

Cultural determinism

- 1) Cultural determinism is a relatively new paradigm in human Geography. It is in contrast to the earlier paradigm of environmental determinism.**
- 2) The cultural determinism approach theory is developed on the basis that the human nature is greatly determined by beliefs, ideas, values and meanings that people acquire as members of a given society.
- 3) A number of anthropologists presuppose that human nature does not have common "right way". They have suggested that "Right way" depends on the society from which one comes, and that the culture make up make of a given society is always unique and different from any other society.
- 4) This theory has two approaches; the optimistic account of the hypothesis of cultural determinism as later stated suggests that human beings are to a great deal flexible and malleable and that they can decide on the way of life they want. Another approach of this theory is the pessimistic account that postulates; human beings are always what they are accustomed to be and there is nothing they can do about it. In other words, human beings are passive creatures who are required to live by what the culture in the society they are living prescribes them to do.

- 5) According to Donald the genes that determine the structure and operations of human mind and body are usually in interaction with environments in which they operate. Donald says that these environments usually differ depending on culture that is in play. He further says that this will translate into operations and structures of the mind and body that that will differ across populations and also across individuals.
- 6) Margaret Meads in the doctrine of the noble savage postulated that human beings naturally are basically good, harmonious and peaceful. According to Mead, wickedness and immorality does not come naturally but instead results from the alteration and tainting of a good human nature when one is exposed to bad culture. Using this doctrine Pinker specifically brings out the Western culture as corrupting especially for its focus on rivalry, individuality, status striving and avariciousness, something he says has tainted the good human nature.