of agriculture (and subsequently of civilization) should not be seen as a suggestion to deindustrialize; rather, it is a challenge to assumptions that Western civilization and its technological developments necessarily represent improvements for human societies. Perhaps the strongest argument against capitalism and industrialization is the real possibility of environmental collapse that those systems have brought.

Sahlins' analysis calls into question the idea that humans as a species are necessarily progressing through history and encourages us to think about how “necessities” are culturally constructed. Do we really need cars or cell phones to be happy? How about books and vaccines? Because many of our innovations in technology, agriculture, and transportation have come at the expense of the natural systems that support us, we need to think about human “progress” in relationship to its impact on the environment. The impacts of climate change from our dependence on fossil fuel, toxic byproducts from expanding chemical industries, and pollution of land, soil, and water from industrialized agriculture are a significant challenge to a vision of human history in which we expect things to get better and better.

Archaeological evidence of collapses of earlier societies—Harappan cities in the Indus River Valley, the Maya in

Central America, and the Rapa Nui of Easter Island, for example—provides a sobering warning as many pre-historic cultures' practices were, at some level, environmentally unsustainable, leading to deforestation, soil salinization, or erosion.

For example, archaeologists have explored the collapse of a number of Maya cities from an environmental perspective.³ After examining samples of pollen from nearby lakebeds, they determined the relative abundance of various ecosystems, such as cornfields and pine forests, over time. They found that deforestation in the uplands associated with an expanding population around the Maya city of Copan was one of the factors that led to the city's decline. Land was cleared to increase agricultural production and to harvest wood for the construction of houses, fueling cooking fires, and producing lime, which was used to make plaster for large-scale construction projects. The study suggests that prehistoric groups' lack of adequate environmental management systems could have affected their ability to maintain their complex urban societies—a warning for society today.

Another fascinating story of the complex relationships between culture, plants, and the economy relates to development of sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz documented how our sweet tooth led to development of the slave trade, industrialization, capitalism, and colonization in the Americas.⁴ He examined how sugar went from being a luxury good associated with the upper class as a spice and medicine to a regular staple for factory workers. The increased consumption of sugar associated with industrialization provided financial incentives for continuing slavery and colonization projects in the Americas. Mintz's work is not usually described as environmental anthropology, but his careful documentation of the relationship between people and sugar cane clearly demonstrates the importance of certain species of plants in shaping human history.

The question of how humans interact with their environment

through hunting and gathering, agriculture, and deforestation is central to understanding how human groups meet their basic needs and continue to survive and develop. By examining these past and present cultural configurations critically and carefully, anthropology provides a valuable perspective from which to understand such environmental questions.

Sustainability and Public Anthropology

Environmental anthropology provides an opportunity for anthropologists to engage in larger public debates. The American Anthropological Association, for example, recently issued a [Statement on Humanity and Climate Change](#) meant to “to recognize anthropological contributions to global climate change-related issues, articulate new research directions, and provide the American Anthropological Association with actions and recommendations to support and promote anthropological investigation of these issues including the development of course curricula and application of anthropological theory and methods to the issues.”⁵ Such statements emphasize the importance of anthropological contributions to current scientific and political debates.

Anthropologists have become involved in environmental causes around the world. In Brazil, for example, they have worked with indigenous groups to maintain land claims, prevent deforestation, and organize against construction of large hydropower projects that threaten the river ecosystems.⁶ Others have challenged development of parks throughout the world as a major conservation strategy for biodiversity and explored the impacts of those parks on local communities.⁷ Studies of these diverse topics benefit from incorporation of an ethnographic perspective that emphasizes the importance of identity politics, connection to place, and cultural beliefs for understanding how groups of people interact with their environment. This work also reminds us that environmentalism and conservation are grounded in sets of beliefs, assumptions, and world views developed in Western Europe and North America and must be

translated as environmentalists work in other cultures.

Environmental anthropology naturally lends itself to use of anthropological perspectives to inform and engage in public policy decisions, land-use management, and advocacy for indigenous communities, urban minorities, and other groups that are often under-represented in places of power and in traditional environmental movements. In that sense, environmental anthropology is a way to inform and connect with a variety of other disciplines that address similar questions of sustainability. Regardless of whether you decide to study anthropology, understanding the value of anthropological insights for environmental questions will allow you to better appreciate and understand the complexity of environmental questions in modern society and potential solutions. The next section examines the diverse ways that anthropologists have historically looked at the human-environmental dynamic, highlighting some of the key theories, methods, and approaches and how they have developed over time.

CULTURAL ECOLOGY

Early Cultural Ecologists

One of the earliest anthropologists to think systematically about the environment was Leslie White. His work built on earlier anthropological concepts of cultural evolution—the idea that cultures, like organisms, evolve over time and progress from simple to more complex. White described how cultures evolved through their ability to use energy as they domesticated plants and animals, captured the energy stored in fossil fuels, and developed nuclear power.⁸ From this perspective, “human cultural evolution was best understood as a process of increasing control over the natural environment” through technological progress.⁹ White’s conclusions are at odds with Franz Boas’ historical particularism, which rejected theories based on evolution that labeled cultures as more advanced or less advanced than others and instead looked at each society as

a unique entity that had developed based on its particular history. Like earlier anthropologists, White viewed anthropology as a natural science in which one could generate scientific laws to understand cultural differences. His model is useful, however, when exploring the nature of change as our society increasingly harnessed new sources of energy to meet our wants and needs. He was writing at a time when the U.S. economy was booming and our technological future seemed promising, before the environmental movement raised awareness about harm caused by those technologies.

How the Future Looked 50 Years Ago

This National Public Radio [Planet Money episode](#) captures the enthusiasm for techno-logical progress at the 1964 World's Fair, when little was known about the environmental damage such technologies would cause. How did people see the future in 1964? How is their idea of the future different from ours today?

Anthropologist Julian Steward first used the term **cultural ecology** to describe how cultures use and understand their environments. His fieldwork among the Shoshone emphasized the complex ways they had adapted to the dry terrain of the Great Basin between the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountain ranges. He described how a hunting and gathering subsistence economy that relied on pine nuts, grass seeds, berries, deer, elk, sheep, antelope, and rabbits shaped Shoshone culture. Their detailed knowledge of various microclimates and seasonal variations in resource availability structured their migration patterns, social interactions, and cultural belief systems.¹⁰ Rather than looking for single evolutionary trajectories for cultures as White had done, Steward looked for multiple evolutionary pathways that led to different outcomes and stressed the variety of ways in which cultures could adapt to ecological conditions.

Both White and Steward were influenced by **materialism**, a Marxist concept that emphasized the ways in which human social and cultural practices were influenced by basic subsistence (economic) needs. Both were trained as scientists, which shaped how they looked at cultural variation. Steward was also influenced by **processual archaeology**, a scientific approach developed in the 1960s that focused primarily on relationships between past societies and the ecological systems they inhabited. The shift in anthropology represented by White and Steward's work led to increased use of scientific methods when analyzing and interpreting data. In subsequent decades, movements in both anthropology and archaeology criticized those scientific perspectives, challenging their objectivity, a process I examine in greater detail later in this chapter.

Pigs and Protein

Subsequent anthropologists built on the work of White and Steward, looking for ecological explanations for cultural beliefs and practices. They also drew on newly developed computer science to think about dynamic feedback systems in which cultural and ecological systems self-regulate to promote social stability—**homeostasis**. Some fascinating examples of this work include Roy Rappaport's work in Papua New Guinea and Marvin Harris' work in India.

Marvin Harris examined Hindu religious beliefs about sacred cattle from functional and materialist perspectives. Among Hindus in India, eating beef is forbidden and cows are seen as sacred animals associated with certain deities. From the perspective of a Western beef-loving country, such beliefs may seem irrational. Why would anyone not want to eat a juicy steak or hamburger? Rejecting earlier academics who regarded the Hindu practice as illogical, Harris argued that the practice makes perfect sense within the Hindu ecological and economic system. He argued that cows were sacred not because of cultural beliefs; instead, the cultural beliefs existed because of the economic and ecological importance of cows in India. Thus, Hindu restrictions regarding cows were

an “adaptive” response to the local ecological system rather than the result of Hindu theology.¹¹ Harris explored the importance of cattle for milk production, dung for fuel and fertilizer, labor for plowing, and provision of meat and hides to the **lowest caste, untouchables, who were able to slaughter and eat cows and tan their hides because they were already seen as ritually impure.**

Roy Rappaport examined subsistence practices of the Tsembaga in Highland New Guinea, a group that planted taro, yams, sweet potatoes, and sugar cane and raised pigs. Rappaport used scientific terms and concepts such as caloric intake, carrying capacity, and mutualism to explain methods used by the Tsembaga to manage their resources. A population of pigs below a certain threshold provided a number of benefits, such as keeping villages clean by eating refuse and eating weeds in established gardens that had relatively large fruit trees that would not be damaged by the pigs. Once the population reached the threshold, the pigs ate more than weeds and garbage and began to create problems in gardens. In response, the people used periodic ritual feasts to trim the population back, returning the ecological system to equilibrium. Rappaport, like Harris, used ecological concepts to understand the Tsembaga subsistence practices, thus downplaying the role of cultural beliefs and emphasizing ecological constraints.

These early cultural ecologists viewed cultures as trying to reach and maintain social and ecological equilibrium. This idea aligned with ecological thinking at the time that emphasized the balance of nature and the importance of the various components of an ecosystem in maintaining that balance. However, environments and cultures were rapidly changing as colonization, globalization, and industrialization spread throughout the world. In many of those early cases, anthropologists had ignored these larger processes.

As ecologists began to develop more-complex models of how ecosystems change through long-term dynamic processes of **succession** and disturbances (such as storms, droughts, and El Niño

events), anthropological approaches to the environment also changed. The next sections examine those shifts in anthropology as environmental movements developed in response to increasing degradation of natural environments.

Early anthropologists were notable for their attempts to understand how different groups of people interacted with their environments over time. Their work paved the way for future environmental anthropologists even though they generally were not directly concerned with environmental problems associated with modernity, such as pollution, tropical deforestation, species extinctions, erosion, and global warming. As people around the world became more familiar with such issues, environmental anthropologists took note and began to analyze those problems and accompanying conservation movements, especially in the developing world, which was still the primary focus of most anthropological research.

ETHNOECOLOGY

Slash-and-Burn versus Swidden Cultivation

Traditionally, anthropologists studied small communities in remote locations rather than urban societies. While much of that work examined rituals, political organizations, and kinship structures, some anthropologists focused on **ethnoecology**: use and knowledge of plants, animals, and ecosystems by traditional societies. Because those societies depended heavily on the natural world for food, medicine, and building materials, such knowledge was often essential to their survival.

As anthropologists, Harris and Rappaport worked to make the strange familiar by taking seemingly bizarre practices such as ritual slaughtering of pigs and sacredness of cows in India and explaining the practices within the context of the people's culture and environment. This work explains not only **how and why people do what they do, but also the advantages of their systems in the environments in which they live. An indigenous practice long demonized by the media, environmental activists, and scientists is**

slash-and-burn agriculture in which small-scale farmers, mostly in tropical developing countries, cut down a forest, let the wood dry for a few weeks, and then burn it, clearing the land for cultivation. Initially, the farmers plant mostly perennial crops such as rice, beans, corn, taro, and manioc. Later, they gradually introduce tree crops, and the plot is left to regrow trees while they open new fields for crops. Every year, as the soil's fertility declines and insects become a problem in the original plot, new land is cleared to replace it. Environmentalists and developers have decried slash-and-burn cultivation as a major cause of deforestation, and governments in many tropical countries have prohibited farmers from cutting and burning forests.

Anthropologists have challenged these depictions and have documented that slash-and-burn cultivators possess detailed knowledge of their environment; their agricultural processes are sustainable indefinitely under the right conditions.¹² When there is a low population density and an adequate supply of land, slash-and-burn cultivation is a highly sustainable type of elongated crop rotation in which annuals are planted for a few years, followed first by tree crops and then by forest, rebuilding soil nutrients and mimicking natural processes of forest disturbance in which tree falls and storms periodically open up small patches of the forest. They used the term **swidden** cultivation instead of slash and burn to challenge the idea of the practice as inherently destructive. The surrounding forest allows the fields to quickly revert to forest thanks to seeds planted in the cleared area as birds roost in the trees and defecate into the clearing and as small rodents carry and bury the seeds. Furthermore, by mimicking natural processes, the

small patches can enhance biodiversity by creating a greater variety of microclimates in a given area of forest.

The system breaks down when cleared forests are not allowed to regrow and instead are replaced with industrial agriculture, cattle raising, or logging operations that transform the open fields into pasture or permanent agricultural plots.¹³ The system can also break down when small-holders are forced to become more sedentary because the amount of land they control is reduced by arrival of new migrants or government land seizures. In that case, local farmers must replant areas more frequently and soil fertility declines. A desire to plant cash crops for external markets can also exacerbate these changes because food is no longer grown solely for local consumption and more land is put into agriculture. Anthropologists' studies uncovered the sustainability of these traditional practices, which were destructive only when outside forces pressured local farmers to modify their traditional farming systems.

Plants, People, and Culture

One branch of ethnoecology is ethnobotany, which studies traditional uses of plants for food, construction, dyes, crafts, and medicine. Scientists have estimated that 60 percent of all of the current medicinal drugs in use worldwide were originally derived from plant materials (many are now chemically manufactured). For example, aspirin came from the bark of willow trees and an important muscle relaxant used in open-heart surgery was developed from *curare*, the poison used on arrows and darts by indigenous groups throughout Central and South America. In light of such discoveries, ethnobotanists traveled to remote corners of the world to document the knowledge of shamans, healers, and traditional

medical experts. They have also looked at psychoactive plants and their uses across cultures.

What The People of the Amazon Know That You Don't

This [TED talk by ethnobotanist Mark Plotkin](#) describes some important cases of knowl-edge of medicinal plants learned from indigenous people in the Amazon.

Ethnobotanical work is interdisciplinary, and while some ethnobotanists are anthropologists, many are botanists or come from other disciplines. Anthropologists who study ethnobotany must have a working knowledge of scientific methods for collecting plant specimens and of botanical classification systems and basic ecology. Similarly, archaeologists and paleobotanists study prehistoric people's relationships and use of plants, especially in terms of domestication of plants and animals.

The Kayapó project is a famous ethnobotanical study organized by Darrell Posey and a group of twenty natural and social scientists who examined how the Kayapó people of Brazil understood, managed, and interacted with the various ecosystems they encountered as the region was transformed from a dry savanna-like *Cerrado* to Amazonian rainforest.¹⁴ By documenting Kayapó names for dif-ferent ecosystems and methods they used to drop seeds and care for certain plants to expand islands of forest in the savanna, the project illustrated the complex ways in which indigenous groups shape the environments in which they live by documenting how the Kayapó cared for, managed, and en-hanced forests to make them more productive.

Posey was also an activist who contributed to drafting of the Declaration of Belem, which called for governments and corporations to respect and justly compensate the intellectual property rights of indigenous groups, especially regarding medicinal plants. He accompanied Kayapó leaders to Washington, D.C., to protest construction of a large dam using funds from the World Bank. Pressure from numerous international groups led to a halt in the dam's construction (plans for the dam have recently

been resurrected). Posey's identification of the Kayapó as guardians of the rainforest provided a powerful symbol that resonated with Western ideas of indigeneity and the moral high ground of environmental conservation.

In recent years, some anthropologists have questioned whether the idea of indigenous people having an innate positive connection to the environment—what some call the myth of the ecologically noble savage—is accurate.

The Myth of the Ecologically Noble Savage

The image of the noble savage developed many centuries ago in Western culture. From the beginning of European exploration and colonialism, Europeans described the “natives” they encountered primarily in negative terms, associating them with sexual promiscuity, indolence, cannibalism, and violence. The depictions changed as Romantic artists and writers rejected modernity and industrialization and called for people to return to an idealized, simpler past. That reactionary movement also celebrated indigenous societies as simple people living in an Eden-like state of innocence. French painter Paul Gauguin's works depicting scenes from his travels to the South Pacific are typical of this approach in their celebration of the colorful, easygoing, and natural existence of the natives. The continuing influence of these stories is evident in Disney's portrayal of Pocahontas and James Cameron's 2009 film *Avatar* in which the primitive Nàvi are closely connected to and defenders of an exotic and vibrant natural world. Cameron's depiction, which includes a sympathetic anthropologist, criticizes Western capitalism as willing to destroy nature for profit.

Disney's Pocahontas: Colors of the Wind Song

[Disney's Pocahontas presents many of the stereotypes](#) of the ecologically noble savage. What are these stereotypes? Where else do we see these kinds of depictions?

Despite its positive portrayals of indigenous groups, the idea of the ecologically noble savage tends to treat indigenous peoples as an imagined “other” constructed as the opposite of Western culture

rather than endeavoring to understand the world views and complexities of indigenous cultures. Similarly, a naive interpretation of indigenous environmentalism may merely project an imaginary Western ideal onto another culture rather than make a legitimate observation about that culture on its own terms.

The Kayapó in the Amazon and another group known as the Penan, who live in the Indonesian rainforest, were both confronted in the past by plans to open logging roads in their traditional territories and build dams that would flood vast amounts of their land. These indigenous communities organized, sometimes with the aid of anthropologists who had connections to media and environmental organizations, to protect the forest. The combination of two causes—rainforest conservation and indigenous rights—was powerful, successfully grabbing media attention and raising money for conservation. Their success led to later instances of indigenous groups joining efforts to halt large-scale development projects. These movements were especially powerful symbolically because they articulated the longstanding Western idea of the environmentally noble savage as well as growing environmental concerns in Europe and North America.¹⁵

Some anthropologists have noted that these alliances were often fragile and rested on an imagined ideal of indigenous groups that was not always accurate. The Western media, they argue, imagined indigenous groups as ecologically noble savages, and the danger in that perspective is that the indigenous communities would be particularly vulnerable if they lost that symbolic purity and the power that came with it. The image of ecologically noble savages could break down if they were seen as promoting any kind of non-environmental practices or became too involved in messy national politics. Furthermore, indigenous groups' alliances with international activists tended to cast doubt on their patriotism and weaken their position in their own countries. Though these indigenous groups achieved visibility and some important victories, they remained vulnerable to

negative press and needed to carefully manage their images.

It is important to note that depictions such as the ecologically noble savage rely on an overly simplistic portrayal of the indigenous “other.” For example, some indigenous groups have been portrayed as inherently environmentalist even when they hunt animals that Western environmentalists want to preserve. Often, the more important questions for indigenous groups revolve around land rights and political sovereignty. Environmental concerns are associated with those issues rather than existing separately. The ramifications of these differences are explained in the next section, which discusses the people-versus-parks debate.

Land Claims and Mapping

One way that anthropologists have successfully used traditional ecological knowledge to advance indigenous rights is through advocacy on behalf of indigenous groups seeking to establish legal ownership or control over their traditional lands. This was first done in Alaska and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. Indigenous groups wanted to map their seasonal movements for hunting, gathering, and other subsistence practices. The maps would demonstrate that they used the land in question and that it was important for their continued physical and cultural survival.

Since then, communities throughout the developing world have adopted similar strategies with the help of geographers and anthropologists to demarcate their lands. Often, lands used by indigenous groups are seen as empty because their population densities are quite low, and developers imagine the land as unused and open for taking. The production of maps by indigenous communities challenges those notions by inscribing the landscape with their names, relationships, and the human histories that mark their claim to the land. The maps become important symbols and tools for organizing local resistance against large development projects.

The non-governmental organization (NGO) Native Lands, for

example, assisted in mapping the Mosquitia region of Honduras. Although the area, which consisted of 20,000 square kilometers, included 170 communities, most government maps showed it as practically empty. Earlier, in a back-room deal, the entire area had been granted as a logging concession to Stone Container Corporation, a Chicago-based company that made cardboard boxes and paper bags.¹⁶ When Native Lands became involved in the early 1990s, mapping was used to bring the diverse communities in the region together to communicate their presence and advocate for an end to the logging concession. The power of maps to communicate the presence of indigenous people on the land is critical, especially when the indigenous groups lack legal ownership.

POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Questioning Science

In the 1960s, theoretical movements in the social sciences and humanities began to challenge the presumed benefits of modernity and science. These movements were led in part by feminist and post-colonial theorists who saw science as part of a patriarchal system that was complicit in the subjugation of women and colonized people throughout the world. In environmental sciences, this move to question the objectivity of science can be seen in political ecology, a diverse field that includes many anthropologists along with geographers, political scientists, sociologists, and other social scientists. Political ecology's primary message is the importance of examining environmental questions that seem, at first glance, to be strictly scientific (i.e., apolitical). Questions of cause and effect, for instance, are comprised of political and economic agendas that can be masked by a seemingly neutral language of scientific objectivity. By focusing our attention on the power dynamic in political dimensions of conservation, principally in the developing world, political

ecologists illustrate why conservation efforts so often fail to achieve the desired goals.

In an early and influential study of political ecology, Piers Blaikie and others argued that soil erosion was not caused by many of the factors blamed by state governments, including overpopulation, bad farming practices, and environmental stresses. Instead, they found that state policies such as taxes forced farmers into capitalist economic systems that encouraged unsustainable farming practices.¹⁷ From this perspective, soil erosion, which seemed to be primarily a local problem, was actually connected to national politics and needed to be addressed in that larger context. Once attention had been drawn to the relationship between state policies and soil erosion, the solution to the problem could no longer come from simply teaching small-scale farmers better soil conservation techniques. It required eliminating government practices and economic conditions that provided an incentive to use unsustainable farming practices.

Political ecology often focuses on the impacts of governments and corporations in establishing political and economic systems that constrain local behavior and challenge standard narratives regarding environmental destruction and conservation. Learning about political ecology can be difficult for environmentally minded people because it requires them to rethink many of their own positions and the science that supports them.

Revisionist Environmental History

Some of my favorite work in political ecology challenges the causes and effects of tropical deforestation. James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, for example, looked at tropical deforestation in the West African country of Guinea.¹⁸ The state's forestry department and later conservation organizations described the savanna as containing only small fragments of a once extensive tropical forest. Administrators, foresters, and botanists had created forest policies based on the idea that this degradation was caused by local villagers as they cleared and burned forests to create fields for

agriculture. Through careful study of historical archives, oral histories, and historical aerial photographs, Fairhead and Leach challenged these narratives. Instead, they argued that the remaining fragments of forest had been planted by local villagers who had gradually planted useful species around their villages, improving the soil for planting and generating other positive ecological changes. Rather than being the cause of the deforestation in areas that was previously forest, the villagers were creating the forest in an area that had previously been savanna through generations of hard work, turning the colonial narrative on its head.

Another fascinating tale comes from William Balee's work in the Amazon. Balee was a friend of Darrell Posey, and their work together got Balee thinking about the extent to which the Amazon rainforest is a product of human productive activities and not entirely natural processes. Balee disagreed with earlier anthropologists who had described how primitive groups were forced to adapt to the constraints imposed by fragile tropical ecosystems, such as declining soil fertility, a lack of plants and animals that provided protein, and other limiting factors that constrained their behavior. Balee examined a wide variety of ecosystems in the Amazon that seemed to have been created or significantly modified by human activity, including the forest islands of the Kayapó discussed by Posey, babassu palm forests, bamboo forests, Brazil nut forests near Maraba, and liana forests. His conservative estimate was that at least 12 percent of the Amazon, the largest rainforest on the planet, was a product of indigenous intervention. This conclusion challenged two major assumptions made about the rainforest and the people who lived there. First is the notion that indigenous groups were forced to adapt to the harsh environment of the rainforest. Instead, Balee found that they were resource managers who had developed ecosystems to better provide for their

needs. Second is the notion that the Amazon was primeval, untouched, and pristine.¹⁹ If we extend this analysis to other regions and ecosystems, it challenges the entire notion of “untouched nature.” If the wildest, least populated, and largest rainforest in the world is already highly **anthropogenic**, or shaped by humans, what can we say about supposed ideas of wilderness in other places?

Environmental historian William Cronon tackled this question directly in his essay, “The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.”²⁰ Cronon argued that, by celebrating a nature supposedly untouched by human hands, we tend to forget about preserving the nature with which we come in contact every day. If we focus exclusively on a concept of **wilderness**, which excludes humans and human activities by definition, we may ignore ways to help humans better in-teract with nature, leading to conservation policies that try to create parks without anyone inside of them and do not fully consider agricultural and urban areas. It means that one must leave civilization behind to be in contact with nature. Cronon ended his essay with a plea:

If wildness can stop being (just) out there and start being (also) in here, if it can start being as humane as it is natural, then perhaps we can get on with the unending task of struggling to live rightly in the world, not just in the garden, not just in the wilderness, but in the home that encompasses them both.²¹

Cronon’s call to action is for humans to consider themselves fully part of nature and to look for ways to behave responsibly in that relationship. In a way, his message is similar to Bruno Latour’s about the Anthropocene. By recognizing that nature does not exist outside of human activities, we must come to terms with the impacts of our lifestyles on the environment. Some may believe that this cheapens nature, making it less sacred and significant, but understanding the diverse ways in which humans have affected the environment

should make us better able to appreciate and evaluate our interactions with it. Instead of seeing nature as outside of human activities, we need to consider how our food production, transportation, and habitation systems affect the environment.

People versus Parks

Generally, when we think of nature, we tend to think of national parks and other kinds of **pro-protected areas** set aside for conservation under various categories. In the United States, these include national and state parks, forests, wilderness areas, recreation areas, and wildlife conservation areas. In most cases, people are allowed to visit these areas for recreational or scientific purposes but cannot live directly in them, and regulations control the kinds of activities allowed. Protected areas developed from the Western vision of nature that separates it from culture and assumes that one must exclude humans to conserve nature. This model of setting aside protected areas has been exported to the rest of the world and persists as the most common strategy for numerous environmental goals, including protection of watersheds, endangered plants and animals, and providing space for people to interact with nature. The most common example of a protected area is a national park. In the United States, national parks are so popular that they have been called “America’s Best Idea.” While I am an enthusiastic fan of national parks, I also recognize problems associated with the concept. We often forget, for example, that the “natural” state of such parks is mostly a recent phenomenon. Many Native American groups were systematically removed from parks (and rarely compensated) to make the parks “natural,” and some parks, such as Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Devil’s Tower in Wyoming, are directly on top of sacred sites for Native Americans. In other areas of the world, especially in developing countries,

most protected areas are occupied by groups of people who have lived there for decades or centuries and have legitimate claims to the land. Some may not be aware that their land is being transformed into a park and, once informed, are shocked by all of the new regulations they are expected to obey. In worst-case scenarios, they are evicted without compensation, becoming environmental refugees. From the perspective of such groups, the government seems to value elephants, tigers, or scenic vistas more than the people living on the land.

The conflicts that have developed between local communities in and around protected areas and state conservation officials and international conservation NGOs that advocate for the parks is referred to as the “people-versus-parks debate.”²² Communities, rather than seeing parks as preserving a public good that benefits everyone, view creation of a park as an effort by government officials to extend their power to remote rural areas. And those negative views can thwart conservation efforts when locals resent preferential treatment of animals and choose to poach or simply ignore the new regulations.

Conservation groups have begun to recognize that they must support economic development of local communities to get them on board with conservation efforts. When local residents benefit from jobs as park guards, tour guides, and research assistants, they recognize the positive economic benefits of conservation and support the initiatives. This approach aims to combine conservation and development, bringing together typically different objectives. Initially, this approach was a response to development policies associated with building infrastructure such as roads and dams that had huge environmental impacts and created negative press for the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID), and other institutions that funded the projects. Now, most conservation projects incorporate development objectives, and the environmental impacts of development projects usually must be assessed. In addition, the failure of many of these projects has inspired governments and NGOs to include local communities in planning and operating conservation and development schemes.

Conservation and Sustainable Development

Since the early 1990s, environmental conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy and Conservation International and development organizations such as the World Bank and USAID have been working to bring conservation and development together. The structures and success of these approaches vary widely. Some aim to help local communities develop industries that depended on rainforests in nondestructive ways, such as non-timber forest products like rattan, rubber, medicines, and fruit. By assisting local communities in developing and marketing such products, the programs have provided them with economic alternatives that encourage people to preserve rainforests instead of chopping them down, a form of **sustainable development**.

The conservation and development project with which I am most familiar is related to **extractive reserves** in the Brazilian Amazon. I spent a summer doing research for my master's thesis on extractive reserves established by Brazilian rubber tappers in Acre, which is in the northwestern corner of the Brazilian Amazon. These rubber tappers live in the rainforest and tap natural rubber by scraping a long thin cut into the bark of the tree and returning later in the day to collect the sap that had dripped into a small container hung on the tree. Rubber trees do not grow together; they are spread out throughout the forest, requiring rubber tappers to walk several trails each day. Many also collect and sell Brazil nuts, which fall from ancient trees that live for centuries. Brazil nuts cannot be commercially grown so they must be collected from rainforests. Both of these economic activities require a healthy, mature forest. And although rubber can be produced synthetically, natural rubber

is stronger, longer lasting, more flexible, and more resistant to heat than synthetic alternatives, making it ideal for use in medical and aeronautic industries where high-quality material is essential.

As cattle ranching expanded in the Amazon, rubber tappers were being evicted because they did not have formal title to the land on which they lived and worked. Led by local activist Chico Mendes, the rubber tappers organized and petitioned the government for the right to remain on the land. Mendes was eventually assassinated by owners of some of the cattle ranches who were unhappy about his activism, but ultimately, the movement was successful. Environmentalists who were worried about Amazonian deforestation joined forces with the rubber tappers, who were worried about their livelihoods, and together they created **extractive reserves**—protect-ed areas owned by the federal government but managed by local communities of rubber tappers who could stay on the land indefinitely as long as they followed the environmental regulations they established. The model was successful and has since been expanded to include millions of hectares throughout the Amazon.

As with many conservation and development projects, the economic benefits of the extractive reserves were slow to accrue. When rubber prices fell in response to international commodity markets, many families stopped tapping rubber and focused on subsistence agriculture. In fact, some turned to cattle ranching, mimicking on a smaller scale many of the destructive processes they had originally protested. Because the regulations were poorly

enforced, a number of families gradually turned old swidden fields into pastures instead of letting the fields revert to rainforest.

Despite these challenges, development of the land was significantly reduced relative to the original plan of allowing owners of large tracts to move in and convert large areas to pasture and soy plantations. Likewise, the rubber tappers, though still poor, had access to greater resources than they would if they have been evicted and forced to move to urban slums. Extractive reserves succeeded because they were implemented across vast areas of the Brazilian Amazon and provided rights to thousands of small landholders.

Significant challenges remain for organizations working to improve the standard of living of rubber tappers in Brazil and conserve biodiversity, and this case study illustrates many of the problems associated with conservation and development models. Often, the economic gains are limited and require compromises in terms of conservation benefits. Usually, neither local communities nor environmentalists are completely happy with the models and their results but also agree that compromise is better than the rampant destruction averted by a reserve. Research on political ecology from such case studies forces us to recognize that the debates are not solely about environmental ethics; they also involve control over valuable resources such as land, timber, and oil. Political ecology invites us to think about the local political and cultural processes that shape the outcomes of conservation projects and determine who benefits from such projects.

First World Political Ecology

A significant challenge for political ecologists is that most of the research so far has been done in the developing world; relatively few studies have been conducted in the United States and Europe. Some newer studies are aiming to showcase what political ecology might look like when applied to similar questions in the developed world. One such study came from the Sierra Nevada foothills in California. There, a participatory conservation project was being developed

that would have included local conservation organizations, government offices, and other groups. Their goal was to create an environmental management plan for the region that would limit development and urban growth. They tried to bring together a variety of environmental and pro-development groups to dialogue but were met with an intense political backlash. Pro-development forces, rather than participating, mobilized politically to remove supporters of the plan from county government seats and derail the process. In first world countries, local groups can mobilize significant political and economic resources to influence the fate of a project. This is an unlikely scenario in the developing world where conservation organizations are generally more powerful than local communities.²³

Clashes between environmentalists, who are often **exurban** migrants who moved from urban to rural areas for outdoor activities and scenic nature, and longtime residents who are involved in extractive industries such as mining, ranching, and agriculture are common in the western United States. In many cases, communities are bitterly divided over the importance of nearby public lands and the role of the federal government in managing those lands. In developing countries, political ecologists as a group tend to side with local communities and against government intervention. In the United States, left-leaning and environmental sympathies can push them to side with government intervention at the expense of local communities. Some political ecologists have noted this **contradiction and called for local movements and their pushes against extension of states power to be taken more seriously, including in the United States.**²⁴

Another fascinating political ecology associated with the first world is a study by Paul Robbins and Julie Sharp that looked at the American lawn, noting that 23 percent of urban land in the United States is dedicated to lawns and that urban areas are growing at a rate of 675,000 hectares a year.²⁵ In addition, the vast majority of

those lawns are sprayed with fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Because these chemicals wash into waterways, lawns have an enormous collective environmental impact. Robbins and Sharp analyzed advertisements for lawn care products and interviewed and surveyed households across the country, leading to some startling discoveries. One of the strongest indicators of intensive and toxic lawn care was not a lack of knowledge about the environmental impacts of the products, but how well they knew the names of their neighbors. They describe the moral economy of a turf grass commons in which maintaining a healthy lawn signified important values of being connected to the community, your family, and nature. The aesthetics and family values associated with lawns outweighed concerns about environmental impacts, suggesting that water conservation activists must understand and address underlying cultural ideas about lawns in the United States.

Where's the Ecology?

Political ecologists Andrew Vayda and Bradley Walters have noted that the field of political ecology seems to be increasingly political, overemphasizing how different groups use environmental issues to gain control over land and resources and ignoring important ecological considerations.²⁶ They argue that political ecologists need to take the limits, constraints, and challenges associated with natural systems more seriously and research those systems in addition to local cultural and political systems. In a study of the destruction of mangrove forests in the Philippines, they examined both the role of local communities in the destruction and management of mangrove ecosystems and the natural limits that impede replanting in the area. The next section presents examples of anthropologists who thought creatively about how to integrate theories from the natural sciences back into anthropology while simultaneously questioning whether science provides unbiased objective results. This requires a careful balancing act but is necessary to generate an approach that respects the contributions of scientific and anthropological knowledge.

ADDITIONAL APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL

ANTHROPOLOGY Eco-justice: Race, Gender, and Environmental Destruction

Many environmental justice advocates are anthropologists and political ecologists. They examine environmental questions from the perspective of social equality, identifying impacts and risks associated with environmental damage that have disproportionately affected socially marginalized groups. For example, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu the trash incinerator and landfill are on the west side of the island where many native Hawaiians and other low-income groups live.²⁷ Locating landfills, incinerators, chemical plants, industrial factories, nuclear waste storage, and other environmentally hazardous facilities near communities of color, Native American reservations, and relatively poor communities is not accidental. A lack of economic and political power prevents residents of such communities from influencing the large industries and government agencies that determine where such facilities are placed.

The same process is at work when environmentally toxic jobs and waste storage facilities are out-sourced. For example, many computers and other electronic appliances that contain toxic components made from heavy metals are shipped to West Africa for disassembly and recycling.²⁸ This arrangement makes economic sense for consumers in relatively rich countries in North America and Europe, but the workers in Africa are out of sight and out of mind, often working without proper protection from the toxic metals or even training on their dangers. And as global supply chains have expanded, consumers in the United States rarely know where the clothes, electronics, and toys they purchase are made, the impacts of that production, or what happens to them after they dispose of them. By looking at these long complex commodity or supply chains, which cover products from their cradle to grave, social scientists interested in **eco-justice** can create awareness of these issues.

Anthropologists also work to connect **ecocide** (environmental destruction) with **ethnocide** (cultural destruction). In many indigenous communities worldwide, cultural activities and beliefs are connected to specific landscapes and ecologies. Consequently, as a logging or mining company moves in, it destroys both the environment and culture. Eco-justice studies call attention to these connections and seek to protect both culture and the environment and the relationship between them. Barbara Rose Johnston's work with Marshallese Islanders in Micronesia documented the impact of U.S. atomic bomb testing on the atolls and supported their claims for compensation from the United States for damage by carefully documenting the relationship between their culture and the contaminated landscapes ruined by nuclear testing.²⁹

Anthropologists are often involved in these kinds of research projects because they are on the ground in remote locations around the world and share a disciplinary interest in raising awareness of cultural differences and inequality. They are also trained to examine categories of race, class, nationality, and other social factors that differentiate groups of people and are the basis for unequal treatment. While valuing cultural diversity, anthropologists also argue for a holistic perspective that universally values human life regardless of such differences.

Science and Technology Studies

The study of science and technology is a diverse field that uses social science methods to analyze the culture of science in industrialized and modern societies. Like political ecology and ethnoecology, science and technology studies question the objectivity of modern science to some extent and view science as a product of specific cultural understandings. These studies often look to the history of a science to understand its development in a specific cultural, political, and economic context.

An early developer of the discipline is Bruno Latour, who introduced the idea of the Anthropocene discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Latour's earlier work included a study, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (1979), written with

Steve Woolgar, that used the ethnographic technique of participant observation in a laboratory at the Salk Institute for Biological Sciences to determine how scientific knowledge is produced and challenged dominant narratives about the scientific method.³⁰ Other studies have examined concepts of race and indigeneity in the Human Genome Project and how remote sensing technologies shape how anthropologists interact with ecosystems in the Guatemalan rainforest.³¹ As science and technology become increasingly important parts of our lived experiences and our understanding of the environment around us, anthropologists naturally analyze those connections.

Many anthropologists who study science and technology endeavor to make sure they do not throw the baby out with the bath water. They do not deny the important contributions of science and the scientific method. However, they also pay attention to the limitations and biases inherent in those methods.

Multispecies Ethnographies

Multispecies ethnographies challenge the centrality of humans in the world. Most of the stories we tell about ourselves and our place in the world and especially stories told by anthropologists re-volve around *Homo sapiens*. Increasingly, though, some anthropologists have begun to think about how other species make decisions and exercise a degree of agency that can influence history. For example, Donna Haraway writes about dogs and how the relationship between dogs and humans has evolved over time. She criticizes people who anthropomorphize dogs and challenges her readers to understand dogs on their own terms.³²

We can also think about the role of bacteria in human evolution and cultural development and remind ourselves that diseases, parasites, and symbiotic gut bacteria that allow us to eat certain kinds of foods have been very influential in shaping human history and cultural development over time. Other works have, for example, re-examined plant and animal domestication from non-human perspectives and explored how forests “think.”³³ By carefully

considering other species and ecological processes, we decenter our increasingly human-centered focus. Much of the work on multispecies ethnography has been done by feminist anthropologists who have already been at work for decades on similarly decentering male-focused histories of our species.

APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY IN CONSERVATION Reforestation

Anthropological analyses of the environment may seem overly theoretical and abstract, far re-moved from actual practices and the work of learning to live with and within our environment. Anthropologists may be seen as hidden in ivory towers of academia, disconnected from real world issues and problems. However, applied and activist anthropology offer avenues for anthropologists to tackle problems on the ground and make a direct difference. Applied anthropologists often work with conservation and development organizations to implement projects that depend on an accurate understanding of local cultures and practices to succeed.

Anthropologist Gerald Murray's doctoral dissertation examined land tenure among small-holders in Haiti. After finishing his dissertation work, Murray delivered a presentation to USAID on a Hai-tian reforestation project. He joked that if they gave him "a jeep and carte blanche access to a \$50,000 checking account" he could prove his "anthropological assertions about peasant economic behavior and produce more trees on the ground than their multi-million-dollar Ministry of Agriculture cha-rade."³⁴ USAID program officers accepted his challenge, inviting him to head a \$4 million project to reforest Haiti. Using his understanding of Haitian small-holders, he drastically changed the USAID's approach. Instead of trying to convince small-holders that trees were valuable for their environmental services, he emphasized fast-growing species that could be sold for firewood, charcoal, and lumber. By giving the trees to the small-holders and allowing them to harvest and sell them whenever they wanted, he motivated them to plant and care for the seedlings like any other valuable cash crop. In prior projects, tree-cutting was prohibited and the trees

belonged to the government. Consequently, no one took care of the trees and they were eventually destroyed by livestock or neglect and rarely reached maturity. Treating the trees as a cash crop motivated farmers to plant trees on their own land, thus meeting USAID's goals of stabilizing the soil and reducing illegal tree cutting (since farmers had access to stands of their own) and providing a direct economic benefit from selling wood. The project was a stunning success—20 million trees were planted in the first four years. By understanding local farmers' perspectives, Murray was able to work with Haitian small-holders instead of seeing them as an impediment to reforestation efforts.

A number of anthropologists are working with conservation and development organizations to assist them in understanding local cultures and implementing conservation and develop projects. This work is often done in teams in which anthropologists join with foresters, conservation biologists, agronomists, and others to implement projects. Because they often speak the local language, understand the peoples' perspectives, and are interested in close, on-the-ground observations, anthropologists make valuable contributions in support of conservation and economic development.

Climate Change

In 2014, the American Anthropological Association's Global Climate Change Task Force submitted a report on climate change that summarized anthropology's engagement with the issue. Currently, climate change is perhaps the single most important environmental issue worldwide, and our responses to it will shape the future of our species on the planet. The report identified the human causes and contributions to climate change and emphasized

that climate change is already having an impact as rising sea levels are forcing residents of places such as Kiribati to flee their island homes and melting ice shelves threaten the subsistence practices and the lifestyle of Inuit groups in Alaska. These examples illustrate how the impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect groups who have contributed the least to the accumulation of greenhouse gases, highlighting the social inequality of impacts of climate change around the world.

The report analyzed drivers of climate change, focusing on consumption, land use, energy, and population growth. An anthropological analysis of consumption reminds us that the categories of “necessities” and “luxuries” are cultural constructs. For example, Western societies now accept cell phones as necessities despite the fact that humans survived perfectly well for thousands of years without them. As the global middle class expands and places new demands on ecosystems, a cultural understanding of social classes and related consumption practices will be increasingly important to analyses the causes of climate change and potential solutions.

The report also criticized much of the language of climate change and its focus on concepts of adaptation, vulnerability, and resilience that elided the differential impacts of climate change on different groups of people. The task force noted that proposed global solutions focused on top-down management strategies that did not take existing social issues of “poverty, marginalization, lack of education and information, and loss of control over resources” that structure vulnerability of different populations to the impacts of a warming planet into account. 35 The report also illustrates the power of language to shape certain debates and potential solutions to problems, an important piece of anthropological analysis.

At the end of the report, the task force recommended actions anthropologists could take to contribute to efforts to address global climate change, including reducing the carbon footprint of anthropological meetings, working with interdisciplinary research teams to continue research, and **maintaining a research**

agenda that stresses the importance of anthropological contributions to discussions of climate change. Perhaps most interesting is their conclusion that many of the most innovative and creative approaches to addressing and mitigating the effects of climate change were occurring at local and regional levels, recognizing communities' innovative efforts to bypass national and international gridlock and develop approaches that reflect local realities and address local problems. The anthropological focus on local communities is a welcome change of perspective when, by definition, the scale of global climate change seems to preclude local involvement and solutions.

Anthropologists at Work in Conservation Organizations

Anthropologists work for international conservation organizations like Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund and with government agencies like the National Park Service, the Peace Corps, and USAID. They also work for smaller conservation organizations, urban planning initiatives, environmental education groups, environmental activist networks, and other initiatives aimed at reducing our negative impact on the planet.

Cultural Resources Management

Management of cultural resources is a growing field of anthropology that catalogs and preserves archaeological sites and historic places threatened by development, bringing together various principles developed in anthropology over the years. First, it recognizes the need to preserve both "natural" ecosystems and ecosystems shaped by past human activities. By connecting natural and human diversity, anthropologists recognize humans' interdependence with the environment over time. Second, cultural resource managers recognize the need for continuing involvement

of indigenous communities with archaeological sites and seek their input to inform management plans and practices. As cultural resource management has become standard operating procedure, archaeologists have begun to meet with members of the local community and others who have a stake in their research. These interactions improve archaeological research and create the kind of cross-cultural bridges that strengthen the discipline. Finally, destruction of historical places and archaeological sites is a form of environmental destruction that, like climate change and species extinctions, requires us to critically examine the cultural values underlying that destruction.

CONCLUSION

The discipline of anthropology provides a unique perspective on human-environmental inter-actions and thus generates valuable insights into the social, political, and cultural complexity of modern environmental problems. Anthropologists are hard at work with governments, conservation organizations, and community groups to understand and solve complex environmental problems. I hope this discussion has challenged you to think about the environment and conservation in a new way, allowing you to help reframe these debates and develop innovative solutions to the complex problems that confront us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have anthropologists examined human interactions with the environment over time?
2. What is the myth of the ecologically noble savage? What are some recent examples of this myth? What is the impact of this idea on indigenous people?
3. How has research in political ecology challenged traditional conservation efforts? What are some of the problems with promoting parks or ecological reserves as solutions to environmental problems?
4. What is the Anthropocene? How has research in anthropology

contributed to an improved understanding of how humans interact with the “natural” world?

5. What insights from anthropology do you think would be most useful to the public, environmental activists, and government officials when considering policies related to current environmental challenges?

GLOSSARY

Anthropocene: a term proposed to describe the current moment (or epoch) in geological time in which the effects of human activities have altered the fundamental geochemical cycles of the earth. There is some disagreement about when the Anthropocene period began—most likely, it began with industrialization.

Anthropogenic: environments and pollutants produced by human activities.

Cultural ecology: a subfield of cultural anthropology that explores the relationship between human cultural beliefs and practice and the ecosystems in which those beliefs and practices occur.

Cultural evolutionism: a theory popular in nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology suggesting that societies evolved through stages from simple to advanced. This theory was later shown to be incorrect.

Ecocide: destruction of an environment, especially when done intentionally by humans.

Eco-justice: a movement to recognize and remedy the adverse relationship between social inequality and the harms and risks that come from environmental destruction and pollutants.

Ethnocide: destruction of a culture, often intentionally, through destruction of or removal from their territory, forced assimilation, or acculturation.

Ethnoecology: the relationships between cultural beliefs and practices and the local environment. Components include ethnobiology, ethnobotany, and ethnozoology.

Extractive reserves: community-managed protected areas designed to allow for sustainable ex-traction of certain natural

resources (such as fish, rubber, Brazil nuts, and rattan) while maintaining key ecosystems in place.

Exurban: a term that describes the migration of generally affluent people from urban areas to rural areas for the amenities of nature, recreation, and scenic beauty associated with rural areas.

Historical particularism: the theory that every culture develops in a unique way due to its history, including the interaction of people with the natural environment.

Homeostasis: the movement of a particular system (a human body, an ecosystem) towards equilibrium. In ecology this is associated with the idea that ecosystems should remain at the climax (stable) ecosystem associated with an area.

Hominin: Humans (*Homo sapiens*) and their close relatives and immediate ancestors.

Materialism: a Marxist theory emphasizing the ways in which human social and cultural practices are influenced by basic subsistence (economic) needs.

Multispecies ethnographies: an ethnographic approach in which anthropologists include non-human species as active participants in a society or culture and study their influence and actions.

Political ecology: an interdisciplinary field of research that emphasizes the political and economic dimensions of environmental concerns.

Processual archaeology: a shift in archaeological studies toward scientific methods, testing of hypotheses, quantitative analysis, and theory-driven approaches and away from an earlier emphasis on typologies and descriptive analysis.

Protected areas: lands set aside for conservation of the environment for their scenic beauty, biodiversity, recreational value, and other reasons.

Succession: changes in types of species in an area over time. For example, it would describe the different ecosystems that gradually replace one other after a forest fire.

Sustainable development: development that can meet present

needs without damaging the environment or limiting the potential for future generations.

Swidden: an agricultural practice, also called shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn, in which fields are cleared, burned, and planted for several seasons before being returned to fallow for an extended period.

Wilderness: a natural area that is untouched or unchanged by human activities and often seen as a cultural construct of the American West.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I grew up hiking and surfing in Hawaii and became interested in the environment and conservation. I studied Biology and International Cultural Studies at Brigham Young University-Hawaii as an undergraduate, including research on how traditional Hawaiian healers adapted to introduced plant species and diseases. My master's degree is in Environmental Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where I researched extractive reserves in the Brazilian Amazon. My Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz focused on tourism, urban development, and conservation in a small fishing town in Northeastern Brazil that was transitioning to a tourist economy.

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55. Chapter 12: Health and Medicine

Learning Objectives

- Define the biocultural perspective and provide examples of how interactions between biology and culture have affected human biology.
- Identify four ethnoetiologies (personalistic, naturalistic, emotionalistic, and biomedical) and describe how each differs in explaining the root cause of illness.
- Explain the significance of faith in healing.
- Examine the relationship between mental health and cultural factors, including stigma, that affect the way people with mental health conditions are perceived.
- Discuss examples of culture-bound syndromes.
- Evaluate the positive and negative effects of biomedical technologies.

Click [here](#) to view the full text and images for *Chapter 12: Health and Medicine*.

What does it mean to be “healthy”? It may seem odd to ask the question, but health is not a universal concept and each culture values different aspects of well-being. At the most basic level, health may be perceived as surviving each day with enough food and water, while other definitions of health may be based on being free of diseases or emotional troubles. Complicating things further is the

fact that that each culture has a different causal explanation for disease. For instance, in ancient Greece health was considered to be the product of unbalanced humors or bodily fluids. The four humors included black bile, phlegm, yellow bile, and blood. The ancient Greeks believed that interactions among these humors explained differences not only in health, but in age, gender, and general disposition. Various things could influence the balance of the humors in a person's body including substances believed to be present in the air, changes in diet, or even temperature and weather. An imbalance in the humors was believed to cause diseases, mood problems, and mental illness.¹

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes that the health of individuals and communities is affected by many factors: “where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family.”² Research conducted by the WHO suggests that these characteristics play a more significant role in affecting our health than any others, including having access to health care. For this reason, anthropologists who are interested in issues related to health and illness must use a broad holistic perspective that considers the influence of both biology and culture. **Medical anthropology**, a distinct sub-specialty within the discipline of anthropology, investigates human health and health care systems in comparative perspective, considering a wide range of biocultural dynamics that affect the well-being of human populations. Medical anthropologists study the perceived causes of illness as well as the techniques and treatments developed in a society to address health concerns. Using cultural relativism and a comparative approach, medical anthropologists seek to understand how ideas about health, illness, and the body are products of particular social and cultural contexts.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE BIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Evolutionary biology is a field of study that investigates the ways

that natural processes have shaped the development of life on Earth, producing measurable changes in populations over time. Humans, *Homo sapiens*, are a special case in the discussion of evolution. We are a relatively young species that has been on Earth for only about 195,000 years.³ Although this may sound like a long time, compared with other animals, humans are newcomers and we have been subject to processes of natural selection and adaptation for less time than many other living things. In that short time period, human lifestyles have changed dramatically. The first humans evolved in Africa and had a foraging lifestyle, living in small, kin-based groups. Today, millions of people live in crowded, fast-paced, and technologically advanced agricultural societies. In evolutionary terms, this change has happened rapidly. The fact that these rapid changes were even possible reveals that human lifestyles are **biocultural**, products of interactions between biology and culture. This has many implications for understanding human health.

The theory of natural selection suggests that in any species there are certain physical or behavioral traits that are **adaptive** and increase the capacity of individuals to survive and reproduce. These adaptive traits will be passed on through generations. Many human traits contributed to the survival of early human communities. A capacity for efficient walking and running, for instance, was important to human survival for thousands of years. However, as cultural change led to new lifestyles, some human characteristics became **maladaptive**.

One example is the obesity epidemic that has emerged all over the world. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of the population of the United States is obese.⁴ Obesity is considered to be a “disease of civilization,” meaning that it did not exist in early human populations. Taking a biocultural evolutionary approach to human health, we can ask what traits characteristic of early human foraging populations might have encouraged an accumulation of fat in the human body. The answer comes from the evidence of food shortages among foraging populations. In fact, 47 percent of societies that forage experience food

shortages at least once per year. Another 24 percent experience a shortage at least every two years.⁵ When taking this into account, the ability to retain body fat would have been advantageous for humans in the past. Women with more body fat could give birth to healthy babies and breastfeed them, even in periods of food scarcity. It is also possible that women and men would have viewed body fat as a sign of health and access to resources, choosing sexual partners based on this characteristic. If so, powerful biological and cultural forces would have contributed to genetic traits that led to efficient metabolism and higher body fat.

With the development of agriculture, calories became more easily available while many people in the population became more sedentary. Traits that were once adaptive became maladaptive. The development of cultural preferences for foods high in fat and sugar, such as the “standard American diet” (SAD) is directly associated with obesity. These cultural changes have had a negative impact on health in many places. In Polynesia, for instance, obesity rates were around 15 percent in traditional farming communities, but climbed to over 35 percent as people moved to cities.⁶ This is an example of the biocultural nature of many human health challenges.

Another example of this biocultural dynamic is sickle cell anemia, an inherited disease that can be fatal. A person who inherits the sickle cell gene from both parents will have red blood cells with an usual sickle (crescent) shape. These cells cannot carry oxygen as efficiently as normal red blood cells and they are also more likely to form painful and dangerous blood clots. Ordinarily, genetic conditions that make it more difficult for individuals to survive or have children, will become less common in populations over time due to the effects of natural selection. From an evolutionary perspective, one might ask why a deadly genetic condition has remained so common in human populations.

The cultural context is important for answering this question. The

sickle cell gene is found most often in human populations in Africa and Southeast Asia where malaria is widespread. Malaria is a mosquito-borne illness that can be deadly to humans. People who have inherited one copy of the sickle cell anemia trait (instead of the two copies that cause sickle cell disease) have resistance to malaria. This is a significant adaptive trait in parts of the world where malaria is widespread. There is some evidence that malaria became a significant threat to human health only after the invention of agriculture. The deforested areas and collections of standing water that characterize agricultural communities also attract the mosquitos that carry disease. 7 In this case, we can see biocultural dynamics in action. Because resistance to malaria is an adaptive trait, the sickle cell gene remained common in populations where malaria is present. In parts of West and Central Africa, up to 25 percent of the population has the sickle cell gene. While sickle cell anemia is still a deadly disease, those who inherit a single copy of the gene have some protection from malaria, itself a deadly threat in many places. This example illustrates the biocultural interaction between genes, pathogens, and culture.

Infectious diseases generally do not have an adaptive function for humans like the examples above, but many infectious diseases are influenced by human cultural systems. Because early human communities consisted of small groups with a foraging lifestyle, viruses and bacteria transmitted from person to person were unlikely to result in large-scale epidemics. Healthy individuals from neighboring groups could simply avoid coming into contact with anyone who was suffering from illness and outbreaks would be naturally contained.8

The rapid increase in the size of human communities following the invention of agriculture changed this pattern. Agriculture can support more people per unit of land and, at the same time, agriculturalists need to live in permanent urban settlements in order to care for their crops. In a cyclical way, agriculture provides more food while also requiring that people have sizeable families to do the necessary farm work. Over the course of several thousand

years, agricultural communities became increasingly densely populated. This had many implications for local ecology: problems disposing of waste and difficulty accessing clean water. A prime example of the health effects of the transition to urban settlements is cholera, a water-borne illness that spreads through water that has been polluted with human feces. Cholera, which was first detected in urban populations in India, has killed tens of thousands of people throughout history and continues to threaten populations today, particularly in developing countries, where access to clean water is limited, and in places that have experienced natural disasters.⁹

From an adaptive perspective, human beings die from infectious diseases because they do not have immunity to them. Immunity can be built up over time for some diseases, but unfortunately only after the illness or death of many members of a population.¹⁰ When a new infectious disease reaches a population, it can wreak havoc on many people. Historically, several new infectious diseases are known to have been introduced to human populations through contact with livestock. Tuberculosis and smallpox were linked to cattle and influenza to chickens. When humans domesticated animal species, and began to live in close proximity to them, new routes for the transmission of **zoonotic** disease, illnesses that can be passed between humans and animals, were established.¹¹ Living in cities accelerates the spread of infectious diseases and the scale of outbreaks, but may also contribute to the natural selection of genetic traits that confer resistance to disease. This biocultural evolutionary process has been documented in urban populations where there are genes providing some resistance to leprosy and tuberculosis.¹²

ETHNOMEDICINE

Ethnomedicine is the comparative study of cultural ideas about wellness, illness, and healing. For the majority of our existence, human beings have depended on the resources of the natural environment and on health and healing techniques closely associated with spiritual beliefs. Many such practices, including

some herbal remedies and techniques like acupuncture, have been studied scientifically and found to be effective.¹³ Others have not necessarily been proven medically effective by external scientific evidence, but continue to be embraced by communities that perceive them to be useful. When considering cultural ideas about health, an important place to start is with **ethno-etiology**: cultural explanations about the underlying causes of health problems.

In the United States the dominant approach to thinking about health is **biomedical**. Illnesses are thought to be the result of specific, identifiable agents. This can include pathogens (viruses or bacteria), malfunction of the body's biochemical processes (conditions such as cancer), or physiological disorders (such as organ failure). In biomedicine as it is practiced in the United States (Western biomedicine), health is defined as the absence of disease or dysfunction, a perspective that notably excludes consideration of social or spiritual well-being. In non-Western contexts biomedical explanations are often viewed as unsatisfactory. In his analysis of ideas about health and illness in non-Western cultures, George Foster (1976) concluded that these ideas could be categorized into two main types of ethno-etiology: personalistic and naturalistic.¹⁴

Ethno-Etiologies: Personalistic and Naturalistic

Personalistic ethno-etologies view disease as the result of the “active, purposeful intervention of an agent, who may be human (a witch or sorcerer), nonhuman (a ghost, an ancestor, an evil spirit), or supernatural (a deity or other very powerful being).”¹⁵ Illness in this kind of ethno-etiology is viewed as the result of aggression or punishment directed purposefully toward an individual; there is no accident or random chance involved. Practitioners who are consulted to provide treatment are interested in discovering *who* is responsible for the illness—a ghost, an ancestor? No one is particularly interested in discovering *how* the medical condition arose in terms of the anatomy or biology involved. This is because treating the illness will require neutralizing or satisfying a person, or a supernatural entity, and correctly identifying the being who is the root cause of the problem is essential for achieving a cure.

The Heiban Nuba people of southern Sudan provide an interesting example of a personalistic eti-ology. As described by, S.F. Nadel in the 1940s, the members of this society had a strong belief that illness and other misfortune was the result of witchcraft.

A certain magic, mysteriously appearing in individuals, causes the death or illness of anyone who eats their grain or spills their beer. Even spectacular success, wealth too quickly won, is suspect; for it is the work of a spirit-double, who steals grain or livestock for his human twin. This universe full of malignant forces is reflected in a bewildering array of rituals, fixed and occasional, which mark almost every activity of tribal life.¹⁶

Because sickness is thought to be caused by spiritual attacks from others in the community, people who become sick seek supernatural solutions. The person consulted is often a **shaman**, a person who specializes in contacting the world of the spirits.

In Heiban Nuba culture, as well as in other societies where shamans exist, the shaman is believed to be capable of entering a trance-like state in order to cross between the ordinary and supernatural realms. While in this state, the shaman can identify the individual responsible for causing the illness and sometimes the spirits can be convinced to cure the disease itself. Shamans are common all around the world and despite the proverbial saying that “prostitution is the oldest profession,” shamanism probably is! Shamans are religious and medical practitioners who play important social roles in their communities as healers with a transcendent ability to navigate the spirit world for answers. In addition, they often have a comprehensive knowledge of the local ecology and how to use plants medicinally. They can address illnesses using both natural and supernatural tools.

In **naturalistic** ethno-etologies, diseases are thought to be the result of natural forces such as “cold, heat, winds, dampness, and above all, by an upset in the balance of the basic body elements.”¹⁷ The ancient Greek idea that health results from a balance between the four humors is an example of a naturalistic explanation. The

concept of the yin and yang, which represent opposite but complementary energies, is a similar idea from traditional Chinese medicine. Achieving balance or harmony between these two forces is viewed as essential to physical and emotional health. Unlike personalistic explanations, practitioners who treat illness in societies with naturalistic ethno-etologies are interested in understanding how the medical condition arose so that they can choose therapeutic remedies viewed as most appropriate.

Emotional difficulties can be viewed as the cause of illness in a naturalistic ethno-etiology (an **emotionalistic explanation**). One example of a medical problem associated with emotion is *susto*, an illness recognized by the Mixe, an indigenous group who live in Oaxaca, Mexico, as well as others throughout central America. The symptoms of *susto* include difficulty sleeping, lack of energy, loss of appetite and sometimes nausea/vomiting and fever. The condition is believed to be a result of a “fright” or shock and, in some cases at least, it is believed to begin with a shock so strong that it disengages the soul from the body.¹⁸ The condition is usually treated with herbal remedies and *barrida* (sweeping) ceremonies designed to repair the harm caused by the shock itself.¹⁹ Although physicians operating within a biomedical ethno-etiology have suggested that *susto* is a psychiatric illness that in other cultural contexts could be labeled anxiety or depression, in fact *susto* does not fit easily into any one Western biomedical category. Those suffering from *susto* see their condition as a malady that is emotional, spiritual, and physical.²⁰

In practice, people assess medical problems using a variety of explanations and in any given society personalistic, naturalistic, or even biomedical explanations may all apply in different situations. It is also important to keep in mind that the line between a medical concern and other kinds of life challenges can be blurry. An illness may be viewed as just one more instance of general misfortune such as crop failure or disappointment in love. Among the Azande in Central Africa, witchcraft is thought to be responsible for almost all misfortune, including illness. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, an

anthropologist who studied the Azande of north-central Africa in the 1930s, famously described this logic by describing a situation in which a granary, a building used to store grain collapsed.

In Zandeland sometimes an old granary collapses. There is nothing remarkable in this. Every Zande knows that termites eat the supports in course of time and that even the hardest woods decay after years of service. Now a granary is the summerhouse of a Zande homestead and people sit beneath it in the heat of the day and chat or play the African hole-game or work at some craft. Consequently it may happen that there are people sitting beneath the granary when it collapses and they are injured...Now why should these particular people have been sitting under this particular granary at the particular moment when it collapsed? That it should collapse is easily intelligible, but why should it have collapsed at the particular moment when these particular people were sitting beneath it...The Zande knows that the supports were undermined by termites and that people were sitting beneath the granary in order to escape the heat of the sun. But he knows besides why these two events occurred at a precisely similar moment in time and space. It was due to the action of witchcraft. If there had been no witchcraft people would have been sitting under the granary and it would not have fallen on them, or it would have collapsed but the people would not have been sheltering under it at the time. Witchcraft explains the coincidence of these two happenings.²¹

According to this logic, an illness of the body is ultimately caused by the same force as the collapse of the granary: witchcraft. In this case, an appropriate treatment may not even be focused on the body itself. Ideas about health are often inseparable from religious beliefs and general cultural assumptions about misfortune.²²

Is Western Biomedicine An Ethno-Etiology?

The **biomedical** approach to health strikes many people, particularly residents of the United States, as the best or at least the most “fact-based” approach to medicine. This is largely because

Western biomedicine is based on the application of insights from science, particularly biology and chemistry, to the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions. The effectiveness of biomedical treatments is assessed through rigorous testing using the scientific method and indeed Western biomedicine has produced successful treatments for many dangerous and complex conditions: everything from antibiotics and cures for cancer to organ transplantation.

However, it is important to remember that the biomedical approach is itself embedded in a distinct cultural tradition, just like other ethno-etiologicals. Biomedicine, and the scientific disciplines on which it is based, are products of Western history. The earliest Greek physicians Hippocrates (c. 406–370 BC) and Galen (c. 129–c. 200 AD) shaped the development of the biomedical perspective by providing early insights into anatomy, physiology, and the relationship between environment and health. From its origins in ancient Greece and Rome, the knowledge base that matured into contemporary Western biomedicine developed as part of the Scientific Revolution in Europe, slowly maturing into the medical profession recognized today. While the scientific method used in Western biomedicine represents a distinct and powerful “way of knowing” compared to other etiologies, the methods, procedures, and forms of reasoning used in biomedicine are products of Western culture. 23

In matters of health, as in other aspects of life, ethnocentrism predisposes people to believe that their own culture’s traditions are the most effective. People from non-Western cultures do not necessarily agree that Western biomedicine is superior to their own ethno-etiologicals. Western culture does not even have a monopoly on the concept of “science.” Other cultures recognize their own forms of science separate from the Western tradition and these sciences have histories dating back hundreds or even thousands of years. One example is Traditional Chinese

Medicine (TCM), a set of practices developed over more than 2,500 years to address physical complaints holistically through acupuncture, exercise, and herbal remedies. The tenets of Traditional Chinese Medicine are not based on science as it is defined in Western culture, but millions of people, including a growing number of people in the United States and Europe, regard TCM as credible and effective.

Ultimately, all ethno-etologies are rooted in shared cultural perceptions about the way the world works. Western biomedicine practitioners would correctly observe that the strength of Western biomedicine is derived from use of a scientific method that emphasizes objectively observable facts. However, this this would not be particularly persuasive to someone whose culture uses a different ethno-etiology or whose understanding of the world derives from a different tradition of “science.” From a comparative perspective, Western biomedicine may be viewed as one ethno-etiology in a world of many alternatives.

Techniques for Healing

Western biomedicine tends to conceive of the human body as a kind of biological machine. When parts of the machine are damaged, defective, or out of balance, chemical or surgical interventions are the preferred therapeutic responses. Biomedical practitioners, who can be identified by their white coats and stethoscopes, are trained to detect observable or quantifiable symptoms of disease, often through the use of advanced imaging technologies or tests of bodily fluids like blood and urine. Problems detected through these means will be addressed. Other factors known to contribute to wellness, such as the patient’s social relationships or emotional state of mind,

are considered less relevant for both diagnosis and treatment. Other forms of healing, which derive from non-biomedical ethno-etologies, reverse this formulation, giving priority to the social and spiritual.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the body is thought to be governed by the same forces that animate the universe itself. One of these is *chi* (qi), a vital life force that flows through the body and energizes the body and its organs. Disruptions in the flow or balance of *chi* can lead to a lack of internal harmony and ultimately to health problems so TCM practitioners use treatments designed to unblock or redirect *chi*, including acupuncture, dietary changes, and herbal remedies. This is an example of **humoral healing**, an approach to healing that seeks to treat medical ailments by achieving a balance between the forces or elements of the body.

Communal healing, a second category of medical treatment, directs the combined efforts of the community toward treating illness. In this approach, medical care is a collaboration between multiple people. Among the !Kung (Ju/'hoansi) of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, energy known as *n/um* can be channeled by members of the community during a healing ritual and directed toward individuals suffering from illness. Richard Katz, Megan Bisele, and Verna St. Davis (1982) described an example of this kind of ceremony:

The central event in this tradition is the all-night healing dance. Four times a month on the average, night signals the start of a healing dance. The women sit around the fire, singing and rhythmically clapping. The men, sometimes joined by the women, dance around the singers. As the dance intensifies, *n/um*, or spiritual energy, is activated by the healers, both men and women, but mostly among the dancing men. As *n/um* is activated in them, they begin to *kia*, or experience an enhancement of their consciousness. While experiencing *kia*, they heal all those at the dance.²⁴

While communal healing techniques often involve harnessing supernatural forces such as the *n/um*, it is also true that these rituals help strengthen social bonds between people. Having a strong social and emotional support system is an important element of health in all human cultures.

Faith and the Placebo Effect

Humoral and communal approaches to healing, which from a scientific perspective would seem to have little potential to address the root causes of an illness, present an important question for medical anthropologists. What role does faith play in healing? Sir William Osler, a Canadian physician who was one of the founders of Johns Hopkins Hospital, believed that much of a physician's healing ability derived from his or her ability to inspire patients with a faith that they could be cured.²⁵ Osler wrote:

Faith in the Gods or in the Saints cures one, faith in little pills another, suggestion a third, faith in a plain common doctor a fourth...If a poor lass, paralyzed apparently, helpless, bed-ridden for years, comes to me having worn out in mind, body, and estate a devoted family; if she in a few weeks or less by faith in me, and faith alone, takes up her bed and walks, the Saints of old could not have done more.²⁶

In fact, there is a considerable amount of research suggesting that there is a **placebo effect** involved in many different kinds of healing treatments. A placebo effect is a response to treatment that occurs because the person receiving the treatment *believes it will work*, not because the treatment itself is effective.

In Western biomedicine, the placebo effect has been observed in situations in which a patient believes that he or she is receiving a certain drug treatment, but is actually receiving an inactive substance such as water or sugar. ²⁷ Research suggests that the body often responds physiologically to placebos in the same way it would if the drug was real.²⁸ The simple act of writing a prescription can contribute to the successful recovery of individuals because patients trust that they are on a path that **will lead to wellness**.²⁹ If we consider the role of the placebo

effect in the examples above, we should consider the possibility that humoral and communal healing are perceived to “work” because the people who receive these remedies have faith in them.

An interesting example of the complexity of the mind-body connection is found in studies of intercessory prayer: prayers made to request healing for another person. In one well-known study, researchers separated patients who had recently undergone heart surgery into two groups, one containing people who know they would be receiving prayers for their recovery and another group who would receive prayers without being aware of it. Those patients who knew they were receiving prayers actually had more complications and health problems in the month following surgery.³⁰ This reflects an interesting relationship between faith and healing. Why did the patients who knew that others were praying for them experience more complications? Perhaps it was because the knowledge that their doctors had asked others to pray for them made patients more stressed, perceiving that their health was at greater risk. However, it can also be a lack of faith that drives people to look for alternative treatments. In the United States, alternative treatments, some of which are drawn from humoral or communal healing traditions, have become more popular among patients who believe that Western biomedicine is failing them. Cancer research facilities have begun to suggest acupuncture as a treatment for the intense nausea and fatigue caused by chemotherapy and scientific studies suggest that acupuncture can be effective in relieving these symptoms. Marijuana, a drug that has a long recorded history of medical use started in ancient China, Egypt, and India has steadily gained acceptance in the United States as a treatment for a variety of ailments ranging from anxiety to Parkinson’s disease.³² As growing numbers of people place their faith in these and other remedies, it is important to recognize that many alternative forms of healing or medicine lack scientific

evidence for their efficacy. The results derived from these practices may owe as much to faith as medicine.

MENTAL HEALTH

Unlike other kinds of illnesses, which present relatively consistent symptoms and clear biological evidence, mental health disorders are experienced and treated differently cross-culturally. While the discipline of psychiatry within Western biomedicine applies a disease-framework to explain mental illness, there is a consensus in medical anthropology that mental health conditions are much more complicated than the biological illness model suggests. These illnesses are not simply biological or chemical disorders, but complex responses to the environment, including the web of social and cul-tural relationships to which individuals are connected.

Medical anthropologists do not believe there are universal categories of mental illness.³³ Instead, individuals may express psychological distress through a variety of physical and emotional symptoms. Arthur Kleinman, a medical anthropologist, has argued that every culture frames mental health concerns differently. The pattern of symptoms associated with mental health conditions vary greatly between cultures. In China, Kleinman discovered that patients suffering from depression did not de-scribe feelings of sadness, but instead complained of boredom, discomfort, feelings of inner pressure, and symptoms of pain, dizziness, and fatigue.³⁴

Mental health is closely connected with social and cultural expectations and mental illnesses can arise as a result of pressures and challenges individuals face in particular settings. Rates of depression are higher for refugees, immigrants, and others who have experienced dislocation and loss. A sense of powerlessness also seems to play a role in triggering anxiety and depression, a phenomenon that has been documented in groups ranging from stay-at-home mothers in England to Native Americans affected by poverty and social marginalization.³⁵

Schizophrenia, a condition with genetic as well as environmental components, provides another interesting example of cross-cultural variation. Unlike anxiety or depression, there is some consistency in the symptom patterns associated with this condition cross culturally: hallucinations, delusions, and social withdrawal. What differs, however, is the way these symptoms are viewed by the community. In his research in Indonesia, Robert Lemelson discovered that symptoms of schizophrenia are often viewed by Indonesian communities as examples of communication with the spirit world, spirit possession, or the effects of traumatic memories.³⁶ Documenting the lives of some of these individuals in a [film series](#), he noted that they remained integrated into their communities and had significant responsibilities as members of their families and neighborhoods. People with schizophrenia were not, as often happens in the United States, confined to institutions and many were living with their condition without any biomedical treatments.

In its multi-decade study of schizophrenia in 19 countries, the World Health Organization concluded that societies that were more culturally accepting of symptoms associated with schizophrenia integrated people suffering from the condition into community life more completely. In these cultures, the illness was less severe and people with schizophrenia had a higher quality of life.³⁷ This finding has been controversial, but suggests that stigma and the resulting social isolation that characterize responses to mental illness in countries like the United States affect the subjective experience of the illness as well as its outcomes.³⁸

THE EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS IN PLACE Social Construction of Illness

As the above examples demonstrate, cultural attitudes affect how medical conditions will be perceived and how individuals with health problems will be regarded by the wider community. There is a difference, for instance, between a disease, which is a medical condition that can be objectively identified, and an illness, which is the subjective or personal experience of feeling unwell. Illnesses

may be caused by disease, but the experience of being sick encompasses more than just the symptoms caused by the disease itself. Illnesses are, at least in part, social constructions: experiences that are given meaning by the relationships between the person who is sick and others.

The course of an illness can worsen for instance, if the dominant society views the sickness as a moral failing. Obesity is an excellent example of the social construction of illness. The condition itself is a result of culturally induced habits and attitudes toward food, but despite this strong cul-tural component, many people regard obesity as a preventable circumstance, blaming individuals for becoming overweight. This attitude has a long cultural history. Consider for instance the religious connotations within Christianity of “gluttony” as a sin.³⁹ Such socially constructed **stigma** influences the subjective experience of the illness. Obese women have reported avoiding visits to physicians for fear of judgment and as a result may not receive treatments necessary to help their condition.⁴⁰ Peter Attia, a surgeon and medical researcher who delivered a [TED Talk](#) on this subject, related the story of an obese woman who had to have her foot amputated, a common result of complications from obesity and diabetes. Even though he was a physician, he judged the woman to be lazy. “If you had just tried even a little bit,” he had thought to himself before surgery.

Subsequently, new research revealed that insulin resistance, a precursor to diabetes, often develops as a result of the excess sugars used in many kinds of processed foods consumed commonly in the United States. As Attia observes, high rates of obesity in the United States are a reflection of the types of foods Americans have learned to consume as part of their cultural environment.⁴¹

In addition, the fact that foods that are high in sugars and fats are inexpensive and abundant, while healthier foods are expensive and unavailable in some communities, highlights the economic and social inequalities that contribute to the disease.

The HIV/AIDS virus provides another example of the way that the subjective experience of an illness can be influenced by social attitudes. Research in many countries has shown that people, including healthcare workers, make distinctions between patients who are “innocent” victims of AIDS and those who are viewed as “guilty.” People who contracted HIV through sex or intravenous drug use are seen as guilty. The same judgment applies to people who contracted HIV through same-sex relationships in places where societal disapproval of same-sex relationships exists. People who contracted HIV from blood transfusions, or as babies, are viewed as innocent. The “guilty” HIV patients often find it more difficult to access medical care and are treated with dis-respect or indifference in medical settings compared with superior treatment provided to those regarded as “innocent.” In the wider community, “guilty” patients suffer from social marginalization and exclusion while “innocent” patients receive greater social acceptance and practical assistance in responding to their needs for support and care.⁴²

The stigma that applies to “guilty” patients also ignores the socioeconomic context in which HIV/AIDS spreads. For instance, in Indonesia, poor women can make considerably more money as sex workers than in many other jobs: \$10 an hour as a sex worker compared to 20 cents an hour in a factory.⁴³ In a similar way, poverty and a lack of other choices contribute to a decision to engage in sex work in other societies, including in sub-

Saharan Africa where rates of HIV infection are among the highest in the world. Poverty itself is one of the greatest “risk factors” for HIV infection.⁴⁴ The clear relationship between poverty, gender, and HIV infection has been the topic of a great deal of research in medical anthropology. One example is Paul Farmer’s classic book, *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame* (1992), which was one of the earliest books to critically evaluate the connection between poverty, racism, stigma, and neglect that allowed HIV to infect and kill thousands of Haitians. Projects like this are critical to developing holistic views of the entire cultural, economic, and political context that affects the spread of the virus and attempts to treat the disease. [Partners in Health](#), the non-profit medical organization Paul Farmer helped to found, continues to pursue innovative strategies to pre-vent and treat diseases like AIDS, strategies that recognize that poverty and social marginalization provide the environment in which the virus flourishes.

Culture-Bound Syndromes

A **culture-bound syndrome** is an illness recognized only within a specific culture. These conditions, which combine emotional or psychological with physical symptoms, are not the result of a disease or any identifiable physiological dysfunction. Instead, culture-bound syndromes are **so-matic**, meaning they are physical manifestations of emotional pain. The existence of these conditions demonstrates the profound influence of culture and society on the experience of illness.

Anorexia

Anorexia is considered a culture bound syndrome because of its

strong association with cultures that place a high value on thinness as a measure of health and beauty. When we consider concepts of beauty from cultures all over the world, a common view of beauty is one of someone with additional fat. This may be because having additional fat in a place where food is expensive means that one is likely of a higher status. In societies like the United States where food is abundant, it is much more difficult to become thin than it is to become heavy. Although anorexia is a complex condition, medical anthropologists and physicians have observed that it is much more common in Western cultural contexts among people with high socioeconomic status.⁴⁵ Anorexia, as a form of self-deprivation, has deep roots in Western culture and for centuries practices of self-denial have been associated with Christian religious traditions. In a contemporary context, anorexia may address a similar, but secular desire to assert self-control, particularly among teenagers.⁴⁶

During her research in Fiji, Anne Becker (2004) noted that young women who were exposed to advertisements and television programs from Western cultures (like the United States and Australia) became self-conscious about their bodies and began to alter their eating habits to emulate the thin ideal they saw on television. Anorexia, which had been unknown in Fiji, became an increasingly common problem.⁴⁷ The same pattern has been observed in other societies undergoing “Westernization” through exposure to foreign media and economic changes associated with globalization.⁴⁸

Swallowing Frogs in Brazil

In Brazil, there are several examples of culture-bound syndromes that affect children as well as adults. Women are particularly susceptible to these conditions, which are connected to emotional distress. In parts of Brazil where poverty, unemployment, and poor physical health are common, there are cultural norms that discourage the expression of strong emotions such as anger, grief, or jealousy. Of course, people continue to experience these emotions, but cannot express them openly. Men and women deal

with this problem in different ways. Men may choose to drink alcohol heavily, or even to express their anger physically by lashing out at others, including their wives. These are not socially acceptable behaviors for women who instead remark that they must suppress their feelings, an act they describe as having to “swallow frogs” (*engolir sapos*).⁴⁹

Nervos (nerves) is a culture-bound syndrome characterized by symptoms such as headaches, trem-bling, dizziness, fatigue, stomach pain, tingling of the extremities and even partial paralysis. It is viewed as a result of emotional overload: a state of constant vulnerability to shock. Unexplained wounds on the body may be diagnosed as a different kind of illness known as “blood-boiling bruises.” Since emotion is culturally defined as a kind of energy that flows throughout the body, many believe that too much emotion can overwhelm the body, “boiling over” and producing symptoms. A per-son can become so angry, for instance, that his or her blood spills out from under the skin, creating bruises, or so angry that the blood rises up to create severe headaches, nausea, and dizziness. A third form of culture-bound illness, known as *peito aberto* (open chest) is believed to be occur when a per-son, most often a woman, is carrying too much emotional weight or suffering. In this situation, the heart expands until the chest becomes spiritually “open.” A chest that is “open” is dangerous because rage and anger from other people can enter and make a person sick.⁵⁰

In stressful settings like the communities in impoverished areas of northeastern Brazil, it is com-mon for people to be afflicted with culture-bound illnesses throughout their lives. Individuals can suffer from one condition, or a combination of several. Sufferers

may consult *rezadeiras/rezadores*, Catholic faith healers who will treat the condition with prayer, herbal remedies, or healing rituals. Because these practitioners do not distinguish between illnesses of the body and mind, they treat the symptoms holistically as evidence of personal turmoil. This approach to addressing these illnesses is consistent with cultural views that it is the suppression of emotion itself that has caused the physical problems.

BIOMEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

In the history of human health, technology is an essential topic. Medical technologies have transformed human life. They have increased life expectancy rates, lowered child mortality rates, and are used to intervene in and often cure thousands of diseases. Of course, these accomplishments come with many cultural consequences. Successful efforts to intervene in the body biologically also have implications for cultural values and the social organization of communities, as demonstrated by the examples below.

Antibiotics and Immunizations

Infectious diseases caused by viruses and bacteria have taken an enormous toll on human populations for thousands of years. During recurring epidemics, tens of thousands of people have died from outbreaks of diseases like measles, the flu, or bubonic plague. The Black Death, a pandemic outbreak of plague that spread across Europe and Eurasia from 1346–1353 AD, killed as many as 200 million people, as much as a third of the European population. Penicillin, discovered in 1928 and mass produced for the first time in the early 1940s, was a turning point in the human fight against bacterial infections. Called a “wonder drug” by Time magazine, Penicillin became available at a time when bacterial infections were frequently fatal; the drug was glorified as a cure-all.⁵¹ An important factor to consider about the introduction of antibiotics is the change to an understanding of illness that was increasingly scientific and technical. Before science could provide cures, personalistic and naturalistic ethno-etologies identified various root causes for sickness, but the invention of antibiotics contributed to a

strengthening of the Western biomedical paradigm as well as a new era of profitability for the pharmaceutical industry.

The effects of antibiotics have not been completely positive in all parts of the world. Along with other technological advances in areas such as sanitation and access to clean water, antibiotics contributed to an **epidemiological transition** characterized by a sharp drop in mortality rates, particularly among children. In many countries, the immediate effect was an increase in the human population as well as a shift in the kinds of diseases that were most prevalent. In wealthy countries, for instance, chronic conditions like heart disease or cancer have replaced bacterial infections as leading causes of death and the average lifespan has lengthened. In developing countries, the outcome has been mixed. Millions of lives have been saved by the availability of antibiotics, but high poverty and lack of access to regular medical care mean that many children who now survive the immediate dangers of infection during infancy succumb later in childhood to malnutrition, dehydration, or other ailments.⁵² Another difficulty is the fact that many kinds of infections have become untreatable as a result of bacterial resistance. Medical anthropologists are concerned with the increase in rates of infectious diseases like tuberculosis and malaria that cannot be treated with many existing antibiotics. According to the World Health Organization, there are nearly 500,000 cases of drug resistant tuberculosis each year.⁵³ New research is now focused on drug resistance, as well as the social and cultural components of this resistance such as the

relationship between poverty and the spread of resistant strains of bacteria.

Immunizations that can provide immunity against viral diseases have also transformed human health. The eradication of the smallpox virus in 1977 following a concerted global effort to vaccinate a large percentage of the world's population is one example of the success of this biotechnology. Before the development of the vaccine, the virus was killing 1–2 million people each year.⁵⁴ Today, vaccines exist for many of the world's most dangerous viral diseases, but providing access to vaccines remains a challenge. The polio virus has been eliminated from most of the world following several decades of near universal vaccination, but the disease has made a comeback in a handful of countries, including Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, where weak governments, inadequate healthcare systems, or war have made vaccinating children impossible. This example highlights the global inequalities that still exist in access to basic medical care.

Because viruses have the ability to mutate and to jump between animals and people, human populations around the world also face the constant threat of new viral diseases. Influenza has been responsible for millions of deaths. In 1918, a pandemic of the H1N1 flu infected 500 million people, killing nearly 5 percent of the human population.⁵⁵ Not all influenza strains are that deadly, but it remains a dangerous illness and one that vaccines can only partially address.⁵⁶ Each year, the strains of the influenza virus placed in the annual “flu shot” are based on predictions about the strains that will be most common. Because the virus mutates frequently and is influenced by interactions between human and animal populations, there is always uncertainty about future forms of the virus.⁵⁷

Reproductive Technologies

Today, the idea of “contraception” is linked to the technology of hormone-based birth control. “The pill” as we now know it, was

not available in the United States until 1960, but attempts to both prevent or bring about pregnancy through technology date back to the earliest human communities. Techniques used to control the birthrate are an important subject for medical anthropologists because they have significant cultural implications.

Many cultures use natural forms of birth control practices to influence the spacing of births. Among the !Kung, for instance, babies are breastfed for many months or even years, which hormonally suppress fertility and decrease the number of pregnancies a woman can have in her lifetime. In Enga, New Guinea, men and women do not live with one another following a birth, another practice that increases the time between pregnancies.⁵⁸ In contrast, cultures where there are social or religious reasons for avoiding birth control, including natural birth spacing methods, have higher birth rates. In the United States, the Comstock Act passed in 1873 banned contraception and even the distribution of information about contraception.

Although the Comstock Act is a thing of the past, efforts in the United States to limit access to birth control and related medical services like abortion are ongoing. Many medical anthropologists study the ways in which access to reproductive technologies is affected by cultural values. Laury Oaks (2003) has investigated the way in which activists on both sides of the abortion debate attempt to culturally define the idea of “risk” as it relates to women’s health. She notes that in the 1990s anti-abortion activists in the United States circulated misleading medical material suggesting that abortion increases rates of breast cancer. Although this claim was medically false, it was persuasive to many people and contributed to doubts about whether abortion posed a health risk to women, a concern that strengthened efforts to limit access to the procedure.⁵⁹

Other forms of reproductive technology have emerged from the desire to increase fertility. The world of “assisted reproduction,” which includes technologies such as in vitro fertilization and surrogate pregnancy, has been the subject of many anthropological

investigations. Marcia Inhorn, a medical anthropologist, has written several books about the growing popularity of in vitro fertilization in the Middle East. Her book, *The New Arab Man* (2012), explores the way in which infertility disrupts traditional notions of Arab masculinity that are based on fatherhood and she explores the ways that couples navigate conflicting cultural messages about the importance of parenthood and religious disapproval of assisted fertility.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

As the global population becomes larger, it is increasingly challenging to address the health needs of the world's population. Today, 1 in 8 people in the world do not have access to adequate nutrition, the most basic element of good health.⁶¹ More than half the human population lives in an urban environment where infectious diseases can spread rapidly, sparking pandemics. Many of these cities include dense concentrations of poverty and healthcare systems that are not adequate to meet demand.⁶² Globalization, a process that connects cultures through trade, tourism, and migration, contributes to the spread of pathogens that negatively affect human health and exacerbates political and economic inequalities that make the provision of healthcare more difficult.

Human health is complex and these are daunting challenges, but medical anthropologists have a unique perspective to contribute to finding solutions. Medical anthropology offers a holistic perspective on human evolutionary and biocultural adaptations as well as insights into the relationship between health and culture. As anthropologists study the ways people think about health and illness and the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics that affect the provision of health services, there is a potential to develop new methods for improving the health and quality of life for people all over the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This chapter describes several examples of diseases that result from interactions between biology and culture such as obesity. Why

is it important to consider cultural factors that contribute to illness rather than placing blame on individuals? What are some other examples of illnesses that have cultural as well as biological causes?

2. Many cultures have ethno-etiological explanations for illness that are not based in science. From a biomedical perspective, the non-scientific medical treatments provided in these cultures have a low likelihood of success. Despite this, people tend to believe that the treatments are working. Why do you think people tend to be satisfied with the effectiveness of the treatments they receive?

3. How does poverty influence the health of populations around the world? Do you see this in your own community? Who should be responsible for addressing health care needs in impoverished communities?

GLOSSARY

Adaptive: traits that increase the capacity of individuals to survive and reproduce.

Biocultural evolution: describes the interactions between biology and culture that have influenced human evolution.

Biomedical: an approach to medicine that is based on the application of insights from science, particularly biology and chemistry.

Communal healing: an approach to healing that directs the combined efforts of the community toward treating illness.

Culture-bound syndrome: an illness recognized only within a specific culture.

Emotionalistic explanation: suggests that illnesses are caused by strong emotions such as fright, anger, or grief; this is an example of a naturalistic ethno-etiology.

Epidemiological transition: the sharp drop in mortality rates, particularly among children, that occurs in a society as a result of improved sanitation and access to healthcare.

Ethno-etiology: cultural explanations about the underlying causes of health problems.

Ethnomedicine: the comparative study of cultural ideas about wellness, illness, and healing.

Humoral healing: an approach to healing that seeks to treat medical ailments by achieving a balance between the forces, or elements, of the body

Maladaptive: traits that decrease the capacity of individuals to survive and reproduce.

Medical anthropology: a distinct sub-specialty within the discipline of anthropology that investigates human health and health care systems in comparative perspective.

Naturalistic ethno-etiology: views disease as the result of natural forces such as cold, heat, winds, or an upset in the balance of the basic body elements.

Personalistic ethno-etiology: views disease as the result of the actions of human or supernatural beings.

Placebo effect: a response to treatment that occurs because the person receiving the treatment *believes it will work*, not because the treatment itself is effective.

Shaman: a person who specializes in contacting the world of the spirits.

Somatic: symptoms that are physical manifestations of emotional pain.

Zoonotic: diseases that have origins in animals and are transmitted to humans.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sashur Henninger-Rener is an anthropologist with research in the fields of comparative religion and psychological anthropology. She received a Master of Arts from Columbia University in the City of New York in Anthropology and has since been researching and teaching. Currently, Sashur is teaching with The University of LaVerne and the Los Angeles Community College District in the fields of Cultural and Biological Anthropology. In her free time, Sashur enjoys traveling the world, visiting archaeological and cultural sites along the way. She and her husband are actively

involved in animal rescuing, hoping to eventually found their own animal rescue for animals that are waiting to find homes.

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56. Chapter 10: Globalization Study Guide

Chapter 10 Study Guide

Globalization

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Appadurai, Arjun
- Banking
- Bolivia
- Bretton Woods Conference
- *Candomblé*
- Colonialism
- Commodity chain
- Ethnoscape
- Fair trade
- Financescape
- Global North
- Global South
- Globalization
- Glocalization
- Habitus
- Ideoscape
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Latin America

- Mediascape
- Neocolonialism
- Neoliberalism
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- Orixá
- Quinoa
- Re-entrenchment
- Scott, James
- Slavery
- Steger, Manfred
- Syncretism
- Syria
- Technoscape
- Tourism
- Translocal
- United Nations Urban World Bank (WB)
- World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Zapotec (cultural group)

57. Chapter II: Culture and Sustainability: Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene Study Guide

Chapter II Study Guide

Culture and Sustainability

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Agency
- Agriculture
- Anthropocene
- Anthropogenic
- Brazil nuts
- Copan (Mayan city)
- Cultural ecology
- Cultural evolutionism
- Cultural Resources
- Management
- Ecocide
- Eco-justice
- Ecologically noble savage
- Ethnobotany

- Ethnocide
- Ethnoecology
- Extractive reserve
- Exurban
- Haiti
- Harris, Marvin
- Homeostasis
- Hominin J
- ohnston, Barbara Rose
- Kayapó (cultural group)
- Map-making
- Marshallese Islanders (cultural group)
- Materialism
- Mintz, Sidney
- Multispecies ethnographies
- Murray, Gerald
- NGOs
- People-versus-park-debate
- Political ecology
- Political environmentalism
- Posey, Darrell
- Processual archaeology
- Protected areas
- Rappaport, Roy
- Sahlins, Marshall
- Shoshone (cultural group)
- Steward, Julian
- Succession
- Sustainable development
- Swidden cultivation
- Tsembaga (cultural group)
- Wilderness

58. Chapter 12: Health and Medicine Study Guide

Chapter 12 Study Guide

Health and Medicine

Use this study guide as you read the selected chapter, to help you focus on the important terms, concepts, people and places. This will also help you prepare for the quiz on this chapter.

- Adaptive traits
- Barrida
- Becker, Anne
- Biocultural
- Biomedical
- Birth control
- Brazil: culture bound syndromes
- Chi
- Cholera
- Communal healing
- Culture-bound syndrome
- Disease
- Emotionalistic explanation (ethno-etiology)
- Epidemiological transition
- Ethno-etiology
- Ethnomedicine
- Farmer, Paul
- Fiji

- Foragers
- Four humors
- H1N1 flu pandemic of 1918
- Haiti Heiban Nuba (cultural group)
- Holistic Homo sapiens
- Humoral healing
- Illness
- Inhorn, Marcia
- In-vitro fertilization
- Kleinman, Arthur
- !Kung (Ju/'hoansi) (cultural group)
- Lifestyle
- Maladaptive traits
- Malaria Medical anthropology
- Mixe (cultural group)
- n/um
- Naturalistic ethno-etiology
- Nervos
- Personalistic ethno-etiology
- Placebo effect
- Shaman
- Sickle cell gene
- Smallpox
- Somatic
- Stigma
- Susto
- TCM: Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Theory of natural selection
- Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Zoonotic

59. Virtual Field Trip: Australian Aboriginal Culture, Art, History, Music

Where do you want to go?

Virtual Field Trip: Australian Aboriginal Culture, Art, History, Music

Australia has always had a mix of cultures and people although not in the same way as it does today.

Select an image to view larger:

[A photograph of The Seven Peace Keepers](#)

[A photograph of Glen Namundja painting.](#)

[Primitive drawing of a kangaroo](#)

[Man in aboriginal dress playing a didgeridoo](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have changed and developed over time. However, European colonisation of Australia brought very rapid changes to Aboriginal society and dramatically affected Aboriginal land and the ways people lived. Australia has always had a mix of cultures and people although not in the same way as it does today.

Before 1788 Australia was populated only by the Indigenous people of Australia – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In 1788 Aboriginal people inhabited the whole of Australia and Torres Strait Islanders lived on the islands between Australian and Papua New

Guinea, in what is now called the Torres Strait. There were many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities made up of people who spoke different languages with various cultural beliefs, practices and traditions.

Before 1788 there were approximately 700 languages spoken throughout Australia with an estimated population of 750 000 people. Today Indigenous people make up 2% of the entire Australian population (about 410 000 people). The number of Aboriginal people has changed since European settlement because of the effects of removal of people from traditional lands and the impact of cities and towns on populations...

Australia today is a much different place from when the First Fleet arrived in 1788 with convicts and marines. Just as in the past, Indigenous Australians live throughout Australia but now this includes cities, towns, the coast, rural areas and the outback. There is no one Indigenous culture but a mixture of contemporary and traditional thoughts, ways and practices.

[Introduction to Indigenous Australia, Australian Museum](#)

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

Each of the videos has a caption at the beginning: “May contain names, images or voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” This respects Indigenous community cultural protocols related to deceased persons. For more information, see: [Indigenous Cultural Protocols](#)

Be sure to check out the “Education Notes” for each of the videos; they contain great background information!

- Creative Spirits: Get Aboriginal Culture Without Agenda “I think anybody who does a course on Aboriginal culture just sees Australia so differently. It’s very enlightening and gives another dimension to being Australian. —Anna Bell, coordinator Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater
 - [History](#)
 - [Spirituality](#)
 - [Arts](#)

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of the topics from the list below and follow the suggested websites, or select your own [scholarly resources](#).

History and Culture

- Website: [Koori History](#)
- Website: [The AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia](#) The Aboriginal Language Map attempts to represent all of the language or tribal or nation groups of Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates general locations of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group.

Music

- Article: [Treaty by Yothu Yindi – a Trojan horse in the culture wars](#) The Yolngu song never quite achieved what it set out to in the lifetime of its author, but it gave reconciliation in Australia an anthem
- Webpage: [Yothu Yindi](#) Band biography. “They took the ancient song cycles of north-east Arnhem Land – featuring such traditional instruments as the bilma (ironwood clapsticks) and yidaki (didgeridoo or hollow log) – and juxtaposed them with western pop sounds to present a true musical meeting of two diverse cultures. They took traditional Yolngu dance performances – describing the behavior of crocodiles, wallabies, brolga and other fauna of their homelands – and worked them into the context of contemporary performance. The result is a band that’s been hailed as “the most powerful blend of indigenous and modern music to emerge from the world music scene”.
- Article: [Read the Lyrics of Yothu Yindi](#) Yothu Yindi were best known for the song “Treaty”? about the Hawke government’s broken promise to Indigenous people. Here are the lyrics, with translations.

Rituals and Rites of Passage

- Video Clip: [Blood Brothers – Jardiwarnpa](#) A sweeping aerial view of mountains jutting out of the flat desert-scape. A song of the area plays out in subtitles over the image. An elder tells us about the sacred Ancestor of this area, and his relation to him.
- Website: [Photo Essay: Australian Aboriginal – Initiation and Mourning Rites of Passage](#)

Art

- Website: Artlandish Aboriginal Art Gallery, [The Story of Aboriginal Art](#)
- Article: Smithsonian Magazine, [Contemporary Aboriginal Art](#)
- Video: Shaman Creative, [Gilbert Laurie, Artist](#)

60. Virtual Field Trip: Know Your Sources

KNOW YOUR SOURCES

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING SOURCES

When doing research you will come across a lot of information from different types of sources. How do you decide which source to use? From tweets to newspaper articles, this tool provides a brief description of each and breaks down 6 factors of what to consider when selecting a source.

Tweets

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics that enables brief dialogue between distinct groups of people across geographic, political, cultural and economic boundaries.

Tumblr blog

An avenue for sharing both developed and unpolished ideas and interests with a niche community with relative ease.

Youtube video

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos that are shared rapidly and widely.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed of daily events, sports, and current news. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Popular magazine

A glossy compilation of informative, entertaining stories with unique themes intended for a specific interests—or lifestyles—from celebrities to gardening to gaming.

Professional journal

A collection of work-related articles that keep professionals up-to-date on the latest trends, breakthroughs and controversies in their field.

Scholarly journal

A collection of analytic reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

A book in which the information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author, and the editor pulls them all together into a whole. Often these types of books have a narrow and specific focus.

Encyclopedia

A book or set of books giving information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject. Some are intended as an entry point into research for a general audience, some provide detailed information. Most list relevant books and articles for further information on a topic.

TOTAL NUMBER PUBLISHED PER DAY

When an idea can be published quickly, we end up with many ideas that we have to sift through before we find what we're looking for. As the selectivity of a medium increases, the value and uniqueness of the contribution typically increases too. However, on the flip side,

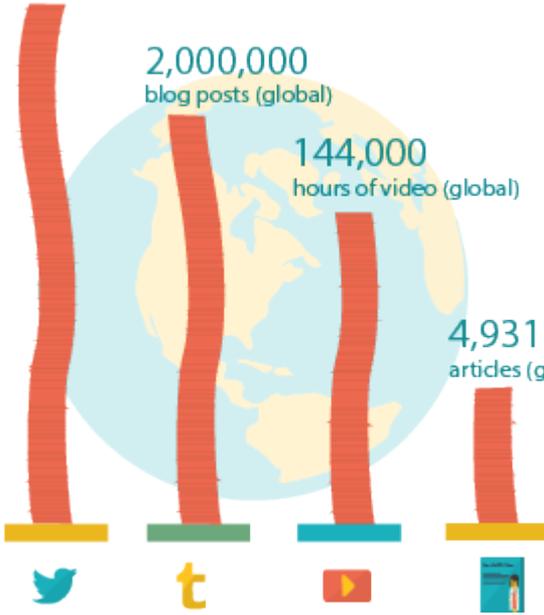
when the selectivity increases, fewer diverse ideas or voices may be published.

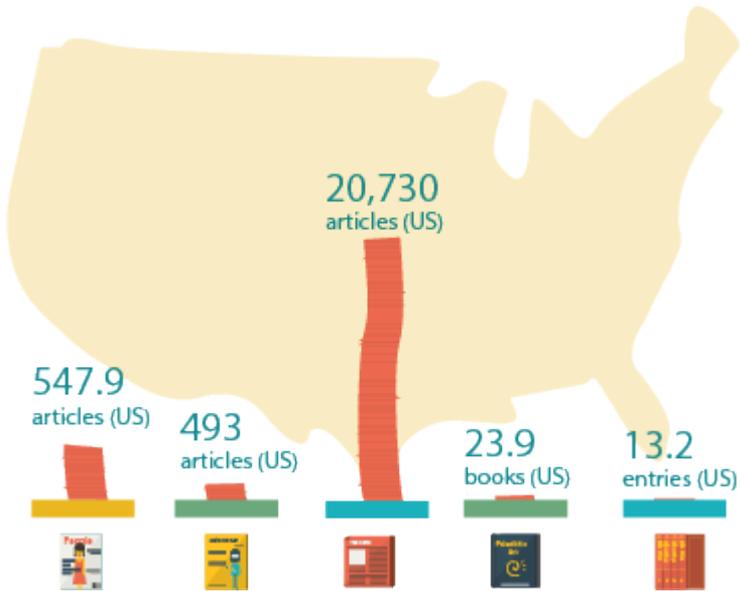
500,000,000
tweets (global)

2,000,000
blog posts (global)

144,000
hours of video (global)

4,931
articles (global)





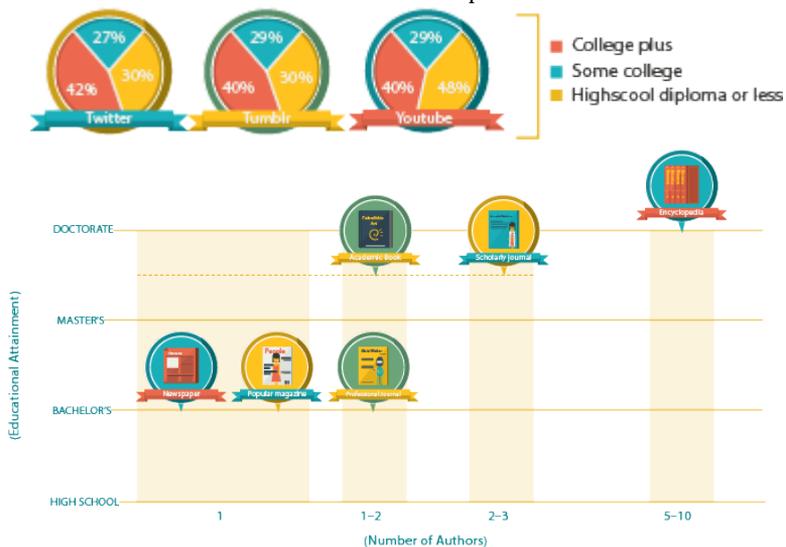
DEGREE OF SCRUTINY BEFORE A SOURCE IS PUBLISHED

Two factors contribute to the amount of scrutiny that a source receives before it might be published: The **number of reviewers** fact-checking the written ideas and the **total time** spent by reviewers as they fact-check the ideas. The more people pulled into the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Youtube, tumblr and twitter enable dialogue with outside “reviewers” after an idea has been published. The comments section of a Youtube video might receive hundreds of comments from outside voices.

DEGREE OF AUTHOR EDUCATION

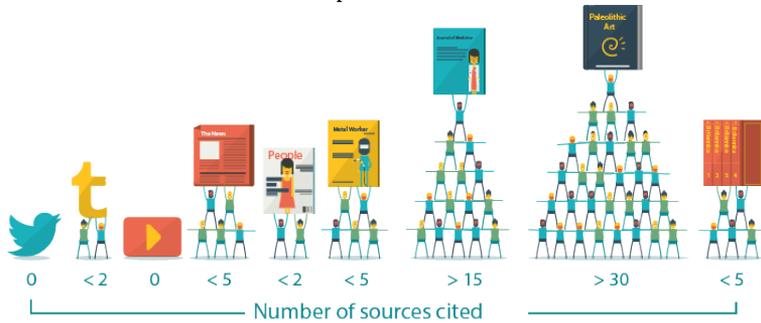
One factor contributing to the amount of knowledge used to produce a source is the **number of authors** collaborating on the article. When more people contribute their viewpoints or ideas to the writing, the quality and breadth are likely strengthened. A second factor to consider is the **number of years of formal education** that the author(s) received prior to writing the article. The more combined education that the authors have, the more knowledgeable we can assume the team of authors to be. What other factors can contribute to author expertise?



NUMBER OF OUTSIDE SOURCES

When an author pulls many outside sources into her writing, she demonstrates familiarity with ideas beyond her own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more

comprehensive and reliable. Below, we show the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.



15, Academic books: >30, Encyclopedias: <5." width="703" height="298">

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER SOURCE

When an source uses more words to convey its points, those words are likely used to document a more thorough, well-reasoned argument that is better supported with existing research or past claims. Below, you will find the typical number of words used by an author when expressing ideas in each source.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Every source makes some assumptions about the reader's knowledge of the subject. The level of technical words and ideas rises when the author is targeting readers in a niche field. In advanced sources, the reader can expect the information and writing to go beyond the basics. When the author is writing for a general audience, terms are typically defined and background

information is provided to make the content understandable to an average reader. Here, we convey the typical level of knowledge assumed by authors for each type of source.

DATA SOURCES

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6I. Virtual Field Trip Essay-Assignment

Your Field Guide

Start Here

Use the suggested websites to get a broad view of your destination, or select another [scholarly resource](#) to get started:

Each of the videos has a caption at the beginning: “May contain names, images or voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” This respects Indigenous community cultural protocols related to deceased persons. For more information, see: [Indigenous Cultural Protocols](#)

Be sure to check out the “Education Notes” for each of the videos; they contain great background information!

- Creative Spirits: Get Aboriginal Culture Without Agenda “I think anybody who does a course on Aboriginal culture just sees Australia so differently. It’s very enlightening and gives another dimension to being Australian. —Anna Bell, coordinator Aboriginal Support Group Manly Warringah Pittwater
 - [History](#)
 - [Spirituality](#)
 - [Arts](#)

Choose a Topic and Explore More Deeply

Choose one of the topics from the list below and follow the suggested websites, or select your own [scholarly resources](#).

History and Culture

- Website: [Koori History](#)
- Website: [The AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia](#) The

Aboriginal Language Map attempts to represent all of the language or tribal or nation groups of Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates general locations of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group.

Music

- Article: [Treaty by Yothu Yindi – a Trojan horse in the culture wars](#) The Yolngu song never quite achieved what it set out to in the lifetime of its author, but it gave reconciliation in Australia an anthem
- Webpage: [Yothu Yindi](#) Band biography. “They took the ancient song cycles of north-east Arnhem Land – featuring such traditional instruments as the bilma (ironwood clapsticks) and yidaki (didgeridoo or hollow log) – and juxtaposed them with western pop sounds to present a true musical meeting of two diverse cultures. They took traditional Yolngu dance performances – describing the behavior of crocodiles, wallabies, brolga and other fauna of their homelands – and worked them into the context of contemporary performance. The result is a band that’s been hailed as “the most powerful blend of indigenous and modern music to emerge from the world music scene”.
- Article: [Read the Lyrics of Yothu Yindi](#) Yothu Yindi were best known for the song “Treaty”? about the Hawke government’s broken promise to Indigenous people. Here are the lyrics, with translations.

Rituals and Rites of Passage

- Video Clip: [Blood Brothers – Jardiwarnpa](#) A sweeping aerial view of mountains jutting out of the flat desert-scape. A song of the area plays out in subtitles over the image. An elder tells us about the sacred Ancestor of this area, and his relation to

him.

- Website: [Photo Essay: Australian Aboriginal – Initiation and Mourning Rites of Passage](#)

Art

- Website: Artlandish Aboriginal Art Gallery, [The Story of Aboriginal Art](#)
- Article: Smithsonian Magazine, [Contemporary Aboriginal Art](#)
- Video: Shaman Creative, [Gilbert Laurie, Artist](#)

Instructions

Each Module will have a “virtual field trip” assignment, that consists of a visit – to online websites and articles – and a written “Field Trip Essay” – where you describe, analyze, and reflect on what you have learned. Use this opportunity to more deeply explore another culture!

- Read, watch, and listen to the required materials above. Explore all area of the website(s), listen to all of the interviews, watch all associated videos.
- Select a more specific topic to help you dive deeper. Read, watch, and listen to the suggested websites for your topics above, and
- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool, and then post a copy into the Discussion to share with the class.

Essay Requirements

Introduction: In your opening paragraph, introduce the culture and topic of your field trip. Include the name of least one source (website or article) that you visited, using an internal citation.

Exploration: This is the heart of your essay! Address the following areas, to share what you learned during your field trip. Each of these should be a paragraph (3-4 sentences minimum).

1. **Overview of the topic.** Give a general summary of information

about the topic.

2. **Holistic and comparative analysis** (choose one):
 1. If the field trip focuses on one cultural group, compare and contrast two elements within that culture, such as practices (rituals, art, etc.), or two different time periods
 2. If the field trip covers multiple groups, compare and contrast specific elements of two cultural groups
3. **Then, dig deeper!** Apply these two anthropological fieldwork methods:
 1. Participant observation. Define participant observation. Explain at least two things you would do as part of this activity (2- sentences for each of these). How would this help you learn more about this culture?
 2. Interview. What is one question you would ask a member of that culture? Explain how that would help you learn more deeply about that culture or practice.

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and a post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

62. Virtual Field Trip

Essay-Discussion

Remember: Use grammar and spell-check! Include a bibliography and two internal citations – one from a source in the field trip required materials, and one from our text readings for this module.

- Submit your essay to the Assignments tool.
- Copy and paste a copy of your essay into the Discussion tool.
- Read the essays posted by your peers, and post a comment to two peers (75 words minimum each). Due one week after you post your initial essay.

PART VI
SEMESTER RESEARCH
PROJECT

63. Semester Research Project Instructions

Semester Research Project

This assignment is your opportunity to more deeply explore an indigenous or other “non-Western” culture or group. You are encouraged to “follow your own path” in research!

There are two parts to this assignment, due in two different modules (check the Schedule of Work for due dates):

- Module 2: Semester Research Project Proposal
- Module 4: Semester Research Project Essay

Module 2: Proposal

How do professional anthropologists “follow their own path” when starting original research? They begin by creating a proposal outlining the type of research they want to pursue when they do field work.

The Semester Research Project Study Proposal is your first step in the Semester Research Project assignment. Check the Schedule of Work for due date.

Instructions

- Choose a cultural group, a topic, and two anthropological concepts from the lists below. You may choose other groups, topics, or concepts, but they must be approved by the instructor.
- Conduct preliminary research on the cultural group, topic, concepts, and outside [scholarly resources](#). See your librarian for research help, and consult the text for the concepts.

Write a 150-word, one to two paragraph overview of your ideas, for your research. Your proposal should include:

- the culture you will study,
- the topic you will investigate,
- two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, citing our text) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and,
- one outside source you can use in your research (give the name and author of the source, and include internal citation).
- At the end, add a bibliography listing both sources, and any others you choose to use.

Your proposal should include:

- two anthropological concepts (with brief definitions or explanations, **citing our text**) that will guide you in your research and analysis, and,
- one outside source you can use in your research (include internal citation),
- bibliography listing both sources, and any others you choose to use.

Cultural Groups

- Agta (Philippines)
- Ainu (Japan)
- Diné/Navajo (U.S. southwest)
- Dinka (Africa) Hadza (Africa)
- !Kung San (also called Ju/hoansi) (Kalahari Desert, Africa)
- Maasai (Africa)
- Maori (New Zealand)
- Maya (southern Mexico, Central America)
- Mbuti (also called Mbuti Pygmies, or Ba Mbuti) (Africa)
- Mundurucu (Amazon, South America)
- Nuer (Africa)
- O'dham (Sonoran desert, U.S. and Mexico)
- Quiché (Peru/Bolivia, South America)
- Sámi (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia)
- Yanomami (Amazon, South America) Yaqui (Sonoran desert, U.S. and Mexico)

You may select another non-Western or indigenous group from your textbook. If you choose another group, you need to email your instructor for approval.

Topics

Think broadly about what topic you would like to investigate!

Suggested topics include:

- Artistic practices
- Beliefs (may be separate from religious ideology)
- Clothing styles
- Death/Funerary Customs
- Gender
- Indigenous rights issues
- Kinship
- Marriage practices
- Religion
- Ritual
- Socio-political organization

If you choose another topic, you need to email your instructor for approval.

Anthropological Concepts

“Anthropological concepts” are ideas we use in anthropology that help us understand what we see – like ritual, tribe, gender, etc. Here is a list of some anthropological concepts that may be useful to you.

Use the definition and theory of the concept from the textbook to understand and analyze the topic you choose...

- Band
- Chiefdom
- Colonialism
- Cultural Loss
- Cultural Relativism
- Cultural Revitalization
- Division of Labor
- Enculturation
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Innovation
- Kinship
- Language Revitalization
- Marriage
- Pastoralism
- Power (and types of power)
- Racial Thinking (remember: “race” is a social construct)
- Reciprocity (and types of reciprocity)
- Religion
- Revitalization movement
- Rite of passage
- Ritual
- Subculture
- Tradition
- Tribe

Module 4: Essay

Earlier this semester, you selected a group and related topic in your “Follow Your Own Path” Proposal. Now it is time to expand these into a full paper through research and writing!

Research

As you research and collect information about the cultural group and topic you chose for your Proposal, remember to locate TWO [scholarly resources](#), in addition to your textbook, to supplement your information and knowledge. These should be professional or academic sources.

Instructions

Write a 1500-word essay (no more than 1750 words), on the specific cultural group and topic you have proposed and researched.

- Include at least 7 internal citations within your essay (with at least one from each of your three sources: your text and two outside sources), in support of your explanations.
- Quotations should be 10 words or less.

The essay assignment should include:

- **A general introduction** to the essay. Introduce the cultural group, including its geographic location. Introduce the topic you have chosen for the focus of the essay. Explain why you chose this cultural group and this topic.
- **A detailed discussion** of the specific topic you have chosen.

This is the body of your essay assignment. Support and document your findings with citations from your sources.

1. You should have a **minimum of five points in your discussion of the topic, with at least one paragraph for each of these points**. Each paragraph should have at least one citation as a source for the information you provide.
 2. You should use a **minimum of two anthropological concepts (be sure to define them according to your textbook, and cite your text)**, to help explain and analyze the topic you have chosen. These should be woven into the five main paragraphs.
 3. The seven internal citations are spread throughout the essay, and are the way you show that you conducted research! There is one for each of the five main points, and one for each of the anthropological concepts.
- **A concluding paragraph** summing up the findings of your research.
 - **Bibliography or References** List at the end of the essay.

Formatting

- Your essay should be a minimum of 1500 words (no more than 1,750 words), double-spaced. Include the word count after the last sentence in the paper for only the body of the paper. Don't count the words in the heading, title or Works Cited/ Bibliography. Remember, the assignment is graded for word count, not page length.
- Include a Works Cited or Bibliography. Be sure to use full bibliographic references for all sources, including websites, according to correct style.
 - Use the following links for each of the citations styles (MLA, Chicago, APA)

- [MLA Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)
- [APA Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)
- [Chicago Style – Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)
- Remember to proofread and edit for spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Use the spell and grammar check!
- Type your full name and “Semester Research Project” at the top of the first page.

Submission

Save your work as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf file only. Other formats might not transmit and cannot be guaranteed on time or graded. Submit this assignment in the “Semester Research Project” Assignment Folder in our website.

Grading

The Proposal and the Semester Research Project will be graded based on the Writing Assignment Rubric below and be checked against anti-plagiarism software applications such as Turnitin.

Refer to the Schedule of Work for due dates on these written assignments.

Proposal: Semester Research Project Rubric (10 Points)

Exceeds Expectations (10 points)	Meets Expectations (8 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (7 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (6 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
150 words or more.	150 words.	Less than 150 words.	Less than 150 words.	
Ideas are clear, specific, and meet or exceed minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed and cited.	Ideas are clear, but not specific. Meets minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed.	Ideas are not clear or specific. Does not meet minimum word requirement. At least one outside source is listed.	Does not address all required topics. Does not meet minimum word requirement. No outside source is mentioned.	Not submitted.

Essay: Semester Research Project Rubric

Exceeds Expectations (100 points)	Meets Expectations (76 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (54 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (32 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Ideas/Content (40 points) Anthropological ideas are clear, specific, and paper exceeds minimum word requirement. Main ideas stand out along with details. Clearly illustrates critical and reflective thinking.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (30 points) Anthropological ideas are clear but information is general and predictable. Paper meets minimum word count. Shows some critical and reflective thinking.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (20 points) Anthropological ideas are clear but more information is needed. Paper meets minimum word count. Poorly thought out response.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (10 points) Anthropological information is limited and text is repetitious. Paper does not meet minimum word count. No central theme. No evidence of having given the assignment real thought.</p>	<p>Ideas/Content (0 points) Not submitted.</p>
<p>Anthropological Concepts (40 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through an in-depth application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (30 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through a strong application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (20 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through an adequate application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (10 points) Anthropological understanding is illustrated through a superficial application of concepts presented in the course.</p>	<p>Anthropological Concepts (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>
<p>Organization (10 points) Organization (including introduction and conclusion) enhances the central theme. Sequencing is logical and transitions are smooth.</p>	<p>Organization (8 points) Organization is adequate and introduction needs more anticipation. Conclusion leaves no closure. Connections are faint.</p>	<p>Organization (7 points) Organization is not clear. Introduction is present, but has no lead. Conclusion is present but not clear.</p>	<p>Organization (6 points) No clear direction with no lead or conclusion. Connections are confusing or incomplete.</p>	<p>Organization (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>

Exceeds Expectations (100 points)	Meets Expectations (76 points)	Almost Meets Expectations (54 points)	Does Not Meet Expectations (32 points)	Not Submitted (0 points)
<p>Conventions (10 points) There are few or no errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar and spelling. Paragraphing adds to organizational structure. Properly and explicitly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (8 points) There are a few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Paragraphing may create problems. Properly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (7 points) Some usage, grammar, or paragraphing problems are more frequent. Spelling and end-of-sentence punctuation are almost always correct. Internal punctuation may be incorrect or missing. Improperly cited.</p>	<p>Conventions (6 points) Errors in grammar and usage affect meaning. Paragraphing is missing or does not relate to organization of text. Frequent spelling errors. Punctuation is often missing or incorrect. Improperly cited or no citations present.</p>	<p>Conventions (0 points) No assignment submitted or submitted late.</p>

64. Semester Research Project Paper Submission