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Anthropology short notes

Neo-evolutionism (Childe, White, Steward, Sahlins and Service)

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination · Anthropology Paper 1 · Anthropology GS 1 (Paper I)

(f) Neo-evolutionism (Childe, White, Steward, Sahlins and Service)

Short notes by official syllabus heading.

Revision notes for the Anthropology optional. Confirm thinkers and examples against standard texts and recent papers.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/archives/anthropology-notes/paper-1/neo-evolutionism/>

Neo-Evolutionism**Definition**

1. Examine Gordon Childe's Statement "**Neolithic Culture is a Revolution**" (2010)

Thinkers

Bio-cultural Functionalism: Bronislaw Malinowski pioneered Participant Observation, arguing that culture exists solely to satisfy biological and psychological needs. Structural Functionalism: A.R. Radcliffe-Brown applied an "**Organic Analogy**," viewing society as a system where institutions function like organs to maintain the stability of the social structure.: Structural and Psychological Turns. Structuralism: Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that human thought is patterned through binary oppositions (e.g., **Nature vs. Culture**) and that culture, like language, is a mental construct. Culture and Personality: Scholars like Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead explored the relationship between culture and individual psychology, arguing that adult personality is a product of cultural training and socialization.: Mid-20th Century Revivals: Neo-Evolutionism and Materialism. Neo-Evolutionism: Revived evolutionary theory by explaining cultural change through technology and ecology. Leslie White proposed that cultural development is a function of energy harnessed ($C = E \times T$), while Julian Steward introduced Cultural Ecology, focusing on multilineal evolution and environmental adaptation.

Definition

PTC Tasting: The ability to taste the bitter chemical Phenylthiocarbamide is a dominant trait (TT, Tt).

Thinkers

Bronislaw Malinowski | Fieldwork; Cultural Anthropology Franz Boas | Cultural Anthropology; Historical Particularism Benjamin Lee Whorf | Linguistic Relativity Historical Particularism: Franz Boas (the "**Father of American Anthropology**") rejected universal laws, arguing that each culture has a unique history. He introduced the Four-Field Approach (Biological, Archaeological, Linguistic, and Cultural) to gather comprehensive empirical data.: The Golden Age of Fieldwork: Functionalism.

Definition

The discipline has evolved from a "**Science of Man**" focused on the "primitive" to a global, reflexive discipline that addresses contemporary issues like Digital Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, and AI technology. As society changes, anthropology continues to adapt, fulfilling its role as a holistic framework for understanding human diversity and survival.

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Definition

Consumption is the utilisation of final goods and services by society.

Example / case study

Giving without expectation of immediate return

Definition

Traced migration from Deccan-Konkan region → Son valley → Chotanagpur Plateau.

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