

Chapter 1

What is sociology?

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Activity: Research

Cannibalism as a norm

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify different types of cannibalism.
- Identify cultural reasons for cannibalism.
- Explain how norms about cannibalism reflect cultural attitudes to death and bereavement.

In some cultures and in some circumstances, cannibalism is a cultural norm.

A. Using the web links below (or others), find definitions for the following types of cannibalism:

1. exocannibalism
2. endocannibalism
3. necro-cannibalism

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannibalism>

<http://www.deathreference.com/Bl-Ce/Cannibalism.html>

B. The Korowai people of Papua New Guinea practise endocannibalism. Use the web links to research the reasons why these people eat human flesh.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korowai_people

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-Vtk2dDkI8>

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/sleeping-with-cannibals-128958913/>

C. The Wari' use cannibalism in different ways. Use the link to research the two different meanings and types of cannibalism among the Wari'.

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/exploration/news/news_cannibalism.htm

D. Write a summary of how the meaning of cannibalism varies between and within cultures. (You may like to consider how it reflects differences in attitudes towards death and bereavement in different cultures.)