II

THE NATURE OF CULTURE

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2. The Nature of Culture

2-1. Overview

In this chapter, the nature of culture, one of the key topic issues of the study is discussed with the various theoretical perspectives in depth for answering the question of "what is the culture?" At first, the word, 'Culture' is attempted to define with the historical point of view: how the meaning of culture has been changed into current concept of culture. This part of cultural definition is used to select a meaning of culture among diverse meanings that will be used throughout this entire study. After having defined the meaning of culture, culture is divided into different domains of cultural elements that would help to understand the structure of culture. In addition the mutual relationships between elements of culture is reviewed in terms of characteristics, methods for studying them, and the process of formation. Then, the fundamental characteristics of culture are summarized and discussed for identifying the basis for experiment problem later. It is followed by the review of characteristics of methodological approaches to studying culture, which would help setting up the direction of research methods for this study. It continues to the review of different academic fields related to cultural study for understanding multi-aspects and views of anthropologies and other culture-related academic fields. Finally, findings of this chapter are summarized and their implications to next chapters are to be listed up.

The overview of this chapter is diagrammatically summarized in Figure 2-1. Figure 2-1 is based on Figure 1-2 shown in preceding chapter 1 so that it is easy to understand the position of this chapter in the context of the whole study.
2-2. Definition of Culture

The word “culture” is not a simple word. The cultural theorist and critic, Raymond Williams writes in *keywords* “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.” There are various aspects in the meaning of culture, so that the word ‘culture’ is used with different meanings in different occasions. In the following, different types in defining the ‘culture’ will be collected as a start and then one of those meanings are selected for clarifying what the word ‘culture’ means in this

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study.

At first, the meaning of culture is reviewed by how the meaning has been historically developed into current meaning of culture. Roughly speaking, about five different types of concept of culture have been created with historical changes.Originally, the English term 'culture' is from Latin word 'cultus', which is associated with the idea of 'tending of cultivation of crops and animals' — as in, for example, agriculture. This biological definition labels a culture as "a community of bacteria grown in a laboratory test tube".

During the Enlightenment, culture was considered as a synonym of 'civilization', which means the general, universal process of human development and progress. This human nature definition of culture is used to distinguish the behavior of civilized man from other animals or rude, less civilized man.

In the nineteenth century, under the influence of the German writer, Herder, as well as the Romantic Movement and the rise of nationalism, culture came to be associated with 'the specific and variable cultures of different nations and peoples'. In this definition, culture is used to refer to the particular and distinctive 'way of life' of specific social groups, peoples, nations or periods. This human group definition is interrelated with omnibus definition of culture that is followed in the end. This definition uses a concept of culture almost as a synonym for 'society' or 'community' as in 'Hawaiian culture'. Culture-area concept is closely tied up with this idea.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Matthew Arnold's famous book *Culture*...
and Anarchy, the word culture acquired more restrictive meaning referring to the 'high arts' as compared with 'popular' culture (what ordinary folk, the relatively unsophisticated masses, do) or 'mass' culture (associated with the mass media and mass consumption). This social class definition sees culture as a 'refined habits and courtesies of the upper class', in other words, the state of intellectual refinement associated with the arts, philosophy and learning. This kind of meaning of culture is what general people are now using in present everyday life like the term 'cultural celebrity' or 'cultural section in the newspaper'. However, this definition is rejected among most culture-related scholars.

These above four meanings are still active wherever the concept of 'culture' is used. However, the definition which is probably most relevant to how the concept is used in this study really emerges at the end of the nineteenth and through the twentieth centuries, and is associated with the rise of the human and social sciences. This definition emphasizes the relation of culture to meaning: the social definition of culture, in which culture is "a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values implicit and explicit in particular ways of life."\(^9\)

This historical development of cultural meaning is diagrammed in Figure 2-2.

Additionally, besides of these historical terms of cultural definitions, as another restrictive meaning, there is an artifact definition within a qualifier - material culture. In this definition, culture refers to the products which man has created including tools, paintings, houses, hypodermic needles and hydrogen bombs. In this sense, culture is dealt with an antonym of nature just as the word 'artificial' is an antonym of 'natural'.

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Culture is what man controls and touches, so that gives an order in the nature. Paul Willis argues that “culture is the very material of our daily lives, the brick and mortar of our most commonplace understandings.”

Figure 2-2: Historical Development of Meaning of Culture and Meaning of Culture taken in This Study.

There is still an omnibus definition that involves widest usage of this word. This type of definition designates that cultural contents are almost everything. It includes emotions, work of arts, behavior, beliefs, and institutions. It includes what people know, feel, think, make and do. This definition of culture in broad sense is commonly used in the field of studying culture generally - anthropology. The most classic definition of ‘culture’ that is used in anthropology is that provided by Sir Edward Tylor, the founder of social anthropology, in 1871: “Culture ....taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any
other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Tylor's definition can be divided into two parts. First part of the definition says that it is a complex whole, and second part is citing concrete contents of this whole. Seeing culture as whole capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society has relation with human group definition, in which culture is seen as 'a way of life' mentioned earlier. Way of life means daily life including social, economic, religious way of life, besides food, clothing, and housing cycling by a year and a lifetime. While human group definition focused on culture as a shared one by a human group, omnibus definition focuses on omnibus contents of culture. Therefore, the combination of these two definitions in a broad sense is generally accepted as a complete version of definition in the field of anthropology.

In the mean time, ontologically speaking, there are two other mutually exclusive (but actually complementary) definitions of special interest among many cultural contents associated with two major theoretical approaches. These are the cognitive and behavioral definitions of culture. The cognitive definition excludes behavior and restricts the culture concept to ideas, beliefs, and knowledge. This practice emerged under the influence of linguistics and social system theory of Talcott Parsons. Ward Goodenough, under this linguistic tradition, proposed following definition. "A Society's culture is whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role they accept for any of

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12 Goodenough, W. 'Comment on Cultural Evolution,' Daedalus 90, 1961 pp. 521-528
themselves....Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.” While most early definitions of culture included these cognitive dimensions as a core elements of culture, they were not restricted to them.

On the other hand, the behavioral definition focuses upon observable patterns of behavior within some social groups. For this approach, “the culture concept comes down to behavioral patterns associated with particular groups of peoples, that is to ‘customs’ or to a people’s way of life.” Scholars who support this definition argue against the notion that “culture is not behavior itself but the shared understanding that guide behavior and are expressed in behavior.” They argue that we can learn the shared understandings through observing behaviors and other visible and audible forms that manifest them. Therefore, they emphasize visible and audible forms of culture rather than the forms of things that people have in mind, and they view behavior itself as the most important thing of the representations of culture.

This debate of the mental or attitudinal aspect versus the behavioral aspect of culture is an innate problem in the field of anthropology. Hall ¹³ says, “There are two meanings of the word ‘culture’ – culture as ‘whole way of life - practice’ and culture as ‘the production and circulation of meaning’.” However, what is important is not which one is correct, but nature of distinction between material and symbolic domains of culture. These two domains are not fighting each other but simply shows the

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complementary domains of culture elements like front and rear sides of coins. In order to understand the phenomenal order of culture, one should have sufficient knowledge of members ideas and beliefs, while at the same time, comprehending ideological order of culture requires the knowledge of material and behavioral aspects of the community. Therefore, culture simultaneously invokes symbolic and material domains, and the study of culture can be understood as interrogating the relation between the two domains rather than involving privileging one domain over the other. The concept of culture, in this paper, embraces the definition from the 20 Century’s to the contemporary one. Culture, in this paper, is treated as a “a whole way of life that are explicit- behavior & material and implicit – meaning & value, including symbolic behavior in a community’s everyday life.” It includes both behavioral and cognitive aspects of human life, and it also expands to everyday practice that expresses meaning.

This dual nature of culture is interrelated with the two major domains of cultural elements, which will be discussed in the following section.

2-3. Domains of Cultural Elements

There have been various efforts to figure out what the elements of culture are by many anthropologists. Since culture is a complex whole as mentioned earlier, it consists of diverse cultural elements just like human body consists of lots of different components. Cultural element means the smallest entity which cannot be spilt15. Cultural element is an important concept which cannot be left out in order to explain the nature of culture. It is also very closely related to the domains of culture which mentioned above. For example, Tylor’s definition of culture states several of these

15 A. L. Kroeber uses ‘culture trait’ as a synonymous term with ‘culture element’.
elements such as knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits. Before complete explanation of domains of culture is employed, it should be examined how anthropologists divides cultural elements.

F. Boas\(^\text{16}\) divides culture as three categories, which are things related to nature, things related to human relationship, and things that are not included in both.

L. White expressed these three categories of cultural elements as technological, sociological and ideological. Technological elements include way of acquisition and preservation of food, clothing and housing, all the skills to use nature, tools, and conditions of nature. Sociological elements designate social aspects of human life. This includes social institution such as family or kinships, social relation according to individual difference of sex and age, and relationship among groups. In case of a complex society, it can include political, economic, and religious social groups, war, peace and so on. The third category, ideological elements designate things that are not included in both of the above two categories, that is subjective, for example, knowledge, emotion, value, morality, ethics, religion and so on.

Spradley\(^\text{17}\) argues that when ethnographers study a culture, they must deal with three fundamental aspects of human experience: what people know, what people do, and the things people make and use. He spoke of these three as cultural knowledge, cultural behavior, and cultural artifact. These three aspects of culture also can answer for the question of where the culture is - cultural knowledge in human mind, cultural behavior in human interaction, and cultural artifacts in the objects.

\(^{16}\) Boas F. 'The mind of primitive man,' N.Y. Collier Books, 1938 p.45

Meanwhile, along the line of above theories regarding domains of cultural elements, there have also been many attempts to identify different structural layers of culture. They adopted the view from Freud's theory of the unconscious: human being is no longer considered to be entirely rational, ruled by logic, and rather has another hidden significant portion of personality that is out of the person's awareness. Anthropologists applied this theory of dual level of human mind for finding out that culture has the depth existing on two levels. One is overt culture, which is visible and easily described, and the other is covert culture which is not visible and presents difficulties even to the trained observer. Many anthropologists and social psychologists agreed on this view, some keeping the number of levels as two while others adding one more level producing three levels of model.

E. Hall\textsuperscript{18} proposed model of three levels of culture: Formal, Informal, and Technical. 'Formal' is the one that every one knows about and takes for granted and which is well worked into daily life. For example, skis are an actual extension of the Eskimo foot, a highly adapted organ for locomotion. Each has their own style of skiing like everyone has their own way of walking. Skiing is taken for granted as a part of the daily life of the town: a formal tradition. 'Informal' has to do with situational or imprecise references. For instance, unlike Eskimo, other people take skis for pleasure, as part-time activity. They are not highly conscious of how they ski, what technique they use, or how the skill can be taught. Their conception of skiing is 'informal', a view which is no better expressed than in the phrase, "You will get the hang of it."

'Technical' is the one used by scientists and technicians, in which even the terminology

\textsuperscript{18} Hall, Edward T. 'The Silent Language,' New York: Anchor books, 1984. p. 28
may be unfamiliar to the non-specialist. Again ski as an example, films of skilled skiers
are analyzed, and the whole process is broken down into the components or isolates.
After a while it is decided that skiing is not an art which has to be restricted to the gifted.
They can be talked about and described technically.

A researcher on international business, F. Trompenaars also proposed a model of
culture having three layers: Outer layer of explicit-artifacts and products, Middle layer
of norms and values, and Core of implicit-basic assumption.19 Outer layer of explicit
culture is the observable reality of language, food, buildings, houses, monuments,
agriculture, markets, arts, and so on. They are externalized symbols of deeper level of
culture. Middle layer of norms are the mutual sense a group has of what is right and
wrong. Norms can develop on a formal level as written laws, and informal level as
social control. Values, on the other hand, determine the definition of good and bad, and
are therefore closely related to the ideals of shared by a group. While the norms,
consciously or subconsciously, give us a feeling of “this is how I normally should
behave,” values give us a feeling of “this is how I aspire or desire to behave.” It takes
shared meanings of norms and values that are stable and salient for a group’s cultural
tradition to be developed and elaborated. The core of basic assumption is the most basic
value people strive for survival. It is the one from the result that each cultural group has
organized itself to find the ways to deal most effectively with its environment, given its
available resources. It is the core meaning of life that man, and after man the
community takes from the fundamental relationship with the (natural) environment.
This deepest meaning has escaped from conscious questioning and has become self-

19 Trompenaars, Fons, ‘Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global
Business,’ Chicago: Irwin, 1994 pp. 23-26
evident, because it is a result of routine responses to the environment. In this sense, culture is anything but nature.

Another three-layer model of culture is a well-known iceberg model consisting of surface, unspoken rules, and unconscious rules by N. Hoft.\textsuperscript{20} The analogy drawn in the iceberg model is that just as small top portion of an iceberg is visible above of surface of the water. In other words, only surface level of cultural elements is easily visible to an observer, while the remaining portion of iceberg is not visible. Surface level of cultural characteristics again refer to the one which is visible, obvious, and easy to research such as number, currency, time, and date formats, language, and so on. Unspoken rules level of culture are somewhat obscured for which people generally need to identify the context of situation first. Unconscious rules level of culture are the one out of conscious awareness and difficult to study for this reason like nonverbal communication, a sense of time and physical distances and so forth.

Vask and Grantham enlisted another set of three categories of culture elements: Symbols, Rituals, and Myths.\textsuperscript{21} Symbols are visible signs created by humans to convey our ideas, intentions, and actions to others. It can be language, pictures or any other artifacts. Rituals are prescribed behaviors that help form attitudes by providing meaningful context. Rituals, like social norms as mentioned before in Trompenaars model, are prescriptions for what behavior ought to be. Myths as the term implies refers to the belief taken for granted by long accumulated experience.


As mentioned above, there are also some scholars to categorize culture elements into knowledge (cognition) and behavior, and ideology and phenomena. Kluckhohn\textsuperscript{22} spoke these two levels of culture elements as ‘covert culture and overt culture.’ He also spoke these two levels as implicit and explicit culture.

Finally, Stewart and Bennet divided culture elements as two levels of Subjective and Objective culture.\textsuperscript{23} In their model, objective culture refers to the institutions and artifacts of a culture, such as its economic system, social customs, political structures and processes, arts, crafts, and literature which are visible, easy to examine and tangible. In the mean time, subjective culture is the psychological features of culture, including assumptions, values, and patterns of thinking. It is difficult to examine because it operates outside of conscious awareness.

All the models reviewed so far, can be summarized in Table2-1.

As shown in Table 2-1, although many scholars do not quite agree upon the number of layers and words describing each layer, they all agree upon the theory that culture consists of elements that differ from each other in the degree of observability, concreteness and consciousness. Three levels that each scholar argued do not also always agree upon the cultural elements allocated in top, middle, and bottom layers in the Table 2-1. Top layer of culture consists of the observable, objective, concrete and tangible elements of culture such as language, food, housing, monuments, clothing, tools, arts and all artifacts human created. People can consciously and explicitly describe this phenomenal layer of culture. This layer of cultural element is the

\textsuperscript{22} Kluckhohn, F. R. and Strodtbeck, F. ‘Variation in Value Orientations,’ Evanston: Row, Peterson and Company, 1961 pp.11-24

manifested symbol of deeper layers of cultural element. Artifacts are 'frozen information' which contains the story of culture at present. Archeologists and Semioticians try to melt down the cultural element from the artifact.

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<td>Nature</td>
<td>Human Relationship</td>
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<td>L. White</td>
<td>Technological</td>
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<td>Artifact</td>
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Middle layer of cultural element includes something people know but cannot exclusively talk and elaborate. Each culture has its own shared sense of likes and dislikes. They know clearly what they prefer or not but cannot clarify why. Same as what they should do or should not. This level resides in people preconscious level between conscious and unconscious. Traditionally, this level has been hard part to conduct research but nowadays, Emotional Engineering or Kansei Engineering in
Japanese terms has begun to shed some potential lights on this area. Finally, bottom layer of cultural elements consists of things in people’s mind that are out of conscious awareness, taken for granted and difficult to know and elaborate. People cannot even be conscious of this layer of cultural element. For example, people never know that their specific behaviors are unique to them before they mirror them against different foreign culture. Research of this layer largely relies on interpretive approach of observed behaviors.

These three levels of cultural elements are intertwined cycle and mutually reinforcing. Top level of artifacts are linked to bottom level of basic assumptions through middle level of norm and value. Artifacts are embedded in norm and value which are in turn embedded in basic assumptions. The artifacts impart meaning to behavior through the rules prescribed by norm and value, but the meaning of behavior only make sense in the context of basic assumptions that surround that behavior. Describing and understanding these relationships between artifacts, norm and value, and basic assumptions in a cultural context is a major focus of anthropology. This notion of mutually complementary relationships between different levels of cultural elements suggests that complete understanding of culture require one to investigate all domains of culture elements. For example, the understanding of the background of specific characteristics of certain product requires a researcher to dig in deeper levels of hidden value and unconscious mental model. Similarly, in order to understand value of certain culture, we may need to collect and analyze all related artifacts where value is embedded.

This cycle also models the process of forming culture. At first, when new product introduced in real world, people gets to form the value of like and dislike on it. Then,
next, if the value is kept long enough it would be gradually absorbed deep into subconscious level. This reverse cycle can also happen. Out of unconscious level, some value is expressed, and if the value is salient enough, it can be manufactured as artifact or expressed in some symbol.

Three layers model of culture also implies that the study of each domain requires different methodologies specifically fit to concrete artifact, abstract value, and invisible unconscious rules. The secret of successful research lies in to identify to which level the current research problem belongs to so that researcher can equip with appropriate tools.

All these relationships between different levels of cultural artifacts are summarized and diagrammed in Figure 2-3.

![Figure 2-3: Cycling and Mutually Complementary Relationship between Different Levels of Cultural Elements.](image)

2-4. Characteristics of Culture

After having reviewed all the definitions and the domains of culture stated so far,
there can be found several characteristics of culture.

Many scholars have also defined these characteristics of culture in various ways. Those cultural characteristics can be summarized by the following five major characteristics as shown in Figure 2-4. In short, culture is *acquired or learned* by a man, *shared* by members of a society, and it makes up an *interrelated* whole. Moreover, it is *cumulative* in the history of man, and finally it is *diverse*. These five characteristics of culture will be explained in detail in the following.\(^\text{24}\)

\[\text{Figure 2-4: Five Characteristics of Culture}\]

The first characteristic of culture is that it is 'shared', supra-individual phenomena. Culture represents a consensus on a wide variety of meanings among members of an

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interacting community. Human being has remarkable capability of internalizing relevant values and the appropriate behavior patterns manifested by his or her role demand (father, teacher, or son etc.). Everybody has conscious or unconscious expectation of how I and other are supposed to behave: social norm and value. This shared consensus regarding social norm is continuously reinforced by social sanctions. Sanctions are the rewards and punishments allocated to the group members by other individuals and the group at large in consequence of adherence to or departure from the behavioral norms prescribed by group. Positive sanctions include approval or prestige, and examples of negative sanctions are shaming and application of physical force.²⁵ The very example is the consensus on language among members of a speech community. Speech is an individual action and each individual speaks somewhat differently from another; yet speakers of a given language can understand one another on their first meeting. Their capacities for mutual understanding are accompanied by a remarkable consensus about rules of pronunciation and grammar which linguist can discover the rules of prevailing in a whole community not from an extensive survey but from a small number of informants. This fact also can give a hint of the methodological approach for the culture as shared, supra-individual phenomena.

The second characteristic of culture is that culture is ‘learned’, rather than inherited biologically. The individual behaves largely in terms of certain habits and motives (predispositions) to respond to given culturally patterned stimuli in a culturally patterned way. The predispositions are assumed to have been learned in matrix of reward and punishment (social sanctions), and the appropriate responses reinforced by

²⁵ Inkels, Alex & Levinson, Daniel J., ‘National Character: the Study of Modal Personality and Sociocultural Systems,’ In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson, ed. The Handbook of Social Psychology,
consistent patterning of the individual's later cultured experience. The acquisition of culture by children has long fascinated anthropologists. A person learns the society's culture right after the birth. There are many kinds of agencies to teach culture to a person. As well as parents and family have the important roles, friends, play-partners, and even enemy, and, today, school, books and various types of media also take crucial roles for the learning. What kind of culture one learns depends on what kind of situation one encounters. There are no innate properties in here. Therefore, Linton viewed culture as social heredity in contrast to biological heredity.26 It becomes clear if a comparison between human culture and animal behavior is made. As a common example, ants live in-group and build a nest, but it is not seen as culture because it is an instinctively imitated behavior. It is different from socially learned behavior of human. Thus, culture is seen as the unique trait of human. This also means that culture is transmitted from generation to generation in human history. This transmitting nature of culture is interrelated to cumulative nature that will be discussed in the following.

Third, culture is 'cumulative'. Whatever scholars define culture diversely, they agree upon the cumulative nature of culture, meaning that culture is a historical product. Kluckhohn viewed culture as a design for living established historically, meaning that a nation or a group of people chooses the most effective and valuable way of life under a certain condition through a repeating trial and errors. Culture is the wisdom cumulated through a trial and errors by a nation or a group for a long time, and there can a concept of culture in more broad sense, which designates human wisdom of life.

Fourth, culture is a complex whole or a system, in which each part is 'interrelated'

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in a complicated way. Many anthropologists convicted that the customs they studied are connected and comprehensible only as parts of a larger organization – of beliefs, norms, values or social actions. If one attempts to understand, for example, witchcraft, one finds it deeply implicated in other aspects of their culture. A custom like witchcraft is understood not as an isolated phenomenon but in relation to its interpersonal, religious, and psychosomatic contexts that constitute a meaning for a custom.

Finally, fifth, culture is 'diverse', meaning that culture is varied across human populations. As stated above, if a culture is way of life of a nation or a group, a culture is unique to its people. Anthropologists never agree more on the issues of cultural variability. There is no serious dispute among professional anthropologists about the wide variations, documented by increasingly detailed ethnography, in the economic, organizational, and communicative patterns by which humans live. There is also consensus regarding documented variations in cultural standards of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic judgment. Although a few anthropologists consider the world is a melting pot in which variation is disappearing, it is clear that world culture as a whole are resisting homogenization, even as they embrace Western consumer goods and bureaucratic forms. Tradition may be eradicated, new ones may be invented and imported that are equally eligible to be called 'culture.'

In the following section, the methodological approach to study culture will be discussed.

2-5. Methodological Approaches in Studying Culture

The impetus of methodological approaches in studying culture is to identify and

27 This is the reason why the plural form, cultures, is commonly accepted.
articulate the relations between culture and society. The most important and unique methodological approach to study culture is 'a fieldwork.' Every anthropologist should get through a fieldwork. Fieldwork is what anthropologist directly goes into the area where people live. Therefore, the field is the laboratory of anthropologist. The length of fieldwork is usually more than one year long. The fieldwork for understanding culture has many values. At first, fieldwork can be very effective to have the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape people's conscious awareness. As mentioned before, it is very hard to speak out, or even know the culture in unconsciousness. Asking opinion can only capture something in conscious level which is not the case in culture. Only direct observation of people in real field is the best answer to it. The other advantage of direct observation of fieldwork comes from rich contextual data collected from the field that cannot be gathered from artificially set laboratory. Geertz explains the fieldwork as three steps — experience, establishing an identity in the new setting, and interpretation. The second step of establishing an identity in the new setting shows the distinctive characteristics of fieldwork, which is participant observation. It is the peculiar combination of subjectivity and objectivity. Anthropologist should be not only observer, but also a participant. It is very difficult job to call for both of involvement and detachment, entry and exit. Practically speaking, anthropologists cannot only hang around and get absorbed, but also record, describe, analyze and eventually, formulate the culture. Such formulation is the result of fieldwork: the ethnography.

28 Zeiel, John. 'Inquiry by Design,' Cambridge University Press, 1984


30 Ethnography refers to two different meanings. One hand, it is a final product as a form of writing, which is an analytic descriptions or reconstructions of cultural scenes and groups.
Another approach to study culture is a ‘comparative’ method. Comparative method is the second most important approach next to fieldwork in anthropology. It is needed to figure out characteristics of a culture and to figure out similarity and dissimilarity among cultures. There can be a synchronic comparison and a chronological comparison in comparative method. However, the more important thing is distinction between elemental comparison and formal comparison. Elemental comparison focuses upon the culture element to compare, while formal comparison focuses upon the form of cultural practices. Another effective approach is a small-scale comparison and large-scale comparison. Small-scale comparison is the method to identify structural characteristics of culture through comparing neighbor cultures in the limitation of area. However, it cannot convey macro level of analysis of cultural development. Therefore, large-scale comparison, extends its subject to the whole world and tries to verify a certain culture theory, to formulate patterns of cultures and to identify developmental process of culture in a macro level.

Furthermore, some other characteristics of the methodological approaches in studying culture can be summarized. The basic characteristic of the approaches of cultural study is a ‘total’ qualitative assessment. Total assessment means holistic approach to human life to generalize whole aspects of culture. For example, in order to study a family life, an anthropologist should look at each individual member’s common behaviors, language, and attitude. Family life is interrelated with economic life, material life including clothing, food, and housing, religious life, community life, conditions of

Another hand, it refers to one of research methods to conduct fieldwork.

natural environment, history, population, industry, and moreover, national customs and values. Since culture is an organic system in which each part is harmoniously interrelated, anthropologists should try to understand a part within the relation to the whole.

Another basic characteristic of this approach can be said 'inductive', which is a major characteristic of fieldwork. Anthropological research is concrete, empirical and inductive: it is based on gathering facts. Anthropologists do not simply think, they look and listen, photograph and record, then analyze the gathered data and formulate their findings. However, anthropological research is also 'deductive', too. It depends on thinking, on the manipulation of logical categories, especially in formulating the findings.\(^{32}\) Geertz expressed this inductive and deductive process as interpretation through 'thick description'.\(^{33}\) Geertz argued that what anthropologist is doing is sorting out the patterns and principles behind the meaning. This effort is what we call interpretation. Spradley describes this process as making a cultural inference. He argues that people in a culture who have shared knowledge generate cultural behavior, cultural artifacts, and speech messages, and the anthropologists observe these elements and infer informants' cultural knowledge. Therefore, strictly speaking, anthropological approach seems to be inductive at first, but it is interplay between deduction and induction. Four characteristics of methodological approaches to study of culture mentioned in this section are summarized visually in Figure 2-5 as follows:

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\(^{32}\) C. Levi-Strauss, the founder of Structuralism, uses deductive method to explain the structure beneath the culture. Some say that Levi-Strauss is not an anthropologist but a philosopher. However, his contribution on the field of anthropology was huge.

\(^{33}\) "Thick description" is a phrase to call a literary characteristic of ethnography as a final product of field research. Ethnography through a thick description, reveals the general through the particular, and the abstract through the concrete.
2-6. Academic Fields in Studying Culture

As found out before in the section of definition of culture, the word 'culture' is dealt with in so many different fields such as biology, journalism, archaeology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and so on. It can be said that almost all academic fields related to the human life deal with culture. Since so many fields approach the same subject, studying culture cannot but be interdisciplinary. There are four major approaches to study culture in the academic field: anthropological, sociological, psychological, and applied. The objective and interests to study culture will be different according to the fields.

Anthropological approach—especially, socio-cultural anthropology—studies culture
for its own sake, in other words, understanding people’s way of living. Originally, culture was a classic theme of anthropology. There are four sub fields in anthropology, which are physical anthropology, anthropological linguistics, archaeology, and sociocultural anthropology. Besides physical anthropologists’ interests, anthropological major interests can be divided into human material life, economic life, social life, religious life, social rule, art, and language. Among these interests, studying material culture including things that human make and use – that is tools, containers, clothing and housing and so on, makes an independent field of archaeology. Anthropological linguistics is also an independent sub field to study language. Language is an important communication vehicle in human life that consists of continuous exchange and communication of thoughts, emotions and information.

The rest of interest becomes a subject of socio-cultural anthropology. Economic life is a universal human behavior based on the cycle of production, distribution, exchange, consumption, and accumulation. Social life is very wide area including interpersonal relationship and institution and organization for this. While social life includes economic, political and legal life in a broad sense, it means family, kinship, marital institution, and territorial group in a narrow sense. Social rule means political and legal institutions that regulate behaviors and sense of value of group members. Religious life matters human spiritual life that takes a very important part in culture, including an attitude or ideology about human life and death, and happiness and unhappiness. Anthropology of religious life has been concerned with significance of religion, types of religious life, beliefs, and rituals. Art was also an interest of anthropology because

34 Physical anthropology studies physical characteristics of a group of people, therefore it is not included in academic fields to study culture.
human expresses what he feels, thinks, enjoys and fears through artistic medium.

While classical socio-cultural anthropology focused on primitive cultures through a fieldwork in a tribal society, sociological approaches focuses more on the urban, contemporary culture related to human social life, rules and institutions. Sociologists who studies culture, do fieldwork in contemporary urban settings, and they are interested in sub-cultures under the national culture, for example, minor group culture, gang culture, and problems of slam, and so on. This area of interest is not an exception of field of anthropology. Since primitive, tribal society has become industrialized, today's so-called urban anthropology also commits its focus onto urban culture and society.

Psychological approach of culture is basically interdisciplinary field of anthropology and psychology. Psychological approach mainly includes cognitive anthropology, and cultural psychology (psychological anthropology). In cognitive anthropology, culture is viewed as a system of meaning and implicit phenomena and the objective to study culture is to understand human cognitive processing mechanism. Cognitive anthropology was suggested by Anthony F. C. Wallace.35 Cognitive anthropology has developed into a new field, embracing cognitive psychology, social psychology, and social linguistics based on the methodology of linguistics.

Cultural psychology embraces human development, psychology, education, anthropology, developmental biology, and sociology. The field stresses the integration of theoretical interpretations and empirical findings bearing upon human development - personality development and psychological functioning in various cultural settings. The objective of this area is to contribute to the interdisciplinary understanding of human

behavior. This area of cultural studies interests culture and mental health, the cross-cultural study of human development, field studies of socialization practices, the comparative study of healing systems; study of culture-specific and universal structures in cognitive development, identity and self-concept, cross-cultural study of moral development, social cognition and indigenous psychology, and comparative study of high civilizations.

Applied approach has somewhat different objective from the fields stated above. As “Applied” means, the objective of this approach is more practical. This approach includes international relations, international business and industry, health and education and so on. Applied approach persists studying culture to participate in practical use of their ethnographic research result beyond academia. Since anthropologist’s work in colonial society had been funded by government and helped colonialists to rule their colony indirectly, even though they did not intended, some anthropologists emphasized their more active participation into establishing policy in colony. Many anthropologists today are working for promoting health and education in underdeveloped nations or for making policies in international relations for the government, and so on. International relations is a broadly interdisciplinary field embracing anthropology, economics, history, political science, and sociology, business, law and public policy studies. Researchers who are trained in the field, works in the international organizations as policy analysts and administrators and in the private sector in a wide variety of fields, such as consulting, commerce, and journalism. International business and industry studies culture to deal with cultural problems in the global business environment. In the field of international business, the objective to study culture is an understanding of the cultural elements of managerial and
organizational behavior inside multi-national corporation in the global market and understanding of the international environment for economic policy and business decision-making.

Table 2-2. Four major academic approaches and fields in studying culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Academic Fields</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Focused Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>Culture for its own sake - Understanding people's way of living</td>
<td>Material Culture, Language as communication vehicle, People's complex way of living - economic life, social life, religious life, social rule and art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anthropological Linguistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-cultural anthropology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological</td>
<td>Sub-culture studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Subcultures in contemporary urban settings, for example, minor group culture, gang culture, and problems of alienation and so on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Cognitive anthropology</td>
<td>Understanding human cognitive processing mechanism</td>
<td>Culture viewed as a system of meaning and implicit phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural psychology</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary understanding of human behavior</td>
<td>Integration of theoretical interpretations and empirical findings bearing upon human development - personality development and psychological functioning in various cultural settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>Participating in practical use of their ethnographic research result beyond academia</td>
<td>Promoting health and education in underdeveloped nations or for making policies in international relations for the government and so on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural elements of managerial and organizational behavior, economic policy and business decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry (Design)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Culture as a means to design better concept of things to live with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the meantime, a field related to designing artifacts inside industry has become more interested in studying culture. Since design is one of human science, understanding culture is a means to design better concept of artifacts to live with. In the
field of design, there are two approaches to the culture- cognitive and behavioral approaches. Cognitive approach is to understand how people give meanings to the designed objects. It is also related to design man-machine interface based on the knowledge of how people perceive icons and symbols differently culture by culture. Behavioral approach is to understand user better through users’ behaviors. It is useful for designers to develop a concept for the artifacts based on the full understanding of user’s potential needs. Four major academic approaches and fields with their objectives and focusing interests are summarized in the Table 2-2.

2-7. Findings and Implications

The nature of culture has been discussed in this chapter mainly regarding definition of culture, domains of cultural elements, characteristics of culture, methodological approaches in studying culture, and academic fields in cultural study. The findings of this chapter and their implication to the following chapters can be summarized as follows. Implications are written in italic fonts.

- Definition of Culture
  - Culture has many different meanings: cultivation, human development, civilization, a way of life, high arts, artifacts, and meaning. However, this study adopts the meaning of culture as “a whole way of life that is explicit such as behavior and material, and implicit as well such as meaning and value including symbolic behavior in a community’s everyday life.”

  The study should embrace not only explicit artifact culture but also implicit symbolic culture for understanding whole aspects of culture.

- Domains of Cultural Elements
  - Culture consists of structural layers with different observabilities and methodologies for studying them. Top layer consists of observable objective artifacts, middle layer include people’s value and norm which cannot be explicitly elaborated, and bottom layer consists of basic assumptions in human being’s unconsciousness.
The study should implement methodologies which can analyze behavioral and artifact level of culture, and cognitive level of culture as well.

- These layers are mutually reinforcing, recycling and complementary.

Findings of each level should be able to understand the relationship between them.

- Characteristics of Culture

- Culture is ‘learned’ or ‘acquired’ by a man, ‘shared’ by members of society, and it makes up an ‘interrelated’ whole. And it is ‘cumulative’ throughout the history of man, and it is ‘diverse’.

The study should choose the problem for experiment which is learned and shared by ordinary people in a community; is used in the supra-context; has been used for quite long period; has various way of dealing with it.

- Methodological Approaches in Studying Culture

- Methodological characteristics of cultural study include ‘field work’, ‘holistic’, ‘comparative’, and ‘interpretive’.

The study should directly observe people’s behavior as much as possible; should be cross-cultural comparative study including at least more than one culture; should have some means of interpreting observed behavior; should embrace comprehensive cultural elements as much as possible.

- Academic Fields in Studying Culture

- There are various academic fields to study culture which include ‘Anthropological’, ‘Sociological’, ‘Psychological’ and ‘applied’. In addition, there are diverse sub-fields within them with different viewpoints and methodologies. In the mean time, design has interests mainly in adopting cognitive and behavioral approaches to understand how people give meanings to the designed object, and to observe human behavior for identifying users’ potential needs.

The study should not aim at establishing profound cultural theory itself but should be bounded to studying relationships between design and culture by implementing methodologies and theories of culture only as tools.
These findings and implications are summarized and diagrammed in Figure 2-6 as follows. The understanding of basic nature of culture will be further elaborated for finding more concrete method for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>The scope of study of explicit artifact culture and implicit symbolic culture as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit &amp; implicit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domains</strong></td>
<td>The methods of study for behavioural level of culture and cognitive level of culture as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three layers of artifact, value &amp; basic assumptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>The problem of experiment shared in general, used for long time, and various way of dealing with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned, shared, interrelated, diverse cumulative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodologies</strong></td>
<td>The methods of study with direct observation and cross-cultural comparative study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field work, holistic, comparative, interpretive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fields</strong></td>
<td>The scope of study limited in relationship between design and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse fields, Design interests in methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2-6: Findings of Chapter 2 and Their Implications to Remaining Chapters*