SHARED VOICES - AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Demetrios Brellas and Vanessa Martinez
Remixing Open Textbooks with an Equity Lens (ROTEL)

LibreTexts™

Shared Voices - An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)

Demetrios Brellas and Vanessa Martinez

Remixing Open Textbooks with an Equity Lens (ROTEL)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Land Acknowledgement Statement for the ROTEL Grant

As part of ROTEL Grant's mission to support the creation, management, and dissemination of culturally-relevant textbooks, we must acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land, and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. We acknowledge that the boundaries that created Massachusetts were arbitrary and a product of the settlers. We honor the land on which the Higher Education Institutions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are sited as the traditional territory of tribal nations. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from their territory, and other atrocities connected with colonization. We honor and respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather, and our acknowledgement is one action we can take to correct the stories and practices that erase Indigenous People's history and culture.

Identified tribes and/or nations of Massachusetts

Historical nations:

- Mahican
- Mashpee
- Massachuset
- Nauset
- Nipmuc
- Pennacook
- Pocomtuc
- Stockbridge
- Wampanoag

Present day nations and tribes:

- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah
- Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe
- Assawompsett-Nemasket Band of Wampanoags
- Pocasset Wampanoag of the Pokanoket Nation
- Pacasset Wampanoag Tribe
- Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe
- Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Indian Nation
- Nipmuc Nation (Bands include the Hassanamisco, Natick)
- Nipmuck Tribal Council of Chaubunagungamaug
- Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag

In the event that we have an incorrect link or are missing an existing band/nation, please let us know so that we may correct our error.

Suggested readings

Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness

A guide to Indigenous land acknowledgment

'We are all on Native Land: A conversation about Land Acknowledgements' YouTube video

Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land (mapping of native lands)

Beyond territorial acknowledgments – âpihtawikosisân

Your Territorial Acknowledgment Is Not Enough

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in Back Matter/Detailed Licensing.

Preface

Welcome to *Shared Voices: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology.*

We are excited to share this with you all. We decided to remix a textbook for our Cultural Anthropology courses to address the lack of current, reliable and relevant resources for introductory anthropology courses that center equity and anti-racism. Our goal is to have the final product be a textbook that is culturally responsive and inclusive with an anti-racist and global citizenry perspective. We want to center marginalized voices, stories, and community engagement and organizing. We want to include research stories and ethnographic work by Latinx scholars, and other BIPOC folks. Our hope is to represent the stories of these communities and their voices through the on-going development of this book.

Our teaching pedagogy always involves both a historical, and contemporary lens, on the topics covered in the course. This includes, but is not limited to, culture, language, politics, religion, expressive culture, race, gender. Flexibility in modality and timing is built into this course. We work to actively respond to and provide support for student needs while maintaining a high standard of education in our courses.

Our approach to cultural anthropology centers equity and focuses on anthropology's potential to change the world. We see the interconnectedness of humans and their cultural practices is integral to better human communication. In all of the chapters, we emphasize the comparison of cultures, the ways of life of different peoples, and the importance of becoming a truly global citizen by resolving some of the most critical issues facing our world today. In our complicated world of increasing migration, nationalism, and climate challenges, cultural diversity might actually be the source of conflict resolution and provide us with new and old approaches to ensuring a healthier world. This book brings together anthropological stories to inspire the next generation to use anthropological theories and methodologies 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 easily share anthropological knowledge and understanding. We want all readers to be inspired by the intensely personal writings of the anthropologists who contribute to this volume.

About the remixing process

The original book which forms the 'bones' of this remixing project, Perspectives, an Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, is one that we have both used in our courses. This work is different from other introductory textbooks, in that it is an edited volume with each chapter originally written by a different author and now edited by two other anthropologists.

For students, we promise readable and interesting writing on topics that tend to be covered in a first year anthropology course. The chapters contain links and reading questions to support your use and enjoyment of the book. The questions, videos and other links are designed to help you better learn the material. Feel free to use this book, even if it is not your course text, and then ask your instructor the tough questions! Use email to send us questions and/or comments.

- Dr. Vanessa Martínez (vmartinez@hcc.edu)
- Dr. Demetrios Brellas (dbrellas@framingham.edu)

For instructors, we invite you to build your own book, the perfect book for your course. We promise a user friendly and adaptable text that provides you with some great conversation possibilities for your class. The available chapters mirror the lecture topics in many first-year courses. The chapters form a whole and they can also stand alone. Choose the ones you need.

This new remixed edition furthers the mission of open educational resources while centering equity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and universal design. We are particularly interested in ensuring that the world is made better for our most vulnerable and believe that anthropology has the potential to do just that.

What Comes Next?

The work to remix this book is an ongoing process. In the current version we present the first phase of this work which encompasses the first seven chapters. We are currently developing the next seven chapters as well as an in-depth instructor's resources package. One of the greatest challenges in teaching anthropology is coming up with relevant and equity-based activities and resources for instruction. We are in the process of compiling an extensive collection of teaching resources as well as student assessment tools such as journal assignments, activities, and more.

Meet the Authors

Originally from San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, **Vanessa E. Martinez-Renuncio, Ph.D.**, is an experienced health anthropologist, professor, trainer, non-profit professional and leader in the areas of justice, cultural humility and culturally responsive pedagogy. With over twenty years of experience working in higher education colleges, my focus has been on building campus and community wide equity and inclusion initiatives and programs to support student retention, graduation, and transfer. She works full time at Holyoke Community College as Professor of Anthropology and Honors Program Coordinator. She is also a co-founder of The Women of Color Healthy Equity Collective (The Collective), a movement building non-profit in Western Massachusetts whose mission is to ensure girls and women of color are able to achieve optimal health. She received her Master's in applied medical anthropology from Georgia State University in 2002 and her PhD in anthropology with a focus in health and medicine from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2014. She currently resides in Holyoke, Massachusetts, with her partner Jamie and her daughter Alejandra. Her favorite activities involve dancing, going on adventures with her family and enjoying time on a beach.

Born to Greek immigrant parents in Queens, New York City, **Demetrios James Brellas, Ph.D.**, is an anthropologist, archaeologist, researcher and educator. He received his doctorate in Archaeology from Boston University in 2016. His graduate work focused on the socioeconomic role of wetland environments and their resources in ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. He has conducted archaeological fieldwork throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East including: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Italy. Most recently, his research takes place in Greece, where he is a part of several ongoing projects, which involve the analysis of animal as well as human remains. He is currently the team zooarchaeologist at the Molyvoti Thrace Archaeological Project (MTAP) in Greece, where he continues to research animal economies and particularly the role of sustainable wetland and marine ecosystem use in ancient complex societies. Before pursuing a graduate level career in archaeology he worked as a K-12 teacher. He also teaches several anthropology courses to high school students in the Boston MetroWest area through the College Planning Collaborative. Everyone learns differently and educators therefore must not take anything for granted when we speak. Therefore, his teaching philosophy focuses on finding the strategy that works for each student by using various teaching tools.

Thank you for adopting *Shared Voices: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*.

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College

Attribution

Media Attributions

- Vanessa Martinez © Vanessa Martinez is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license
- Demetrios Brellas © Demetrios Brellas is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in *Back Matter/Detailed Licensing*.

Chapter 1: What is Anthropology?

Remix Authors:

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Authors:

Katie Nelson, Inver Hills Community College, knelson@inverhills.edu

Lara Braff, Grossmont College, lara.braff@gcccd.edu

> ◧ Learning Objectives
> - Identify the four subfields of anthropology and describe the kinds of research projects associated with each subfield.
> - Describe how anthropology developed from early explorations of the world through the professionalization of the discipline in the 19th century.
> - Discuss ethnocentrism and the role it played in early attempts to understand other cultures.
> - Explain how the perspectives of holism, cultural relativism, comparison, and fieldwork, as well as both scientific and humanistic tendencies make anthropology a unique discipline.
> - Examine the ways in which anthropology can be used to address current social, political, and economic issues.

1.1 Introduction

> 📌 Vanessa's Story
>
> I remember the first anthropology class that I took in my second year of college. It was a cultural anthropology class taught by Dr. Sabine Hyland, an American anthropologist and ethnohistorian working in the Andes. It was challenging and exciting, and she was the first real mentor I ever had. Her research and teaching style allowed me to engage with topics and questions that I loved inside the college classroom. The way she taught brought you into the stories and research of the communities she highlighted, giving a rich understanding of our diverse world. A class really can change the trajectory of your life. This class did. I fell in love with anthropology and wanted to merge it with my interest in health and wellbeing. It was this class, and this professor, that made me see that there were many more options for degrees, and that medical anthropology could be my path. I am someone who wants to leave the world better than I found it. I found that with anthropology, a discipline devoted to better understanding of humanity as a whole, I could investigate questions that I was curious about and develop solutions to real world problems by centering humanity as cooperative and creative. Years later, I even wrote a recommendation letter for Dr. Hyland to receive tenure, which she did. One class and one mentor can make a difference in the trajectory of your life.

> 📌 Demetri's Story
>
> I came to the field of anthropology completely by accident. I entered college at Stony Brook University in New York as a biology major and was considering a pre-med pathway. I always had a passion for science but admittedly the push towards medicine was largely because— well, because according to my parents who came from Greece in the late 70s, every "good Greek boy" had to become a doctor or lawyer (even though they both grew up in tiny agricultural villages). When I first met my R.A. during freshman orientation, I mentioned needing an elective course. He suggested taking cultural anthropology as the course would be fun and the professor was "a character". Admittedly at the time, I had very little idea of what anthropology was, but the course description sounded interesting so I registered for it. This ended up being the very first college course I attended on the first day of my life as a college student. The professor, William Arens, was indeed eccentric. Although his somewhat controversial research on cannibalism (or lack thereof) in human societies has been met with almost universal criticism, he was one of the most vibrant and engaging professors I had as an undergraduate. The topics he discussed and the people he introduced us to were eye-opening. The way he casually discussed taboo topics and his use of narrative in the classroom really brought culture to life. Before I knew it, I was taking more anthropology courses on various topics, including: the anthropology of food, medical anthropology, physical anthropology, and many others. When I took my first Archaeology course, and subsequently my archaeological field school in Pompeii, Italy, I knew I wanted to become an archaeologist. Being able to connect with past cultures through their material remains is the closest human beings can get to a time machine. Once I

felt that connection, I was in love. Luckily for me, I was able to combine my training in biology with my interest in archaeology, through the interpretation of animal remains, leading to my doctoral research in zooarchaeology.

If you are reading this textbook for your cultural anthropology course, you are likely wondering, much like we did, what anthropology is all about. Perhaps the course description appealed to you in some way, but you had a hard time articulating what exactly drove you to enroll. With this book, you are in the right place!

Self Reflection: What are you excited to learn about this semester in this class?

1.2 What is Anthropology?

Anthropology is the study of human beings. Anthropologists investigate everything and anything that makes us human– from culture, to language, to material remains and human evolution. Anthropologists examine every dimension of humanity by asking compelling questions like: How did we come to be human and who are our ancestors? Why do people look and act so differently throughout the world? What do we all have in common? How have we changed culturally and biologically over time? What factors influence diverse human beliefs and behaviors throughout the world?

You may notice that these questions are very broad. Indeed, anthropology is an expansive field of study. It comprises four subfields that in the United States include cultural anthropology, archaeology, biological (or physical) anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. Together, the subfields provide a multi-faceted picture of the human condition.

It is important to note that in other parts of the world, anthropology is structured differently. For instance, in the United Kingdom and many European countries, the subfield of cultural anthropology is referred to as social (or socio-cultural) anthropology. Archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology are frequently considered to be part of different disciplines. In some countries, like Mexico, anthropology tends to focus on the cultural and indigenous heritage of groups within the country rather than on comparative research. In Canada, some university anthropology departments mirror the British social anthropology model by combining sociology and anthropology. As noted above, in the United States and most commonly in Canada, anthropology is organized as a four-field discipline. You will read more about the development of this four-field approach in the Doing Fieldwork chapter (chapter three).

Applied anthropology is another area of specialization within or between the anthropological subfields. It aims to solve specific practical problems in collaboration with governmental, non-profit, and community organizations as well as businesses and corporations.

1.3 What is Cultural Anthropology?

The focus of this textbook is cultural anthropology, the largest of the subfields in the United States as measured by the number of people who graduate with PhDs each year.[1] Cultural anthropologists study the similarities and differences among living societies and cultural groups. Through immersive fieldwork, living and working with the people one is studying, cultural anthropologists suspend their own sense of what is "normal" in order to understand other people's perspectives. Beyond describing another way of life, anthropologists ask broader questions about humankind: Are human emotions universal or culturally specific? Does globalization make us all the same, or do people maintain cultural differences? For cultural anthropologists, no aspect of human life is outside their purview. They study art, religion, healing, natural disasters, and even pet cemeteries. While many anthropologists are at first intrigued by human diversity, they come to realize that people around the world share much in common.

Cultural anthropologists often study social groups that differ from their own, based on the view that fresh insights are generated by an outsider trying to understand the insider point of view. For example, beginning in the 1960s Jean Briggs (1929-2016) immersed herself in the life of Inuit people in the central Canadian arctic territory of Nunavut. She arrived knowing only a few words of their language but ready to brave sub-zero temperatures to learn about this remote, rarely studied group of people. In her most famous book, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (1970), she argued that anger and strong negative emotions are not expressed among families that live together in small igloos amid harsh environmental conditions for much of the year. In contrast to scholars who see anger as an innate emotion, Briggs' fieldwork and research shows that all human emotions develop through culturally specific child-rearing practices that foster some emotions and not others.

While cultural anthropologists traditionally conduct fieldwork in faraway places, they are increasingly turning their gaze inward to observe their own societies or subgroups within them. For instance, in the 1980s, American anthropologist Philippe Bourgois sought to understand why pockets of extreme poverty persist amid the wealth and overall high quality of life in the United States. To answer this question, he lived with Puerto Rican crack dealers in East Harlem, New York. He contextualized their experiences both historically in terms of their Puerto Rican roots and migration to the U.S., and in the present as they experienced social marginalization and institutional racism. Rather than blame the crack dealers for their poor choices or blame our society for perpetuating inequality, he argued that both individual choices and social structures can trap people in the overlapping worlds of drugs and poverty (Bourgois 2003).

1.4 Beyond Cultural Anthropology
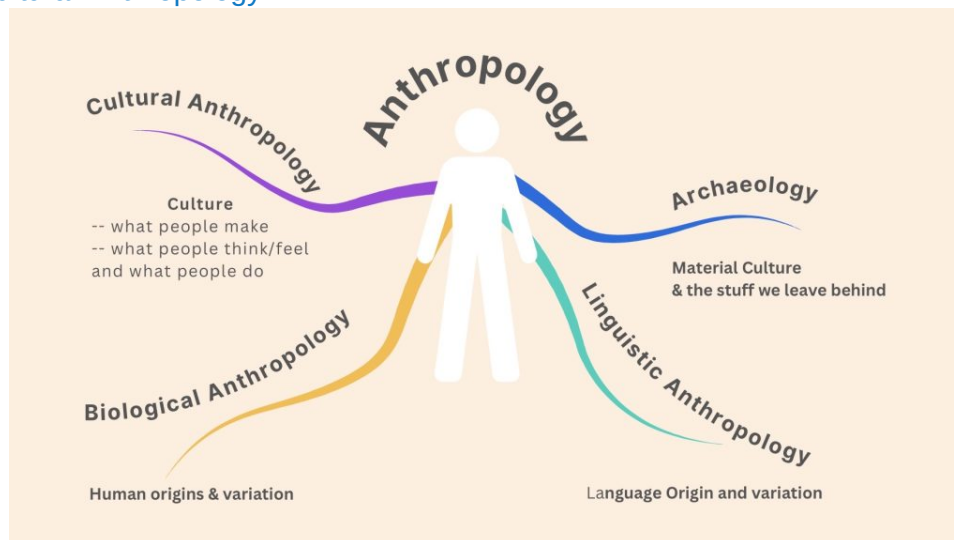
Figure 1.1: Anthropology Subfields

1.4.1 What is Biological Anthropology?

Biological anthropology is the study of human origins, evolution, and variation. Some biological anthropologists focus on our closest living relatives, monkeys and apes. They examine the biological and behavioral similarities and differences between nonhuman primates and human primates (us!). For example, Jane Goodall has devoted her life to studying wild chimpanzees (Goodall 1996). When she began her research in Tanzania in the 1960s, Goodall challenged widely held assumptions about the inherent differences between humans and apes. At the time, it was assumed that monkeys and apes lacked the social and emotional traits that made human beings such exceptional creatures. However, Goodall discovered that, like humans, chimpanzees also make tools, socialize their young, have intense emotional lives, and form strong maternal-infant bonds. Her work highlights the value of field-based research in natural settings that can help us understand the complex lives of nonhuman primates.

Other biological anthropologists focus on extinct human species, asking questions like: What did our ancestors look like? What did they eat? When did they start to speak? How did they adapt to new environments? In 2013, a team of women scientists excavated a trove of fossilized bones in the Dinaledi Chamber of the Rising Star Cave system in South Africa. The bones turned out to belong to a previously unknown hominin species that was later named *Homo naledi*. With over 1,550 specimens from at least fifteen individuals, the site is the largest collection of a single hominin species found in Africa (Berger, 2015). Researchers are still working to determine how the bones were left in the deep, hard to access cave and whether or not they were deliberately placed there. Here is a short National Geographic clip that discusses this. They also want to know what *Homo naledi* ate, if this species made and used tools, and how they are related to other Homo species. Biological anthropologists who study ancient human relatives are called paleoanthropologists. The field of paleoanthropology changes rapidly as fossil discoveries and refined dating techniques offer new clues into our past.

Other biological anthropologists focus on humans in the present including their genetic and phenotypic (observable) variation. For instance, Nina Jablonski has conducted research on human skin tone, asking why dark skin pigmentation is prevalent in places, like Central Africa, where there is high ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight, while light skin pigmentation is prevalent in places, like Nordic countries, where there is low UV radiation. She explains this pattern in terms of the interplay between skin pigmentation, UV radiation, folic acid, and vitamin D. In brief, too much UV radiation can break down folic acid, which is

essential to DNA and cell production. Dark skin helps block UV, thereby protecting the body's folic acid reserves in high-UV contexts. Light skin evolved as humans migrated out of Africa to low-UV con texts, where dark skin would block too much UV radiation, compromising the body's ability to absorb vitamin D from the sun. Vitamin D is essential to calcium absorption and a healthy skeleton. Jablonski's research shows that the spectrum of skin pigmentation we see today evolved to balance UV exposure with the body's need for vitamin D and folic acid (Jablonski 2012). For more information regarding Jablonski's work please review The Evolution of Skin Color website.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What types of questions are biological anthropologists interested in and why?

1.4.2 What does it mean to be an archaeologist? What is material culture?

Take a look around you, chances are you are surrounded by "stuff". From the clothing you are wearing to the screen you are staring at and the vessel from which you are drinking, much of our culture plays out in the material world in some form. After all, it is this stuff or what anthropologists call material culture which separates us from other living things on earth. Now picture if all that was left of your existence is the stuff surrounding you. This is the situation that archaeologists often face when trying to examine culture. Archaeologists focus on the material past: the tools, food, pottery, art, shelters, seeds, and other objects left behind by people. Prehistoric archaeologists recover and analyze these materials to reconstruct the lifeways of past societies that lacked writing. They ask specific questions like: How did people in a particular area live? What did they eat? Why did their societies change over time? They also ask general questions about humankind: When and why did humans first develop agriculture? How did cities first develop? How did prehistoric people interact with their neighbors? The method that archaeologists use to answer their questions is excavation—the careful digging and removal of dirt and stones to uncover material remains while recording their context. Archaeological research spans millions of years from human origins to the present. For example, British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon (1906-1978), was one of few female archaeologists in the 1940s. She famously studied the city structures and cemeteries of Jericho, an ancient city dating back to the Early Bronze Age (3,200 years before the present) located in what is today the West Bank. Based on her findings, she argued that Jericho is the oldest city in the world and has been continuously occupied by different groups for over 10,000 years (Kenyon 1979).

Historical archaeologists study recent societies using material remains to complement the written record. The Garbage Project, which began in the 1970s, is an example of a historic archaeological project based in Tucson, Arizona. It involves excavating a contemporary landfill as if it were a conventional archaeology site. Archaeologists have found discrepancies between what people say they throw out and what is actually in their trash. In fact, many landfills hold large amounts of paper products and construction debris (Rathje and Murphy 1992). This finding has practical implications for creating environmentally sustainable waste disposal practices.

In 1991, while working on an office building in New York City, construction workers came across human skeletons buried just 30 feet below the city streets. Archaeologists were called in to investigate. Upon further excavation, they discovered a six-acre burial ground, containing 15,000 skeletons of free and enslaved Africans who helped build the city during the colonial era. The "African Burial Ground," which dates from 1630 to 1795, contains a trove of information about how free and enslaved Africans lived and died. The site is now a national monument where people can learn about the history of slavery in the U.S.[2]

> **Quick Reading Check:** What type of research archaeologists do and what aspects of humanity do they study?

1.4.3 What is Linguistic Anthropology?

Language is a defining cultural trait of human beings. While other animals have communication systems, only humans have complex, symbolic languages—over 6,000 of them! Human language makes it possible to teach and learn, to plan and think abstractly, to coordinate our efforts, and even to contemplate our own demise. Linguistic anthropologists ask questions like: How did language first emerge? How has it evolved and diversified over time? How has language helped us succeed as a species? How can language convey one's social identity? How does language influence our views of the world?

If you speak two or more languages, you may have experienced how language affects you. For example, in English, we say: "I love you." But Spanish speakers use different terms—te amo, te adoro, te quiero, and so on—to convey different kinds of love: romantic love, platonic love, maternal love, etc. The Spanish language arguably expresses more nuanced views of love than the English language.

One intriguing line of linguistic anthropological research focuses on the relationship between language, thought, and culture. It may seem intuitive that our thoughts come first; after all, we like to say: "Think before you speak." However, according to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (also known as linguistic relativity), the language you speak allows you to think about some things and not others. When Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) studied the Hopi language, he found not just word-level differences, but grammatical differences between Hopi and English. He wrote that Hopi has no grammatical tenses to convey the passage of time. Rather, the Hopi language indicates whether or not something has "manifested." Whorf argued that English grammatical tenses (past, present, future) inspire a linear sense of time, while Hopi language, with its lack of tenses, inspires a cyclical experience of time (Whorf 1956).

Some critics, like German-American linguist Ekkehart Malotki, refute Whorf's theory, arguing that Hopi do have linguistic terms for time and that a linear sense of time is natural and perhaps universal. At the same time, Malotki recognized that English and Hopi tenses differ, albeit in ways less pronounced than Whorf proposed (Malotki 1983). Other linguistic anthropologists track the emergence and diversification of languages, while others focus on language use in today's social contexts. Still others explore how language is crucial to socialization: children learn their culture and social identity through language and nonverbal forms of communication (Ochs and Schieffelin 2012).

> **Quick Reading Check:** What is linguistic anthropology and what elements of communication are they interested in?

1.4.4 Applied Anthropology

Applied anthropology involves the application of anthropological theories, methods, and findings to solve practical problems. Applied anthropologists are employed outside of academic settings, in both the public and private sectors, including business or consulting firms, advertising companies, city government, law enforcement, the medical field, non governmental organizations, and even the military.

Applied anthropologists span all four of the subfields. An applied archaeologist might work in cultural resource management to assess a potentially significant archaeological site unearthed during a construction project. An applied cultural anthropologist could work at a technology company that seeks to understand the human-technology interface in order to design better tools.

Medical anthropology is an example of both an applied and theoretical area of study that draws on all four subdisciplines to understand the interrelationship of health, illness, and culture. Rather than assume that disease resides only within the individual body, medical anthropologists explore the environmental, social, and cultural conditions that impact the experience of illness. For example, in some cultures, people believe illness is caused by an imbalance within the community. Therefore, a communal response, such as a healing ceremony, is necessary to restore both the health of the person and the group. This approach differs from the one used in mainstream U.S. healthcare, whereby people go to a doctor to find the biological cause of an illness and then take medicine to restore the individual body. Trained as both a physician and medical anthropologist, the late Paul Farmer demonstrates the applied potential of anthropology. During his college years in North Carolina, Farmer's interest in the Haitian migrants working on nearby farms inspired him to visit Haiti. There, he was struck by the poor living conditions and lack of health care facilities. Later, as a physician, he would return to Haiti to treat individuals suffering from diseases like tuberculosis and cholera that were rarely seen in the United States. As an anthropologist, he would contextualize the experiences of his Haitian patients in relation to the historical, social, and political forces that impact Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (Farmer 2006). He died in February 2022, but his academic writing and his activism in the world live on through the people he has inspired and the work of Partners in Health, a nonprofit organization that he co-founded. He helped open health clinics in many resource-poor countries and trained local staff to administer care. In this way, he applied his medical and anthropological training to improve people's lives.

> **Quick Reading Check:** How does applied anthropology differ from academic anthropology?

1.5 How Did Anthropology Come to Be?

Imagine you are living several thousand years ago. Maybe you are a parent of three children. Maybe you are a young individual eager to start your own family. Maybe you are a prominent religious leader, or maybe you are a respected healer. Your family has, for as long as people can remember, lived the way you do. You learned to act, eat, hunt, talk, pray, and live the way you do from your parents, your extended family, and your small community. Suddenly, you encounter a new group of people who have a

different way of living, speak strangely, and eat in an unusual manner. They have a different way of addressing the supernatural and caring for their sick. What do you make of these differences? These are the questions that have faced people for tens of thousands of years as human groups have moved around and settled in different parts of the world.

One of the first examples of someone who attempted to systematically study and document cultural differences is Zhang Qian (164 BC – 113 BC). Born in the second century BCE in Hanzhong, China, Zhang was a military officer who was assigned by Emperor Wu of Han to travel through Central Asia, going as far as what is today Uzbekistan. He spent more than twenty-five years traveling and recording his observations of the peoples and cultures of Central Asia (Wood 2004). The Emperor used this information to establish new relationships and cultural connections with China's neighbors to the West. Zhang discovered many of the trade routes used in the Silk Road and introduced several new cultural ideas, including Buddhism, into Chinese culture. Another early traveler of note was Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Battuta, known most widely as Ibn Battuta, (1304-1369). Ibn Battuta was an Amazigh (Berber) Moroccan Muslim scholar. During the fourteenth century, he traveled for a period of nearly thirty years, covering almost the whole of the Islamic world, including parts of Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, India, and China. Upon his return to the Kingdom of Morocco, he documented the customs and traditions of the people he encountered in a book called Tuhfat al-anzar fi gharaaib al-amsar wa aja'ib al-asfar (A Gift to those who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling), a book commonly known as Al Rihla, which means "travels" in Arabic (Mackintosh-Smith 2003: ix). This book became part of a genre of Arabic literature that included descriptions of the people and places visited along with commentary about the cultures encountered. Some scholars consider Al Rihla to be among the first examples of early pre-anthropological writing.[3]

The stories of Zhang Qian and Abu Abdullah Muhammad are particularly important for us to learn about because of the common erasure of non-white, non-European, and non-Greco-Roman peoples in the telling of history and in the development of many of our academic disciplines. Even I (Vanessa Martinez) only recently learned about these two scholars and their importance to anthropological history and I have been a professor of anthropology for over sixteen years.

Later, from the 1400s through the1700s, during the so-called "Age of Discovery," Europeans began to explore the world and then colonize it. Europeans exploited natural resources and human labor in other parts of the world, exerting social and political control over the people they encountered. New trade routes along with the slave trade fueled a growing European empire while forever disrupting previously independent cultures in the Old World. European ethnocentrism—the belief that one's own culture is better than others—was used to justify the subjugation of non-European societies on the alleged basis that these groups were socially and even biologically inferior. Indeed, the emerging anthropological practices of this time were ethnocentric and often supported colonial projects. As European empires expanded, new ways of understanding the world and its people arose. Beginning in the eighteenth century in Europe, the Age of the Enlightenment was a social and philosophical movement that privileged science, rationality, and experience while critiquing religious authority. This crucial period of intellectual development planted the seeds for many academic disciplines, including anthropology. It gave ordinary people the capacity to learn the "truth" through observation and experience: anyone could ask questions and use rational thought to discover things about the natural and social world.

For example, geologist Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875) observed layers of rock and argued that the earth's surface must have changed gradually over long periods of time. He disputed the Young Earth theory, which was popular at the time and used Biblical information to date the earth as only 6,000 years old, Charles Darwin (1809-1882), a naturalist and biologist, observed similarities between fossils and living specimens, leading him to argue that all life is descended from a common ancestor. Philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) contemplated the origins of society itself, proposing that people historically had lived in relative isolation until they agreed to form a society in which the government would protect their personal property.

These radical ideas about the earth, evolution, and society influenced early social scientists into the nineteenth century. Philosopher and anthropologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), inspired by scientific principles, used biological evolution as a model to understand social evolution. Just as biological life evolved from simple to complex multicellular organisms, he postulated that societies "evolve" to become larger and more complex. Like Herbert Spencer, anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) was a proponent of social evolution and argued that all societies "progress" through the same stages of development: savagery—barbarism—civilization. Societies were classified into these stages based on their family structure, technologies, and methods for acquiring food. So-called "savage" societies, ones that used stone tools and foraged for food, were said to be stalled in their social, mental, and even moral development.

Ethnocentric ideas like Spencer's and Morgan's were challenged by anthropologists in the early twentieth century in both Europe and the United States. During World War I, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), a Polish anthropologist, became stranded on the Trobriand Islands located north of Australia and Papua, New Guinea. While there, he started to develop participant-observation fieldwork: the method of immersive, long-term research that cultural anthropologists use today. By living with and observing the

Trobriand Islanders, he realized that their culture was not "savage" but was well-suited to fulfill the needs of the people. He developed a theory to explain human cultural diversity: each culture functions to satisfy the specific biological and psychological needs of its people. While this theory has been critiqued as biological reductionism, it was an early attempt to view other cultures in more open-minded ways. Around the same time in the United States, Franz Boas (1858-1942), widely regarded as the founder of American anthropology, developed cultural relativism, the view that while cultures differ, they are not better or worse than one another. In his critique of ethnocentric views, Boas insisted that physical and behavioral differences among racial and ethnic groups in the United States were shaped by environmental and social conditions, not biology. In fact, he argued that culture and biology are distinct realms of experience: human behaviors are socially learned, contextual, and flexible but not innate. Further, Boas worked to transform anthropology into a professional and empirical academic discipline that integrated the four subdisciplines of cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology.

1.6 Picture of an Anthropologist: Anthony Kwame Harrison

I (Kwame) like to tell a story about how, on the last day of my first year at the University of Massachusetts, while sitting alone in my dorm room waiting to be picked up, I decided to figure out what my major would be. So, I opened the course catalog—back then it was a physical book—and started going through it alphabetically.

Figure 1.2: Anthony Kwame Harrison, PhD Cultural Anthropologist, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

On days when I am feeling particularly playful, I say that after getting through the A's, I knew anthropology was for me. In truth, I also considered Zoology. I was initially drawn to anthropology because of its traditional focus on exoticness and difference. I was born in Ghana, West Africa, where my American father had spent several years working with local artisans at the National Cultural Centre in Kumasi. My family moved to the United States when I was still a baby and I had witnessed my Asante mother struggle with adapting to certain aspects of life in America.

Studying anthropology, then, gave me a reason to learn more about the unusual artwork that filled my childhood home and to connect with a faraway side of my family that I hardly knew anything about.

Looking through that course catalog, I didn't really know what anthropology was but resolved to test the waters by taking several classes the following year. As I flourished in these courses—two introductory level classes on cultural anthropology and archeology, a class called "Culture through Film," and another on "Egalitarian Societies"—I envisioned a possible future as an anthropologist working in rural West Africa on topics like symbolic art and folklore. I never imagined I would earn a Ph.D. researching the mostly middle-class, largely multi-racial, independent hip-hop scene in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Through my anthropological training, I have made a career exploring how race influences our perceptions of popular music. I have written several pieces on racial identity and hip hop—most notably my 2009 book, *Hip Hop Underground: The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification*. I have also explored how race impacts people's senses of belonging in various social spaces—for instance, African American participation in downhill skiing or the experiences of underrepresented students at historically white colleges and universities. In all these efforts, my attention is primarily on understanding the complexities, nuances, and significance of race. I use these other topics—music, recreation, and higher education—as avenues through which to explore race's multiple meanings and unequal consequences.

Figure 1.3: Harrison performing as a participant-observing member of the Forest Fires Collective (the hip hop group he founded during his fieldwork). Photo courtesy of Kwame Harrison.

Where a fascination with the exotic initially brought me to anthropology, it is the discipline's ability to shed light on what many of us see as normal, common, and taken-for-granted that has kept me with it through three degrees (bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D.) and a fifteen-year career as a college professor. I am currently the Gloria D. Smith Professor of Africana Studies at Virginia Tech— a school that, oddly enough, does not have an anthropology program. Being an anthropologist at a major university that doesn't have an anthropology program, I believe, gives me a unique perspective on the discipline's key virtues.

One of the most important things that anthropology does is create a basis for questioning taken-for granted notions of progress. Does the Gillette Fusion Five Razor, with its five blades, really offer a better shave than the four-bladed Schick Quattro? I cannot say for sure, but as I've witnessed the move from twin-blade razors, to Mach 3s, to today (there is even a company offering "the world's first and only" razor with "seven precision aligned blades)" there appears to be a presumption that more, in this case, razor-blades is better. I'll admit that the razor-blade example is somewhat crude. Expanding out to the latest model automobile or smartphone, people seem to have a seldom questioned belief in the notion that newer technologies ultimately improve our lives. Anthropology places such ideas within the broader context of human lifeways, or what anthropologists call culture. What are the most crucial elements of human biological and social existence? What additional developments have brought communities the greatest levels of collective satisfaction, effective organization, and sustainability?

Anthropology has taught me to view the contemporary American lifestyle that I grew up think ing was normal through the wider frame of humanity's long history. How does our perspective change upon learning that for the vast majority of human history— some say as much as ninety nine percent of it—people lived a foraging lifestyle (commonly referred to as "hunting and gathering")? Although I am not calling for a mass return to foraging, when we consider the significant worldwide issues that humans face today—such things as global warming, the threat of nuclear war, accelerating ethnic conflicts, and a world population that has grown from one billion to nearly eight billion over the past two hundred years—we are left with difficult questions about whether 10,000 years of agriculture and a couple hundred years of industrialization have been in humanity's best long-term interests. All of this is to say that anthropology offers one of the most biting critiques of modernity, which challenges us to slow down and think about whether the new technologies we are constantly being presented with make sense. Similarly, the anthropological concept of ethnocentrism is incredibly useful when paired with different examples of how people define family, recognize leadership, decide what is and is not edible, and the like.Using my own anthropological biography as an illustration, I want to stress that the discipline does not showcase diverse human lifeways to further exoticize those who live differently from us. In contrast, anthropology showcases cultural variation to illustrate the possibilities and potential for human life, and to demonstrate that the way of doing things we know best is neither normal nor necessarily right. It is just one way among a multitude of others. "Everybody does it but we all do it different"; this is culture.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What did you learn about the discipline of anthropology by reading Kwame's story?

1.7 What Makes Anthropology Unique From Other Social Sciences?

Humanity, while central to anthropology, is not only studied in anthropology. Other social sciences, sociology and psychology most notably often discuss similar concepts like the role of culture and ask similar questions about the past, societies, and human nature. Students often ask what is unique about anthropology and how it differs from the other social sciences. Anthropologists across the subfields use unique perspectives to conduct their research that make anthropology distinct from related disciplines — like history, sociology, and psychology.

These key anthropological perspectives are holism, relativism, comparison, and fieldwork. Important to all of these perspectives are how different anthropologists might use scientific strategies and humanistic frameworks to better understand the world, and at

times, conflict with one another.

1.7.1 Holism

Anthropologists are interested in the whole of humanity and how various aspects of life interact. One cannot fully appreciate what it means to be human by studying a single aspect of our complex histories, languages, bodies, or societies. By using a holistic approach, anthropologists ask how different aspects of human life influence one another. For example, a cultural anthropologist studying the meaning of marriage in a small village in India might consider local gender norms, existing family networks, laws regarding marriage, religious rules, and economic factors. A biological anthropologist studying monkeys in South America might consider the species' physical adaptations, foraging patterns, ecological conditions, and interactions with humans in order to answer questions about their social behaviors. By understanding how nonhuman primates behave, we discover more about ourselves (after all, humans are primates!). By using a holistic approach, anthropologists reveal the complexity of biological, social, or cultural phenomena.

Anthropology itself is a holistic discipline, composed in the United States (and in some other nations) of four major subfields: cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeology. While anthropologists often specialize in one subfield, their specific research contributes to a broader understanding of the human condition, which is made up of culture, language, biological and social adaptations, as well as human origins and evolution.

1.7.2 Cultural Relativism (versus 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 do they view other ways of doing things as inferior. Instead, anthropologists seek to understand people's beliefs within the system they have for explaining things.

The opposite of cultural relativism is ethnocentrism, the tendency to view one's own culture as the most important and correct and as a measuring stick by which to evaluate all other cultures that are largely seen as inferior and morally suspect. As it turns out, many people 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." But the answer should be expanded to – "that is the way it is done in our culture at this time" – acknowledging both its cultural context and its time-bound nature. People typically believe that their ways of thinking and acting are "normal"; however, at a more extreme level, some believe their ways are better than those of others.

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, cultural relativism is especially important. We must set aside our innate ethnocentric views in order to allow cultural relativism to guide our inquiries and interactions so that we can learn from others.

1.7.3 The Comparative Approach

Anthropologists of all the subfields use comparison to learn what humans have in common, how we differ, and how we change. Anthropologists ask questions like: How do chimpanzees differ from humans? How do different languages adapt to new technologies? How do countries respond differently to immigration? In cultural anthropology, we compare ideas, morals, practices, and systems within or between cultures. We might compare the roles of men and women in different societies or contrast how different religious groups conflict within a given society. Like other disciplines that use comparative approaches, such as sociology or psychology, anthropologists make comparisons between people in a given society. Unlike these other disciplines, anthropologists also compare across societie and between humans and other primates. In essence, anthropological comparisons span societies, cultures, time, place, and species. It is through comparison that we learn more about the range of possible responses to varying contexts and problems.

1.7.4 Fieldwork

Anthropologists conduct their research in the field with the species, civilization, or groups of people they are studying. In cultural anthropology, our fieldwork is referred to as ethnography, which is both the process and result of cultural anthropological research. The Greek term "ethno" refers to people, and "graphy" refers to writing. The ethnographic process involves the research method of participant observation fieldwork: you participate in people's lives, while observing them and taking field notes that, along with

interviews and surveys, constitute the research data. This research is inductive: based on day-to-day observations, the anthropologist asks increasingly specific questions about the group or about the human condition more broadly. Oftentimes, informants actively participate in the research process, helping the anthropologist ask better questions and understand different perspectives.

Figure 1.4: Author Katie Nelson conducting ethnographic fieldwork among undocumented Mexican immigrant college students. Photo by Luke Berhow.

The word ethnography also refers to the end result of our fieldwork. Cultural anthropologists do not write "novels," rather they write ethnographies, descriptive accounts of culture that weave detailed observations with theory. After all, anthropologists are social scientists. While we study a particular culture to learn more about it and to answer specific research questions, we are also exploring fundamental questions about human society, behavior, or experiences.

In the course of conducting fieldwork with human subjects, anthropologists invariably encounter ethical dilemmas: Who might be harmed by conducting or publishing this research? What are the costs and benefits of identifying individuals involved in this study? How should one resolve competing interests of the funding agency and the community? To address these questions, anthropologists are obligated to follow a professional code of ethics that guide us through ethical considerations in our research.[4]

> **Quick Reading Check:** What are the four anthropological perspectives that are used to distinguish anthropology from other social sciences?

1.7.5 Scientific vs Humanistic Approaches

As you may have noticed from the above discussion of the anthropological sub-disciplines, anthropologists are not unified in what they study or how they conduct research. Some sub-disciplines, like biological anthropology and archaeology, use a deductive, scientific approach. Through hypothesis testing, they collect and analyze material data (e.g. bones, tools, seeds, etc.) to answer questions about human origins and evolution. Other subdisciplines, like cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology, use humanistic and/or inductive approaches to their collection and analysis of nonmaterial data, such as observations of everyday life or language in use.

At times, tension has arisen between the scientific subfields and the humanistic ones. For example, in 2010, some cultural anthropologists critiqued the American Anthropological Association's mission statement, which stated that the discipline's goal was "to advance anthropology as the science that studies humankind in all its aspects."[5] These scholars wanted to replace the word "science" with "public understanding." They argued that some anthropologists do not use the scientific method of inquiry; instead, they rely more on narratives and interpretations of meaning. After much debate, the word "science" remains in the mission statement and, throughout the United States, anthropology is predominantly categorized as a social science.

1.8 Why is Anthropology Important?

As we hope you have learned thus far, anthropology is an exciting and multifaceted field of study. Because of its breadth, students who study anthropology go on to work in a wide variety of careers in medicine, museums, field archaeology, historical preservation, education, international business, documentary filmmaking, management, foreign service, law, and many more. Beyond preparing students for a particular career, anthropology helps people develop essential skills that are transferable to many career choices, life paths, and interpersonal relationships. Studying anthropology fosters broad knowledge of other cultures, skills in observation and analysis, critical thinking, clear communication, and applied problem-solving. Anthropology encourages us to extend our perspectives beyond familiar social contexts to view things from the perspectives of others. As one former cultural anthropology student observed, "I believe an anthropology course has one basic goal: to eliminate ethnocentrism. A lot of issues we have today (racism, xenophobia, etc.) stem from the toxic idea that people are 'other'. We must put that idea aside and learn to value different cultures."[6] This anthropological perspective is an essential skill for nearly any career in today's globalized world.

❓ Discussion Questions

1. This chapter emphasizes how broad the discipline of anthropology is and how many different kinds of research questions anthropologists in the four subdisciplines pursue. What do you think are the strengths or unique opportunities of being such a broad discipline? What are some challenges or difficulties that could develop in a discipline that studies so many different things?

2. Cultural anthropologists focus on the way beliefs, practices, and symbols bind groups of people together and shape their worldview and lifeways. Thinking about your own culture, what is an example of a belief, practice, or symbol that would be interesting to study anthropologically? What do you think could be learned by studying the example you have selected?

3. Discuss the definition of culture proposed in this chapter. How is it similar or different from other ideas about culture that you have encountered in other classes or in everyday life?

4. In this chapter, Anthony Kwame Harrison describes how he first became interested in anthropology and how he has used his training in anthropology to conduct research in different parts of the world. How do you think the participant-observation fieldwork he described leads to information that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to learn?

5. In this chapter, [blank] and [blank], former anthropology students, discuss the lifelong lessons learned in their anthropology courses and the "pay it forward" effect it has had in their communities. Whose story resonated with you and why? Are you open to letting a course change your life?

📌 Glossary

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.

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 ruler by which to measure all other cultures.

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

Hominin: Humans (Homo sapiens) and their close relatives and immediate ancestors.

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.

Paleoanthropologist: biological anthropologists who study ancient human relatives. Participant-observation: a type of observation in which the anthropologist observes while participating in the same activities in which her informants are engaged.

Bibliography

Berger, Lee R., Hawks, John, de Ruiter, Darryl J., Churchill, Steven E., Schmid, Peter, Delezene, Lucas K., Kivell, Tracy L., Garvin, Heather M., and Scott A. Williams. 2015. "Homo naledi, A New Species of the Genus Homo from the Dinaledi Chamber, South Africa." eLife 4:e09560. doi: 10.7554/eLife.09560. Bourgois, Philippe. In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Briggs, Jean. Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family. Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1970.

Farmer, Paul. AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Goodall, Jane. My Life with the Chimpanzees. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996. Harrison, Anthony Kwame. Hip Hop Underground: The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification. Philadel phia: Temple University Press, 2009.

Jablonski, Nina. Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color. Berkeley: University of Cal ifornia Press, 2012.

Kenyon, Kathleen. Excavations at Jericho – Volume II Tombs Excavated in 1955-8, London: British School of Archaeology, 1965.

Kwiatkowski, Lynn. Struggling with Development: The Politics of Hunger and Gender in the Philippines. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.

Mackintosh-Smith, Tim, ed. The Travels of Ibn Battutah. London: Picador, 2003.

Malotki, Ekkehart. Hopi Time: A Linguistic Analysis of the Temporal Concepts in the Hopi Language. Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs. 20. New York: Mouton Publishers, 1983. Mackintosh-Smith, Tim, ed. The Travels of Ibn Battutah. London: Picador, 2003.

Ochs, Elinor, and Bambi B. Schieffelin. 2012. "The Theory of Language Socialization." In The Handbook of Language Socialization edited by Alessandro Duranti, Elinor Ochs, and Bambi Schieffelin, 1–21. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Rathje, William and Cullen Murphy. Rubbish: The Archaeology of Garbage. New York: HarperCollins Pub lishers, 1992.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Edited by J.B. Carroll. Cambridge: M.I.T Press, 1956.

Wood, Frances. The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

About the Original Authors

Katie Nelson is an instructor of anthropology at Inver Hills Community College. Her research focuses on migration, identity, belonging, and citizenship(s) in human history and in the contemporary United States, Mexico, and Morocco. She received her B.A. in anthropology and Latin American studies from Macalester College, her M.A. in anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, an M.A. in education and instructional technology from the University of Saint Thomas, and her Ph.D. from CIESAS Occidente (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropologia Social –Center for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology), based in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Katie views teaching and learning as central to her practice as an anthropologist and as mutually reinforcing elements of her professional life. She is the former chair of the Teaching Anthropology Interest Group (2016–2018) of the General Anthropology Division of the American Anthropological Association and currently serves as the online content editor for the Teaching and Learning Anthropology Journal. She has contributed to several open access textbook projects, both as an author and an editor, and views the affordability of quality learning materials as an important piece of the equity and inclusion puzzle in higher education.10

Lara Braff is an instructor of anthropology at Grossmont College, where she teaches cultural and biological anthropology courses. She received her B.A. in anthropology and Spanish from the University of California at Berkeley and both her M.A. and Ph.D. in comparative human development from the University of Chicago, where she specialized in cultural and medical anthropology. Her research has focused on social identities and disparities in the context of reproduction and medicine in both Mexico and the U.S.

Lara's concern about social inequality has guided her research projects, teaching practices, and involvement in open access projects like this textbook. In an effort to make college more accessible to all students, she serves as co-coordinator of Grossmont College's Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiatives.

Media Attributions

1. See: https://www.americananthro.org/Learn...temNumber=1499). ↵
2. https://www.nps.gov/afbg/index.htm ↵
3. Lahcen Mourad (Arabic scholar) in discussion with Katie Nelson, December, 2018. ↵
4. See the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics: http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/ ↵
5. See: American Anthropological Association Statement of Purpose: https://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=1650 ↵
6. This quote is taken from a survey of students in an Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course at the Community College of Baltimore County, 2018. ↵

Chapter 2: What is Culture?

Remix Authors:

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Authors

Priscilla Medeiros, Women's College Hospital, priscilla.medeiros@wchospital.ca

Emily Cowall, McMaster University, cowallee@mcmaster.ca

> **◑ Learning Objectives**
> - Describe how anthropologists define culture.
> - Compare and contrast the ideas of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
> - Describe how the anthropological concept of culture came to be.
> - Identify the differences between armchair anthropology and participant-observer fieldwork.
> - Assess some of the ethical issues that can arise from anthropological research.

2.1 Introduction

Cultural anthropologists study all aspects of culture, but what exactly is "culture"? When we first ask students in our introductory cultural anthropology courses what culture means to them, our students typically say that culture is food, clothing, religion, language, traditions, art, music, and so forth. Indeed, culture includes many of these observable characteristics, but culture is also something deeper. Culture is a powerful defining characteristic of human groups that shapes our perceptions, behaviors, and relationships.

Culture is a set of beliefs, practices, materials, and symbols that are learned and shared. In this definition, *belief* refers not just to what we "believe" to be right or wrong, true or false. Belief also refers to all the mental aspects of culture including values, norms, philosophies, worldview, knowledge, and so forth. *Practices* refers to behaviors and actions that may be motivated by belief or performed without reflection as part of everyday routines.

This definition of culture – both shared and learned beliefs, practices, and symbols – allows us to understand that people everywhere are thinkers and actors shaped by their social contexts. As we will see throughout this book, these contexts are incredibly diverse, comprising the human cultural diversity that drew many of us to become anthropologists in the first place. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds groups of people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways. In defining culture, some anthropologists emphasize material life and objects (e.g. tools, clothing, and technologies); others emphasize culture as a system of intangible beliefs; and still others focus on practices or customs of daily life.

2.2 Characteristics of Culture

*So how **can** we Define culture?:*

- ***Culture is Performed or Enacted as Part of our daily lives.*** In other words culture is something that we **do**. It sustains and comprises us, yet we largely take it for granted. We are not always consciously aware of our own culture which is one reason that culture is sometimes difficult to define.
- ***Culture is Shared:*** To say that a group of people shares a culture does not mean all individuals think or act in identical ways. One's beliefs and practices can vary within a culture depending on age, gender, social status, and other characteristics. However, members of a culture share many things in common.
- ***Culture is Learned.*** While we are not born with a particular culture, we are born with the capacity to learn any culture. Through the process of enculturation, we learn to become members of our group both directly, through instruction from our parents and peers, and indirectly, by observing and imitating those around us.
- ***Culture Changes:*** Culture is dynamic. It constantly changes in response to both internal and external factors. Some parts of culture change more quickly than others. For instance, in dominant American culture, technology changes rapidly while deep seated values such as individualism, freedom, and self-determination change very little over time. Yet, inevitably, when one part

of culture changes, so do other parts because nearly all parts of a culture are integrated and interrelated. As powerful as culture is, humans are not necessarily bound by culture; they have the capacity to conform to it or not and even transform it.

- *Culture is Symbolic:* Much like art and language, culture is also symbolic. A symbol is something that stands for something else, often without a natural connection. Individuals create, interpret, and share the meanings of symbols within their group or the larger society. For example, in U.S. society everyone recognizes a red octagonal sign as signifying "stop." In other cases, groups within American society interpret the same symbol in different ways. Take the Confederate flag: Some people see it as a symbol of pride in a southern heritage. Many others see it as a symbol of the long legacy of slavery, segregation, and racial oppression. Thus, displaying the Confederate flag could have positive or, more often, negative connotations. Cultural symbols powerfully convey either shared or conflicting meanings across space and time.
- *Culture and biology are connected:* While culture is central to making us human, we are still biological beings with natural needs and urges that we share with other animals: hunger, thirst, sex, elimination, etc. Human culture uniquely channels these urges in particular ways and cultural practices can then impact our biology, growth, and development. Humans are one of the most dynamic species on Earth. Our ability to change both culturally and biologically has enabled us to persist for millions of years and to thrive in diverse environments.

2.3 Tell Me a Story! 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, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Portugal) asserted control over land (Asia, Africa, the Americas) and the people of color on those lands. 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, thereby ushering in white supremacy as a long lasting idea that has changed the world.

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. However, 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 debate 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—questions that could ultimately only be answered by going into the field.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What is armchair anthropology and why did the discipline move away from this type of analysis?

2.4 We do it too! 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. Going 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What is participant observation? How does this research methodology teach us about culture? How is it different from "going native"?

2.5 The Development of Theories of Culture

2.5.1 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 the 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.

Table 2.1: Contrasting approaches to the study of groups of people.

	Culture	**Society**
Definition	what people make, think, feel, and do	people linked through social institutions; bigger, larger scale
Focus	People	Institutions

	Culture	Society
Way to Study	Enculturation	Socialization
Primary Research Method	Fieldwork	Surveys

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 they 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.

2.5.2 Anthropology in the United States: Boas, Benedict, Hurston, Mead and Kroeber

During the development of anthropology in North America (Canada, the 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 from 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. This is the goal of anthropologists when doing their fieldwork: to not be ethnocentric and instead strive to understand the cultural rules, values, and actions from within their own cultural frame.

The participant-observation method of fieldwork 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 when creating research questions and going out into the field.

Franz Boas, a German immigrant and an American anthropologist, is acknowledged for redirecting American anthropologists away from cultural evolutionism and toward cultural relativism. Boas first got his doctorate in 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 ethno-graphic fieldwork.[6]

Boas is often considered the originator of American anthropology because he trained the first generation of American anthropologists including Zora Neale Hurston, 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.

Zora Neale Hurston, a black woman anthropologist and student of Boas', is known for her notable contribution to our understanding of African American and Caribbean folklore. Most notably known for her book *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, she traveled extensively across the Caribbean and the American South immersing herself in their cultural practices and folklore to conduct her anthropological research and produce over 50 bodies of literature. For many decades, her research and writing was ignored for cultural and political reasons – the devaluing of a black woman, writer, scholar, and anthropologist. It was not until the late 20th century that her work began to be acknowledged for its cultural significance. Anthropology is not the first discipline to erase the significance of people of color from its history. In fact, all disciplines have this as part of their story. All you have to do is look.

Figure 2.1: Zora Neale Hurston, Anthropologist (public domain https://creativecommons.org/publicdo...rk/1.0/deed.no

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 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 Taʻū 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 research 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. We will discuss more about language extinction and linguistic diversity in Chapter 4 on Languages.

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, customs, 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What was the impact of Franz Boas on the field of anthropology, both in research and on students?

2.5.3 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 1945 in Nuremberg, Germany and 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.

Many universities adopted principles from the Nuremberg Code to write 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 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 somewhat 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.

2.5.4 Napoleon Chagnon & The Yanomami

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, the debate over this episode continues.[8][9] 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** Name 2 – 3 ethical concerns when "doing ethnography"?

2.6 Our Final Reflection on Culture

Culture by its very nature is complex and ever-changing, making a solid definition difficult. There are likely as many definitions of culture as there are anthropologists defining it. In fact, when the term culture is used outside of anthropology, the abundance of definitions of this term can serve to even further muddy the waters of consensus. And yet, the common elements of culture remain clear – culture is performed, shared, learned, symbolic, and ever changing.

📌 Glossary

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

Cultural evolutionism: a discredited theory popular in nineteenth century anthropology suggesting that societies evolve through stages from simple to advanced.

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.

Culture: a set of beliefs, practices, and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways.

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 ruler 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 anthropologists observe while participating in the same activities in which their informants are engaged.

Structural-Functionalism: 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.

Bibliography

Benedict, Ruth. Patterns of Culture. Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1934. Boas, Franz. Race, Language, and Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940. Darwin, Charles. On the Origin of Species. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1859. Kroeber, Alfred. The Nature of Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. Argonauts of the Western Pacific. London: Routledge and Sons, 1922.

Mead, Margaret. Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization.

New York: William Morrow and Company, 1928.

Swift, Jonathan. Gulliver's Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. London: Benjamin Motte, 1726.

Tylor, Edward B. Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Lan-guage, Art, and Customs. London: Cambridge University Press. 1871.

About the Original Authors

Dr. Priscilla Medeiros is a medical anthropologist and Postdoctoral Fellow in the Women's College Research Institute at Women's College Hospital, Canada. She recently defended her thesis in January 2019 at McMaster University, Ontario. 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 measures 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 seven years ago in Nairobi County, Kenya, as part of her master's degree at the University of New Brunswick. Her current postdoctoral work focuses on geospatial analysis of data from the Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Study (CHIWOS) and expansion to the Atlantic Provinces, and is funded by the CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network. When she is not working in the field 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.

Dr. Emily Cowall is a cultural anthropologist and instructor in the department of Anthropology at McMaster University, Canada; Medical Historian; and former regulated health practitioner in Ontario. Her primary academic research interests are focused on the cultural ethno-history of the Canadian Arctic. Emily moved to the Eastern Arctic in the 1980s, where she became integrated into community life. Returning for community-based research projects from 2003-2011, her previous community relationships enabled the completion of a landmark study examining the human geography and cultural impact of tuberculosis from 1930-1972. From 2008-2015, 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.

Media Attributions

- Private: Hurston Zora Neale © Wikimedia is licensed under a Public Domain license
- Private: Priscilla Medeiros © Priscilla Medeiros adapted by https://pressbooks.pub/perspectives/...r-50-section-6 is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license
- Private: Emily Cowall © Emily Cowall is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

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 no. 4 (2004):687-698 ↵
9. Robert Borofsky, Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and.What We Can Learn From It (Berkley: 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). ↵

Chapter 3: Doing Fieldwork- Methods in Cultural Anthropology

Remix Authors

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Author:

Katie Nelson, Inver Hills Community College, knelson@inverhills.edu

> 🧠 Learning Objectives
> - Understand what makes ethnography unique compared to other methods of gathering data about human beings
> - Explain how traditional approaches to ethnographic fieldwork contrast with contemporary ones
> - Understand the role of participant observation in anthropological fieldwork
> - Discuss the ethical considerations of ethnographic fieldwork
> - Summarize how anthropologists use their data to tell meaningful stories about culture?

3.1 What Exactly Is Anthropological Fieldwork?

Fieldwork can take many forms depending on the perspective you are using and the "field(s)" you are visiting. 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 to learn about the research questions they are asking.

To get a basic understanding of what fieldwork can look like, we want you to watch Doing Anthropology, a short 8 minute film where 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. This film will provide you with an introductory understanding of some of the types of fieldwork done by cultural anthropologists and their importance for gaining an in-depth perspective on the research.

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.

> 📌 Katie Nelson's Story of Anthropological Fieldwork
>
> My (Katie's) first experience with fieldwork as a student anthropologist took place in a small indigenous community in northeastern Brazil studying the Jenipapo-Kanindé of Lagoa Encantada (Enchanted Lake). I had planned to conduct an independent research project on land tenure among members of the indige- nous 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.

Figure 3.1: Author Katie Nelson (center) with her Brazilian Host Family, 2001)

I soon learned that many among the Jeni- papo-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 indige- nous 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.

Figure 3.2: A young Jenipapo-Kanindé boy shows off his grass skirt prior to a community dance, 2001.

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.

3.1.1 How can we make 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.

📌 Margaret Mead: A historical example of Defamiliarizing the Familiar

The anthropologist Margaret Mead describes a famous example of defamiliarizing the familiar in her monograph Coming of Age in Samoa (1928). 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 tur- moil 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. Now, almost a 100 years later, there is still a need for these changes.

A pop culture video example of making the familiar strange can be seen in the Morning Routine title sequence of the mid-2000s show Dexter, an American crime drama. This show tells the story of a vigilante serial killer who kills murderers who have escaped the punishment of the criminal justice system. What is most interesting to this story for me, Vanessa, as an anthropologist is how the producers of the show created the Morning Routine title sequence.

See for Yourself:

This video highlights Dexter's morning routine as both normal and unfamiliar. Like Horace Miner's Body Ritual of the Nacirema, this video pushes the viewer to both see themselves in Dexter and feel a bit uneasy because what is a normal morning is shown with images that can be viewed in multiple ways.

Quick Reading Check: What does it mean to make the familiar strange and/or defamiliarize the familiar? Provide your own example.

3.1.2 Emic versus Etic Perspectives: How are both important to Anthropological Fieldwork?

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 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What is anthropological fieldwork and where can it be done?

3.2 Traditional Ethnographic Approaches

3.2.1 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 preconceived 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 the 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.

3.2.2 Out of the Armchair: Into the Field

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 an armchair.

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 traveled 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 armchair 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.

3.2.3 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 in 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. This is what is known as **salvage ethnography**, the process of documenting and writing stories about people who were thought to be near extinction.

Figure 3.3: Bronislaw Malinowski (center) with Trobriand Islanders circa 1918

Others who were not formally trained in the sciences or in anthropology also participated in salvage activities. Photographers, artists, and documentarians have likewise attempted to capture and preserve traditional indigenous life in paintings and photographs. 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."

Seeing these people as living fossils is rooted in western ethnocentrism. This view is born from an inherently racist desire to "civilize the savage". It assumes that non-western cultures have only two choices – to evolve (ie "westernize) or go extinct.

Today, more anthropologists are involved in unearthing the racist roots of the discipline. Anthropology as a discipline is invested in highlighting that human cultures constantly change as people respond to social, political, economic, and other external and internal influences. In contrast to a historical white supremacist approach, today's anthropologists work to show that there is no moment when a culture is more authentic, more civilized, 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** Cultures around the world are constantly changing/adapting to new influences. Provide one example of culture change that is historical and one that is relatively new.

3.2.4 A Holistic Approach to Fieldwork

In the throes of salvage ethnography, anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century actively documented anything and everything they could about the cultures they viewed as endangered. They collected artifacts, excavated ancient sites, wrote dictionaries of non-literate 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 composed 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 humans 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. Anthropologist Jason De León's highly multidisciplinary work, "The Land of Open Graves" for example, combines forensic anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, (using a four-field perspective) to examine the ordeals faced by migrants along the United States-Mexico border. His research and fieldwork examine both the grueling life experiences of undocumented migrants as well as the unclaimed and unidentified remains of those poor souls for whom this journey claimed their lives. Through a combination of forensic science, ethnography, and investigation he can finally tell their story and makes us question the structural violence of American immigration policies here and abroad.

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.[2]

Watch Pirahã Numerical Terms – In this short film, linguist Daniel Everett illustrates Pirahã numerical terms.

Although some scholars have criticized 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.

3.3 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.

> **Reflection:** Can you describe in 4-5 sentences what makes anthropological fieldwork unique among the social sciences?

3.3.1 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, Katie Nelson's doctoral research took place in the United States. Nelson studied identity formation among undocumented Mexican immigrant college students in Minnesota. Because some of her informants were living in Mexico when her fieldwork ended, she 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, ethnographic research done and recorded in multiple field sites.

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 TikTok and then later make a zoom call to a relative? Do you belong to an online group that meets for breastfeeding support, mutual aid, or to share resources? These new technological "sites" of human interaction are fascinating to many ethnographers and have expanded the definition of fieldwork. These sites can also make research and the ethical considerations of privacy more challenging.

> **Quick Reading Check:** Provide at least 2 examples of "new sites" where anthropologists do their research.

3.3.2 What is 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 predefined 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.

Most anthropologists these days are increasingly taking a more deductive approach to ethnographic research. 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. For example, Katie Nelson 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 her research "problem," and it oriented and guided her study from beginning to end. She did not document every dimension of her informants' lives; instead, she focused on the things most closely related to her research problem.

In my case, Vanessa, I spent three years (2008-2011) working with community agencies and community organizers on health equity issues in Springfield, Massachusetts before finalizing my research question about how to build more sustainable community-research partnerships. Like Nelson, I did not record every dimension of my informants' lives and instead focused on the question that came out of my time in the field. This combined approach to anthropological research is not typical because of how long it can take, but I did not feel right about going into the field with a preset question.

3.3.3 How do anthropologists use Quantitative Methods in their research?

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 predefined 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** Provide one example of a quantitative method and one example of a qualitative method.

3.3.4 How do anthropologists use Mixed Methods in their research?

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 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** What does it mean to do "mixed methods" in anthropology?

3.4 Ethnographic Techniques and Perspectives

3.4.1 What is 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 discussing each other's bodies. Children and adults commonly refer to each other using playful nick- names 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.

Trying to perform cultural relativism is difficult even for anthropologists. This is because it is our tendency to try to understand our experience by using cultural experiences we have had previously. The challenge with this is that it can lead to 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." What is missing from this idea of "that's just the way it is done" is the fact that what, how, and why things are done are culturally determined, ie. they believe what they believe because that is what one normally believes in their culture and doing things any other way seems wrong to their culture.

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. This is also helpful when thinking about our global world. If we want to interact as governments in conversation with other governments, we want to try to understand each other even if we do not agree with each other. For anthropologists in the field, cultural relativism is especially important. We must set aside our innate ethnocentrisms and let cultural relativism guide our inquiries and interactions with others so that our observations are not biased. Cultural relativism is, therefore, at the core of the discipline of anthropology.

3.4.2 Can we really be objective? 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 vaginal 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 anthropologists 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.[3]

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 disempowered 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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** Explain the tension between objectivity and activism in anthropology?

3.4.3 Is Anthropology a Science, a Social Science or One of the Humanities?

In truth, anthropology is all of these or just one depending on the type of research being done. Anthropology is all of these because studying humans requires all of these approaches to get a clear and comprehensive understanding of "us". 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 politi- cal 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.

3.4.4 What is the difference between 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. To some extent we all do observation. Do you ever people-watch at the airport? Ethnographers are trained to pay attention to everything happening around them when in the field—from routine daily activities such as cooking dinner for 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."[4]

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 in the Maya Highlands – Katie Nelson**
>
> 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. Huipiles (pronounced "we-peel-ayes") 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' as well as 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 Zinacan- tán 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 ten- sion 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 multitask 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, Katie Nelson was able to recognize that other factors likely drove the changes in their textiles. She 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 her research and is central to most ethnographic studies today.

3.4.5 Let's Talk: 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, or trust, 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.

3.4.6 Let's Take a Walk: Mapping your Space

Another methodology that anthropologists sometimes use involves mapping our cultural landscape. Whether through drawing, google maps and earth, or through narrative, being able to share images and/or writing about the physical space of your research allows the reader to engage in a different way with the content. I, Vanessa Martinez, decided to create a written narrative of an environmental walk I took in Springfield, Massachusetts as part of my doctoral work to highlight the importance of physical space to my community health equity work.

Walking through Springfield: Vanessa Martínez

On July 19, 2011, I participated in an environmental and educational walk around the North End of Springfield, an area rife with structural barriers to positive health outcomes for its residents. The North End of Springfield is a "food desert" and one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Massachusetts. Originally, the environmental and health coalition had planned a bike event that would allow community members and local leaders to identify the structural violence in the community, understand the history of Springfield's poor health indicators, and discuss strategies for improving Springfield residents' health outcomes. After learning about the event, I suggested to Betty Agin, my community collaborator, that the event could also be done as a walk, providing people without bikes the opportunity to participate. She thought it was a great idea and so she contacted the organizers who agreed to promote the event as a bike/walk health event. The day of the event, I arrived wearing workout clothes. I only note my clothing because Betty was dressed as she always was in her Sunday best, only changing her sneakers to walk.

The organizers chose to start our journey at the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority diesel bus garage in the North End neighborhood. The North End may not have a toxic waste dump or a factory emitting smoke into the sky, but the diesel bus

garage is a major contributor to air pollution which can pose a serious challenge to human health. Participating in this Springfield community event provided me with a new understanding of the dangers experienced by Springfield residents every day. These dangers are not only what we hear about Springfield in the news nearly every day, violence and poverty; but rather, these dangers stem from being pedestrians in a city after the creation of a highway that split the North End neighborhood in two. This is not unique to Springfield, in fact, many urban centers faced this during Urban Renewal of the 1960s and 70s. However, a consistent thread in the Urban Renewal story across urban America highlights that the newly created highway systems ensured that getting from neighborhood to neighborhood was difficult if not impossible. This remains true today where in some areas, people have to risk crossing railroad tracks or highway entrances in order to get to another neighborhood.

While I walked around Springfield that day, the most prominent features that stood out to me were the elements of hope and community in an urban city that was rife with structural violence. I noticed the vertical ghetto across from the Springfield Riverwalk and Bike Path; this poor community could look across and see the bike path only a few yards away, but the highway divided the community from the river. The only way to access the river would be to walk miles across the city. I was so frustrated that I looked on in amazement searching for hope – we kept walking and I noticed that this same community had a small community garden that was tended to by adults and youth alike. Hope.

When we reached the Gerena School, a community elementary located at 200 Birnie Avenue and built in 1972, our Springfield tour guide discussed the environmental problems experienced by school personnel, students, and community members. The school was built directly under Interstate 91 and adjacent to roadways, a railway, and industrial plant. An underground tunnel was created within Gerena's property as "a passageway for pedestrians after the construction of Interstate 91 removed the original connecting streets between Memorial Square and Brightwood neighborhoods" (Santana 2012). Construction of the highway system severed the Connecticut River from the rest of the city, just as the railroad had done a century earlier. Recent community outcry over the school's need for repairs has resulted in local government officials redirecting money for structural repairs. The school suffers from transportation-related indoor air exposures, flooding, moisture, mold, and filth resulting in an unhealthy environment for children. Currently, the EPA is conducting a Health Impact Assessment to determine changes needed to make the school safer and healthier. As we continued our walk past an industrial plant, I had to use my inhaler several times for my asthma.

On our walk, Betty Agin, a Springfield based community organizer, introduced me to Zaida Luna, City Counselor for Ward 1, which includes the North End. Meeting a City Counselor who was committed to the community and showed her support at community events like these was very powerful. As our walk continued, our tour guide pointed out not only what we could see, but what was missing. We saw limited green spaces, barriers to reach the riverwalk, limited pools and family friendly spaces, and the lack of established walking and bike trails. I could not help but think about a framed art piece on my wall with a quote taken from Martin Luther King Jr's speech "Beyond Vietnam", an address delivered to the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam on April 4, 1967, in New York City; "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death".

I began to wonder about the future of the Gerena School, the North End, and Springfield as a whole given that their future was tied up in the narrative of historical oppression, urban renewal, and community action. Furthermore, how is the media driven narrative of personal responsibility mediated by the lived experience of structural and symbolic violence in poor communities? Who was this event really for, and was this experience for the researchers participating in this environmental walk/bike journey to learn about the everyday life experiences of Springfield residents? Was this a healthy event for community members to learn how social factors impact their every-day health choices? Did one's position as stakeholder change the purpose of the event? The fifty people gathered may have come to the event for different reasons, but at the end of the walk/bike event people seemed eager to take what they had learned and experienced to their fellow community organizers and take action on the disparities existing in their neighborhoods.

3.4.7 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.

3.4.8 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.

3.4.9 Key Informants

Within any culture or subculture, there are always particular individuals who are more knowledge- able about the culture than others and who may have more-detailed or privileged knowledge. Anthro- pologists 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.

An example of the central role that key informants can play in an ethnographer's research can be seen in the 2010 *Labor and Legality: An Ethnography of a Mexican Immigrant Network* where Ruth Gomberg-Munoz provides a complex look at the lives of ten male undocumented immigrants, the Lions, who work as restaurant busboys in Chicago, Illinois. Gomberg-Munoz nicknames her informants "The Lions" because they all come from Leon, Mexico; Leon means lion in Spanish. Gomberg-Munoz writes about their daily lives, which personalizes the faces of illegal immigrants in the context of larger structural violence. Her writing style and the use of the personal stories of undocumented immigrants at the beginning of each chapter allows her readers to become emotionally invested in the lives of these marginalized men. These personal vignettes are contrasted against typical representations of undocumented immigrants found in mainstream media.

3.4.10 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 hap- pened 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.[5]

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

3.5 Ethical Considerations

3.5.1 Ethical Guidelines in Anthropological Research

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.

Building trust through rapport and mutual understanding is paramount to any ethnographic endeavor. We are often asking for our informants to share a look into some of the most personal aspects of their lives. How can we expect such openness without a sense of trust? Trust building is therefore arguably the most important step in beginning any anthropological study.

> 📌 Trust is Earned
>
> On the evening of February 15, 2012, I (Vanessa Martínez) was sitting in the conference room that Universal Community Voices Eliminating Disparities (UCVED) shared with other organizations in their (previous) office building at 640 Page Boulevard in Springfield, Massachusetts. I was waiting to interview Betty Agin, the community leader who founded UCVED in 2009 after co-leading monthly health roundtable discussion groups and monthly community conversations with another community leader, Juan Montoya* and a health professional, Dr. Joseph Frames*. That day, Betty arrived frantic because she was late and then proceeded to inform me she had to leave early. We would only have about 60 minutes for the interview, but she said she would be available again if I wanted. When Betty sat down next to me, she told me "to begin." I asked her some questions about her life, her work as a community organizer, and her passions. I ran the interview informally, probing her for more details throughout the interview. I have observed Betty and her facilitation style for over two years and was interested in getting more information about why she was a community organizer trying to improve health disparities and increase community involvement in Springfield.
>
> The most salient part of this discussion was when we discussed the idea of collaboration and trust. At first, Betty said that she does not "really think about trust, it's intuitive." Yet as we continued the interview discussing the concept of trust, the pattern that arose was that while she wanted to trust people to do the work she did, it was actually really hard for her to trust them. In fact, when I asked her if she wanted my help, she said yes. But when I asked if she would allow me to assist in my own way

and without her micromanaging me, she hesitated. She said she "likes things done her way, because she knows how to do it (i.e. organize) in her community". Her hesitation comes from a history of working with people who did NOT step up to the leadership roles she asked of them.

As a researcher collaborating with community leaders from historically marginalized communities, I am aware of community members' past negative experiences with academics. I try to walk the walk of true collaboration. I remember the legacy of grave robbing and of medical experimentation on black bodies and other marginalized populations. And this history is never truly forgotten, nor do I believe it should be. In fact, the misinformation and stigmatization of people of color continues with our media today. And so, I believe it is up to the researcher to show the community that they are there with the best of intentions and with the goal of collaboration. The concept of reciprocity also comes to mind. Betty needed, from me and others like me, to see that our relationship was mutually beneficial and that I was not working with her to get my research done and then leave. And so, I must remember that I am both an academic (outsider in the community) and a woman of color (an insider or part of communities of color). And both of these social positions influence my research, my collaborations, and my power in the community.

Author's Note: names have been changed for anonymity

Building rapport is critical to being able to engage in the research in the first place. Once trust is earned, we need to think about what comes next to ensure ethical consideration of the research and our informants. 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.

3.5.2 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 Yonomami, 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. Anthro- pologists and other scholars have accused Chagnon of encouraging the violence he documented, staging fights and scenes for documentary films and fabricating data.

> 📌 The (w)hole story: Researchers and Community need to be on the same page
>
> While writing this chapter, I (Vanessa Martínez) am struck by a story I remember hearing at a day-long workshop training in Boston on November 20, 2010. This training, titled Racism: The Deadliest Disease in America, was presented by Critical Mass & Center for Community Health Education Research and Services at Northeastern University. As part of an afternoon workshop on Participatory Health Research for Understanding and Eliminating Health Disparities, I heard an allegory highlighting the extreme differences in researcher and community perspectives on a social problem or community issue. Researchers and community members see different things. The story goes something like this… There was once a hole in the ground. Researchers are interested in studying the hole and ask the community for permission to study the hole. The community wants the hole fixed because the hole is not productive for the community. The researchers gather data about the hole's physical makeup (its length, its width and its depth) and explain how and why the hole exists. When the researchers are done collecting data, they leave and the community is left with a hole in the ground, feeling used and unheard. In this story, the researchers did not connect their goals of study with the community they were studying. Instead, the researchers held the academic power by taking from the community with no distribution of data, resources and power for the community.

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.

3.5.3 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.

3.5.4 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 workplaces to protect them from being identified. Maintaining privacy and anonymity is an important way for anthropologists to ensure that their involvement does no harm.

3.5.5 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 research 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.

> **Reflection:** How are these ethical considerations reflected in the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics introduced in Chapter 1?

3.6 Writing Ethnography

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 Whose Story is it?

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 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.

3.6.3 Polyvocality: Multiple voices are working together to tell the story

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.

3.6.4 Reflexivity: Researchers impact on the story

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.

In my own (Vanessa's) doctoral research and writing, I used reflexivity to ensure that I communicated my positionality and my goals to all community members involved in my health equity research in Springfield, Massachusetts. I told my story of interacting with black community organizers who questioned my light skin Latine body and research goals and my own need to ensure transparency and collaborative research with community, for community. I shared my interest in doing community-engaged research before I ever knew there was a term for it. It was this reflexive position that led me to be able to discuss two health case studies and their relationship to building sustainable and mutually beneficial community-research partnerships. I continue to engage in this type of work in all my professional roles – as a community college professor, cultural humility and anti-racist trainer, non-profit professional and more.

❓ Discussion Questions

1. What is unique about ethnographic fieldwork and how did it emerge as a key strategy in anthropology?
2. How do traditional approaches to ethnographic fieldwork contrast with contemporary approaches?
3. What are some of the contemporary ethnographic fieldwork techniques and perspectives and why are they important to anthropology?
4. What are some of the ethical considerations in doing anthropological fieldwork and why are they important?

5. 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.

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

Culture: a set of beliefs, practices, and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all- encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways.

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 Salvadorian 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 Ameri- cans 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 home- towns 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.

Bibliography

Behar, Ruth. Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.

Boddy, Janice. Civilizing Women: British Crusades in Colonial Sudan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Chagnon, Napoleon. Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Chavez, Leo. The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens and the Nation. Stanford: Stanford Uni- versity Press, 2008.

Dettwyler, Katherine A. Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2014

Frazer, James. The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion. London: Macmillian Press, 1894. Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Gordon, Peter. "Numerical Cognition without Words: Evidence from Amazonia." Science 306 no. 5695 (2004): 496–499.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. London: Kegan Paul 1922.

Mead, Margaret. Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization.

New York: William Morrow and Company, 1928.

Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." American Anthropologist 58 no. 3 (1956): 503-507. Nelson, Katherine. 2015. Between Citizenship and Alienage: Flexible Identity Among Informally Authorized

Mexican College Students in Minnesota, USA. PhD diss., CIESAS Occidente (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social – Institute for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology).

Rosaldo, Renato. "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage" in Violence in War and Peace, edited by Nancy Scheper- Hughes and Philippe I. Bourgois, 150-156. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. Saints, Scholars, Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1979.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. "Science and Linguistics." MIT Technology Review: 42 (1940): 229–248.

Whyte, William Foote. Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993[1943].

About the Original Author

Katie Nelson is an instructor of anthropology at Inver Hills Community College. Her research focuses on migration, identity, belonging, and citizenship(s) in human history and in

the contemporary United States, Mexico, and Morocco. She received her B.A. in anthropology and Latin American studies from Macalester College, her M.A. in anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, an M.A. in education and

instructional technology from the University of Saint Thomas, and her Ph.D. from CIESAS Occidente (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social –Center for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology), based in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Katie views teaching and learning as central to her practice as an anthropologist and as mutually reinforcing elements of her professional life. She is the former chair of the Teaching Anthropology Interest Group (2016–2018) of the General Anthropology Division of the American Anthropological Association and currently serves as the online content editor for the Teaching and Learning Anthropology Journal. She has contributed to several open access textbook projects, both as an author and an editor, and views the affordability of quality learning materials as an important piece of the equity and inclusion puzzle in higher education.

Media Attributions

- Private: Katie Nelson and host family © Missing Source is licensed under a All Rights Reserved license
- Private: Jenipapo Kanindé boy © Missing Source is licensed under a All Rights Reserved license
- Private: Bronisław Malinowski among Trobriand tribe © Wikimedia is licensed under a Public Domain license
- Private: Katie Nelson © Katie Nelson is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

1. Franz Boas, "Foreword," in Coming of Age in Samoa by Margaret Mead (New York: William Morrow, 1928). ↵
2. Peter Gordon, "Numerical Cognition Without Words: Evidence from Amazonia," Science 306 no. 5695 (2004): 496-499. ↵
3. Janice Bodd, Civilizing Women: British Crusades in Colonial Sudan (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). ↵
4. 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. ↵
5. 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. ↵

Chapter 4: Language

Remix Authors

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Author

Linda Light, California State University, Long Beach, Linda.Light@csulb.edu

> 🧠 Learning Objectives
> - Explain the relationship between human language and culture.
> - phonemesmorphemessyntaxsemanticspragmaticsDescribe the structures of language: , , , , and .
> - Assess the relationship between language variations and ethnic or cultural identity
> - Examine the mechanisms of language change and adaptation
> - Explain how language is affected by social class, ethnicity, gender and other aspects of identity
> - Examine the role of Anthropology in the preservation of endangered languages

4.1 What Is Non-Verbal 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 discuss the three most important human non-verbal communication systems – kinesics, proxemics, and paralanguage.

4.1.1 Kinesics: Body Language

Kinesics includes 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.

4.1.2 Proxemics: Study of Social Use of Space

Proxemics is the study of the social use of space, specifically the distance an individual tries to main- tain 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 stan- dards, 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.

I (Vanessa) remember taking a college trip to Russia and traveling on a train. The train was packed and everyone was struggling to find space. While most of the Americans were uncomfortable and complaining, the majority of Russians seemed relaxed and accustomed to the limited space. Such a difference from trying to catch a bus in Sunderland, Massachusetts to get to the University of Massachusetts. I had to ask someone to move their book bag from a seat because the Americans seemed to think that they needed a large space bubble on a crowded bus. How would you define your "space bubble" in relation to others and when? How much of your "space bubble" is informed by your culture and when might you decide to push the space bubble?

4.1.3 Paralanguage: Speech Beyond Words

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.

Watch this short video on Paralanguage using the TV show The Office
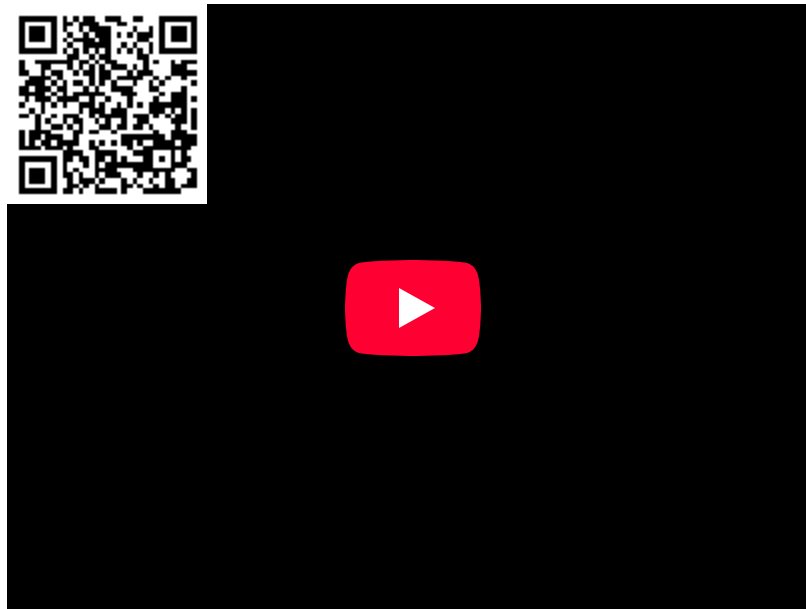
4.2 How Do We Learn Language?

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.

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.

4.3 How Can We Describe Language?

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 derived 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.

4.4 How Do Languages Change?

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.

Typical Causes of Dialect Variation
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.
Region and occupation: Rural farming people may continue to use archaic expressions compared with urban people, who have much more contact with contemporary lifestyles and diverse speech com- munities.

Typical Causes of Dialect Variation
Language contact: Interactions with other language groups, such as Native Americans, French, Span- ish, 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 parquear 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-drinking, beach, e-book, and drop-out, while older ones include le weekend and stop.
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 syn- tactic changes to clarify meaning can also contribute to language change.

These eight factors of linguistic variation do not work in isolation. Any 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.

Activity: Which of these terms do you use – pop or soda or coke? Do you use pail or bucket? Do you say "vayse" or "vahze" for the vessel you put flowers in? Do you say "ant" or "a-unt" for your endearing mother's sister or father's sister?

4.5 How Does Cultural Context Shape Language?

As we have seen, language is ever-evolving and adapting to changes in our lives. Socio-cultural markers of difference, such as race, gender, class, age, economic status, sexuality, and religion, shape the words we use and how we communicate. Cultural norms, taboos, group dynamics, and power relationships also impact language acquisition and rules. In this chapter, we will focus on gender as an example of language difference.

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 discriminate 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.

4.5.1 Gender and Language

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.[1]

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 "feminine" 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 workforce 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.

Self Reflection: Now we have just covered some of the reasons these linguistic variations exist above. Where are you from? Pick one of the examples above and learn about which parts of the United States uses which variations. Can you find other regional differences like these? Share one.

4.6 What Is the Impact of Globalization on 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 Spanish, 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 popular 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 migrating 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.

4.7 Cultural Impact of Language Loss

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 endangered languages, including one speak- ing 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.

> 📌 Korean Immigrants & Language Loss
>
> A former student of Linda Light, James Kim, 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 pressure, he began refusing to speak Korean, even to 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.[2] 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.[3]

4.8 Revitalization of Indigenous Languages

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 nineteenth 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. How can such languages be revitalized?

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 Thanksgiving. 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.

Figure 4.1. Jessie Little Doe Baird with daughter Mae. Photo courtesy of Cultural Survival and Make Peace Productions

A young Wampanoag woman named Jessie Little Doe Baird (pictured in **Figure 4.1** 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.[4]

4.9 Technology and Language Change

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.[5] 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.[6] 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 is language related to social and economic inequality? Do you think that attitudes about language varieties have affected you and/or your family?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. How do you think modern communication technologies like cell phones and computers are changing how people communicate? Is the change positive or negative?

📌 Glossary

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 creoles.

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 need for some aspects of the system to be learned; 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 they 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 languages.

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).

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

Morphemes: the basic meaningful units in a language.

Morphology: the study of the morphemes of language.

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

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.

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 his 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 tem- plate 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 Original 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 Coastline 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.

Media Attributions

- Private: Jessie Mae © Cultural Survival is licensed under a All Rights Reserved license
- Private: Linda Light © LibreTexts is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

---

1. 1. 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). ↵
2. You can hear the 6-minute piece at https://www.kpcc.org/show/offramp/20...-same-language ↵
3. From François Grosjean, Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), chapter two. ↵
4. Filmmaker Anne Makepeace created a documentary of the story, called We Still Live Here: s Nutayuneân, which PBS broadcast in 2010. You can watch the clips from the video online. ↵
5. Terms first coined by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Native(New York, Basic Books, 2008). ↵
6. Lydia Emmanouilidou, For Rare Languages, Social Media Provide New Hope. More information at this link - http://www.npr.org/sections/all- techconsidered/2014/07/26/333732206/for-rare-languages-social-media-provide-new-hope ↵

Chapter 5: Foodways

Remix Authors

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Author

Isaac Shearn, Community College of Baltimore County, isaacshearn@gmail.com

> **◑ Learning Objectives**
> - Understand what anthropologists mean by Foodways, and describe the components of a culture's Foodways.
> - Identify the four modes of subsistence and describe the major activities associated with obtaining food in each system.
> - Explain the relationship between the subsistence system used in a society and the amount of private property or wealth differences that develop.
> - Understand and explain the complex relationships between food and all aspects of culture.
> - Categorize the social and economic characteristics associated with agriculture and describe the benefits and drawbacks of the agricultural subsistence system.
> - Appraise the ways in which human intervention in the environment has made it difficult to separate the "natural" from the human-influenced environment.

5.1 Introduction

At the start of every semester, when I (Demetrios) introduce the first journal activity, I ask students to discuss what Culture or cultures they identify with and what that means. The overwhelming majority mention food. This is not surprising as food is one of the strongest cultural identity markers. (Elaborate)

Anthropologists use the term Foodways to refer to the role of food in culture. The cultural norms and attitudes surrounding food and eating are known as foodways. A culture's foodways encompass all of the social, economic, ritual, and other cultural practices surrounding the ***acquisition***, ***preparation***, ***sharing***, and ***eating*** of food. In short foodways refers to the cultural life of food. This chapter will explore the role of food and how it is intertwined with nearly all aspects of culture. Foodways are a vital component of a culture's identity. They tell the story of a culture's history, environment, social structure, and world view.

One aspect of foodways is the production and acquisition of food. This includes a culture's mode of subsistence. In other words, how a group of people obtain food. This may include subsistence strategies such as farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering or any combination of these. The specific methods and techniques employed, as well as the cultural significance attached to certain foods, vary across different societies.

Another component of a culture's foodways is the preparation and culinary practice associated with food. This includes the techniques, recipes, and rituals involved in transforming raw ingredients into meals. Food preparation methods can range from simple to elaborate, and often reflect cultural norms and preferences. Traditional cooking techniques, ingredients, and flavors are passed down through generations, contributing to a sense of cultural heritage and identity. Additionally, the act of preparing and sharing food often holds social significance, fostering community bonds and reinforcing social relationships.

The sharing and eating of food are also integral to foodways. The way we eat, the dining customs, and the rules and etiquettes surrounding meals can vary greatly across cultures. Food can have symbolic meanings, representing aspects of social status, gender roles, or magical and religious beliefs. Commensality, or the act of sharing meals together,is one of the most ancient forms of gift giving and often serves as a means of reinforcing social cohesion and solidarity within a group. Additionally, food-related celebrations, festivals, and rituals play a significant role in reinforcing cultural values and traditions, creating a sense of collective identity and belonging.

To understand a culture's foodways is to understand the complex relationships that exist between their food and culture. By studying the food practices of different societies, anthropologists can gain a deeper understanding of how food shapes social interactions, defines cultural identities, and reflects broader social, economic, and environmental factors.

Figure 5.1: Modern American Foodways-Choices in the Supermarket

5.2 Subsistence: How do we get food?

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 non-agricultural societies have a more direct connection to their food and are likely to know where 100 percent 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. 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.

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 who caught, cleaned, distributed, and prepared the fish he or she is consuming. The web of social connections that we can trace through subsistence provides a very particular kind of anthropological insight into how societies function at their most basic level.

Figure 5.2: Traditional Horticulture in a Greek Village. Dimitrios Andrinopoulos, grandfather of author Demetrios Brellas, pictured. Ambelofyto, Messinia, Greece. 2007.

5.3 Modes of Subsistence: foraging, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture

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 use 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.

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.

> **Quick Reading Check:** 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.

5.3.1 Foraging

> *"Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongos (type of nut) in the world?"*
>
> *-/Xashe, !Kung forager[3]*

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 will 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 Kwakwa̱ka̱'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 Kwakwa̱ka̱'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 Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw developed a tradition of potlatch, a kind of "extreme gift-giving" to neutralize some of these tensions.

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 and white supremacy. 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.

5.3.2 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[14]

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, Tibet, 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.

Figure 5.3: A Typical Maasai Herd: Although women do most of the work of tending the herd, only men are allowed to own cattle

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."[15] 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.[16]

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 trickier 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.[17]

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.

5.3.3 Horticulture

> *"Yams are persons with ears. If we charm, they hear."* – Alo, Trobriand Island farmer[18]

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 shared 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, sometimes 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, corn, 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 rela- tionships. 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.

5.3.4 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 [19]

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.

Four Hallmarks of Agricultural Societies
reliance on a few staple crops, foods that form the backbone of the subsistence system
link between intensive farming and a rapid increase in human population density; ie increased farming leads to increased people
the development of a division of labor, a system in which individuals in a society begin to specialize in certain roles or tasks
tendency to create wealth inequities

The first characteristic of agriculture is reliance on a few staple crops, foods that form the backbone 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, often leads 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 the 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 pro- duce 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.[20]

> **Quick Reading Check:** 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. Was agriculture a horrible human mistake or a technological marvel? Explain your ideas.

5.4 The Global Agriculture System: Feeding Everyone

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.[21] The problem is that this capacity is unevenly distributed and the power is the hands of a few global powers, i.e. the wealthiest nations, the United States being among them. 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. Walking 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 economy 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 commodity chain.

Figure 5.4: Links in the Commodity Chain for Coffee: As the coffee changes hands from the growers, to the exporters, to the importers, and then to the retail distributors, the value of the coffee increases. Consider the differences in wage between these workers.

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 usable 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.[22]

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.[23] 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.

> **Reflection:** What are some of the causes for inequities in the availability of food?

📌 **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 some- times called "hunting and gathering."

Historical ecology: the study of how human cultures have developed over time as a result of interactions 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.

Bibliography

Binford, Lewis. "Post-Pleistocene adaptations." In New Perspectives in Archeology, edited by Sally Binford and Lewis Binford, 313-41. New York: Aldine, 1968.

Boserup, Ester. The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change Under Population Pressure. Rutgers, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005.

Diamond, Jared. "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race," Discover, May 1987, http://dis- covermagazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race

Fiedel, Stuart J. "Man's Best Friend — Mammoth's Worst Enemy? A Speculative Essay on the Role of Dogs in Paleoindian Colonization and Megafaunal Extinction." World Archaeology 37 (2005): 11-25.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The State of Food Insecurity in the World. Rome: The United Nations, 2015.

. "World Hunger Falls to Under 800 Million, Eradication Possible." World Food Program, May 27, 2015, https://www.wfp.org/news/news-releas...llion-eradica- tion-next-goal-0

Fortune, R. F. Sorcerers of Dobu: The Social Anthropology of the Dobu Islanders of the Western Pacific. London:

1. Routledge and Sons, 1963 [1932].

Hardin, Garrett. "Tragedy of the Commons." Science 162 no. 3859 (1968): 1243-1248.

Hawkes, Kristen and James F. O'Connell. "Affluent Hunters? Some Comments in Light of the Alyawara Case." American Anthropologist 83(1981): 622-626.

Hawkes, Kristen, Kim Hill and James F. O'Connell. "Why Hunters Gather: Optimal Foraging and the Aché of Eastern Paraguay." American Ethnologist 9 (1982):379-398.

Hayden, Brian. "The Proof is in the Pudding: Feasting and the Origins of Domestication." Current Anthropology 50 (2009):597–601, 708–9.

Lee, Richard B. The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society. Cambridge: Cambridge Uni- versity Press, 1979.

. "What Hunters Do for a Living, or, How to Make Out on Scarce Resources." In Man the Hunter, edited by Richard Lee and Irven DeVore. Chicago: Aldine, 1968.

Lee, Richard B. and Irven DeVore, editors. Man the Hunter. New York: Aldine, 1968.

Llewellyn-Davies, Melissa. "Two Contexts of Solidarity." In Women United, Women Divided: Comparative Studies of Ten Contemporary Cultures, edited by Patricia Caplan and Janet M. Bujra. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1979.

Malthus, Thomas. An Essay on the Principle of Population. London: J. Johnson, 1798.

Nelson, Fred. "Natural Conservationists? Evaluating the Impact of Pastoralist Land Use Practices on Tanzania's Wildlife Economy." Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice 2012.

Paoletti, Maurizio G., E. Buscardo, D.J. Vanderjagt, A. Pastuszyn, L. Pizzoferrato, Y.S. Huang, L.T. Chuang, M. Millon, H. Cerda, F. Torres, and R.H. Glew. "Nutrient Content of Earthworms Consumed by Ye'Kuana Amerindians of the Alto Orinoco of Venezuela." Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences 270 (2003): 249-257.

Politis, Gustavo. Nukak: Ethnoarchaeology of an Amazonian People. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007.

Rosenberg, Harriet G. "Complaint Discourse, Aging, and Caregiving Among the !Kung San of Botswana." In The Cultural Context of Aging, edited by Jay Sokolovsky, 19-41. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990.

Sahlins, Marshall. "The Original Affluent Society." In Stone Age Economics, edited by Marshall Sahlins, 1-39. London: Tavistock, 1972.

Wallace, Melanie and Sanford Low. Maasai Women, Film, Produced by Michael Ambrosino. Watertown: CT: Documentary Educational Resources, 1980.

White, Leslie. The Evolution of Culture: The Development of Civilization to the Fall of Rome. New York: McGraw Hill, 1959.

About the Original Author

Isaac Shearn earned his PhD in 2014 at the University of Florida and is an adjunct professor at the Community College of Baltimore County. His work focuses on the archaeology and ethnohistory of the Caribbean and South America, with a focus on public archaeology, developing inclusive and participatory methods. His ongoing research in Dominica allows him to pursue his second major passion in life besides archaeology: music. He has played drums for a Dominican reggae band since 2010.

Media Attributions

1. Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 4. ↵
2. Ester Boserup, The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change Under Population Pressure (Rutgers, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005). ↵
3. Richard B. Lee, "What Hunters Do for a Living, or, How to Make Out on Scarce Resources," in Man the Hunter, ed. Richard Lee and Irven DeVore (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), 33. ↵
4. Maurizio G.Paoletti, E. Buscardo, DJ Vanderjagt, A Pastuszyn, L Pizzoferrato, YS Huang, et al., "Nutrient Content of Earthworms Consumed by Ye'Kuana Amerindians of the Alto Orinoco of Venezuela," Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences 270 (2003): 249-257. ↵
5. Kristen Hawkes, Kim Hill and James F. O'Connell, "Why Hunters Gather: Optimal Foraging and the Aché of Eastern Paraguay," American Ethnologist 9 (1982):379-398. ↵
6. Richard Lee, The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). ↵
7. For more information about intergenerational dynamics among foragers see Kathryn Keith "Childhood Learning and the Distribution of Knowledge in Foraging Societies," Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 15 (2005): 27-40 and Harriet G. Rosenberg, "Complaint Discourse, Aging, and Caregiving among the !Kung San of Botswana," in The Cultural Context of Aging, ed. Jay Sokolovsky (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990)19-41. The quotation is from Rosenberg page 29. ↵
8. For a discussion of generosity and sharing in foraging communities see Lorna Marshall, "Sharing, Talking, and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions among !Kung Bushmen," Africa: Journal of the International African Insti- tute31(1961):231-249 and Lester Hiatt, "Traditional Attitudes to Land Resources," in Aboriginal Sites, Rites and Resource Development, ed. R. M. Berndt (Perth: University of Western Australia Press. 1982) 13-26. ↵
9. Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, eds. Man the Hunter (New York: Aldine, 1968). ↵
10. Marshall Sahlins, "The Original Affluent Society," in Stone Age Economics, ed. Marshall Sahlins (London: Tavis- tock, 1972) 1-39. ↵
11. Kristen Hawkes and James F. O'Connell, "Affluent Hunters? Some Comments in Light of the Alyawara Case," American Anthropologist 83(1981): 622-626. ↵
12. See for example Robert J. Gordon, The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass (Boulder, CO: West- view Press, 2000). ↵
13. Gustavo Politis, Nukak: Ethnoarchaeology of an Amazonian People (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007). ↵
14. Melanie Wallace and Sanford Low, Maasai Women, Film, Produced by Michael Ambrosino (1980, Watertown: CT: Documentary Educational Resources). ↵
15. Melissa Llewellyn-Davies, "Two Contexts of Solidarity," in Women United, Women Divided: Comparative Studies of Ten Contemporary Cultures, ed. Patricia Caplan and Janet M. Bujra (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1979), 208. ↵
16. Ibid., 234. ↵
17. Fred Nelson, "Natural Conservationists? Evaluating the Impact of Pastoralist Land Use Practices on Tanzania's Wildlife Economy," Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice 2012. ↵
18. R. F. Fortune, Sorcerers of Dobu: The Social Anthropology of the Dobu Islanders of the Western Pacific (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1963 [1932]),107-109. ↵
19. Jared Diamond, "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race," Discover, May 1987, http://discover- magazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race ↵
20. See for example Marshall Sahlins' argument in Stone Age Economics (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1972). ↵

21. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The State of Food Insecurity in the World (Rome: FAO, 2015) ↵

22. Information about the current prices paid to coffee farmers is available from the International Coffee Organization: http://www.ico.org/coffee_prices.asp ↵

23. This phenomenon has been observed in many countries. For an ethnographic analysis of the health effects of the decline of traditional foods in Guatemala, see Emily Yates-Doerr, The Weight of Obesity: Hunger and Global Health in Postwar Guatemala (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015). ↵

Chapter 6: Economics

Remix Authors

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Author

Sarah Lyons, University of Kentucky, sarah.lyon@uky.edu

> 🧠 Learning Objectives
> - Define economic anthropology and identify ways in which economic anthropology differs from the field of Economics
> - Describe the characteristics of the three modes of production: domestic production, tributary production, and capitalist production.
> - Compare reciprocity, redistribution, and market modes of exchange.
> - Assess the significance of general purpose money for economic exchange.
> - Evaluate the ways in which commodities become personally and socially meaningful.
> - Use a political economy perspective to assess examples of global economic inequality and structural violence.

6.1 Introduction

One of the hallmarks of the human species is our flexibility: culture enables humans to thrive in extreme arctic and desert environments, to make our homes in cities and rural settings alike. Yet amidst this great diversity there are also universals. For example, all humans, like all organisms, must eat. We all must make our living in the world, whether we do so through foraging, farming, or factory work. At its heart, economic anthropology is a study of livelihoods: how humans work to obtain the material necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter that sustain our lives. Across time and space, different societies have organized their economic lives in radically different ways. Economic anthropologists explore this diversity, focusing on how people produce, exchange, and consume material objects and the role that immaterial things such as labor, services, and knowledge play in our efforts to secure our livelihood.[1] As humans, we all have the same basic needs, but understanding how and why we meet those needs—in often shared but sometimes unique ways—is what shapes the field of economic anthropology.

Economic anthropology is always in dialogue (whether implicitly or explicitly) with the discipline of economics.[2] However, there are several important differences between the two disciplines. Perhaps most importantly, economic anthropology encompasses the production, exchange, consumption, meaning, and uses of both material objects and immaterial services, whereas contemporary economics focuses primarily on market exchanges. In addition, economic anthropologists dispute the idea that all individual thoughts, choices, and behaviors can be understood through a narrow lens of rational, self-interested decision-making. When asking why people choose to buy a new shirt rather than shoes, anthropologists, and increasingly economists, look beyond the motives of Homo economicus to determine how social, cultural, political, and institutional forces shape humans' everyday decisions.[3]

As a discipline, economics studies the decisions made by people and businesses and how these decisions interact in the marketplace. Economists' models generally rest on several assumptions: that people know what they want, that their economic choices express these wants, and that their wants are defined by their culture. Economics is a normative theory because it specifies how people should act if they want to make efficient economic decisions. In contrast, anthropology is a largely descriptive social science; we analyze what people actually do and why they do it. Economic anthropologists do not necessarily assume that people know what they want (or why they want it) or that they are free to act on their own individual desires.

Rather than simply focusing on market exchanges and individual decision-making, anthropologists consider three distinct phases of economic activity: production, exchange, and consumption. Production involves transforming nature and raw materials into the material goods that are useful and/or necessary for humans. Exchange involves how these goods are distributed among people. Finally, consumption refers to how we use these material goods: for example, by eating food or constructing homes out of bricks. This chapter explores each of these dimensions of economic life in detail, concluding with an overview of how anthropologists understand and challenge the economic inequalities that structure everyday life in the twenty-first century.

> Quick Reading Check: Tell me the differences between economic anthropology and contemporary economics in your own words.

6.2 Modes of Production: Domestic, Tributary, and Capitalist

A key concept in anthropological studies of economic life is the mode of production, or the social relations through which human labor is used to transform energy from nature using tools, skills, organization, and knowledge. This concept originated with anthropologist Eric Wolf, who was strongly influenced by the social theorist Karl Marx. Marx argued that human consciousness is not determined by our cosmologies or beliefs but instead by our most basic human activity: work. Wolf identified three distinct modes of production in human history: domestic (kin-ordered), tributary, and capitalist.[4]

Domestic or kin-ordered production organizes work on the basis of family relations and does not necessarily involve formal social domination, or the control of and power over other people. However, power and authority may be exerted on specific groups based on age and gender. In the tributary mode of production, the primary producer pays tribute in the form of material goods or labor to another indi- vidual or group of individuals who controls production through political, religious, or military force. The third mode, capitalism, is the one most familiar to us.

The capitalist mode of production has three central features: (1) private property is owned by members of the capitalist class; (2) workers sell their labor power to the capitalists in order to survive; and (3) surpluses of wealth are produced, and these surpluses are either kept as profit or reinvested in production in order to generate further surplus. As we will see in the next section, Modes of Exchange, capitalism also links markets to trade and money in very unique ways. First, though, we will take a closer look at each of the three modes of production – domestic, tributary, and capitalist.

6.2.1 Domestic Production

The domestic, or kin-ordered, mode of production characterizes the lives of foragers and small- scale subsistence farmers with social structures that are more egalitarian than those characterizing the other modes of production (though these structures are still shaped by age- and gender-based forms of inequality). In the domestic mode of production, labor is organized on the basis of kinship relations (which is why this form of production is also known as kin-ordered). In southern Mexico and parts of Central America, many indigenous people primarily make their living through small-scale subsistence maize farming. Subsistence farmers produce food for their family's own consumption (rather than to sell). In this family production system, the men generally clear the fields and the whole family works together to plant the seeds. Until the plants sprout, the children spend their days in the fields protect- ing the newly planted crops. The men then weed the crops and harvest the corn cobs, and, finally, the women work to dry the corn and remove the kernels from the cobs for storage. Over the course of the year mothers and daughters typically grind the corn by hand using a metate, or grinding stone (or, if they are lucky, they might have access to a mechanical grinder). Ultimately, the corn is used to make the daily tortillas the family consumes at each meal. This example demonstrates how the domestic mode of production organizes labor and daily activities within families according to age and gender.

Figure 6.1: Hopi Maiden Grinding Corn, Arizona 1909

Foraging societies are also characterized by (1) the collective ownership of the primary means of production, (2) lower rates of social domination, and (3) sharing. For example, the Dobe Ju/'hoansi (also known as the !Kung), a society of approximately 45,000 people living in the Kalahari Desert of Botswana and Namibia, typically live in small groups consisting of siblings of both sexes, their spouses, and children. They all live in a single camp and move together for part of the year. Typically women collect plant foods and men hunt for meat. These resources are pooled within family groups and dis- tributed within wider kin networks when necessary. However, women will also kill animals when the opportunity presents itself, and men spend time collecting plant foods, even when hunting.

Also discussed in the Marriage and Family chapter, kinship relations are determined by culture, not biology. Interestingly, in addition to genealogical kinship, the Dobe Ju/'hoansi recognize kinship relations on the basis of gender-linked names; there are relatively few names, and in this society the pos- session of common names trumps genealogical ties. This means that an individual would call anyone with his father's name "father." The Dobe Ju/'hoansi have a third kinship system that is based on the principle that an older person determines the kinship terms that will be used in relation with another individual (so, for example, an elderly woman may refer to a young male as her nephew or grandson, thus creating a kin relationship). The effect of these three simultaneous kinship systems is that virtually everyone is kin in Ju/'hoansi society—those who are biologically related and those who are not. This successfully expands the range of individuals with whom products of labor, such as meat from a kill, must be shared.[5] These beliefs and the behaviors they inspire reinforce key elements of the domestic mode of production: collective ownership, low levels of social domination, and sharing.

6.2.2 Tributary Production

The tributary mode of production is found in social systems divided into classes of rulers and subjects. Subjects, typically farmers and/or herders, produce for themselves and their families, but they also give a proportion of their goods or labor to their rulers as tribute. The tributary mode of production characterizes a variety of precapitalist, state-level societies found in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. These societies share several common features: (1) the dominant units of production are communities organized around kinship relations; (2) the state's society depends on the local communities, and the tribute collected is used by the ruling class rather than exchanged or reinvested; (3) relationships between producers and rulers are often conflictual; and (4) production is controlled politically rather than through the direct control of the means of production. Some historic tributary systems, such as those found in feudal Europe and medieval Japan, were loosely organized, whereas others, such as the pre-contact Inca Empire and imperial China, were tightly managed.

In the Chinese imperial system, rulers not only demanded tribute in the form of material goods but also organized large-scale production and state-organized projects such as irrigation, roads, and flood control. In addition to accumulating agricultural surpluses, imperial officials also controlled large industrial and commercial enterprises, acquiring necessary products, such as salt, porcelain, or bricks, through non-market mechanisms. The rulers of most tributary systems were determined through descent and/or military and political service. However, the 1,000-year imperial Chinese system (CE 960–1911) was unique in that new members were accepted based on their performance in examinations that any male could take, even males of low status.[6] Despite this exception, the Chinese imperial system exhibits many hallmarks of the tributary mode of production, including the political control of production and the collection of tribute to support state projects and the ruling classes.

6.2.3 Capitalist Production

The capitalist mode of production is the most recent. While many of us may find it difficult to conceive of an alternative to capitalism, it has in fact only existed for a mere fraction of human history, first originating with the North American and western European industrial revolution during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Capitalism is distinguished from the other two modes of production as an economic system based on private property owned by a capitalist class. In the domestic and tributary modes of production, workers typically own their means of production (for example, the land they farm). However, in the capitalist mode of production, workers typically do not own the factories they work in or the businesses they work for, and so they sell their labor power to other people, the capitalists, in order to survive. By keeping wages low, capitalists are able to sell the products of the workers' labor for more than it costs to produce the products. This enables capitalists, or those who own the means of production, to generate a surplus that is either kept as profit or reinvested in production with the goal of generating additional surplus. Therefore, an important distinguishing feature of the capitalist mode of production is that workers are separated from the means of production (for example, from the factories they work in or the businesses they work for), whereas in the domestic and tributary modes workers are not separated from the means of production (they own their own land or they have free access to hunting and foraging grounds). In the domestic and tributary modes of production, workers also retain control over the goods they produce (or a portion of them), and they control their own labor, deciding when and when not to work.[7] However, this is not true within

capitalism. A factory worker does not own the widget that she helps build in a factory, and she cannot decide when she would like to show up at work each day.

Economic anthropologists stress that people and communities are differentially integrated into the capitalist mode of production. For example, some subsistence farmers may also produce a small crop of agricultural commodities in order to earn cash income to pay for necessities, such as machetes or farm tools, that they cannot make themselves. Many of us have had "informal" jobs tending a neighbor's children or mowing someone's lawn. Informal work such as this, where one does not work on a full- time, contracted basis, is especially important in developing countries around the world where informal employment comprises one-half to three-quarters of nonagricultural employment.[8]

Even in our own capitalist society, many of us regularly produce and exchange goods and services outside of the so-called formal marketplace: baking zucchini bread for a cousin who shares her vegetable garden's produce, for example, or buying fair-trade chocolate from a cooperative grocery store. We might spend Sundays volunteering in a church's nursery, or perhaps moonlighting as a server for a friend's catering business, working "under the table" for cash. Each of these examples highlights how even in advanced capitalist societies, we engage in diverse economic practices every day. If, as some suggest, economic anthropology is at its heart a search for alternatives to capitalism, it is useful to explore the many diverse economies that are thriving alongside capitalist modes of production and exchange.[9]

> Quick Reading Check: If I was to say that people believe access to the capitalist class is open to everyone but in reality it is very few who have access at all even with hard work. How would you respond and why? What's your evidence?

6.2.4 Fair-Trade Coffee Farmers: 21st Century Peasants

Small-scale, semi-subsistence farmers make up the largest single group of people on the planet today. Once known as peasants, these people pose an interesting conundrum to economic anthropologists because they live their lives both inside and outside of global capitalism and state societies. These farmers primarily use their own labor to grow the food their families eat. They might also produce some type of commodity for sale. For example, many of the indigenous corn farmers in southern Mexico and Central America discussed earlier also produce small amounts of coffee that they sell in order to earn money to buy school supplies for their children, building supplies for their homes, clothing, and other things that they cannot produce themselves.

There are between 20 and 25 million small farmers growing coffee in more than 50 countries around the world. A portion of these small coffee farmers are organized into cooperatives in order to collectively sell their coffee as fair-trade certified. Fair trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. According to Fair Trade International, fair trade supports farmers and workers to combat poverty and strengthen their livelihoods by establishing a minimum price for as many fair-trade products as possible; providing, on top of stable prices, a fair-trade premium; improving the terms of trade for farmers by providing access to information, clear contracts with prepayments, access to markets and financing; and promoting better living wages and working conditions.[10] In order to certify their coffee, small farmers must belong to democratically run producers' associations in which participation is open to all eligible growers, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, or political affiliation.

To better understand how indigenous farmers practice kin-organized subsistence maize production while simultaneously producing an agricultural commodity for global markets, I conducted long-term research in a highland Guatemala community.[11] In 1977 a small number of Tz'utujil Maya coffee farmers formed a cooperative, La Voz Que Clama en el Desierto (A Voice Crying Out in the Wilderness), with the goal of securing higher prices for their agricultural products and escaping the severe poverty they struggled against on a daily basis. Since the early 1990s the group has produced high-quality organic and fair-trade certified coffee for the U.S. market.

The farmers work tirelessly to ensure that their families have sufficient corn to eat and that their coffee meets the cooperative's high standards of quality. The members of La Voz refer to their coffee trees as their "children" who they have lovingly tended for decades. High-quality, organic coffee production is time consuming and arduous—it requires almost daily attention. During the coffee harvest between December and March, wives, husbands, and children work together to pick the coffee cherries by hand as they ripen and carry them to the wet mill each afternoon.

Figure 6.2: Sorting Coffee Beans

While these farmers are producing a product for the global market, it is not strictly a capitalist mode of production. They own their own land and they sell the fruits of their labor for guaranteed prices. They also work cooperatively with one another, pooling and exchanging their labor, in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of their organization. This cooperation, while essential, is hard work. Because the fair-trade system does not rely on anonymous market exchanges, members of La Voz must also dedicate time to nurturing their relationships with the coffee importers, roasters, advocates, and consumers who support all their hard work through promotion and purchases. This means attending receptions when buyers visit, dressing up in traditional clothing to pick coffee on film for marketing materials, and putting up with questions from nosy anthropologists.

Because the coffee farmers also produce much of the food their families consume, they enjoy a great deal of flexibility. In times of hardship, they can redirect their labor to other activities by intensifying corn production, migrating in search of wage labor, or planting other crops. Their ultimate goal is to maintain the family's economic autonomy, which is rooted in ownership of the means of production—in this case, their land. A close examination of these farmers' lives reveals that they are not relics of a precapitalist system. Instead, their economic activity is uniquely adapted to the contemporary global economy in order to ensure their long-term survival.

> Quick Reading Check: Summarize the story above about fair-trade coffee farmers. How is this different from capitalism? Note: This is not a "pre-capitalism relic" but rather a story about a different version of economic production happening now alongside capitalism. Remember capitalism is the newest economic system in human history.

6.2.5 Salaula in Zambia: The Informal Economy

The informal economy includes a diverse range of activities that are unregulated (and untaxed) by the state: rickshaw pullers in Calcutta, street vendors in Mexico City, and scrap-metal recyclers in Lexington, Kentucky, are all considered informal workers. Informal economies include people who are informally self-employed and those working informally for other people's enterprises. In some parts of the world the informal economy is a significant source of income and revenue. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the informal economy generates nearly 40 percent as much revenue as that included in the "official" gross domestic product.[12] Consequently, the informal economy is of great interest to economic anthropologists. However, the term "informal economy" is critiqued by some scholars since often what we refer to as informal economies are actually quite formal and organized, even though this organization is not regulated by the state and may be based on an internal logic that makes the most sense to those who participate in the exchanges.

Karen Hansen provides an in-depth look at the lives of vendors in the salaula, the secondhand clothing markets in Zambia in southern Africa.[13] Salaula, a term that literally means "to rummage through a pile," is an unusual industry that begins in many of our own homes. In today's era of fast fashion in which Americans buy more than 20 billion garments each year (that's 68 garments per person!), many of us regularly bag up our gently used, unfashionable clothing and drop it off at a nearby Goodwill shop.[14] Only about half of these donated clothes actually end up in charity thrift stores. The rest are sold to one of the nearly 300 firms that specialize in the global clothing recycling business. The textile recycling firms sort the clothing by grades; the higher-quality items are sent to Central America, and the lowest grades go to African and Asian countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa an estimated 50

percent of purchased clothing consists of these secondhand imports, referred to by some consumers as "dead man's clothes" because of the belief that they come from the deceased.[15] In Zambia the secondhand clothes are imported in bulk by 40 wholesale firms that, in turn, sell the clothes to salaula traders. The traders sell the clothes out of their homes and in large public markets.

Typically the people working as salaula traders have either never had formal-sector jobs or have lost their jobs in the public or private sector. Often they start selling in order to accumulate money for other activities or as a sideline business. Hansen found that there were slightly more female sellers and that women were more likely to be single heads of households. Successful salaula trading requires business acumen and practical skills. Flourishing traders cultivate their consumer knowledge, develop sales strategies, and experiment with display and pricing. While salaula trading has relatively low barriers to entry (one simply has to purchase a bale of clothing from a wholesale importer in order to get started), in this informal market scale is important: salaula moves best when traders have a lot of it on offer. Traders also have to understand the local cultural politics in order to successfully earn a living in this sector. For example, salaula is different from used clothing from people someone knows. In fact, secondhand clothing with folds and wrinkles from the bale is often the most desirable because it is easily identifiable as "genuine" salaula.[16]

Figure 6.3: Nguzu Roadside Market, Zambia

The global salaula commodity chain presents an interesting example of how material goods can flow in and out of capitalist modes of production and exchange. For example, I might buy a dress that was produced in a factory to give (not sell!) to my young niece. After wearing the dress for several months, Maddie will probably outgrow it, and her Mom will drop it off at the nearby Goodwill shop. There is a 50 percent chance that the dress will be sold by the charity to a clothing recycler who will export it to Zambia or a nearby country. From there the dress will end up in a bale of clothing that is purchased by a salaula trader in Lusaka. At this point the dress enters the informal economy as the salaula markets are unregulated and untaxed. A consumer might buy the dress and realize that it does not quite fit her own daughter. She might then take it to her neighbor, who works informally as a tailor, for alterations. Rather than paying her neighbor for the work on the dress, the consumer might instead arrange to reciprocate at a later date by cleaning the tailor's home. This single item of clothing that has traveled the globe and moved in and out of formal and informal markets highlights how diverse our economic lives really are, a theme that we will return to at the end of this chapter.

Quick Reading Check: How do you participate in the informal economy? Share one example of an informal economy that you participate in? Be ready to share.

6.3 Modes of Exchange

There are three distinct ways to integrate economic and social relations and distribute material goods. Contemporary economics only studies the first, market exchange. Most economic models are unable to explain the second two, reciprocity and redistribution, because they have different underlying logics. Economic anthropology, on the other hand, provides a rich and nuanced perspective into how diverse modes of exchange shape, and are shaped by, everyday life across space and time. Anthropologists understand market exchange to be a form of trade that today most commonly involves general purpose money, bargaining, and supply and demand price mechanisms. In contrast, reciprocity involves the exchange of goods and services and is rooted in a mutual sense of obligation and identity.

Anthropologists have identified three distinct types of reciprocity, which we will explore shortly: generalized, balanced, and negative.[17] Finally, redistribution occurs when an authority of some type (a temple priest, a chief, or even an institution such as

the Internal Revenue Service) collects economic contributions from all community members and then redistributes these back in the form of goods and services. Redistribution requires centralized social organization, even if at a small scale (for example, within the foraging societies discussed above). As we will see, various modes of exchange can and do coexist, even within capitalism.

6.3.1 Reciprocity

While early economic anthropology often seemed focused on detailed investigations of seemingly exotic economic practices, anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Marcel Mauss used ethnographic research and findings to critique Western, capitalist economic systems. Today, many follow in this tradition and some would agree with Keith Hart's statement that economic anthropology "at its best has always been a search for an alternative to capitalism."[18] Mauss, a French anthropologist, was one of the first scholars to provide an in-depth exploration of reciprocity and the role that gifts play in cultural systems around the world. [19] Mauss asked why humans feel obliged to reciprocate when they receive a gift. His answer was that giving and reciprocating gifts, whether these are material objects or our time, creates links between the people involved.[20]

Over the past century, anthropologists have devoted considerable attention to the topic of reciprocity. It is an attractive one because of the seemingly moral nature of gifts: many of us hope that humans are not solely self-interested, antisocial economic actors. Gifts are about social relations, not just about the gifts themselves; as we will see, giving a gift that contains a bit of oneself builds a social relationship with the person who receives it.[21] Studying reciprocity gives anthropologists unique insights into the moral economy, or the processes through which customs, cultural values, beliefs, and social coercion influence our economic behavior. The economy can be understood as a symbolic reflection of the cultural order and the sense of right and wrong that people adhere to within that cultural order.[22] This means that economic behavior is a unique cultural practice, one that varies across time and space.

6.3.2 Generalized Reciprocity

Consider a young child. Friends and family members probably purchase numerous gifts for the child, small and large. People give freely of their time: changing diapers, cooking meals, driving the child to soccer practice, and tucking the child in at night. These myriad gifts of toys and time are not written down; we do not keep a running tally of everything we give our children. However, as children grow older they begin to reciprocate these gifts: mowing an elderly grandmother's yard, cooking dinner for a parent who has to work late, or buying an expensive gift for an older sibling. When we gift without reckoning the exact value of the gift or expecting a specific thing in return we are practicing generalized reciprocity. This form of reciprocity occurs within the closest social relationships where exchange happens so frequently that monitoring the value of each item or service given and received would be impossible, and to do so would lead to tension and quite possibly the eventual dissolution of the relationship.

However, generalized reciprocity is not necessarily limited to households. In my own suburban Kentucky neighborhood we engage in many forms of generalized reciprocity. For example, we regularly cook and deliver meals for our neighbors who have a new baby, a sick parent, or recently deceased relative. Similarly, at Halloween we give out handfuls of candy (sometimes spending $50 or more in the process). I do not keep a close tally of which kid received which candy bar, nor do my young daughters pay close attention to which houses have more or less desirable candy this year. In other cultures, generalized reciprocity is the norm rather than the exception. Recall the Dobe Ju/'hoansi foragers who live in the Kalahari Desert: they have a flexible and overlapping kinship system which ensures that the products of their hunting and gathering are shared widely across the entire community. This generalized reciprocity reinforces the solidarity of the group; however, it also means that Dobe Ju/'hoansi have very few individual possessions and generosity is a prized personality trait.

6.3.3 Balanced Reciprocity

Unlike generalized reciprocity, balanced reciprocity is more of a direct exchange in which something is traded or given with the expectation that something of equal value will be returned within a specific time period. This form of reciprocity involves three distinct stages: the gift must be given, it has to be received, and a reciprocal gift has to be returned. A key aspect of balanced reciprocity is that without reciprocation within an appropriate time frame, the exchange system will falter and the social relationship might end. Balanced reciprocity generally occurs at a social level more distant than the family, but it usually occurs among people who know each other. In other words, complete strangers would be unlikely to engage in balanced reciprocity because they would not be able to trust the person to reciprocate within an acceptable period of time.
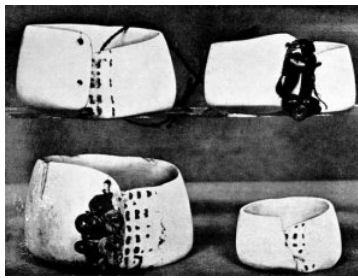
Figure 6.4: Mwali from the Kula Exchange

The Kula ring system of exchange found in the Trobriand Islands in the South Pacific is one example of balanced reciprocity. A Kula ring involves the ceremonial exchange of shell and bead necklaces (soulava) for shell arm bands (mwali) between trading partners living on different islands. The arm bands and necklaces constantly circulate and only have symbolic value, meaning they bring the temporary owner honor and prestige but cannot be bought or sold for money. Malinowski was the first anthropologist to study the Kula ring, and he found that although participants did not profit materially from the exchange, it served several important functions in Trobriand society.[23] Since participants formed relationships with trading participants on other islands, the Kula ring helped solidify alliances among tribes, and overseas partners became allies in a land of danger and insecurity. Along with armbands and necklaces, Kula participants were also engaging in more mundane forms of trade, bartering from one island to another. Additionally, songs, customs, and cultural influences also traveled along the Kula route. Finally, although ownership of the armbands and necklaces was always temporary (for eventually participants are expected to give the items to other partners in the ring), Kula participants took great pride and pleasure in the items they received. The Kula ring exhibits all the hallmarks of balanced reciprocity: necklaces are traded for armbands with the expectation that objects of equal value will be returned within a specific time period.

📌 The Work of Reciprocity at Christmas

How many of us give and receive gifts during the holiday season? Christmas is undeniably a religious celebration, yet while nine in ten Americans say they celebrate Christmas, about half view it to be more of a secular holiday. Perhaps this is why eight in ten non-Christians in the United States now celebrate Christmas.[24] How and why has this one date in the liturgical calendar come to be so central to U.S. culture and what does gift giving have to do with it? In 1865, Christmas was declared a national holiday; just 25 years later, Ladies' Home Journal was already complaining that the holiday had become overly commercialized.[25] A recent survey of U.S. citizens found that we continue to be frustrated with the commercialization of the season: one-third say they dislike the materialism of the holidays, one-fifth are unhappy with the expenses of the season, and one in ten dislikes holiday shopping in crowded malls and stores.[26]

When asked what they like most about the holiday season, 70 percent of U.S. residents say spending time with family and friends. This raises the question of how and why reciprocal gift giving has become so central to the social relationships we hope to nurture at Christmas. The anthropologist James Carrier argues that the affectionate giving at the heart of modern Christmas is in fact a celebration of personal social relations.[27] Among our family members and closest friends this gift giving is generalized and more about the expression of sentiment. When we exchange gifts with those outside this small circle it tends to be more balanced, and we expect some form of equivalent reciprocation. If I spend $50 on a lavish gift for a friend, my feelings will undoubtedly be hurt when she reciprocates with a $5 gift card to Starbucks.

Christmas shopping is arduous–we probably all know someone who heads to the stores at midnight on Black Friday to get a jumpstart on their consumption. Throughout the month of December we complain about how crowded the stores are and how tired we are of wrapping presents. Let's face it: Christmas is a lot of work! Recall how the reciprocity of the Kula ring served many functions in addition to the simple exchange of symbolic arm bands and shell necklaces. Similarly, Christmas gift giving is about more than exchanging commodities. In order to cement our social relationships we buy and wrap gifts (even figuratively by placing a giant red bow on oversize items like a new bicycle) in order to symbolically transform the impersonal commodities that populate our everyday lives into meaningful gifts. The ritual of shopping, wrapping, giving, and receiving proves to us that we can create a sphere of love and intimacy alongside the world of anonymous, monetary exchange. The ritualistic exchange of gifts is accompanied by other traditions, such as the circulation of holiday cards that have no economic or practical value, but instead are used to reinforce social relationships. When we view Christmas through a moral economic lens, we come to understand how our economic behavior is shaped by our historical customs, cultural values, beliefs, and even

our need to maintain appearances. Christmas is hard work, but with any luck we will reap the rewards of strong relational bonds.[28]

6.3.4 Negative Reciprocity

Unlike balanced and generalized reciprocity, negative reciprocity is an attempt to get something for nothing. It is the most impersonal of the three forms of reciprocity and it commonly exists among people who do not know each other well because close relationships are incompatible with attempts to take advantage of other people. Gambling is a good example of negative reciprocity, and some would argue that market exchange, in which one participant aims to buy low while the other aims to sell high, can also be a form of negative reciprocity.

The anthropologist Daniel Smith studied the motives and practices of Nigerian email scammers who are responsible for approximately one-fifth of these types of emails that flood Western inboxes.[29] He found that 419 scams, as they are known in Nigeria (after the section of the criminal code outlawing fraud), emerged in the largest African state (Nigeria has more than 130 million residents, nearly 70 percent of whom live below the poverty line) in the late 1990s when there were few legitimate economic opportunities for the large number of educated young people who had the English skills and technological expertise necessary for successful scams. Smith spoke with some of the Nigerians sending these emails and found that they dreamed of a big payoff someday. They reportedly felt bad for people who were duped, but said that if Americans were greedy enough to fall for it they got what they deserved.

The emails always begin with a friendly salutation: "Dear Beloved Friend, I know this message will come to you as a surprise but permit me of my desire to go into business relationship with you." The introduction is often followed by a long involved story of deaths and unexpected inheritances: "I am Miss Naomi Surugaba, a daughter to late Al-badari Surugaba of Libya whom was murdered during the recent civil war in Libya in March 2011….my late Father came to Cotonou Benin republic with USD 4,200,000.00 (US$4.2M) which he deposited in a Bank here…for safekeeping. I am here seeking for an avenue to transfer the fund to you….Please I will offer you 20% of the total sum for your assistance….."[30]

The emails are crafted to invoke a sense of balanced reciprocity: the authors tell us how trustworthy and esteemed we are and offer to give us a percentage of the money in exchange for our assistance. However, most savvy recipients immediately recognize that these scams are in fact a form of negative reciprocity since they know they will never actually receive the promised money and, in fact, will probably lose money if they give their bank account information to their correspondent.

The typical email correspondence always emphasizes the urgency, confidentiality, and reciprocity of the proposed arrangement. Smith argues that the 419 scams mimic long-standing cultural practices around kinship and patronage relations. While clearly 419 scammers are practicing negative reciprocity by trying to get something for nothing (unfortunately we will never receive the 20 percent of the $4.2 million that Miss Naomi Surugaba promised us), many in the United States continue to be lured in by the veneer of balanced reciprocity. The FBI receives an estimated 4,000 complaints about advance fee scams each year, and annual victim losses total over $55 million.[31]

> Quick Reading Check: How does reciprocity work? What are the three forms and provide an example of each?

6.3.5 Redistribution

Redistribution is the accumulation of goods or labor by a particular person or institution for the purpose of dispersal at a later date. Redistribution is found in all societies. For example, within households we pool our labor and resources, yet we rarely distribute these outside of our family. For redistribution to become a central economic process, a society must have a centralized political apparatus to coordinate and enforce the practice.

Redistribution can occur alongside other forms of exchange. For example, in the United States everyone who works in the formal sector pays federal taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. During the 2015 fiscal year the IRS collected $3.3 trillion in federal revenue. It processed 243 million returns, and 119 million of these resulted in a tax refund. In total, $403.3 billion tax dollars were redistributed by this central political apparatus.[32] Even if I did not receive a cash refund from the IRS, I still benefited from the redistribution in the form of federal services and infrastructure.

📌 Native American Potlatch: Reciprocity or Redistribution?

Sometimes economic practices that appear to be merely reciprocal gift exchanges are revealed to be forms of redistribution after closer inspection. The potlatch system of the Native American groups living in the United States and Canadian northwestern coastal area was long understood as an example of functional gift giving. Traditionally, two groups of clans would perform highly ritualized exchanges of food, blankets, and ritual objects. The system produced status and prestige among participants: by giving away more goods than another person, a chief could build his reputation and gain new respect within the community. After contact with settlers, the excessive gift giving during potlatches escalated to the point that early anthropologists described it as a "war of property."[33]

Later anthropological studies of the potlatch revealed that rather than wasting, burning, or giving away their property to display their wealth, the groups were actually giving away goods that other groups could use and then waiting for a later potlatch when they would receive things not available in their own region. This was important because the availability of food hunted, fished, and foraged by native communities could be highly variable. The anthropologist Stuart Piddocke found that the potlatch primarily served a livelihood function by ensuring the redistribution of goods between groups with surpluses and those with deficits.[34] Our current understanding of the potlatch system shows how important it is to revisit research to ensure it is accurate and complete. Anthropology, as a discipline, continues to grow in knowledge and understanding of other cultures through its scholars' self-reflection and humility in searching for the truth about humanity.

6.3.6 Markets

The third way that societies distribute goods and services is through market exchange. Markets are social institutions with prices or exchange equivalencies. Markets do not necessarily have to be localized in a geographic place (e.g., a marketplace), but they cannot exist without institutions to govern the exchanges. Market and reciprocal exchange appear to share similar features: one person gives something and the other receives something. A key distinction between the two is that market exchanges are regulated by supply and demand mechanisms. The forces of supply and demand can create risk for people living in societies that largely distribute goods through market exchange. If we lose our jobs, we may not be able to buy food for our families. In contrast, if a member of a Dobe Ju/'hoansi community is hurt and unable to gather foods today, she will continue to eat as a result of generalized reciprocal exchanges.

Market exchanges are based on transactions, or changes in the status of a good or service between people, such as a sale. While market exchange is generally less personal than reciprocal exchange, personalized transactions between people who have a relationship that endures beyond a single exchange do exist. Atomized transactions are impersonal ones between people who have no relationship with each other beyond the short term of the exchange. These are generally short-run, closed-ended transactions with few implications for the future. In contrast, personalized transactions occur between people who have a relationship that endures past the exchange and might include both social and economic elements. The transactors are embedded in networks of social relations and might even have knowledge of the other's personality, family, or personal circumstances that helps them trust that the exchange will be satisfactory. Economic exchanges within families, for example when a child begins to work for a family business, are extreme examples of personalized market exchange.

To better understand the differences between transactions between relative strangers and those that are more personalized, consider the different options one has for a haircut: a person can stop by a chain salon such as Great Clips and leave twenty minutes later after spending $15 to have his hair trimmed by someone he has never met before, or he can develop an ongoing relationship with a hair stylist or barber he regularly visits. These appointments may last an hour or even longer, and he and his stylist probably chat about each other's lives, the weather, or politics. At Christmas he may even bring a small gift or give an extra tip. He trusts his stylist to cut his hair the way he likes it because of their long history of personalized transactions.

⚑ Maine Lobster Markets

To better understand the nature of market transactions, anthropologist James Acheson studied the economic lives of Maine fishermen and lobster dealers.[35] The lobster market is highly sensitive to supply and demand: catch volumes and prices change radically over the course of the year. For example, during the winter months, lobster catches are typically low because the animals are inactive and fishermen are reluctant to go out into the cold and stormy seas for small catches. Beginning in April, lobsters become more active and, as the water warms, they migrate toward shore and catch volumes increase. In May prices fall dramatically; supply is high but there are relatively few tourists and demand is low. In June and July catch volume decreases again when lobsters molt and are difficult to catch, but demand increases due to the large influx of tourists, which, in turn, leads to higher prices. In the fall, after the tourists have left, catch volume increases again as a new class of recently

molted lobsters become available to the fishermen. In other words, catch and price are inversely related: when the catch is lowest, the price is highest, and when the catch is highest, the price is lowest.

The fishermen generally sell their lobsters to wholesalers and have very little idea where the lobsters go, how many hands they pass through on their way to the consumer, how prices are set, or why they vary over the course of the year. In other words, from the fisherman's point of view the process is shrouded in fog, mystery, and rumor. Acheson found that in order to manage the inherent risk posed by this variable market, fishermen form long-term, personalized economic relationships with particular dealers. The dealers' goal is to ensure a large, steady supply of lobsters for as low a price as possible. In order to do so, they make contracts with fishermen to always buy all of the lobster they have to sell no matter how glutted the market might be. In exchange, the fishermen agree to sell their catches for the going rate and forfeit the right to bargain over price. The dealers provide added incentives to the fishermen: for example, they will allow fishermen to use their dock at no cost and supply them with gasoline, diesel fuel, paint, buoys, and gloves at cost or with only a small markup. They also often provide interest-free loans to their fishermen for boats, equipment, and traps. In sum, the Maine fishermen and the dealers have, over time, developed highly personalized exchange relations in order to manage the risky lobster market. While these market exchanges last over many seasons and rely on a certain degree of trust, neither the fishermen nor the dealers would characterize the relationship as reciprocal—they are buying and selling lobster, not exchanging gifts.

6.3.7 Money

While general purpose money is not a prerequisite for market exchanges, most commercial transactions today do involve the exchange of money. In our own society, and in most parts of the world, general purpose money can be exchanged for all manner of goods and services. General purpose money serves as a medium of exchange, a tool for storing wealth, and as a way to assign interchangeable values. It reflects our ideas about the generalized interchangeability of all things—it makes products and services from all over the world commensurable in terms of a single metric. In doing so, it increases opportunities for unequal exchange.[36] As we will see, different societies have attempted to challenge this notion of interchangeability and the inequalities it can foster in different ways.

Table 6.1: Key Features and Examples of Redistribution, Reciprocity, and Market Exchange.

Guiding Principles	Key Features	Examples
Reciprocity (Balanced, Generalized, and Negative)	Reciprocity involves the exchange of goods and services and is rooted in a mutual sense of obligation and identity	-Birthday gift giving (Balanced) -Kula Ring (Generalized) -Nigerian Email Scams (Negative)
Redistribution	Occurs when an authority (or institution) collects economic contributions from all the community members and then redistributes these back in a new form of goods and services	Potlatch American Tax System
Market Exchange	a form of trade that today most commonly involves general purpose money, bargaining, and supply and demand price mechanisms	Capitalism Haircut Trip to Target

6.3.8 Tiv Spheres of Exchange

Prior to colonialism, the Tiv people in Nigeria had an economic system governed by a moral hierarchy of values that challenged the idea that all objects can be made commensurable through general purpose money. The anthropologists Paul and Laura Bohannan developed the theory of spheres of exchange after recognizing that the Tiv had three distinct economic arenas and that each arena had its own form of money.[37] The subsistence sphere included locally produced foods (yams, grains, and vegetables), chickens, goats, and household utensils. The second sphere encompassed slaves, cattle, white cloth, and metal bars. Finally, the third, most prestigious sphere was limited to marriageable females. Excluded completely from the Tiv spheres of exchange were labor (because it was always reciprocally exchanged) and land (which was not owned per se, but rather communally held within families).

The Tiv were able to convert their wealth upwards through the spheres of exchange. For example, a Tiv man could trade a portion of his yam harvest for slaves that, in turn, could be given as bridewealth for a marriageable female. However, it was considered immoral to convert wealth downwards: no honorable man would exchange slaves or brass rods for food.[38] The Bohannans found that this moral economy quickly collapsed when it was incorporated into the contemporary realm of general purpose money. When items in any of the three spheres could be exchanged for general purpose money, the Tiv could no longer maintain separate categories of exchangeable items. The Bohannans concluded that the moral meanings of money—in other words, how exchange is culturally conceived—can have very significant material implications for people's everyday lives.[39]

> Quick Reading Check: How has the adoption of general purpose money affected traditional spheres of exchange?

6.3.9 Local Currency Systems: Ithaca HOURS

While we may take our general purpose currency for granted, as the Tiv example demonstrates, money is profoundly symbolic and political. I.e. There is nothing "natural" about money. In fact, the reason we do not question its use is because we, Americans and other industrialized nations, are enculturated into not questioning our use of this "tool". Money is not only the measure of value but also the purpose of much of our activity, and money shapes economic relations by creating inequalities and obliterating qualitative differences.[40] In other words, I might pay a babysitter $50 to watch my children for the evening, and I might spend $50 on a new sweater the next day. While these two expenses are commensurable through general purpose money, qualitatively they are in fact radically different in terms of the sentiment I attach to each (and I would not ever try to pay my babysitter in sweaters).

Some communities explicitly acknowledge the political and symbolic components of money and develop complementary currency systems with the goal of maximizing transactions in a geographically bounded area, such as within a single city. The goal is to encourage people to connect more directly with each other than they might do when shopping in corporate stores using general purpose money.[41] For example, the city of Ithaca, New York, promotes its local economy and community self-reliance through the use of Ithaca HOURS.[42] More than 900 participants accept Ithaca HOURS for goods and services, and some local employers and employees even pay or receive partial wages in the complementary currency. The currency has been in circulation since 1991, and the system was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1998. Today it is administered by a board of elected volunteers. Ithaca HOURS circulate in denominations of two, one, one-half, one-fourth, one-eighth, and one-tenth HOURS ($20, $10, $5, $2.50, $1.25, and $1, respectively). The HOURS are put into circulation through "disbursements" given to registered organization members, through small interest-free loans to local businesses, and through grants to community organizations. The name "HOURS" evokes the principle of labor exchange and the idea that a unit of time is equal for everyone.[43]

Figure 6.5: An Ithaca Hour Note

The anthropologist Faidra Papavasiliou studied the impact of the Ithaca HOURS currency system. She found that while the complementary currency does not necessarily create full economic equality, it does create deeper connections among community members and local businesses, helping to demystify and personalize exchange (much as we saw with the lobstermen and dealers). The Ithaca HOURS system also offers important networking opportunities for locally owned businesses and, because it provides zero interest business loans, it serves as a form of security against economic crisis.[44] Finally, the Ithaca HOURS complementary

currency system encourages community members to shop at locally owned businesses. As we will see in the next section, where we choose to shop and what we choose to buy forms a large part of our lives and cultural identity. The HOURS system demonstrates a relatively successful approach to challenging the inequalities fostered by general purpose money.

> Quick Reading Check: Can you think of two examples of inequalities that result from our dependence on general purpose money?

6.3.10 Local Currency: A Western Massachusetts Example

I, Brendan Kavanah, a Holyoke Community College ANT 101 student in Fall 2023, can actually provide a direct example of this from my own life. I grew up in Great Barrington, in Berkshire county, MA. There's a local currency in the area called Berkshares that's distributed at local banks and accepted at a few hundred businesses in the area, in order to encourage locals to spend their money locally, or to be more accurate, create a proportion of currency that can't be spent *outside* of the local sphere. It costs $1 to get 1 Berkshare from a participating bank, but there's a small exchange fee if trading them back in for regular US dollars, thereby encouraging users to hold onto them and guarantee that a local business will see the profit at some point. They're usually given out at church events, community dinners, and as prizes for races or other contests. As I remember from when I was younger, this was especially true for events that were organized by local business owners like the garden supply store owner, and a few restaurant and brewery owners. Given that, on paper, Berkshares do nothing but limit the flexibility of a given dollar, the whole system can't really function without a base of community-wide support. To help align with this idea of local pride, they even have designs that evoke the natural beauty of the region, and feature the faces of famous Berkshire residents on the front, like W.E.B. Du Bois, Norman Rockwell, and Robyn van En, who founded the first CSA in the US. Here's the website: https://berkshares.org/ for more information.[45]

> Quick Reading Check: Can you think of two examples of inequalities that result from our dependence on general purpose money?

6.4 Consumption of Global Capitalism

Consumption refers to the process of buying, eating, or using a resource, food, commodity, or service. Anthropologists understand consumption more specifically as the forms of behavior that connect our economic activity with the cultural symbols that give our lives meaning.[46] People's consumption patterns are a large part of their lives, and economic anthropologists explore why, how, and when people consume what they do. The answers to these questions lie in people's ideologies and identities as members of a social group; each culture is different and each consumes in its own way. Consumption is always social even when it addresses physical needs. For example, all humans need to eat, but people around the world have radically different ideas of what foods and flavors are most desirable and appropriate.

We use our material possessions to meet our needs (for example, we wear clothing to protect us from the environment), regulate our social lives, and affirm the rightful order of things.[47] Anthropologists understand that the commodities we buy are not just good for eating or shelter, they are good for thinking: in acquiring and possessing particular goods, people make visible and stable the categories of culture.[48] For example, consumption helps us establish and defend differences among people and occasions: I might wear a specific t-shirt and cap to a baseball game with friends in order to distinguish myself as a fan of a particular team. In the process, I make myself easily identifiable within the larger fan community. However, I probably would not wear this same outfit to a job interview because it would be inappropriate for the occasion.

Economic anthropologists are also interested in why objects become status symbols and how these come to be experienced as an aspect of the self.[49] Objects have a "social life" during which they may pass through various statuses: a silver cake server begins its life as a commodity for sale in a store.[50] However, imagine that someone's great-grandmother used that server to cut the cake at her wedding, and it became a cherished family heirloom passed down from one generation to the next. Unfortunately, the server ended up in the hands of a cousin who did not feel a sentimental attachment to this object. She sold it to a gold and silver broker for currency and it was transformed into an anonymous commodity. That broker in turn sold it to a dealer who melted it down, turning the once cherished cake server back into a raw material.

> Quick Reading Check: Some objects can become important symbols and have a social life. Think about one object in your home that has been passed down or will be passed down in the future. What is its story?

6.4.1 Transforming Barbie Dolls

We have already learned about the hard work that Americans devote to converting impersonal commodities into sentimental gifts at Christmastime with the goal of nourishing their closest social bonds. Consumers in capitalist systems continuously attempt to reshape the meaning of the commodities that businesses brand, package, and market to us.[51] The anthropologist Elizabeth Chin conducted ethnographic research among young African American children in a poor neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut, exploring the intersection of consumption, inequality, and cultural identity.

Chin specifically looked at "ethnically correct" Barbie dolls, arguing that while they may represent some progress in comparison to the past when only white Barbies were sold, they also reinforce outdated understandings of biological race and ethnicity. Rather than dismantling race and class boundaries, the "ethnic" dolls create segregated toy shelves that in fact mirror the segregation that young black children experience in their schools and neighborhoods.

The young black girls that Chin researched were unable to afford these $20 brand-name dolls and typically played with less expensive, generic Barbie dolls that were white.[52] The girls used their imaginations and worked to transform their dolls by giving them hairstyles like their own, braiding and curling the dolls' long straight hair in order to integrate the dolls into their own worlds. [53] A quick perusal of the Internet reveals numerous tutorials and blogs devoted to black Barbie hairstyling, demonstrating that the young New Haven girls are not the only ones working to transform these store-bought commodities in socially meaningful ways. [54]

> Quick Reading Check: Share one example of how American consumers have reshaped the meaning of a particular commodity.

6.4.2 Consumption in the Developing World

Consumption provides us with a window into globalization, which we will learn more about in the Globalization chapter. In short, globalization is the way that local and/or national methods of doing stuff become global, that is, done together around the world. Over the past several decades, as global capitalism expanded its reach into developing countries around the world, many people fretted that the growing influx of Western products would lead to cultural homogeneity and even cultural imperialism. Some argued that with every McDonald's constructed, the values and beliefs of the West were being imposed on non-Western societies. However, anthropologists have systematically challenged this thesis by providing a more sophisticated understanding of local cultural contexts. They demonstrate that people do not become Westernized simply by buying Western commodities, any more than I become somehow more Japanese after eating at my favorite neighborhood hibachi restaurant. In fact, anthropological research shows that Western commodities can sometimes lead to a resurgence of local identities and an affirmation of local processes over global patterns.

After I (Vanessa) graduated college, I took a school trip to St. Petersburg, Russia, a place I had never been and a place that my parents were unsure of sending me. My parents, a counselor mother and an army father, both Puerto Rican, could not understand my interest in traveling to Russia because all they had been taught about Russia was based on American cultural stories of the former Soviet Union. That said, they supported my trip plans and wanted me to be careful. While there, many of the other Americans searched for American food and American "stuff" to reduce their culture shock of being in a place they did not know. The American food and stuff cost significantly more than Russian food and reduced the student's ability to blend in. I partook in the Russian fare, saved money, and gained a better understanding of what being American means in other spaces. For my fellow students, they seemed to need the comforts of home to enjoy being away from home. I, on the other hand, remember being fascinated by the limited view of Americans being promoted by the "stuff", American material culture available in Russia. Both our understanding of Russian culture and Russian understanding of American culture seemed to be limited and/or expanded by our interactions and consumption of each other's stuff.

> Quick Reading Check: What impact does McDonald's have on other cultures? And how do we know?

6.4.3 The Children Cry for Bread

The anthropologist Mary Wesimantel researched how families adapt to changing economic circumstances, including the introduction of Western products into their indigenous community of Zumbagua, Ecuador. Once subsistence barley farmers, men from Zumbagua began to migrate to cities in search of work while the women stayed home to care for the children and continue to farm barley for home consumption. The men periodically returned home, bringing cash earnings and urban luxuries such as bread. The children associated this bread with modernity and city life, and they preferred to eat it rather than the traditional staple food of toasted ground barley, grown and cooked by their mothers. The children "cried" for the bread their fathers brought home. Yet, their mothers resisted their pleas and continued to feed them grains from their own fields because barley consumption was considered a core component of indigenous identity.[55] This example illustrates the complex negotiations that emerge within families and communities when they are increasingly integrated into a global economy and exposed to Western goods. The mother's resistance to changing indigenous identity shows that introducing elements of "modernity" does not guarantee that the original cultural identity will be supplanted, but instead could exist alongside what is considered modern.

6.4.4 Consumption, Status, and Recognition among the Elite in China

In other parts of the world, the consumption of Western goods can be used to cement social and economic status within local networks. John Osburg studied the "new elite" in China, the class of entrepreneurs who have successfully navigated the recent transitions in the Chinese economy since the early 1990s when private businesses and foreign investment began to steadily expand their reach in this communist country.[56] Osburg found that the new elite do not constitute a coherent class defined by income level or occupation. Instead, they occupy an unstable and contested category and consequently rely on the consumption of Western-style goods and services in order to stabilize their identities.

Osburg argues that the whole point of elite consumption in Chengdu, China, is to make one's economic, social, and cultural capital as transparent and legible as possible to the widest audience in order to let everyone know one is wealthy and well connected. Consequently, the Chengdu elite favor easily recognizable and pricey brand names. However, consumption is not simply an arena of status display. Instead, Osburg shows how it is a form of social practice through which relationships with other elites are forged: the shared consumption of conventional luxury objects like liquor and tobacco solidifies relationships among the privileged.[57]

6.4.5 Commodities and Global Capitalism

In his 1967 speech "A Christmas Sermon on Peace," the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us that all life is interrelated:

"We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. . . Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world? You get up in the morning and reach over for the sponge, and that's handed to you by a Pacific Islander. You reach for a bar of soap, given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning, and that's poured into your cup by a South American. . . And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world."[58]

King's words are even truer today than they were in the late 1960s. Due to the intensification of global capitalism, the vast majority of the commodities we buy and the food we consume come to us from distant places; while such global supply chains are not new, they have become increasingly dense in an age of container shipping and overnight air deliveries.

Recall that a commodity is any good that is produced for sale or exchange for other goods. However, commodities are more than just a means to acquire general purpose money. They also embody social relations of production, the identities of businesses, and particular geographic locales. Many economic anthropologists today study global flows through the lens of a concrete substance that makes a circuit through various locales, exploring the social lives of agrifood commodities such as mutton, coffee, sushi, and sugar.[59] In following these commodities along their supply chains, anthropologists highlight not only relations of production but also the power of ideas, images, and noneconomic actors. These studies of specific commodities are a powerful method to show how capitalism has grown, spread, and penetrated agrarian societies around the world.[60] One example of this type of commodity research uses darjeeling tea production in India and is done by anthropologist Sarah Besky.

6.4.6 Darjeeling Tea

In India, tea plantation owners are attempting to reinvent their product for 21st century markets through the use of fair-trade certification (discussed earlier in this chapter) and Geographical Indication Status (GI). GI is an international property-rights system, regulated by the World Trade Organization, that legally protects the rights of people in certain places to produce certain commodities. For example, bourbon must come from Kentucky, Mezcal can only be produced in certain parts of Mexico, and

sparkling wine can only be called champagne if it originated in France. Similarly, in order to legally be sold as "Darjeeling tea," the tea leaves must come from the Darjeeling district of the Indian state of West Bengal.

Besky researched Darjeeling tea production in India to better understand how consumer desires are mapped onto distant locations. [61] Besky explores how the meaning of Darjeeling tea is created through three interrelated processes: (1) extensive marketing campaigns aimed at educating consumers about the unique Darjeeling taste, (2) the application of international law to define the geographic borders within which Darjeeling tea can be produced, and (3) the introduction of tea plantation-based tourism. What the Darjeeling label hides is the fact that tea plantations are highly unequal systems with economic relationships that date back to the colonial era: workers depend upon plantation owners not just for money but also for food, medical care, schools, and housing. Even when we pay more for Darjeeling tea, the premium price is not always returned to the workers in the form of higher wages. Besky's research shows how capitalism and market exchange shapes the daily lives of people around the world. The final section of this chapter explores the ways in which economic anthropologists understand and question structural inequalities in the world today.

> Quick Reading Check: What information does the example of darjeeling tea provide us about how commodities exist within global capitalism?

6.5 Political Economy: Understanding Inequality

Humans are fundamentally social, and our culture is always shared and patterned: we live our lives in groups. However, not all groups serve the needs of their members, and some people have more power than others, meaning they can make the weak consent through threats and coercion. Within all societies there are classes of people defined by the kinds of property they own and/or the kinds of work they engage in.[62] Beginning in the 1960s, an increasing number of anthropologists began to study the world around them through the lens of political economy. This approach recognizes that the economy is central to everyday life but contextualizes economic relations within state structures, political processes, social structures, and cultural values.[63] Some political economic anthropologists focus on how societies and markets have historically evolved while others ask how individuals deal with the forces that oppress them, focusing on historical legacies of social domination and marginalization. [64]

Karl Marx famously wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."[65] In other words, while humans are inherently creative, our possibilities are limited by the structural realities of our everyday lives.

> 📌 Let's see an example of the interplay between structure and agency:
>
> Consider a typical college student studying within a particular degree program. Is this student happy with the courses her department or college is offering? Are there courses that she needs to graduate that are not being offered yet? She is free to choose among the listed courses, but she cannot choose which courses are available. This depends on factors beyond her control as a student: who is available to teach which topics or what the administration has decided is important enough to offer. So, her agency and ability to choose is highly constrained by the structures in place. In the same way, political economies constrain people's choices and define the terms by which we must live. Importantly, it is not simply structures that determine our choices and actions; these are also shaped by our community.
>
> Just as our college student may come to think of the requirements she has to fulfill for her degree as just the way it is (even if she does not want to take that theory course!), people come to think of their available choices in everyday life as simply the natural order of things. However, the degree of agency one has depends on the amount of power one has and the degree to which one understands the structural dimensions of one's life. This focus on power and structural relations parallels an anthropological understanding of culture as a holistic system: economic relations never exist by themselves, apart from social and political institutions. It is important to understand two things 1) the fact that we all have some human agency, one's ability to understand the barriers and opportunities we have based on our social identity markers (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and more), and 2) how social structures based on the power of our social identity markers can create barriers and/or opportunities for our success.

6.5.1 Structural Violence and the Politics of Aid in Haiti

Anthropologists interested in understanding economic inequalities often research forms of structural violence present in the communities where they work.[66] Structural violence is a form of violence in which a social structure or institution harms people

by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. In other words, how political and economic forces structure risk for various forms of suffering within a population. Structural violence can include things like infectious disease, hunger, and different forms of violence (torture, rape, crime, etc.).

In the United States we tend to believe that individuals and personal experiences determine how much power you have and your ability to become "well off". A popular narrative holds that if you work hard enough you can "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" in this country of immigrants and economic opportunity. This ideology also leads to victim blaming: the logic is that if people are poor it is their own fault.[67] However, studying structural violence, and understanding the interplay between structure and agency, helps us understand that for some people there simply is no getting ahead and all one can hope for is survival.

⚑ Structural Violence: The Story of Haiti, before, during and after the 2010 earthquake

The conditions of everyday life in Haiti, which only worsened after the 2010 earthquake, are a good example of how structural violence limits individual opportunities. Haiti is the most unequal country in Latin America and the Caribbean: the richest 20 percent of its population holds more than 64 percent of its total wealth, while the poorest 20 percent hold barely one percent. The starkest contrast is between the urban and rural areas: almost 70 percent of Haiti's rural households are chronically poor (vs. 20 percent in cities), meaning they survive on less than $2 a day and lack access to basic goods and services.[68] Haiti suffers from widespread unemployment and underemployment, and more than twothirds of people in the labor force do not have formal jobs. The population is not well educated, and more than 40 percent of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate.[69] According to the World Food Programme, more than 100,000 Haitian children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition and one in three children is stunted (or irreversibly short for their age). Only 50 percent of households have access to safe water, and only 25 percent have adequate sanitation.[70]

On January 12, 2010, a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck this highly unequal and impoverished nation, killing more than 160,000 people and displacing close to 1.5 million more. Because the earthquake's epicenter was near the capital city, the National Palace and the majority of Haiti's governmental offices were almost completely destroyed. The government lost an estimated 17 percent of its workforce. Other vital infrastructure, such as hospitals, communication systems, and roads, was also damaged, making it harder to respond to immediate needs after the quake.[71]

The world responded with one of its most generous outpourings of aid in recent history. By March 1, 2010, half of all U.S. citizens had donated a combined total of $1 billion for the relief effort (worldwide $2.2 billion was raised), and on March 31, 2010 international agencies pledged $5.3 billion over the next 18 months.[72] The anthropologist Mark Schuller studied the aftermath of the earthquake and the politics of humanitarianism in Haiti. He found that little of this aid ever reached Haiti's most vulnerable people, the 1.5 million people living in the IDP (internally displaced persons) camps. Less than one percent of the aid actually was given to the Haitian government. The largest single recipient was the U.S. military (33 percent), and the majority of the aid was disbursed to foreign-run non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Haiti.

Because so little of this aid reached the people on the ground who needed it most, seven months following the disaster 40 percent of the IDP camps did not have access to water, and 30 percent did not have toilets of any kind. Only ten percent of families in the camps had a tent and the rest slept under tarps or bedsheets. Only 20 percent of the camps had education, health care, or mental health facilities on-site.[73] Schuller argues that this failure constitutes a violation of the Haitian IDP's human rights, and it is linked to a long history of exploitative relations between Haiti and the rest of the world.

Haiti is the second oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere (after the United States), having declared its independence from France in 1804. Years later, in order to earn diplomatic recognition from the French government, Haiti agreed to pay financial reparations to the powerful nation from 1825 to 1947. In order to do so, Haiti was forced to take out large loans from U.S. and European banks at high interest rates. During the twentieth century, the country suffered at the hands of brutal dictatorships, and its foreign debts continued to increase. Schuller argues that the world system continually applied pressure to Haiti, draining its resources and forcing it into the debt bondage that kept it from developing. In the process, this system contributed to the very surplus that allowed powerful Western nations to develop.[74]

When the earthquake struck, Haiti's economy already revolved around international aid and foreign remittances sent by migrants (which represented approximately 25 percent of the gross domestic product).[75] Haiti had become a republic of NGOs that attract the nation's most educated, talented workers (because they can pay significantly higher wages than the national government, for example). Schuller argues that the NGOs constitute a form of "trickle-down imperialism" as they reproduce the world system.[76] The relief money funneled through these organizations ended up supporting a new elite class rather than the impoverished multitudes that so desperately need the assistance.

6.6 Conclusion

Anthropologists have identified forms of structural inequality in countless places around the world. As we will learn in the Public Anthropology chapter, anthropology can be a powerful tool for addressing the pressing social issues of our times. When anthropological research is presented in an accessible and easily understood form, it can effectively encourage meaningful public conversations about questions such as how to best disperse relief aid after natural disasters.

One of economic anthropology's most important lessons is that multiple forms of economic production and exchange structure our daily lives and social relationships. As we have seen throughout this chapter, people simultaneously participate in both market and reciprocal exchanges on a regular basis. For example, I may buy lunch for a friend today with the idea that she will return the favor next week when she cooks me supper. Building on this anthropological idea of economic diversity, some scholars argue that in order to address the economic inequalities surrounding us we should collectively work to construct a community economy, or a space for economic decision-making that recognizes and negotiates our interdependence with other humans, other species, and our environment. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy argue that in the process of recognizing and negotiating this interdependence, we become a community.[77]

At the heart of the community economies framework is an understanding of economic diversity that parallels anthropological perspectives. The economic iceberg is a visual that nicely illustrates this diversity.[78] Above the waterline are economic activities that are visible in mainstream economic accounts, things like formal wage labor and shopping for groceries in a supermarket. Below the waterline we find the wide range of people, places, and activities that contribute to our well-being. This conceptual tool helps us to explore interrelationships that cannot be captured through mechanical market feedback loops.[79]

The most prevalent form of labor around the world is the unpaid work that is conducted within the household, the family, and the neighborhood or wider community. When we include these activities in our understanding of the diverse economy, we also reposition many people who may see themselves (or are labeled by others) as unemployed or economically inactive subjects.[80] When we highlight these different kinds of labor and forms of compensation we expand the scope of economic identities that fall outside the narrow range valued by market production and exchange (employer, employee, or entrepreneur).[81] Recognizing our mutual connections and the surplus possibilities in our own community is an important first step toward building an alternative economy, one that privileges community spheres rather than market spheres and supports equality over inequality. This also resonates with one of economic anthropology's central goals: searching for alternatives to the exploitative capitalist relations that structure the daily lives of so many people around the world today.[82]

> 📌 **Glossary**
>
> **Balanced reciprocity:** the exchange of something with the expectation that something of equal value will be returned within a specific time period.
>
> **Consumption:** the process of buying, eating, or using a resource, food, commodity, or service.
>
> **Generalized reciprocity:** giving without expecting a specific thing in return.
>
> **General purpose money:** a medium of exchange that can be used in all economic transactions.
>
> **Homo economicus:** a term used to describe a person who would make rational decisions in ways predicted by economic theories.
>
> **Means of production:** the resources used to produce goods in a society such as land for farming or factories.
>
> **Mode of production:** the social relations through which human labor is used to transform energy from nature using tools, skills, organization, and knowledge.
>
> **Negative reciprocity:** an attempt to get something for nothing; exchange in which both parties try to take advantage of the other.
>
> **Political economy:** an approach in anthropology that investigates the historical evolution of economic relationships as well as the contemporary political processes and social structures that contribute to differences in income and wealth.
>
> **Redistribution:** the accumulation of goods or labor by a particular person or institution for the purpose of dispersal at a later date.

Structural violence: a form of violence in which a social structure or institution harms people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

Subsistence farmers: people who raise plants and animals for their own consumption, but not for sale to others.

Bibliography

Acheson, James. The Lobster Gangs of Maine. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1988. Besky, Sarah. The Darjeeling Distinction: Labor and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India. Berkeley:

University of California Press, 2014.

Bohannan, Paul and Laura Bohannan. Tiv Economy. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968. Carrier, James. Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism Since 1700. New York: Routledge,

1995.

Chin, Elizabeth. Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy. Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Hansen, Karen. Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Hart, Keith. "Money in Twentieth Century Anthropology." In A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, edited by James Carrier. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012.

King, Martin Luther Jr. "A Christmas Sermon on Peace, December 24, 1967," http://thekingcenter.org/ archive/document/christmas-sermon.

Lyon, Sarah. Coffee and Community: Maya Farmers and Fair Trade Markets. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011.

Marx, Karl. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon." In The Marx-Engels Reader, edited by Robert

  1. Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton, 1978[1852].

Mauss, Marcel. The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies. London: Routledge, 1990[1925].

Osburg, John. Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich. Stanford, CA: Stanford Uni- versity Press, 2013.

Papavasiliou, Faidra. "Fair Money, Fair Trade: Tracing Alternative Consumption in a Local Currency Economy." In Fair Trade and Social Justice: Global Ethnographies, edited by Sarah Lyon and Mark Moberg. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Piddocke, Stuart. "The Potlatch System of the Southern Kwakiutl: A New Perspective," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 21 (1965).

Schuller, Mark. "Haiti's Disaster after the Disaster: the IDP Camps and Cholera," Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, December 10, 2013. https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/869

Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012.

Smith, Daniel. A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Wesimantel, Mary. Food, Gender, and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes. Philadelphia: University of Penn- sylvania Press, 1988.

Wolf, Eric. Europe and the People without History. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

About the Original Author

Sarah Lyon is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky. Her work is situated at the juncture of development studies, economic anthropology and food studies. She is particularly interested in how alternative food networks such as fair trade work to create and sustain diverse economies in the United States and Latin America.

Media Attributions

- Private: Hopi maiden © Picryl is licensed under a Public Domain license
- Private: Sorting Coffee Beans © openverse is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license
- Private: Nguzu Roadside Market © Seiko Yamada on Unsplash is licensed under a CC0 (Creative Commons Zero) license
- Private: Mwali © Sarah Lyon is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license
- Private: In Ithica We Trust © Fllickr is licensed under a CC0 (Creative Commons Zero) license
- Private: Sarah Lyon © Sarah Lyon is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

1. James Carrier, "Introduction," in A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, ed. James Carrier (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012), 4. ↵
2. Richard Wilk and Lisa Cliggett, Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007), 37. ↵
3. Carol Tarvis,"How Homo Economicus Went Extinct," Wall Street Journal, May 15, 2015, http://www.wsj.com/ articles/how-homo-economicus-went-extinct-1431721255 ↵
4. Eric Wolf, Europe and the People without History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). ↵
5. Richard Lee, The Dobe Ju/'hoansi (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2013). See also, Thomas Patterson, "Distribution and Redistribution," in A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, ed. James Carrier (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012). ↵
6. Hill Gates, China's Motor: A Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996). ↵
7. Thomas Patterson, "Distribution and Redistribution," in A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, ed. James Carrier (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012), 204. ↵
8. Martha Alter Chen, "The Informal Economy in Comparative Perspective," in A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, ed. James Carrier (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012), 493. ↵
9. Keith Hart, "Money in Twentieth Century Anthropology," in A Handbook of Economic Anthropology, ed. James Carrier (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012). ↵
10. See www.fairtrade.net for more information. ↵
11. Sarah Lyon, Coffee and Community: Maya Farmers and Fair Trade Markets (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011). ↵
12. Friedrich Schneider, Andreas Buehn, and Claudio E. Montenegro, "Shadow Economies from All Over the World: New Estimates for 162 Countries from 1999 to 2007," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5356, July 2010. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/...pdf?sequence=1. ↵
13. Karen Hansen, Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). ↵
14. Elizabeth Cline, Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion (New York: Portfolio, 2013). ↵
15. Robyn Curnow and Teo Kermeliotis, "Is Your Old T-Shirt Hurting African Economies?" CNN, April 12, 2013, http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/12/busine...lothes-africa/. ↵
16. Karen Hansen, Salaula. ↵
17. Marshall Sahlins, Stone Age Economics (Chicago: Aldine, 1972). ↵
18. Keith Hart, "Money in Twentieth Century Anthropology," 179. ↵
19. Marcel Mauss, The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies (London: Routledge, 1990[1925]). ↵
20. Richard Wilk and Lisa Cliggett, Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology, 158. ↵
21. Ibid., 162. ↵
22. Ibid., 120. ↵
23. Bronislaw Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific (New York: Dutton, 1961[1922]). ↵

24. Pew Research Center, "Celebrating Christmas and the Holidays Then and Now," December 18, 2013. http://www.pewforum.org/2013/12/18/c...-then-and-now/. ↵

25. James Carrier, Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700 (New York: Routledge, 1995), 189 ↵

26. Pew Research Center, "Celebrating Christmas and the Holidays Then and Now." ↵

27. James Carrier, Gifts and Commodities. ↵

28. Ibid., 178. ↵

29. Daniel Smith, A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria (Princeton, NJ: Prince- ton University Press, 2007). ↵

30. Erika Eichelberger, "What I Learned Hanging out with Nigerian Email Scammers," Mother Jones, March 20, 2014. http://www.motherjones.com/politics/...erian-scammers. ↵

31. Erika Eichelberger, "What I Learned Hanging out with Nigerian Email Scammers." ↵

32. Internal Revenue Service, 2015 Data Book (Washington D.C. Internal Revenue Service, 2016). ↵

33. Richard Wilk and Lisa Cliggett, Economies and Cultures,156. ↵

34. Stuart Piddocke, "The Potlatch System of the Southern Kwakiutl: A New Perspective," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 21 (1965). ↵

35. James Acheson, The Lobster Gangs of Maine (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1988). ↵

36. Alf Hornborg, "Learning from the Tiv: Why a Sustainable Economy Would Have to Be 'Multicentric,'" Culture and Agriculture 29 (2007): 64. ↵

37. Paul Bohannan and Laura Bohannan, Tiv Economy (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968). ↵

38. Paul Bohannan, "Some Principles of Exchange and Investment among the Tiv," American Anthropologist 57 (1955): 65. ↵

39. Ibid., 64. ↵

40. Faidra Papavasiliou, "Fair Money, Fair Trade: Tracing Alternative Consumption in a Local Currency Economy," in Fair Trade and Social Justice: Global Ethnographies, ed. Sarah Lyon and Mark Moberg (New York: New York University Press, 2010). ↵

41. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). ↵

42. For more information, see http://ithacahours.info/ ↵

43. Faidra Papavasiliou, "Fair Money, Fair Trade: Tracing Alternative Consumption in a Local Currency Economy." ↵

44. Ibid., 216. ↵

45. Fall 2023 Holyoke Community College student Brendan Kavanah example of Berkshares currency. ↵

46. Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, "Consumption: From Cultural Theory to the Ethnography of Capitalism," in Hand- book of Sociocultural Anthropology, ed. James Carrier and Deborah Gewertz (New York: Berg Publishers, 2013), 319. ↵

47. Ibid. ↵

48. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, A World of Goods: Toward an Anthropology of Consumption (New York: Basic Books, 1979). ↵

49. Colloredo-Mansfeld, "Consumption: From Cultural Theory to the Ethnography of Capitalism." ↵

50. Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). ↵

51. Colloredo-Mansfeld, "Consumption: From Cultural Theory to the Ethnography of Capitalism," 329. ↵

52. See for instance, http://www.target.com/p/barbie-endle...l/-/A-15203859 ↵

53. Elizabeth Chin, Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). ↵

54. For example, https://playbarbies.wordpress.com/20...-or-halo-hair/ ↵

55. Mary Wesimantel, Food, Gender, and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988). ↵

56. John Osburg, Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality among China's New Rich (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). ↵

57. Ibid., 121. ↵

58. Martin Luther King, Jr., A Christmas Sermon on Peace, December 24, 1967, http://thekingcenter.org/archive/doc...ristmas-sermon. ↵

59. Some examples of this literature include Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, Cheap Meat: Flap Food Nations in the Pacific Islands (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Sarah Lyon, Coffee and Community: Maya Farmers and Fair Trade Markets (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011); Theodore Bestor, Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the

World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and Sidney Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (New York: Penguin, 1985). ↵

60. Colloredo-Mansfeld, "Consumption: From Cultural Theory to the Ethnography of Capitalism," 326. ↵

61. Sarah Besky, The Darjeeling Distinction: Labor and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). ↵

62. Wilk and Cliggett, Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology, 84, 95. ↵

63. Josiah Heyman, "Political Economy," in Handbook of Sociocultural Anthropology, ed. James Carrier and Deborah Gewertz (New York: Berg Publishers, 2013), 89. ↵

64. The historical evolution of societies and markets is explored by Eric Wolf in Europe and the People without History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). The legacies of social domination and marginalization are discussed by Philippe Bourgois in In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). ↵

65. Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, in The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978[1852]). ↵

66. Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," Journal of Peace Research 6 no. 3(1969): 167–191. ↵

67. See Max Weber's work The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism available at http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WEBER/cover.html ↵

68. "Living Conditions in Haiti's Capital Improve, but Rural Communities Remain Very Poor," World Bank, July 11, 2014. http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/fea...ort-au-prince- are-improving-haiti-countryside-remains-very-poor. ↵

69. "CIA Factbook: Haiti," https://www.cia.gov/library/publicat...k/geos/ha.html. ↵

70. "Ten Facts about Hunger in Haiti," https://www.wfp.org/stories/10-facts...t-hunger-haiti. ↵

71. Mark Schuller, "Haiti's Disaster after the Disaster: the IDP Camps and Cholera," Journal of Humanitarian Assis- tance, December 10, 2013. https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/869 ↵

72. Ibid. ↵

73. Ibid. ↵

74. Mark Schuller, Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012). ↵

75. Terry Buss, Haiti in the Balance: Why Foreign Aid has Failed and What We Can Do about It (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 2008). ↵

76. Mark Schuller, Killing with Kindness. ↵

77. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xix. ↵

78. Byrne, Ken, "Iceberg Image," http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home/Key-Ideas. ↵

79. Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy, Take Back the Economy, 11. ↵

80. J. K. Gibson-Graham, A Postcapitalist Politics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 62–63. ↵

81. Ibid., 65. ↵

82. Keith Hart, "Money in Twentieth Century Anthropology." ↵

Chapter 7: Political Anthropology- A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Remix Authors:

Vanessa Martínez, Holyoke Community College, vmartinez@hcc.edu

Demetrios Brellas, Framingham State University, dbrellas@framingham.edu

Original Author

Paul McDowell, Santa Barbara City College, paulanthropus@cox.net

> ◐ 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.

7.1 WHAT IS POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

All cultures have one element in common: they 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,** as well as aboriginal Australians, experience disputes that must be contained if interpersonal conflicts are to be reduced or eliminated. As societies become more complex, the types of control increase accordingly. The study of these means of social control is the subject of 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:

1. power—the ability to induce behavior of others in specified ways by means of coercion or use or threat of physical force—and
2. authority—the ability to induce behavior of others by persuasion.[1]

Power and authority are points on a continuum, and both are present in every society to some degree.

Extreme examples of the exercise of state-level power are the gulags (prison camps) in Stalinist Russia, the death camps in Nazi-ruled Germany and Eastern Europe, and so-called Supermax 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 comply or are punished or executed. And yet, even when absolute power is exerted in state level societies, you still see forms of persuasion and authority. Even Hitler, who exercised absolute power in many ways, had to hold the Nuremberg rallies to generate popular support 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 extreme are most forager societies, which typically exercise authority more often than power. Groups in these societies comply with the wishes of their most persuasive members. These societies that tend to use persuasion through authority also have some forms of coercive power. For example, among the Inuit, 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, as well as those of the Aztecs 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 Atahualpa 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).

Figure 7.1: Babylonian god Shamash legitimizing the rule of law from the Law Code of Hammurabi

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. Sometimes 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.

> Quick Reading Check: Think of an example of a group you belong to, whether it is a sports team, club, or other organization. How does leadership work? By what rules are leaders in this organization given Legitimacy?

7.2 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 unit 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]

> **Quick Reading Check:** Take one form of socio-cultural political organization – band, tribe, chiefdom, and state – and discuss how it functions including use of power and authority (defined earlier in reading) as well as their levels of (in)equity.

7.2.1 Egalitarian Societies

We humans are not equal in all things. Both gender and age along with other social identity markers have determined the amount of power and status people have within societies. The status of women is low relative to the status of men in many, if not most, societies, as we will see. 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. Also, humans 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 that cannot be questioned or changed. But is this true? Is the concept of social class universal, ie. seen in every society across the world? Well, let's look at the data found in ethnographic research. 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, it 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.

> **Quick Reading Check**: How do egalitarian societies deal with wealth?

7.2.2 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."[9] At 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 patrilocal 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 matrilocal 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.

> **Quick Reading Check**

7.2.3 Law, Disputes and Warfare in Band Societies

Within bands of people, disputes are typically resolved informally and in social ways. 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**, on the other hand, 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]

Figure 7.2: "Mbuti women in Mabukulu, DR Congo"

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 interpersonal 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 relatives 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]

> Quick Reading Check: Describe two different ways in which conflicts can be settled in Band Societies.

7.2.4 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 headsman, 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 the 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]

> Quick Reading Check: How are tribes and bands alike? How are they different?

7.2.5 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]

Table 7.1: Grades and age sets among the Tiriki. Reprinted with permission of Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Traditional Duties of Age Grade	Age Sets 1939	Age Sets 1954	Age Sets 1979	Age Sets 1994
Retired or Deceased: 91-105	Kabalach	Golongolo	Jiminigayi	Nyonje
Ritual Elders: 76-90	Golongolo	Jiminigayi	Nyonje	Mayina
Judicial Elders: 61-750	Jiminigayi	Nyonje	Mayina	Juma
Elder Warriors: 46-60	Nyonje	Mayina	Juma	Sawe
Warriors: 31-45	Mayina	Juma	Sawe	Kabalach
Initiated and Uninitiated Youths: 16-30	Juma	Sawe	Kabalach	Golongolo
Small Boys: 0-15	Sawe	Kabalach	Golongolo	Jiminigayi

> **Quick Reading Check**: What questions do you have about Figure 1 and the example of age sets and age grades from the Tiriki?

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.

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.
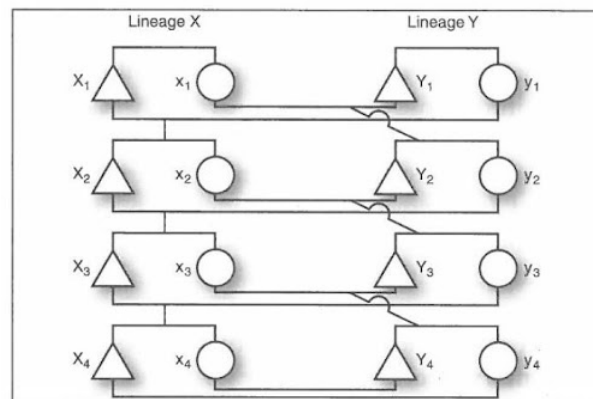

Figure 7.3: Bilateral cross-cousin marriage. Reprinted with permission of Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Figure 7.3 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 fig- ures), creating an **affinal** link. Trace the relationship between X3 and y3 through their matrilateral 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 patrilateral 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 matrilateral 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 patrilateral side, 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 matrilateral cross- cousin and patrilateral 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 Levi-Strauss, called **restricted exchange**.[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.

> **Quick Reading Check**: How does (tribal) integration by marriage work? Ie, how can marriage create beneficial alliances?

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.
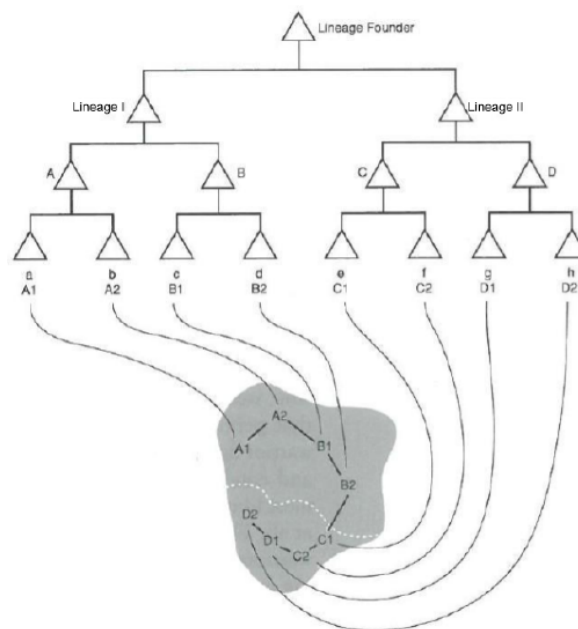

Figure 7.4: Segmentary lineage model. Note connection of each lineage, regardless of relative size, to its territory. Reprinted with permission of Kendall Hunt Publishing Company

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 Sahlins (1961) in studies of the Nuer, tribes in which such lineages occur typically have relatively large populations of close to 100,000 persons.[29]

> **Quick Reading Check**: Provide an example of how segmentary lineage works.

7.2.6 Law in Tribal Societies

Has anyone seen the movie Wedding Crashers? The main characters are divorced mediators. I always think about this when trying to wrap my mind about how "mediation" can resolve conflicts in our society? What could we learn from the Leopard Skin Chief system?

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, headmen 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 commision 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 unre- solved 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]

> **Quick Reading Check**: Think of your family or close friends as a social unit lacking a strict "codified law." Describe a way that an individual may be punished and how those punishments are organized.

7.2.7 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]

> **Quick Reading Check**: Describe two different ways in which tribal societies engage in warfare.

7.3 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 Kwak- waka'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 were 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 chieftainship of his father. If his performance had so far met their expectations, and 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 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]

> **Quick Reading Check**: Describe two differences between chiefdoms and tribal societies.

7.3.1 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.
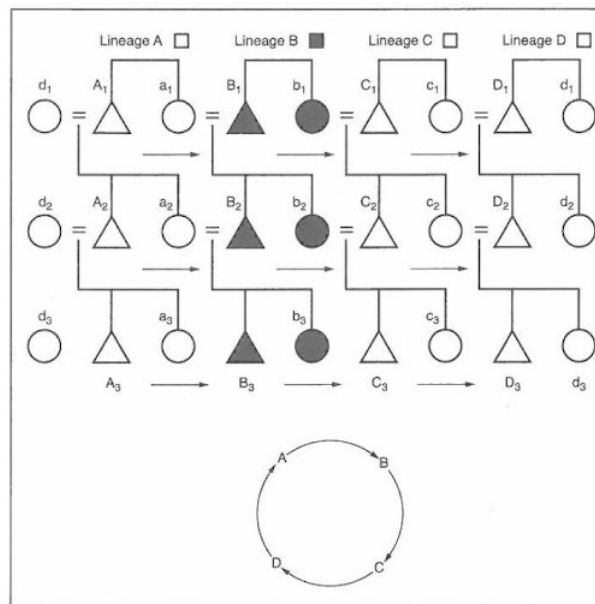
Figure 7.5: Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. Reprinted with permission of Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

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 matrilateral 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" (commoners). 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 (commoner), the child would become a Great Sun. If a stinkard man were to marry a Great Sun woman, the child would be the same rank as the mother. 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]

7.3.2 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. Outside of Guinea, they are legal and membership is universally mandatory under local laws. These secret societies 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.

7.4 Stratified Societies

In contrast with 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 some- times 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 farm- workers, 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 *Dalit*s. 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 catchphrase 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]

> **Quick Reading Check:** In terms of social mobility, how does a caste system differ from American society?

7.4.1 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 highly ethnically diverse populations, and are characterized by complex economies that can be driven by a variety of forces. 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 plebeian (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 powerful characteristic of states but often less understood is their **ideologies**, ideas designed to reinforce the right of those in power to rule. Ideologies are often unquestioned by the majority of people in a society. Changes to ideologies happen when they are questioned by segments of the population that mobilize to change things. 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 betrays an important weakness—subjects and citizens often refuse to recognize the power holders' 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.

Table 7.2: A graphical comparison of the features of different societies discussed in the text.

	Bands	Tribes	Ranked Societies & Chiefdoms	States
Settlements	nomadic	semi-permanent	more than one permanent (sedentary) community	many permanent communities
Primary Subsistence Strategy	food collecting	horticulture and pastoralism	non-mechanized agriculture	intensive agriculture, trade
Economy	generalized reciprocity	reciprocity, some redistribution	redistribution	market economy
Social Structure	egalitarian – situational leadership	some status differences but not rigid or permanent	ranked lineages	clearly defined classes and highly stratified
Political System	non-centralized decision by consensus; power by influence; informal and temporary leaders	non-centralized; some part time officials (big men/age grades); power by skills and knowledge; "achieved status"	centralized power; authority based on birth; "ascribed status"	centralized authority with formal offices and multiple governing bodies; power based on laws
Examples	Painte (North Am), Mbuti (Congo), Tiwi (Australia), Dobe !Kung (Africa)	Yanomami, Big Men (New Guinea), Tiriki (Kenya), Nuer (Sudan), Bedouin (Middle East), Azande (Sudan & Congo)	Kwak-waka'wakw (North Am), Kachin (Burma), Natchez (North Am), Kpelle	Most countries including the United States

7.4.2 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 coterminous 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 multinational.

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 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.

7.4.3 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 have 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 agriculture back to for- aging, 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 sheepherding 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]

7.4.4 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 Babylon (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, are meant to ensure the protection of all citizens from offenses ranging from theft to homicide. This is not always the case.

Often 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] 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. Government funds continue to go to prisons rather than schools, affecting the education and lived experiences of BIPOC communities and expanding "slave labor" in prisons, according to Michelle Alexander who, in 2012, called the current system the school-to-prison pipeline, which disproportionately targets people of color.[67] The school-to-prison pipeline refers to under-resourced schools becoming the breeding ground for young people becoming products of the criminal justice system.

7.4.5 Warfare in States

Warfare occurs in all human societies. It is particularly widespread and integral to the formation of the agricultural state. As governing 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 militarily, then as a 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.

7.4.6 Stability and Duration of States: Why Do States Decline?

It should be noted that states have a clear tendency toward instability. Few states have lasted a thousand years. The American state is more than 245 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]

Is the United States a State in Decline?

Several factors impact the decline of states overtime – 1) Extreme disparities in wealth, 2) use of force to keep populations in line, 3) the stripping of people's resources (such as the enclosures in England that removed peasants from their land), and 4) the harshness of many laws create a general animosity toward the elite in a state. While these can lead to state level decline, it is not guaranteed.

Sometimes, widespread discontent does not lead to the dissolution of a state or 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 continued to vote into office the Republicans whose policies are responsible for these conditions.[72]

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.

Quick Reading Check: Given what you know about state level societies, do you believe the United States is a state in decline? Why or why not? What would it take for it to decline completely?

7.4.7 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 is discussed in greater detail in the case study available here.

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 has been decimated by conflict between the Bashar Assad 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 for foreign investors as witnessed by the collapse of a clothing factory in 2013 that took the lives of more than 1,100 workers.

7.5 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?

? 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 fami- lies. 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. 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 leader- ship 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.
>
> **Chiefdom**: 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 power holders 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 sizable 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.

Bibliography

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

Atwan, Abdel Bari. *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*. London: Saqi Books, 2015. Befu, Harumi. *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction*. San Francisco: Chandler, 1971.

Bellman, Beryl. *The Language of Secrecy: Symbols and Metaphors in Poro Ritual.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rut- gers University Press, 1984.

Bledsoe, Caroline H. *Women and Marriage in Kpelle Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Boehm, Christopher. *Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Har- vard University Press, 1999.

Bohannan, Paul. *Justice and Judgment among the Tiv.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1989. Butterfield, Fox. 1996. "Study Finds Disparity of Justice for Blacks." *New York Times*, February 13: 8A. Carneiro, Robert. "On the Relationship between Size of Population and Complexity of Social Organi-

zation." *Southwest Journal of Anthropology* 23 (1967): 234–243.

. "A Theory of the Origin of the State." *Science* 169 no. 3947 (1970):733–738.

. "Chiefdom: Precursor to the State." In *The Transition to Statehood in the New World,* edited by Grant Jones and Grant, and Robert Kautz, 37–75. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Chagnon, Napoleon. *Yanomamo*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1997. Childe, V. Gordon. "The Urban Revolution." *Town Planning Review* 21 (1950):3–17.

Clay, J.W. "What's a Nation?" In *Talking about People*, edited by William Haviland and R.J. Gordon.

Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1996.

Cockburn, Patrick. *The Age of Jihad*. London: Verso, 2016.

. *Chaos and Caliphate: Jihadis and the West in the Struggle for the Middle East*. New York: OR Books, 2016.

Diamond, Jared. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed.* New York: Viking, 2004. Drucker, Philip. *Indians of the Northwest Coast*. New York: Natural History Press, 1955.

Ember, Melvin, and Carol Ember. *Cultural Anthropology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2002. Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. *The Nuer*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1940.

. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Fallers, Louis. "Are African Cultivators to Be Called Peasants?" *Current Anthropology* 2 no. 2 (1961): 108–110.

Fox, Robin. *Kinship and Marriage*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1967.

Frank, Thomas. *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004.

. *Listen Liberal: Or, Whatever Happened To the Party of the People?* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2016.

Fried, Morton. *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology.* New York: McGraw- Hill, 1967.

. "The State, the Chicken, and the Egg or What Came First?" In *Origins of the State*, edited by Ronald Cohen and Elman Service. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978.

Good, Kenneth. *Into The Heart: One Man's Pursuit of Love and Knowledge among the Yanomami.* Upper Sad- dle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997.

Harris, Marvin. *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*. New York: Vintage, 1974.

Harris, Marvin, and Orna Johnson. *Cultural Anthropology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

Hart, C.W.M, Arnold R. Pilling, and Jane Goodale. *The Tiwi of North Australia*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988.

Haviland, William. *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005. Heider, Karl. *The Dugum Dani: A Papuan Culture in the Highlands of West New Guinea.* Chicago: Aldine,

1970.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning of Our Political Divide*. New York: New Press, 2016.

Hoebel, E. Adamson. *The Law of Primitive Man*. New York: Atheneum, 1968 [1954].

Isenberg, Nancy. *White Trash: The 400 Year Untold History of Class in America*. New York: Viking, 2016. Johnson, Chalmers. *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*. New York: Met-

ropolitan Books, 2004.

Khare, Ravindra. *The Untouchable as Himself: Identity and Pragmatism among the Lucknow Chamars.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Koch, Klaus-Friedrich, Soraya Altorki, Andrew Arno and Letitia Hickson. "Ritual Reconciliation and the Obviation of Grievances: A Comparative Study in the Ethnography of Law." *Ethnology* 16 (1977): 269–284.

Kroeber, Alfred L. *Anthropology.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1948.

Lancaster, William. *The Rwala Bedouin Today*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997. Lee, Richard. *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi.* New York: Thomson, 2003.

Little, Kenneth. "The Political Function of the Poro, Part 1." *Africa* 35 (1965): 349–365.

Long, Bruce. "Reincarnation." *Encyclopedia of Religion,* Vol. 12, 265–269. New York: Macmillan, 1987. Maloney, William. "Dharma." *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4, 239–332. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

. "Karma." *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 8, 261–266. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

Martin, M. Kay, and Barbara Voorhies. *Female of the Species.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies.* London: Routledge, 2001 [1925].

McCants, William. *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State.* New York: St. Martins, 2015.

McDowell, Paul V. "Political and Religious Change in a Guatemalan Factory Community." Ph.D. Diss., University of British Columbia, 1974.

. "The Decline of the Civil-Religious Hierarchy: The Case of Cantel." *NorthSouth: Canadian Jour- nal of Latin American Studies* 35 no. 10 (1980): 17–35.

Meggitt, Mervyn. *Blood is their Argument: Warfare among the Mae-Enga.* Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1977. Murphy, Robert F, and Leonard Kasdan. "The Structure of Parallel Cousin Marriage*." American Anthro-*

pologist 61 no. 1 (1959.):17–29.

Nader, Laura. *Harmony Ideology: Justice and Control in a Zapotec Mountain Village.* Stanford: Stanford Uni- versity Press, 1991.

Nance, Malcolm. *Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, What They Want, What They Believe.* New York: Skyhorse Press, 2016.

Napoleoni, Loretta. *The Islamic Phoenix: The Islamic State and the Redrawing of the Middle East.* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2014.

Oliver, Douglas. *A Solomon Island Society: Kinship and Leadership among the Siuai of Bougainville.* Cam- bridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955.

Otterbein, Keith. "The Anthropology of War." In *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology,* edited by John Huntington. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974.

. *The Evolution of War: A Cross-cultural Study.* New Haven, CT: Human Relation Area Files, 1989. Perelman, Michael. *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primi-*

tive Accumulation. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation.* New York: Beacon Press, 1944.

Redfield, Robert. *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Roberts, Sam. "Fighting the Tide of Bloodshed on Streets Resembling a War Zone." *New York Times*, November 15, 1993: B12.

Sahlins, Marshall. "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion." *American Anthropologist* 63 (1961):322–343.

Sangree, Walter. "The Bantu Tiriki of Western Kenya." In *Peoples of Africa,* edited by James Gibbs. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

Scupin, Raymond. *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2012. Service, Elman. *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective.* New York: Random House,

1962.

. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution.* New York: W.W. Norton, 1975.

. *Profiles of Ethnology.* New York: Harper Collins, 1978. Stavrianos, Leften S. *Global Rift.* New York: Quill, 1974.

Steward, Julian. *The Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution.* Urbana: Univer- sity of Illinois Press, 1955.

Strathern, Andrew, and Pamela J. Stewart. *Collaborations and Conflict: A Leader through Time.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1999.

Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall. *The Harmless People.* New York: Knopf, 1959.

Turnbull, Colin. 1963. *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo.* New York: Simon and Schus- ter.

. "The Mbuti Pygmies in the Congo." In *Peoples of Africa,* edited by James Gibbs, 279– 318. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

. *The Mbuti Pygmies: Change and Adaptation.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983. Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.* New York: Free Press, 1997 [1947].

White, Douglas. "Rethinking Polygyny, Co-wives, Codes, and Cultural Systems." *Current Anthropology*

29 no. 4 (1988): 529–533.

Wray, Matt. *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Wolf, Eric R. "Closed Corporate Communities in Mesoamerica and Central Java." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 13 no. 1 (1957):1–18.

. *Peasants.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Media Attributions

---

1. Morton Fried, The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). ↵
2. E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man (New York: Atheneum, 1968 [1954]). For a critique of Hoebel, see John Steckley, White Lies about the Inuit (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). ↵
3. Elman Service, Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975). ↵
4. Christopher Boehm. Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. ↵
5. Richard Lee, The Dobe Ju/'hoansi (New York: Thomson, 2003). ↵
6. Julian Steward, *The Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 54. ↵
7. Elman Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization*. ↵
8. Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*. ↵
9. Richard Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, 109–111. ↵
10. Julian Steward, *The Theory of Culture Change*. ↵
11. Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962). ↵
12. M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies, *Female of the Species* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975). ↵
13. E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man*, 168. ↵
14. See Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963) and Colin Turnbull, *The Mbuti Pygmies: Change and Adaptation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983). ↵
15. C.W. Merton Hart, Arnold R. Pilling, and Jane Goodale. *The Tiwi of North Australia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988). ↵
16. Richard Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, 112–118. ↵
17. Napoleon Chagnon, *Yanomamo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1997), 133–137. ↵
18. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 2001 [1925]). ↵
19. Douglas Oliver, *A Solomon Island Society: Kinship and Leadership among the Siuai of Bougainville* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955). For an account of Ongka, the big man in a Kawelka village, see Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Collaborations and Conflict: A Leader through Time* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1999). ↵
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 ques- tions 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 ↵
21. Mervyn Meggitt, *Blood Is Their Argument: Warfare among the Mae-Enga* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1977) 202–224. ↵
22. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*. ↵
23. Ibid ↵
24. Ibid ↵
25. Claude Levi-Strauss' concept is further described in Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1967), 182–187. ↵
26. Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. *The Nuer*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1940. ↵
27. Paul Bohannan, *Justice and Judgment among the Tiv.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1989. And Murphy, Robert F, and Leonard Kasdan. "The Structure of Parallel Cousin Marriage.*" American Anthropologist* 61 no. 1 (1959.):17–29. ↵
28. Marshall Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion." *American Anthropologist 63* (1961):322–343. ↵
29. Ibid ↵
30. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1976). ↵
31. Klaus-Friedrich Koch et al., "Ritual Reconciliation and the Obviation of Grievances: A Comparative Study in the Ethnography of Law." *Ethnology 16* (1977):269–270. ↵
32. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1940), 291. ↵

33. Laura Nader, *Harmony Ideology: Justice and Control in a Zapotec Mountain Village.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). ↵

34. Marvin Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*. New York: Vintage, 1974. Good, Kenneth. *Into The Heart: One Man's Pursuit of Love and Knowledge among the Yanomami.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997 ↵

35. Napoleon Chagnon, *Yanomamo*, 91–97. ↵

36. Douglas White, "Rethinking Polygyny, Co-wives, Codes, and Cultural Systems," *Current Anthropology* 29 no. 4 (1988): 529–533 ↵

37. Karl Heider, *The Dugum Dani: A Papuan Culture in the Highlands of West New Guinea* (Chicago: Aldine, 1970). ↵

38. Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast* (New York: Natural History Press, 1955). ↵

39. Ibid ↵

40. For more information about the reasons for the potlatch ban, see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaiken, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990). The website of the U'Mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada offers more information about potlatch traditions and the impact of the ban: www.umista.ca. ↵

41. Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast*. ↵

42. Edmund Leach, cited in Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage*, 215–216. ↵

43. Raymond Scupin, *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2012).4 ↵

44. The information comes from William Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997) and Elman Service, *Profiles of Ethnology* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978). ↵

45. Beryl Bellman, *The Language of Secrecy: Symbols and Metaphors in Poro Ritual* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Uni- versity Press, 1984). ↵

46. Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro, Part 1." *Africa* 35 (1965):349–365. See also Caroline Bledsoe, *Women and Marriage in Kpelle Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). ↵

47. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Beacon Press, 1944). ↵

48. Bruce Long, "Reincarnation," *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987) and William Maloney, "Dharma," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan, 1987). ↵

49. Ravindra Khare, *The Untouchable as Himself: Identity and Pragmatism among the Lucknow Chamars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). ↵

50. Harumi Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1971). ↵

51. William Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*. ↵

52. Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) and Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1997 [1947]). ↵

53. For instance, Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. ↵

54. J.W. Clay, "What's a Nation?" in *Talking about People*, William Haviland and R.J. Gordon, eds. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield), 1996. ↵

55. Robert Carneiro, "A Theory of the Origin of the State." *Science* 169 no. 3947 (1970): 733–738 and Robert Carneiro, "Chiefdom: Precursor to the State," in *The Transition to Statehood in the New World*, Grant Jones and Robert Kautz, eds. 37–75. New York: Cambridge University Press. ↵

56. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1948), 284. ↵

57. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). ↵

58. Louis Fallers, "Are African Cultivators to Be Called Peasants?" *Current Anthropology* 2 no. 2 (1961): 108–110. ↵

59. Eric Wolf, *Peasants*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966. ↵

60. Ibid. ↵

61. Leften S. Stavrianos, *Global Rift* (New York: Quill, 1974). ↵

62. Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 38–59. ↵

63. For more information about land privatization, see Paul V. McDowell, "Political and Religious Change in a Guatemalan Factory Community." Ph.D. Diss., University of British Columbia, 1974 and Paul V. McDowell, "The Decline of the Civil-Religious Hierarchy: The Case of Cantel." *NorthSouth: Canadian Journal of Latin Ameri- can Studies* 35 no. 10 (1980):17–35. ↵

64. Morton Fried "The State, the Chicken, and the Egg or What Came First?" In *Origins of the State*, edited by Ronald Cohen and Elman Service. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978. ↵

65. Sam Roberts, "Fighting the Tide of Bloodshed on Streets Resembling a War Zone." *New York Times*, November 15, 1993: B12. ↵

66. Fox Butterfield, "Study Finds Disparity of Justice for Blacks." *New York Times*, Feb. 13, 1996 8A. ↵

67. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010. ↵

68. V. Gordon Childe, "The Urban Revolution." *Town Planning Review* 21 (1950): 3–17. ↵

69. Keith Otterbein "The Anthropology of War," in *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, John Huntington, ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974) and *The Evolution of War: A Cross-cultural Study* (New Haven, CT: Human Relation Area Files, 1989). ↵

70. Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2004). ↵

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: Metropoli- tan Books, 2004). ↵

Index

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Grant Information

The U.S. Department of Education, the granting agency for the ROTEL project, requires information about the grant be included in the back matter. The text for this section is provided below.

The contents of this book were developed under a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

For more information about the ROTEL Project, please visit our project website.

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: Shared Voices - An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Brellas and Martinez)

Webpages: 22

Applicable Restrictions: Noncommercial

All licenses found:

- CC BY-NC 4.0: 50% (11 pages)
- Undeclared: 50% (11 pages)

By Page

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: Shared Voices - An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Brellas and Martinez)

Webpages: 22

Applicable Restrictions: Noncommercial

All licenses found:

- CC BY-NC 4.0: 50% (11 pages)
- Undeclared: 50% (11 pages)

By Page