

## Lecture 1. Ethnology as a science

### Key words:

ancestor	пращур	mentality	менталітет
culture	культура	to originate	виникати, походити
data	дані, відомості	outlook, worldview	світогляд
diversity	розмаїття	pagan	язичник
Enlightenment	Просвітництво	polling	опитування
ethnic	етнічний	population	населення
ethnos/ethne	етнос	primordial	первісний
ethnology	етнологія	science	наука
fieldwork	польові дослідження	scientist	науковець
folk	народ	society	суспільство
genesis	виникнення	social	суспільний
humanity	людство	tribe	плем'я
indigenous	корінний	values	цінності

### 4. Methods of ethnological research

Having discussed the subject of ethnology we pass to the second essential component of any science – **methodological apparatus** (*method = how to study*).

Ethnology works from the details (ethnographic data) to the general (theory).

The 2 main approaches of ethnology are: **comparative** and **holistic**. They are combined and interrelated.

**Comparative** approach is the major approach to the study of several ethnic groups' development and structure. **Holistic** method (holism) is the study of any ethnic group as a whole, which is the main goal of ethnology.

You should know that all methods of scientific research are divided into **general** and **special**. From general scientific methods ethnology uses historical and sociological, the most widespread special method is the method of field research.

Among **general scientific methods**, the most essential is **historical** one. It comprises **method of research of archeological materials** and **method of research of written sources**.

**Research of archeological materials** helps to restore ethnical and cultural history of folks. This method is a reliable way to get information about historic events and age and functions of artefacts.

**Research of written sources** (analysis of ethnographic records) is another important way of obtaining information. Written sources can include description of folk made by its members or visitors, reports of participants of geographical expeditions, missionaries, traders, seamen etc. It means analyzing folk texts, records of opinions stated by informants, their legends, stories, fairy-tales, myths and memories through which we can gain knowledge of the culture in actual life.

The next general method is **sociological** one. It includes polling (questioning and interviewing), selective research, and observation.

**Polling** in general can be of two types: **general** (all members of community participate) and **selective** (some members).

**Questioning** usually presupposes questions with multiple choices. Questionnaires have limitations because they suggest the possible answers. **Interviewing** is more like a free talk between interviewer and interviewee on a given aspect of life, it happens in casual conversations and formal interviews (a previously selected topic is stated by the researcher). Ethnologists look for a way to make people talk about things that without limitations.

**Selective research** is aimed at making general conclusions based on some selective statistical data. This method is popular because on practice it is often impossible to ask all community members about all ethno-cultural problems.

**Method of observation** means systematic watching and registration of culturally important phenomena, processes, events or characteristics of the researched ethnical groups. It is mainly used on the primary stages of ethnological research (the information it provides is highly subjective). Sometimes it is difficult for the researcher to distinguish personal attitude to the observed events from their actual meaning for the researched ethnos.

**Method of field research (ethnological fieldwork)** is extremely important for ethnological studies. It involves researcher's living in the community that he studies for an extended period of time (from 6 months to 2 years). The aim of scientist is to feel the community, to become part of it, to participate in all the activities and finally to become a member of the social group he studies. The longer the researcher stays in the community – the more relevant the data he gets (about local daily life, behaviour, beliefs, customs, habits, social life and structure, economic activities, politics, religion).

Ethnological fieldwork features **participant observation**. Sounds like a paradox. How can you observe when you're participating? But you can make

observations and take notes later. The researcher observes and participates in the daily life of the community that is being studied.

*Advantages:* It helps to build trust. You eat that they eat, and work when they work, in such a way you build trust. Living with the people you study makes them opener to you.

Example: an anthropologist working in Bali attended a cockfight with the people he was studying which is illegal but quite popular there. When the police came, he had to run out and hide with the rest of them. That showed his solidarity with the people he was studying.

*Disadvantages:* Participant observation can be dangerous (attacks from the natives, accidents, animal bites, illnesses). Besides, there's a question whether your presence there changes people's behaviour. Are the people conscious about your being there? Often if you stay there long enough, people grow more comfortable. So, the longer a researcher stays in the community, the more objective his observations can be.

The last but not the least is the **method of linguistic analysis**. It helps to find connections between words from different languages which reveals cultural and ethnical bonds between different folks. Language reflects consciousness, the words which are used by ethnical group reflect their worldview, cultural values. The method of linguistic analysis reveals the outlook of a particular ethnos.

**As you learn the language you learn a lot about the people!**

Example: Amer. ethnologist prof. James Howe found that the Kuna Indians (the indigenous people of Panama and Columbia) called the people who lived near them "Bila" (the word for "war"). The fact indicated that these people were traditional enemies.

**Case study method** ("the study of an instance in action") – a method to observe in detail the characteristics of an individual object (a person representing a certain ethnos, a situation from their life, an aspect of their behaviour, a tradition, etc.), in order to analyze various phenomena connected to that unit of study and to make conclusions.

## 5. Ethnology and other sciences

Ethnology is related to many other sciences, mainly the Humanities. The boundaries between related disciplines are rather flexible and sometimes unclear.

Ethnology is a branch of anthropology! **Anthropology** – the study of humans, their features, their past and present, that is based on the knowledge from social and biological sciences, as well as the humanities and the natural sciences.

**Ethnology and anthropology.** They both share the same subject – genesis of races and their geographical distribution, change of physical appearance of humans as a result of social-cultural interaction. But while anthropology is wider, it mainly aims at research of physical and biological nature of humans, ethnology mainly deals with social changes in ethnical societies.

Nowadays the borderline between ethnology and anthropology has become obscure with the appearance of such branches as social and cultural anthropology.

**Archaeological anthropology** reconstructs, describes, and interprets past human behavior and culture through material remains. The material remains of a culture include artefacts (e.g., pottery, jewelry, tools, clothes), garbage, burials, the remains of structures. The archaeological record provides the unique opportunity to look at changes in social and cultural life over thousands of years.

**Biological, or physical, anthropology** investigates human biological diversity across time and space. There are 5 branches within biological anthropology: 1. Paleoanthropology: human evolution as revealed by the fossil records. 2. Human genetics. 3. Human growth and development. 4. Human biological plasticity: the body's ability to change as it copes with stresses such as heat, cold, and altitude. 5. Primatology: the study of the biology, evolution, behavior, and social life of the apes (primates).

**Linguistic anthropology** – the study of language in its social and cultural functions across space and time. Some linguistic anthropologists investigate universal features of language connected to peculiarities of the human brain. Historical linguists reconstruct ancient languages and study linguistic change through time. Sociolinguistics investigate the relationship between social and linguistic factors, discover models of language and thought in different cultures.

**Cultural anthropology** combines ethnography and ethnology to study human societies and cultures for explaining social and cultural similarities and differences. Roy D'Andrade: in the process of repeated social transmission,

cultural programs take forms which fit to the natural capacities of the human brain. Culture is the source of the shared procedures with which we do our thinking.

Cultural anthropology became dominant in the United States, and social anthropology – in Great Britain. The distinction between the terms is really blurry.

**Ethnology and ethnography.** These are very close sciences. **Ethnography** – scientific description of cultures (“a portrait of a people”). The main difference between them is that ethnography has descriptive character while ethnology is more theoretical and generalizing. Ethnography produces a description (a book, an article, or a film) of a particular community, society, or culture based on information that is collected during fieldwork. Compared to ethnography (the study of single groups through direct contact with the culture), ethnology takes the research that ethnographers have done and then compares different cultures.

**Ethnology and cultural studies.** Cultural studies are mainly aimed at research of history of culture, philosophy of culture and history of art. Ethnology deals with all these issues but concerning a particular ethnos. It also deals with cultural contacts between members of different ethne and inculturation (acquiring culture of one’s own ethnos) within a certain community.

**Ethnology and sociology.** **Sociology** – the scientific study of social behavior, its origins, development, organization, and institutions. Sociology researches forms of common life and activity of humans, social connections between people, living on the same territory. Ethnology also researches the life of people living together but on a smaller ethnical scale. While sociology tries to explain mechanisms of interaction between different social groups, ethnology focuses on cultural relations between social groups of a particular ethnos.

**Ethnology and psychology.** Psychology deals with psychological states of personality, patterns of behavior and typical characters. Ethnology investigates socio-cultural nature of interpersonal relations. This connection resulted in formation of separate branch – ethno-psychology.

The scope of ethnological research is significant. There are more than 20 related disciplines.