Turn of Century Cultural Evolutionism: Ethnocentric and Racist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Practices</th>
<th>Civilized</th>
<th>Savage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Monogamy</td>
<td>Polygyny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>Extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage transaction</td>
<td>Dowry</td>
<td>Bride price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Monotheistic</td>
<td>Polytheistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal system</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Custom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnocentric Unilinear Model

Protestantism
Catholicism
Monotheism
Polytheism
Totemism
Animism

Note moral and “progressive” ranking
Which tool is more complex?

Figure 1. Stone tools: The first distance weapons. a) Water-polished cobble; b) Mousterian point from the Levant (ca. 55,000–65,000); c) Solutrian point made by behaviorally modern humans in Western Europe (ca. 18,000–22,000 ya); d) flint arrowhead from the American Midwest (ca. 1000 ya). Figures are approximately actual size. Humans have used weapons since the origin of Homo ca. 2–2.5 million years ago. All of these tools/weapons had multiple uses; however, on the coalitional enforcement hypothesis, their most fundamental use was in coercive enforcement of kinship-independent social cooperation.
How do we measure complexity?
Some components:

- Many parts
- Specialization of parts
- Integration of parts
Characteristics of Bands

- **Leadership**
  - headman
  - ephemeral (non-hereditary)
  - charismatic
  - demonstrated competence

- **Status**
  - age & sex
  - accomplishments
  - shaman

- **Religion**
  - ethnic
  - shamanic

- **Economics**
  - sex division of labor
  - reciprocity
  - generalization
Characteristics of Tribes

- **Leadership**
  - headman or bigman

- **Status**
  - based on accumulation of wealth

- **Sodality**
  - organizations such as age grades, lineages, or secret societies that cross-cut territorial boundaries

- ** Corporateness of local residential group**
  - In bands changing membership is easy (fluid)
  - In tribes it is more difficult (rigid)
Simple ad hoc non-hierarchical alliance system: ties are short-lived and can be unilaterally broken and usually found in bands.

Circles represent villages and double-arrows alliances.
Hierarchical alliance system based on kinship: Segmentary Lineage
Characteristics of Headmen & Big Men

- Generosity
- Oratorical abilities
- Dispute settlement
- Consensus forming

-Benefits of being a headman
- Polygyny (in some cases)
- Family members may be better treated
Dealing with an aggrandizing headman

Mechanisms used by the rank-and-file to prevent dominance by their leader:

- criticism, gossip, and ridicule
- disobedience
- public denouncement (usually by a council of men)
- desertion
- exile
- execution

Example of egalitarianism in sharing: San “Belittling of the Meat”

“Yes, when a young man kills much meat he comes to think of himself as a chief or a big man, and he thinks of the rest of us as his servants or inferiors. We can’t accept this. We refuse one who boasts, for someday his pride will make him kill somebody. So we always speak of his meat as worthless. This way we cool his heart and make him gentle”.

Evolution and Dominance

- Boehm shows that among social primates there are dominance hierarchies that allow dominants to have:
  - Priority of access to
    - Food
    - Mates
    - Shelter
- In egalitarian societies this is not the case
- In tribal systems with strong big men and clearly in chiefdoms the primate dominance pattern reasserts itself

Prestige and Dominance

• In primate societies there is a dominance hierarchy which leads to high dominance individuals having priority of access to resources and mates. Dominant individuals coerce sub-dominants, are approached submissively, and advertise their dominance through aggressive displays.

• In egalitarian societies this is much diminished.

• Instead certain individuals because of their expertise in cultural knowledge or performance have high *prestige*. Examples include:
  - Hunting ability
  - Artifact manufacture
  - Curing
  - Knowledge of history and social rules
  - Dispute resolution skills

• High prestige individuals:
  - Do things that are useful to the group through teaching, curing, or high productive abilities (e.g., good hunters)
  - They may gain certain advantages (extra food or mates) from those that pay them respect.

Big Man in New Guinea

First steps back toward dominance

The Bigman is an informal leader in many Melanesian cultures. Much of his influence is based on his ability to distribute resources, among which pigs are most important.
Big Man Relations

"Big man" gets power and prestige through persuading relatives to contribute goods to giveaways.
The Great Transformation

Hereditary

Inequality
Characteristics of Chiefdoms

**Status**
- age & sex
- birth
- priest (=chief)
- conical or ranked clans (usually segmented)

**Leadership**
- chief
- hereditary position (primogeniture)
- coercion

**Religion**
- theocratic & ethnic
- ancestor worship

**Economics**
- redistribution
- craft specialization
Conical Descent Group

Founding ancestor

nobles
commoners
Redistribution: goods flow up the system to a center (e.g., a chief) and then flow back down when needed.
Large Scale Political Integration

- Chiefdoms are hierarchical and regional polities incorporating several local groups.
- Leaders are members of a ruling aristocracy with dominant roles in social, political, and religious affairs.
Highly Integrated Chiefdom

Alternative model of Cahokia:
A series of quasi-autonomous & competitive chiefdoms

- Paramount mound center (i.e., Cahokia)
- 2nd line mound centers (e.g., Mitchell, East St. Louis, Lumsford-Pulaski)
- Nodal villages, hamlets, & farmsteads

Strong directives & redistribution via (related?) elites
Weak directives & redistribution via (co-opted/consquered?) elites
Greater tribute (labor & surplus)
Less tribute (labor & surplus)
Zone of tension/competition between quasi-autonomous chiefdoms
Cahokia: A complex chiefdom

Map of central Cahokia Mounds showing major site features and tour trails

http://www.cahokiamounds.com/cahokia.html
Characteristics of States

Leadership & Politics
- a ruler who has the monopoly of the use of physical coercion in a geographic area
- concept of a crime & rule of law

Economics
- increased specialization often in hereditary guilds or castes

Religion
- imperial or universalistic
- overlay of local ethnic religions

Status
- continues to be based on birth (ascription)
- power of kinship groups begins to decline except among high status
- Mobility may be low or high (closed or open stratified systems)
Caste System in India: example of low mobility

- Brahmins: priests and teachers
- Ksatriyas: warriors and rulers
- Vaisyas: merchants, farmers, artisans
- Sudras: laborers

Outcastes and untouchables: polluted workers
Modes of Social Control in States

- **Direct Repression**
  - use of police,
  - jails, courts, and informers

- **Ideological Manipulation**
  - magico-religious institutions
  - education system
  - monumental architecture
  - state propaganda

- **Provision of Benefits**
  - military protection
  - police
  - infrastructure
  - social insurance
As the European powers and Japan expanded, much of the world fell under their colonial rule. The Americas were colonized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but by 1900, most American nations had gained their independence. In 1900, the key areas under colonial rule were in Africa and Asia. Most of these nations gained their independence by the mid-1960s. Today, very few colonies remain, but many modern nations remain deeply affected by their colonial past.
Scramble for Africa
Britain’s share of the world
World Systems Theory Classification

- **Core Societies**: powerful industrial industrial societies that dominate other regions economically. They dominate trade, control advanced technology, and have highly diversified and productive economies.

- ** Peripheral Societies**: non-industrial industrial societies that have little control over their own economies and are dominated by core societies.

- **Semi-Peripheral Societies**: societies that are partially industrialized & enjoy some economic autonomy but not as advanced as core societies.
World Systems
States obliterate lineages because states:

- have the exclusive right to wage war
- enact and administer laws
- control productivity and redistribute wealth
- lay claim to right of eminent domain and administer tenure
- exact tribute, and the like

General Trends in Cultural Evolution

Band
- Leader: headman
- Status: age, sex, & accomplishments
- Division of labor: general
- Exchange: reciprocity
- Politics: local sovereignty
- Religion: ethnic, shaman

Tribe
- Leader: bigman
- Politics: sodality

Chiefdom
- Leader: chief
- Status: hereditary inequality
- Division of labor: some specialization
- Exchange: redistribution
- Politics: multiple settlements, conical clan
- Religion: theocracy, priest, ancestor worship

State
- Leader: king, president, etc.
- Division of labor: specialized
- Exchange: money
- Politics: monopoly of physical coercion, concept of crime
- Religion: universalistic

Increasing social complexity
Overall Evolutionary Trends

- Decrease in number of independent political units (Carneiro estimates at 1000 BC there were at least 100,000 independent political units but today there are about 200).

- Increase in size of independent political units
- Reduction in family power relations (especially parents over children and husbands over wives)
- Greater bureaucratic control
- Greater specialization in all areas of life
- Family and kinship are not correlated in a straightforward manner with social complexity
Family Power Relationships

- Children must go to school
- Content of curriculum relating to civic & moral issues in the hands of “experts”
- Parents cannot abuse or neglect children
- Spousal abuse is prohibited
- Children free to seek medical treatment or parents cannot forbid medical treatment under certain circumstances
Unilineal Descent & Social Complexity

non-unilineal

unilineal

bands tribes chiefdoms states
Family Form and Social Complexity

- bands
- tribes
- chiefdoms
- states

extended nuclear