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Anthropology and the Globalized World: An Examination of the Process of Globalization as it has Affected the Nature of Culture and Anthropology

Garrett Kennedy

University of Pennsylvania

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Anthropology and the Globalized World:

An examination of the process of globalization as it has affected the nature of culture and anthropology

by

Garrett Kennedy
Introduction

Over the past century, there has been a very clear change in the construction of every society in the world. The world has undergone, and continues to do so, a rapid process of what has been dubbed globalization; over the last one hundred years, societies and cultures from across the entire world have become linked in ways that were never before possible. These connections have occurred in every realm of human life, affecting social, political, and economic issues throughout the world. A general interconnectivity and interdependence has arisen between populations on opposite sides of the world, as the actions of groups that in centuries past would have had little to no interaction now weigh heavily in the daily lives of the various other groups around the world.

The concept of culture is one that has been heavily affected by this process of globalization. Culture is that which is transmitted through one’s society, the fundamental conception of life and the framework through which one perceives the world. Culture is a given lifestyle, and the history and knowledge that surrounds it, which has been passed along among members of a given culture. Culture is based out of tradition, and has a strong effect the way that one understands the world around them.

Through the process of globalization and its various social pressures, however, culture has been forced to change. As large portions of the world’s population have been forced to migrate and urbanize, the traditional cultures have been altered. As information technology has increased worldwide, cultural icons and ideologies have spread out of their culture of origin and into other cultures. Cultures have been changed and altered throughout time, but the most drastic changes, on a global scale, can be seen within the last century; this process of global interconnectedness has even spurred some
to suggest that the world has reached a form of global culture through a similar
worldwide ideology.

Anthropology, a social science based on the study of culture, has always relied
heavily on the study of foreign, tribal cultures. Having arisen in what is often referred to
as Western society, or the first modernized and industrialized realms of the world,
anthropology has long consisted of studying cultural groups that are tribal in nature.
Anthropology has a history of looking at traditional cultures that are for the most part not
interwoven with the over-arching social processes of the rest of the world.

As the world has become more globally oriented, these isolated tribal societies
have also started to become oriented within the global sphere, and their cultures have
been subsequently affected and influenced. A process of cultural flow and fluidity has
occurred, as, worldwide, cultural groups have had influence upon one another. With such
a worldwide interconnection, anthropology can no longer simply be a science based upon
the study of the foreign and the tribal, as the untainted tribal group is disappearing, or has
even disappeared, to the point that suggestions of an achieved global culture have been
made. The question must then be asked as to what the role of anthropology as an
applicable social science in the globalized world can be. If anthropology can no longer
be a study of the groups unknown to the modernized world, then what role does
anthropology fulfill, and what purpose does it serve?
Globalization

Throughout the last century, the world has undergone a process dubbed globalization. Quite simply put, globalization is the process of the formulation of connections across the entire globe. As stated by Roland Robertson:

“Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole... both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole.” [Robertson 1992, p. 8]

The term globalization refers to the process of forming a level co-dependence and interconnection between the entire population of the world. Globalization refers to the growing level of connections throughout differing cultural groups across the globe, and the influences that each culture has had upon one another. While a general term, globalization refers to the interchange of ideas, culture, economics goods, religion, and any facet social life. In essence, globalization is the process of cultural and ideological movement throughout the world.

Globalization has occurred at an increasingly high rate within the past century for a number of reasons, such as improvement in technologies, especially for communication and information transfer, the increase in population, with a subsequent process of urbanization, the rise of nation-states throughout the world, and the creation of transnational corporation. While these are but some of the factors that have played into the creation of a globalized world, they are among some of the primary factors that have led to bring differing cultures into a type of immediate and interdependent contact that otherwise would not be possible. Through this contact, a degree of cultural flow and movement has occurred as the movement of cultural ideas, and often the movement of
members of a culture, have led to the dissemination of aspects of various cultures around the globe.

*Information and Communication Technology.* The increased amount of information transfer technology has had a hefty impact towards creating a globalized world. With the improvements that have been made in information and communication transfer, the flow of ideas is no longer limited simply to word of mouth or printed press. Rather information can be maneuvered across oceans and directly to people through television, telephone, music, and, more recently, the internet. The improvement of communication technologies brings together sectors of the world that are geographically separated, and now does so with such speed that the physical separation can be of minimal importance. This has effectively brought together differing social groups that would have no or minimal contact in the past, and never with the immediacy presented through the mediums of the internet and television.

One prime example of the flow of cultures through media related technology can be seen through television, as *The Cosby Show*, an U.S. based sitcom, was the number one rated television program throughout the 1980s in South Africa. [Barber 2000, p. 25] This demonstrates a degree of cultural movement from one continent to another. The television show moved overseas and worked to attract a set of multi-national viewers. There is thus a clear movement of some aspect of American culture into the lives of South Africans, simply through the viewing of the television show. It is important to note that South Africans found this program engaging despite the fact that it was based within a different society and culture. This suggests a certain degree of accessibility that
would not have been present in a pre-globalized society; without having knowledge of or connection with American society, this program could not have held the same appeal.

The globalization of cultural icons, such as a television show, can also be seen in the world of sports. In a recent article on ESPN.com, Larry Platt wrote concerning the far-reaching popularity of basketball player Allen Iverson:

“Man, I got crazy love like this all around the world?” a stunned Iverson asked ... as he gazed upon a packed, screaming, gyrating crowd on five levels of a Chilean mall, kids and adults alike jockeying for a glimpse of the American ballplayer...

How hot is Iverson globally? So much so that a photographer from Japan has moved to Philadelphia, the better to get shots of Iverson for a string of Japanese "AI" [Allen Iverson] magazines. [Platt 2003]

This event occurred after Iverson's first year playing professional basketball in the U.S. In many ways this seems to sum up the vast amount of cultural material that flows across the world; within one year of playing in the NBA, the popularity of this figure had spread so far as to have a multi-level shopping mall filled with fans. Though Iverson had never played basketball in Chile, because of information technologies such as television, people had learned of Iverson all across the world. The same can be said about the example of the Japanese photographer; although Iverson has never played professional basketball in Japan, his popularity was enough to spread across the Pacific Ocean and inspire a number of Iverson based magazines. The fact that in both cases the popularity of Iverson spread with such speed to places geographically distant demonstrates the speed and accessibility of modern information-based technologies, which in turn increases the speed of, and amount of, cultural spread throughout the globe.
**Population increase and urbanization.** Much in the same way that an increase in information technology has had an impact upon the communication of groups, so has the recent drastic increase in population size. The world population has more than doubled in the past century; in fact, in less than one half of the last century, largely due to the decrease in infant mortality, the world population has doubled. [Why Files 1999] The vast population increase has caused a subsequent increase in urbanization, which in turn has increased the contact between people and groups who otherwise would not have come into contact with one another. This has increased global communication as it has altered the landscape of communication; members of different societies and cultures are brought together through urbanization, which in turns creates a link between differing cultural groups who previously would likely have no interaction.

With the increase in population, coupled with a shift towards capitalist and exported based agricultural economies, as opposed to more subsistence and locally based economies, and the development of new and expensive technologies, the ability to live within a small-scale, localized traditional lifestyle is often no longer a viable option. James Scott depicts this:

"The introduction of combine-harvesting, as the most sudden and devastating of the changes associated with double-cropping, also stirred the most active resistance. The resistance went well beyond the arguments about its efficiency, the complaints over lost wages, and the slander directed against those who hired it... Throughout the rice bowl of Kedah there were efforts physically to obstruct [the combine harvester’s] entry into the fields, incidents of arson and sabotage, and widespread attempts to organize “strikes” of transplanters against those who first hired the machine. All of these actions ultimately failed to prevent mechanization of the paddy harvest...

Combines were, of course, not the first machines that had threatened the livelihood of poorer villagers in Muda.... The use of tractors and trucks to haul paddy
directly from the field to town had earlier sparked spirited and successful resistance in some villages. The threat posed by combines, however, was of a far greater magnitude. Sporadic resistance began as early as 1970, when the first small experimental machines, adapted from a Japanese prototype, were used in field trials near the town of Jitra. Officials of the Muda Agricultural Development Authority, who conducted the trials, recalled several incidents of sabotage..." [Scott 1985, p.248]

In the example of Sedaka, the introduction of the combine-harvesters severely crippled the economic welfare of both the small landowner and of the hired laborer. As these machines were put into use, the small landowner could no longer produce rice fast enough to match the large landowners, and could not afford to purchase or rent these machines, which were able to increase the annual amount of grain produced. This dealt a significant blow to the financial well being of these farmers, who had become dependant on the sale of rice as an export. These machines also hurt the financial situation of the poor non-landowners, as they were no longer needed to harvest the rice. Without being paid to harvest, many of the poor were left without any way to earn money for food. Situations such as this can often force members of rural societies to search for work in urbanized areas, as a wide array of jobs can be found.

Another example of this can be seen in the pastoral Maasai, who have lost much of their tradition, grazing lands in the post colonial period due to the creation of a large nature reserve in the midst of their traditional nomadic routes. [Barron 1999] Combined with the fact that of the open land is filled with unexploded landmines from British military training, and that the natural grazing lands are confined by arbitrarily drawn state boundaries, many Maasai have essentially been forced to give up their traditional nomadic lifestyle for a sedentary and urban lifestyle. [Anonymous 1999]
As many cultural groups are forced to look for work in urbanized areas, they bring with them their own cultural background. While certain aspects of lifestyle change are inevitable, members of a culture carry with them the fundamental beliefs, many of the same cultural practices, and the similar conception of the world that is promoted by their culture. In this way, urbanization becomes a form of melting pot of cultures, as different cultures are able to influence one another. This represents yet another form of cultural flow that has occurred through the process of globalization, as differing cultures that might have not before had contact are brought into contact.

*Nation states.* The rise of the global nation states, especially as a result of the colonial periods in Africa and the Middle East, has played a role in the process of globalization. As the colonial governments withdrew from power, state lines that had been defined by the colonial powers, however arbitrarily, remained. Many, if not most, of these state boundaries were not created around natural cultural areas or regions, but rather lump-summed numerous cultural groups into one larger state. This in turn created nations that were politically and economically separate from surrounding nations; no longer were these colonial areas beneath the control of the larger colonial governments, but they had reached a level of independent statehood. By creating these states under arbitrary lines, in many cases numerous ethnic groups were brought together under the moniker of one state.

Many African countries, such as Nigeria and the Sudan, have multiple cultural groups which each represent significant portions of the country’s population. However, as a single code of law and a single economic system become present within a state, these differing cultural groups must all function within these new parameters. In many cases
this has led to cultural conflicts within in these countries. Sudan is a prime example, as the conflict that has arisen in Sudan has been one based largely around cultural divides.

Sudan is a culturally variant country, and is representative of the arbitrarily drawn colonial borders that were left in place after 1956, the start of the post-colonial period. When the British left Sudan, the Islamic North was left in charge of the government. Since that time, the North has established a system of largely Islamic laws, even reverting to *sharia* law, or an Islamic based system of law, for a time. The North has also waged war against the South, and has purposely attempted to eradicate the tribal and Christian cultures of the South through a process of genocide. This has occurred through the destruction of towns and villages with the purpose of forcing the Southern groups in concentration camps, dubbed Peace Camps. By doing this, the government broke the cultural ties to the land, and, having killed off many of the educated members of the Southern communities, managed to weaken the communal knowledge of past cultures. Within the camps, many people were forced to convert to Islam, while young children would be taken from their parents to Islamic schools to promote enculturation into Islamic culture. [African Rights 1995]

These actions undertaken in Sudan demonstrate a significant movement from the traditional cultures as the Southerners have been removed from their land, placed underneath the laws of a different culture, and have basically seen their way of life be destroyed. This clearly demonstrates the increased movement of culture within the confines of the larger state, as drastic changes within the cultural framework have been imposed largely through the actions of the large state government. The creation of the state allowed one group the power to impose its will, and subsequently its culture, upon
another group, and through this have altered the cultural landscape of that country. While
the Sudan is an extreme example of the way that one culture can impact another within
the confines of nation state boundaries, other countries nonetheless have seen a flow of
cultural beliefs and ideology, many times through conflict, but also simply through
various cultural groups living within one country under a combined government.

With the shift towards a nation state, these countries also adopt a role in the global
realm; rather than remaining member of smaller, traditional societies, the groups are
brought into the global sphere through nation state recognition, and the boundaries drawn
by such recognition. By working within the global political realm, countries open
themselves up for influence from other countries within the global political sphere, be it
through trade, political action, foreign aid, tourism, foreign investment, or any number of
possible avenues. This in turn opens the entire country up to a certain level of cultural
influence, as the interaction between different countries, and hence different cultural
groups, increases. With the increase interaction, there is an increased chance for one
country to have influence upon another, and hence there is an increased potential for
cultural interaction that may lead to a degree of cultures influencing one another.

Transnational Corporations. Transnational corporations (TNCs) have played a
significant role in the process of globalization. Transnational corporations are
corporations that are able to operate across the global sphere; rather than simply being
located to one geographic location or to one country, they are able to operate throughout
the entire globe and within an international context. They are able so produce raw goods
for a product in one area of the world, manufacture the good in second area, and then sell
the good in a third. A prime example of a transnational corporation is Nike, as it can
build its shoes in one place, and then sell the product all over the world. These are companies that operate without the confines of any traditional borders, but rather are able to move in and out of differing regions of the world as it suits them with limited legal repercussions. As they move throughout the world, they carry certain global baggage with them.

In developing countries, TNCs can promote a lifestyle fully different from a traditional lifestyle through the creation of sweatshops and assembly-line production. As the above-noted process of urbanization has occurred, the demand for jobs in such areas has subsequently increased. With this increased demand for jobs, TNCs set up manufacturing plants in urban areas in developing countries, as the demand for work creates an opportunity in economically weak countries for cheap labor. These TNCs subsequently work to promote urbanization as they offer jobs by drawing the struggling poor towards the TNCs.

In many cases, these TNCs also alter the political framework of developing countries; often these corporations move into developing countries with lax worker safety regulations in order to avoid costs. This can help the economy of an indebted, developing country, but at the same time it promotes poor worker safety standards and regulations in these poor countries. There have been reports of developing countries keeping worker standards low to attract TNCs. The promotion of lax safety-standards can be seen in Bhopal, India, where a chemical explosion was responsible for somewhere between 6,000 and 20,000 deaths, plus problems associated with long-term exposure. [Frey 1998, p. 70-71]
The effect of these transnational corporations can also be seen in other policy making aspects of many developing countries. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have financially aided countries in development, but often with stipulations guiding the political and economic development of the country. The IMF and World Bank work to create a capitalist economic and liberally democratic political system within these developing countries, while at the same time lending money as an attempt to improve the infrastructure of the developing countries. The influence of globalization is clear in that foreign ideology is being implemented within the confines of a different state, as the political development of these countries is often conducted under the tutelage of a Western system of government. This can have a clear impact on the culture of a developing country as the rights of the people, laws of the country, and economic development is being directly linked to a foreign frame of reference concerning these aspects of everyday life.

While these are but a few of the factors that have developed to lead to this process of globalization, they are doubtlessly some of the most significant factors to have led to the development of the globalized society in which we live. As much as they demonstrate the process of globalization, these factors also represent a means of cultural flow and change that has occurred through the process of globalization. Over the course of the process of globalization, more and more cultures have been brought into contact with one another in ways previously unimaginable.
The Modern Culture

As the process of globalization occurs, there has been a clearly noted affect on the cultures of the world. The cultures of the world have shifted and changed and have been influenced by one another; within the globalized world, all cultures have been affected through the process of interconnection through which they have gone. No culture is truly fully independent, as in some form or another the cultures of the world have come into contact with and been influenced by other cultures throughout the world. The question then begs to be asked as to what culture in the modern world truly is; has culture reached some homogenous state, as some theorists have suggested, or is culture as omnipresent as it ever was?

Of late, some theorists have been proponents for theories suggesting that the people of the world have in fact reached, or are soon to reach a form of global culture. These authors have suggested that throughout globalization, there has been a process of cultural homogenization; through the interactions between variant cultural groups across the world, there has been a tendency for these cultures to assimilate similar identities, leading to a form of global culture.

One such proponent of this theory is Benjamin Barber who suggested that there has been a global trend towards a Western-based capitalist consumer culture. In his essay “McWorld vs. Jihad”, Barber states that the world is on a course towards two possible cultural endings. The first possible cultural end, which Barber foresees as the more likely possibility, is a slowly created enculturation into the “McWorld”, or a consumer oriented globalized world based around the flow of material goods and trade through large,
transnational corporations. Barber perceives that this course will run in a very subtle manner; rather than the end of the "McWorld" being reached through bloody war, it is a slowly occurring process that will slowly enucleate the entirety of the world. [Barber 2000]

Barber also perceives a general breakdown of state identity and sovereignty as TNCs gain international power. He sees the importance of government legislation falling away as these large corporations are able to move throughout differing countries around the world without any internationally created guidelines or supervision. As there is no body for overseeing the international actions of these TNCs, Barber suggests that they will eventually be able to move throughout the entire world and for, all intents and purposes, undermine the local regional governments. Along with the breakdown of borders and the decrease of importance of state sovereignty, cultural variance too shall fall victim to the McWorld, as the entire world will be working under an identical ideology as the importance of traditional culture is replaced with the tenants of capitalism.

Barber offers a second possible route through the idea of jihad. Barber uses the idea of jihad as a cultural war, or "war not as policy, but as an emblem of identity, and expression of community, and end in itself". [Barber 2000, p. 28] This route through jihad serves the purpose of redrawing the traditional boundaries that have eroded and worn away over time. This works to recreate an insular society by reclaiming traditions and returning to a more tribal, locally based way of life. While this leads to a breakdown of certain global links, it is a reaffirmation of traditional customs and cultures, and to a certain extent is a type of exorcism of foreign influence. Barber feels this situation to
have minimum potential; in Barber's view, it is more the dying gasp of the notion of distinct cultures before a total defeat by the McWorld. While Barber perceives the world to currently still have the remnants of multiculturalism, he feels this to be passing; within the relatively near future he believes the world will adopt a global culture and there will be a total entrance into the McWorld.

Francis Fukuyama is another proponent of the idea of a form of global culture. Adapting ideas from both Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel and Karl Marx, Fukuyama suggested that the world's population has reached an "end of history" in that the world has reached a form of ideological equilibrium. Hegel suggested that the world had reached an end of history in 1806, or after the Battle of Jena in the French Revolution. Hegel saw this as demonstrative of an overwhelming ideology taking hold; these were the rudiments of a "liberal democracy" taking hold. While there was still "considerable work to be done", this nevertheless was the beginning of the end of history for Hegel as he felt that this liberal democracy had taken hold as a global ideology within the people, and it was an ideology that could not be improved upon. [Fukuyama 2000]

In much the same way Fukuyama perceives the current world to be at a similar juncture; Fukuyama states that the two World Wars:

"simply had the effect of extending those principles spatially, such that the various provinces of human civilization were brought up to the level of its most advanced outposts, and of forcing those societies in Europe and North America at the vanguard of civilization to implement their liberalism more fully." [Fukuyama 2000, p 163]

The Two World Wars essentially acted to compress the global realm, and with the end of the Cold War, Fukuyama saw what he perceived to be the last barrier to this notion of a global ideology as this was the fall of the last bastion of fascism. Fukuyama believed this
to be in fulfillment of Marxist ideology also; Fukuyama, believing that an egalitarianism of ideology was a fulfillment of Marxist ideology, stated “the egalitarianism [of ideology] of modern America represents the essential achievement of the classless society envisioned by Marx”. [Fukuyama 2000, p. 168]

Through all of this, Fukuyama suggests that the global community has reached an end of history because the world has attained a final, worldwide ideology. He suggests that this is a common ideology has occurred through political, economic, and cultural means. What this all suggests, as with what Barber suggested in his “McWorld” approach, is that there is a progression through time of enculturation towards a single global ideology. Through this notion of a global ideology and the idea that we have reached an end of history, Fukuyama suggests that we have in fact also adopted a type of global culture. If the world works underneath a common ideology, is globally connected, and has reached this end of history, then there is clearly some type of global culture suggested.

Clearly the notion of culture in the modern world is something that is changing. The fact that the question of whether culture still exists can be asked demonstrates that point. With the process of globalization, there has been a large degree of cultural interchange. However, while some will suggest that the world is reaching a globalized culture, or even that there is no culture in the modern world, culture seems more to be adapting and changing with the world. Culture has not remained stagnant, but rather much in the way the economic systems have adapted with globalization, much in the way political systems have adapted, and much in the way that societies have adapted, so to have cultural systems. While there has been change within cultures, and maybe the
traditional, tribal cultural unit is no longer prevalent, culture has nevertheless persisted. Rather than viewing modern culture as a homogenous conglomerate that has absorbed all other cultures, modern culture should be seen as a wide and ever growing variety of cultures. In one way the modern forces of globalization have forced traditional cultures to change in order to adapt to the changing world environment, but at the same time the changes within the world situation has also given rise to new sub-cultures.

The Maasai of Kenya can be seen as demonstrative of this process of cultural adaptation. The Maasai are a traditionally nomadic group in Kenya with a traditional subsistence based system set around the herding of cattle. Throughout time, the Maasai have been subjugated to outside global forces, such as the limiting of land available for herding as Nation state boundaries have limited the potential land, and the creation of a large national park, and the existence landmines leftover from British military training in what had been traditional Maasai lands. Due to the lack of land, pastoralism became impossible for many, and a subsequent forced sedenterization occurred. However, many Maasai still practice pastoralism; many of the still nomadic members of the Maasai brought a lawsuit against the British government concerning the landmines which the British had left behind in Maasai pastoral land, and which had injured numerous Maasai children. Showing up in London in traditional garb, the Maasai brought the suit to the House of Commons. [Anonymous, 2002] In many ways, this incident demonstrates the shift in culture that has occurred over the past century; in some ways cultural groups have managed to their traditional lifestyles, while at the same time these groups have adapted to function within a global framework.
What role does anthropology fulfill within a globalized world?

As globalization has created a theater for the interconnection of all the cultures throughout the world, the question must be raised as to how this all affects the field of anthropology.

Anthropology comes from a history of studying far-off tribal groups that have little or no connection to the culture of the anthropologist. Having developed as a science within the technologically advanced Western world, anthropology took to the study of groups which had minimal contact with the modernized world, and, for a long time, anthropology dubbed those cultures as primitive. What works were produced were often little more than travelogues, books that described the people and what they did and how they lived, but with little applicability towards the world other than to satisfy the curiosity of intellectual readers.

Anthropology studied small tribal groups and established the basic cultural structures through the kinship diagrams and the creation of social hierarchies. One example of complex kinship design can be seen in E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s The Nuer, as he writes an extensive chapter describing the social relations of the kin system of the Nuer, with whom marriage is considered incestuous, and how all of the clans operate within the tribe, among other aspects of Nuer lineage. The work of Bronislaw Malinowski is also highly demonstrative of the anthropology’s past. Though born in Poland, Malinowski taught in London throughout his professional career. Much of Malinowski’s work focused upon the Trobrianders of Papa New Guinea, and his 1922 ethnography Argonauts of the Western Pacific depicted his experiences living with the Trobrianders. This work depicts the aspects of Trobriander lifestyle, and also details the
*Kula* Ring exchange, which is a traditional exchange of valuable *kula* between specific members of different tribes.

These works are representative of the past of anthropology. Both are clearly being written by an author from an industrialized and globally oriented culture, looking at a much smaller tribal group and analyzing this group. What seems to be present within these past works is a specific interest in demonstrating just how different these groups are from the industrialized cultures, and thus exoticizing these tribal groups. To an extent, the authors seem to make a point of demonstrating how different, and at times almost illogically complicated, the cultures of these tribal societies are. Through fully diagramming the kinship and lineages of the Nuer, Evans-Pritchard establishes a large degree of differentiation between the Nuer and the reader's presumed Western culture. In one way, Evans-Pritchard presents the Nuer conception of kinship, which is a very fundamental conception within any culture, as entirely separate from the conception of the presumed reader. He creates a degree of separation between the a modernized and a tribal culture in this way, which in many ways acts to create the Nuer as a very exotic and foreign culture.

When discussing the Trobriander *Kula* Ring Exchange, Malinowski presents this as almost a centerpiece to Trobriander society. This creates a degree of separation between the reader and the Trobriander culture much in the same way as Evans-Pritchard’s lineage description; the emphasis placed on the *Kula* Ring Exchange depicts the tribal group in a certain exotic light as it presents the Trobriander culture far removed and strange before the eyes of the reader.
The past of anthropology is filled with an “Us and Them” approach, creating a clear distinction between the culture being studied and the culture of the anthropologist. This is understandable to an extent in the fact that there were clear cultural divides at the time; the majority of the studied cultures had come into only limited contact with the modernized and industrialized countries of the West. The cultures were based on systems that were in many ways very different, and, while these differences may have been highlighted by the way in which the anthropologist approached these subjects, these works in many ways worked to dispel certain ethnocentric notions.

While on one hand these groups may have been presented as tribal, and at times primitive, the very existence of these works served to demonstrate that the world possessed a variety of different cultures. Considering that the world was less globalized at the time of these authors, and that information and communication technology was much more limited than that of the modern day internet and televisions, presenting this knowledge in any form is a worthwhile endeavor. While these older works in many ways created the studied groups as exotic and primitive, these works nonetheless served an important purpose within the world.

However, as the world has globalized and become more interconnected, and many of the tribal groups of yore are no longer independent of industrialized and modernized societies. The question must then be raised as to where anthropology is to turn its attention, and at the same what role the science of anthropology is able to fulfill that make it a still relevant and applicable science.

Of late, there has been a trend within anthropology to move away from the study of the independent tribal societies, shifting towards a study that is based within the
industrialized and modernized worlds. This has occurred for a number of reasons. The first is simply that the number of unstudied tribes that are unconnected with modernized world are dwindling; throughout the last century, and through the process of globalization, the unassociated and primal tribal group have begun to function largely within the global sector. These groups that had seemed so interesting for their sheer lack of connection to the modernized world have in many cases become involved in the modernized world. Many of these cultures have become urbanized, while most have found some way to become involved within the global world.

As the various cultures of the world have come into contact within the global realm, the importance of anthropology has been heightened, as anthropology is forced to become a much more active science within the function of the world. Rather than simply acknowledging the fact that there is cultural variation throughout the world, anthropology is now forced to take a role in explaining the roots of that variation within the global society. Anthropology as a science has the unique ability to look at, understand, and demonstrate the social context of a given culture, which sets it apart from other social sciences. Overall, anthropology is poised as a science to have a higher degree of importance than ever before for a number of reasons.

_Ethnocentrism._ Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo stated the United States, and the Western world in general, is guilty of “political arrogance in claiming to rule the world with only... logic and with about 4,000 trained mainstream economists... living mostly in Washington D.C. and in the U.S.” [Lumumba-Kasongo 2000, p. 5] While maybe a bit heavy-handed in his rhetorical approach towards the subject, Lumumba-Kasongo nonetheless raises an important issue: with the exception of anthropology, social sciences
are by and large dictated by numbers and systems of behavior explanation that are devoid of any notion of culture. In essence, these sciences are established in a very ethnocentric manner; they do not take into account the wide array of human cultural variation but rather assume a global culture that works within one defined set of rules.

Economics epitomizes this approach to social sciences, as it depicts the economic and social systems of the world through non-variant graphs and charts. Economics creates a systematic approach towards the way in which people within the world function, as economics presents sets of rules established to apply to every person of every culture. Economics works in a very mathematical sense, relying heavily on the graphs, charts, and mathematically-provable theorems. Through this, economics creates a system of laws that potentially should apply to the whole world.

Economics can be seen as highly ethnocentric as it does not offer to look past the culture in which it is implemented, but rather assumes a static and homogenous human conception of the world. Economics thus acts to create a highly limited scope of reality as it does not take into account the fact that variations within culture may and do lead to a variation in one's conception of the world, thus confounding this science which depicts human action as universal and systematic.

Sociology is another social science that is highly ethnocentric. Sociology attempts to study and explain the various structural systems within society, such as bureaucracy, social hierarchy, and other social institutions, but it does not take into account the potential cultural variations that have led to the creation of these social structures. Sociology offers no explanation of the cultural context within which a social structure exists, but rather provides only data on such social institutions. Sociology is
generally concerned at looking at the structures within its own society, and does not often look past the borders of its own society to reach an understanding of how the structure functions in relation to culture or the rest of the world. There is also generally a large focus on demographic studies within sociology as it attempts to create a mathematical data set to describe a given social institutions, such as creating a data set on an uneven distribution of wealth within a society. In this way, sociology presents a very top-down study of social systems, as it views the social system as a whole and does not work to acknowledge the smaller units that comprise the entire system.

While both of these social sciences attempt to examine and explain the fundamental structures of society, they do so through a very ethnocentric view. As Lumumba-Kasongo stated, there are some 4,000 economists in the Washington, D.C. and the rest of the U.S. determining economic policies that affect countries which have developed from highly variant cultural backgrounds. There is an inherent ethnocentrism within this; these economists have most likely never spent significant time, if any, in many of the countries which their economic policies and theories are affecting. There is also the assumption that every culture within the world functions just as that culture of the economist; the ethnocentric bias inherent within economics is so strong that it does not even bother to consider or take in to account the possibility that other cultures might not function under the same economic rules.

Whereas other social sciences offer a highly ethnocentric perspective of world society and culture, the very basis of the study of anthropology as a science is to refute those ethnocentric views. While other social sciences create a view of global social and economic systems without ever necessitating travel to another culture, anthropology is
based around the idea of understanding the variable cultures of the world through travel and through enculturation. Anthropology thus is the antithesis of ethnocentric, as it attempts to portray the variance of human culture, often through highly emic studies abroad.

One of the vast differences within the study of anthropology and of other social sciences is that anthropology forces the anthropologist to leave his or her culture and to become fully engulfed within another. This allows for the anthropologist, to an extent, to embed him or herself into cultural mindset of a different culture, and enable the anthropologist to both better understand the culture which is being studied and to also understand the culture from whence the anthropologist comes in a different light. In this way, anthropology as a science works against the notion of ethnocentrism as it presents variant cultural perspectives, and as it demonstrates and promotes the world as multicultural, as opposed to simply being a homogenous cultural system.

Within the current globalized world, the notion of ethnocentrism becomes particularly problematic, as a failure to recognize the potential cultural differences throughout the world can lead any number of cultural conflict, internally or internationally. As so many cultures are constantly being drawn into contact with one another, the need to be able to see past one’s own culture and to be able to perceive the presence of a different cultural framework becomes much greater. As a science, anthropology offers the ability to realize that such cultural differences do exist, and the understanding of such cultural differences is important when working within a globalized system.
A Bottom-Up Perspective. Much in the way that the social sciences except anthropology offer an ethnocentric view of the world, they also work from a top-down perspective. A top-down perspective is one that looks at a society through the structural aspects of a society, looking at a social system as a whole and then progressing down to note the social structures within this system with only minimal concern for the smallest sub-units of the individuals. This is clearly apparent within the field of sociology; the very basis of sociology is the study of social structures and institutions. Sociology works to construct an impression of society the overarching structures that establish society. Economics also proceeds with a similar approach; as noted earlier, economics works to construct globally constant laws, and thus works from the ultimate top-down as it creates a view of a global system.

Anthropology functions in the exact opposite way. Where other social sciences strike from a top-down perspective, giving an overview of social structures, anthropology works from the bottom-up as it establishes a conception of culture through an emic approach. Anthropology works from the level of the individual members of a culture; both through interacting with members of a culture and living within a culture, anthropologists are able to construct a view of culture from within the culture itself and through the eyes of the people of a culture. This is one of the essential differences between anthropology and other social sciences; whereas other social sciences attempt to understand the society through the structures that create a society, anthropology attempts to understand culture through the individuals who make up the culture and then attempts to construct a conception of the social structures through the conceptions of the individual members of a culture.
The effect of using a bottom up approach with anthropology is significant in that it allows for the anthropologist to learn the conception of an individual’s culture through the words of an individual. This references back to the earlier idea of the inherent ethnocentrism in other social sciences; other social sciences have an inherent amount of ethnocentrism simply due to the fact that they do not take into account the perspectives of members of other cultures.

The use of a bottom-up perspective has become increasingly important as it allows for a relatively unbiased view of a culture to be presented to a public. Within modernized societies, the control of information has become a powerful tool, as the mass media allows for information, however controlled, to be transferred to millions of people, potentially. As stated by Jerry Skees and Louis Swanson:

“Marshalling information to achieve political agendas takes many forms, ranging from anecdotal information, which is often conveniently used to validate society’s beliefs and biases, to complex econometric models, which are designed to predict the consequences of government regulations and market interventions. Moreover, information can be perceived either with suspicion or accepted as social fact without criticism.” [Skees and Swanson 1994, p 15-16]

This suggests the idea that the media, and through this political rhetoric, can hold a drastic level of sway simply from the omission of information. Time and again cultural information has been omitted in the media when concerning exterior societies, fueling the notion of ethnocentrism. Anthropology, as a presenter of bottom-up cultural information, has the potential to present cultural information without the media biases, becoming a powerful tool in promoting the notion of a multicultural world as it is able to refute certain stereotypes and biases.
Contextualization and History. One of the important aspects of anthropology is the way in which it works to create a context for culture within the world. As noted above, anthropology is fully concerned with the study of variant cultures, and anthropology also works to perpetuate this knowledge of cultural variation throughout the world. However, more than simply noting that differing cultures exist within the world, anthropology also acts to supply an explanation as to why cultures have developed throughout history and to place these cultures in a context with the rest of the world.

In many ways the study of anthropology is intimately linked to the study of history; anthropology works to not only conceive of the existence of cultural variation in the present, but also to understand how a specific culture has come to exist in its modern state. Striking from a culturally emic point of view, anthropology ideally attempts to create the history of a culture group from its own perceptions, detailing from whence and as to why the culture arose, and at the same time how the culture fits into a global world from the perspective of the people.

Within a globalized world, anthropology acts to put a cultural group within the context of the world at large. Rather than simply viewing a specific culture as idiosyncratic in the world, anthropology establishes the development of culture as largely dependent on the environment from which the specific culture grows. Anthropology thus establishes culture and its development within the context of the world around it.

This can be seen in Philippe Bourgois’s ethnography In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio. In this work, Bourgois constructs the culture of crack dealers in El Barrio in New York; rather than view them as idiosyncratic symptoms of the problems of
American society, Bourgois demonstrates the social constraints that have led to the
dealing of crack as a viable option for these people.

Bourgois depicts the contextual environment of the society which has led to
creating the sale of crack as a viable option in life; having migrated into impoverished
urban areas, the majority of the poor immigrants began working in the urban industrial
jobs, such as in the steel industry. In many cases, to help support the newly migrated
families, the young adults would forgo a high school education to earn wages within the
steel mills and other industrial jobs. However, as the U.S. moved away from an
industrial economy to a more service oriented economy, many of these uneducated youth
lost their industrial jobs and were then unable to get jobs within the service industry
because of a lack of education. Bourgois demonstrates this problem as one that is
cyclical, creating through generations a culture of crack dealers who, on the one hand,
have pride and tradition dating back to their traditional culture of Puerto Rico, but, on the
other hand, have become disillusioned with American society, as they have become
discriminated against within mainstream society due to both their race and social class.

Bourgois thus creates a context that leads to the creation of the culture of the
urban crack dealer. Rather than simply being a person trying to make money, the crack
dealer is more complex and stems from a number of social issues. Bourgois essentially
places the culture of the crack dealer within a global realm, as he fits the crack dealer
within the larger society as a whole, demonstrating how the urban crack dealer fits into
the larger society.

This idea of contextualization can be seen throughout any number of texts. In
Weapons of the Weak by James Scott, mentioned earlier, the reader is presented with the
changing culture in the village of Sedaka. Scott presents the reader with a view of the
traditional way of life in Sedaka and how it has changed with the introduction of
combine-harvesters into the society. Scott creates a context and a history of conception
of the lifestyle of the villager within Sedaka, presenting the reader with the pre-globalized
culture. Scott then demonstrates the way in which this globalization has affected the
culture of the village through the drastic change in the social relations between classes
and the forced change in lifestyle to many as they could no longer economically afford to
fulfill their traditional roles.

By providing a historical and cultural context for a modern culture, these authors
each demonstrate how these societies are able to fit within a globalized world. As
anthropology has been forced to adapt to the globalized world, it has been forced to
establish how different cultures interact within a context of one another. As cultures are
no longer separated but rather in constant contact with one another, it is important to form
a background for a culture, and through this to create the context in which a culture
operates.

Applications within the Globalized World.

As the concept of culture, and thus the role of anthropology, has changed through
the process of globalization, the question must be raised as to what applications the
science of now anthropology holds. The importance of anthropology still remains in its
ability to educate. The primary role of anthropology as a science has always been to
educate the world through the furthering of cultural knowledge, and this is a role that is
will always retain. However, as the cultures of the world have become interconnected,
the anthropological study of a culture takes on a new meaning throughout the world. Whereas in the past anthropology was able to study exotic tribal cultures that had little impact upon the Western world, within an interconnected world anthropology is essentially studying a part of the larger global system. As it works within the larger global system, anthropology is given the potential to have an impact upon the functioning of the world. Anthropology is effectively created in a more active role; whereas in the past the study of the foreign tribal culture would have only minimal applicability, within a global system, the potential impact becomes much greater as the studied culture is in some way linked to the rest of the world. In this way, the anthropology has adopted a new role as an active science that can affect the realms of global, foreign, and local policies.

The active ramifications of anthropology can be seen through the work *Facing Genocide: The Nuba of Sudan*, an ethnographic work published by the human rights group African Rights. The Nuba, a blanket name given to the fifty-plus indigenous groups living within the Nuba Mountains, were some of the hardest hit by the genocidal warfare being waged within the Sudan. From the start of the actions taken against the Nuba, the Northern government established a global media blackout of the Nuba Mountains, limiting knowledge of these events worldwide. African Rights managed to produce *Facing Genocide* largely through first hand accounts and a level of ethnographic work conducted within the Nuba Mountains without the knowledge of the government. African Rights printed this book which contained material concerning the "Peace Camps" and the general destruction of the Nuba and their culture. This work was one of the first major works concerning the genocide of the Nuba, and as such helped to raise the issue to
the forefront of the international political scene. This work forced the government to acknowledge that it was taking actions against the Nuba within the Nuba Mountains.

While the example of the African Rights piece can be seen as the example of anthropology being applied actively into the process of world policy in an extreme situation, it nonetheless is representative of the potential effect that an anthropological work can have. Within a global sphere, all cultures become connected, and thus the potential for impact within the global sphere becomes greater. Anthropology has been given the power to promote change within the world, and as such has been adopted as a powerful tool in the promotion of human rights. The African Rights publication is a clear example of the use of anthropology to promote human rights by presenting this work into the global sphere of society.

Anthropology as an active text can also be seen within Bourgois’s In Search of Respect. Bourgois ends this book with a section devoted to possible improvements that can be made to help alleviate the social problems that have led to creating the crack dealer. Even without Bourgois clear attempt to try and affect the realm of public policy with his work, the mere presentation of his work puts the culture of crack dealing within a new context in which it is not normally viewed. His presentation of this crack culture raised awareness about the culture of crack dealing and the societal issues inherent within this culture. While the African Rights text was created to promote the issues of human rights within the Nuba Mountains, Bourgois’s piece is less concerned about the issue of human rights specifically, but rather is more concerned with raising to the forefront an issue that is present within American society.
In general, there has been a significant trend towards the use of anthropology as a means for raising awareness about global issues affecting cultures and the people within the cultures. *Cultural Survival Quarterly* is a magazine that brings to the forefront modern issues that have arisen within the globalized world and are confronting various indigenous cultures. *Cultural Survival* has in the past raised issues such as the problems inherent in mining, especially as mining is often being shifted into developing countries where worker safety standards are lower; the potential for Native Hawaiian sovereignty within the Hawaiian Islands; and recently Project Colombia, a U.S. sponsored crop dusting in Colombia for the purpose of destroying cocoa plants which is effectively leading to the destruction of all local crops and areas of the rain forest. *Cultural Survival* looks at the issues raised by globalization and the effects that this process has had on indigenous and minority populations, with an attempt at raising awareness of the issues within the global sphere.

Besides the promotion of human rights and cultural issues, anthropology can play an important role through its ability to create a cultural context and, through this idea of contextualization, to promote a deeper understanding of various cultures throughout the world. Anthropology has always looked past simply identifying cultures and their variations; rather, anthropology acts to place a culture within a context of the world around it, allowing for a conception of the world through the perception of a given culture.

The idea of anthropology to explain the history and context from which a culture has arisen is becoming an increasingly important phenomenon. Barber’s notion of cultures utilizing *jihad* to promote the retention of culture is demonstrative of how
important the promotion of a fuller understanding of global culture can be. [Barber 2000]
Within the past year and a half, there have been several instances of high profile acts,
such as the attacks on the World Trade Center buildings and the bombing of a nightclub
in Bali, which killed a number of Australian tourists; these actions can be viewed as
symptoms Barber's jihad. These have attacks can be seen as attempts to resist the
globalizing powers that are at work within the world.

Anthropology is able to offer an explanation of these events in ways that other
social sciences can not. Rather than seeing these instances as the sole issue at work,
anthropology has the ability through cultural study to understand the roots that lie
beneath these actions. Anthropology has the ability to put these acts within the larger
context of a cultural ideology, and then to further understand the fundamentals of this
culture through a contextualized understanding of its development throughout time.
Much in the way that Bourgois was able to place the urban crack culture within a context,
so to does anthropology as a whole have the ability to create a context for the
development of different cultures and cultural ideologies throughout the world.

In many ways this may potentially serve as the most important function of
anthropology within the globalized world. As so many cultures have come into contact
with one another, and many cultural conflicts have arisen through this, anthropology
allows for a means to understand these conflicts at a more fundamental level. In this
way, anthropology can both serve to educate the public and to influence the policies of
the nations of the world. Anthropology has the ability to demonstrate that events that are
culturally linked are not simply idiosyncratic events, but rather are generally symptoms
of larger issues at work within the global realm.
Currently, and in the future, anthropology has been put into a place where it is able to affect the lives of the people who exist within the globalized world. Within the globalized realm, anthropology has become much more active as it no longer is concerned with the descriptions of exotic cultures, but rather has arisen to work within the realm of the globalized world with the potential to have significant impacts on the lives of people throughout the world. As cultures are constantly influencing one another and experiencing shifts and changes through the process of globalization, anthropology stands as the only social science equipped to be able to understand these changes.

Anthropology is also the only social science with the ability to explain the importance of culture throughout the world. In this way, anthropology stands as one of the truly important social sciences as it allows for the education and the understanding of multicultural variation throughout the world. Anthropology has not given in to the idea that a strict set of numbers must be used to create a theory, but rather has remained within the human realm, describing human action and human culture as it changes throughout the world. This has allowed anthropology a unique situation within the realm of social sciences, and also will allow for anthropology to continue as a highly important science in the future.

**Conclusion**

With the release of his 1986 album *Graceland*, Paul Simon quickly won vast acclaim for the work as it was well crafted and imbued with a degree of musical creativity not generally found within the realm of the album’s “rock/pop” peers. What stood out about *Graceland*, besides the simple high quality and complexity of the album,
was the contributions of numerous African and other multicultural musicians. If *Graceland* could not last through time because of its musical merits, the use of these musicians at least brought a level of controversy to the work that would keep *Graceland* in the discerning eye of music critics for years to come.

The primary avenue of controversy concerning this album is in fact not the actual use of the musicians, but the concept of musical ownership, or intellectual property. While the various multicultural musical acts brought their music to the album, Paul Simon gave no song writing credits to the other musicians who contributed to this album. While on the one hand it prevents these other artists from collecting royalties, it also raises the important notion cultural intellectual property within a globalized world. Many authors, such as Steven Feld, have argued that Simon effectively stole a cultural property by not giving credit to these musicians for the unique cultural stylings which they brought to the album. [Feld 1994] Others have argued that this is a product of globalization, and that rather than seeing the use of the cultural music as appropriation, it is natural result of different musical traditions impacting one another within the globalized world. Whatever the case may be, the fact of the matter is that this is representative of the notion of cultural flow, as music with differing musical traditions have come together and had an influence upon each other.

Music can be seen in any given culture as part of a traditional heritage. In many parts of Africa, drumming and accompanied singing, often in a form of call and response, have important social and religious aspects within society. Tuvan throat singing has evolved in Mongolia a means to communicate one’s own situation within the world, and to communicate to nature through the use of throat singing to mimic the sounds of nature.
The *hindewhu* is a one-note whistle that has been used within certain Central African pygmy tribes as part of the ritual associated with the announcement of a successful hunt. The *hindewhu* would be blown in a rhythmic pattern interspersed with vocalizations used to play a different note.

Over time, however, as the world has globalized and various cultures have come into contact with one another, the cultures of the world have shared degrees of cultural information of all aspects. The degree of cultural information transfer and influence can be seen clearly through music; the influence of the musical traditions of various cultures upon one another can be throughout the world.

One of the premier examples of the influence which various musical traditions have had upon one another can be seen through the creation of rock and roll. The roots of rock and roll have been attributed to combination of African rhythmic beats and of European classic music, as the music theory behind Europe and classical music, such as the eight-note octave and the general rules of chordal progression, such as those governing cadences. The creation of rock and roll as a hybrid musical style is representative of the process of globalization in that these different musical traditions have managed to combine within a cultural setting that is in fact foreign to both of the original cultures. This idea of two differing cultural traditions converging to create something new and clearly based on the originals but also different can be seen throughout the world. One example of this is the Afro-Cuban music of the *rumba*, which has also been derived from traditional African rhythmic beats but combined with the Spanish influence of traditional Spanish music and Spanish instruments.
In many ways, the arising of a new musical tradition from the two older traditions represents a shift in culture in the modernized and globalized world. Variant cultures have come together and impacted each other, and in the end have created a new culture that is different from the two original cultures.

As the process of globalization has increased, however, so has the spread of knowledge concerning differing musical traditions. Differing musical traditions have influenced musicians throughout the world. The use of the *hindewhu* can be seen in a number of musical pieces in Western music, from Madonna with her song “Sanctuary” to the hip-hop group The Roots song “Love of My Life”. In South Africa, the Nazarites, a group that has adopted a Christianity but that at the same time retained many of their traditional beliefs, have created a religious musical style that represents this mixture of cultural influences. The Nazarite religious music has on the one hand adopted the polyphonic chordal structure seen in Christian hymns, but at the same time has retained a traditional call and response form, along with retaining traditional dance. [Muller 1999]

Music as a whole can be seen as representative of the shift that has occurred within culture through the process of globalization. As the world has become globalized and various cultures have come into contact with each other with increasing frequency, these cultures have had resultant impacts upon one another. With the processes inherent in globalization, there have also been necessary changes within cultures, as often the traditional lifestyle is no longer a viable option within the world. Many cultural groups have been forced to urbanize from rural areas, many to migrate between countries, and many to sedenterize from a previously nomadic lifestyle.
The over-arching theme of globalization has been however that every culture within the world has become interconnected. Cultures no longer are able to exist as independent, but rather the numerous factors of globalization, such as the rise of nation states across the world, the improvements in information transfer technology, and the processes of industrialization, have led to a world in which different cultural groups are forced into contact with each other. As such, there has been a clear influence of different cultures upon one another, no matter how remote. Music is exemplary of this; even the *hindewhu*, used by traditional pygmy tribes in Central Africa has influenced music created by artists removed by vast geographical distances.

With these influences of variant cultures upon each other around the world, anthropology has also been brought into the global realm. As always, anthropology has remained a tool of education, but within the globalized realm anthropology serves to educate with a more active potential. Anthropology is no longer able to simply be a passive science that describes far off tribal groups. Rather, anthropology is now works in a more active role, as the independent tribal cultures once studied by anthropology no longer exist in their previous forms. Anthropology is now a science that works within a global realm where the studies which anthropology conducts are able to have a significant impact. Whereas other social sciences ignore the processes of culture and the variance inherent throughout the cultures of the world, anthropology notes these differences, and works against the ethnocentric biases of other social sciences.

Anthropology remains as one of the few studies that demonstrates cultural variance throughout the world. Clearly, culture is something that retains importance within the world and in how the world functions. While cultures have evolved over time,
the general fundamental principles of a given culture remain over time. And it is in this respect that anthropology is able to retain its importance within the globalized world, as it looks through the often present ethnocentric biases of a culture and presents the true range of cultural variation throughout the world.
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