


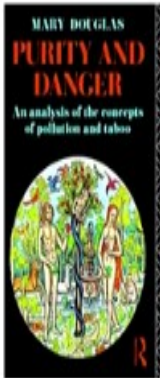
**Disaster Recovery and Build Back Better**  
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**Lecture – 30**  
**Cultural Theory of Risk**

Hello everyone, welcome to the lecture series on disaster recovery and build back better; this lecture we will talk about cultural theory of risk or cultural perspective of risk. I am Subhajyoti Samaddar from DPRI, Kyoto University so, we already discussed in other lectures about the role of culture in risk perceptions. Here, in this lecture, we will focus more what the cultural theory is talking about people's risk perceptions.

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**Purity and Danger (1966)**



- ☐ Modern Classic of Anthropology.
- ☐ Moral risk rather than environmental risks!
- ☐ Focus : Relationship between dietary restriction and the social order.

And how, this is connected with their cultural affiliation okay, so that was the book purely endangered by Mary Douglas in 1966 considered to be a modern classic of anthropology, talking about the moral risk pollution and danger okay.

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## Taxonomic Anomalies = Dietary restrictions



And she was talking about taxonomic anomalies, dietary restrictions in case of Jews, Israeli people who cannot have pork or snake as a food, okay because they are considered to be unclean like why they are unclean because they are anomalies, so taxonomic anomalies like snake, they live on land but they do not have legs so, it is very rare, so that's why you should not eat snake.

Similarly, you should not eat pork because they have cloven hooves but they don't chew the cud, so unlike horse and cow so, these are clean who are anomalies, so you should not eat them.

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## Hima tribe , Uganda



Similarly, the other examples like in case of Hima tribe in Uganda, they depend on animal husbandry, they depend on livestock okay and that the female; it is considered that female

they should not touch these live stocks, the very tribe whose livelihood depends on animal husbandry on depending on livestock rearing, they should not touch, their women should not touch live stocks.

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14<sup>th</sup> Century EUROPE : Poor water quality was a persistent danger!

The issue only became politicized when **persecution of the JEWS** began and as a part of that process , they were blamed for poisoning well-water.



They believe that if the woman they touch livestock, the livestock will die, so similarly in case of the 14th century Europe, there was poor water quality was already an issue for a very long time but it came into kind of more outcry of the people, it is considered to be as one of the critical concern and the blame of these was given to the Jews people because they were told that Jews people are actually contaminating the water.

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The allocation of responsibility of hazards events is a –

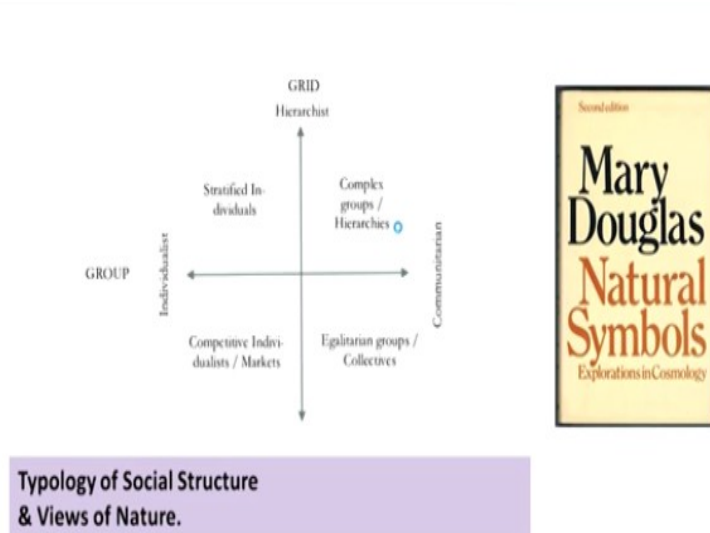
- ☐ "Normal strategy for protecting a particular set of values belonging to a particular way of life ..."
- ☐ "shared confidence and shared fears are part of the dialogue on how best to organize social relations"

So, they started to evict Jews people in Europe, so according to the cultural theory of risk, the allocation of responsibility of hazard event is normal strategy for protecting a particular set of

values, one culture they define that this is right and this is not good, this is bad this is good, this is acceptable, this is unacceptable, this is pure, this is polluted okay, so each culture have their own values.

And through these values; through this lens let's see, what is risky what is not risky, what is pure, what is impure okay and they disseminate this informations among their members.

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Now, Mary Douglas was saying that we need to have a kind of categories of cultures, there we have many cultures but we can group them, categorize them.

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### Why "Grid- Group"?

- The "Grid-Group" Approach : A tool to manage cultural diversity.
- Cultural Bias 1978
- *The failure of anthropologists - to theories cultural diversity and to compare culture.*
- *The problems of British anthropologists trained with theories based on field works in Africa who lack tools to anylase their findings during their field work in Melanesia*



She was telling that we can do it through the grid and group pattern, we can categorize the culture in order to analyse them better. Why it is so, why we need to have grid group kind of

system which will come later but why we need categories the culture based on grid and group. She published a book in 1978 and claiming that the traditional anthropologists; anthropological studies on culture, they are lacking any category of culture.

Therefore, if you are studying some culture in Africa, you cannot compare that when you are studying a culture in Asia so, the anthropologist are trained in such a way that they do not generalize their findings so, they are very localized, contextualize their findings. So, in order to reach to some kind of generalizations, we should try to make categorizations of culture, okay.

And so, she said that we can do it through the model called grid and group to categorize the culture to understand people's mind.

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#### Social order Limits the Freedom of Individuals in Two Shapers



*Whom* one interacts with (GROUP)



*How* one interacts with them (GRID)

Now, she is saying that we can do this by taking 2 elements; one is whom one interact and how one interact with so, whom one interact is considered to be group and how they interact is considered to be grid, okay.

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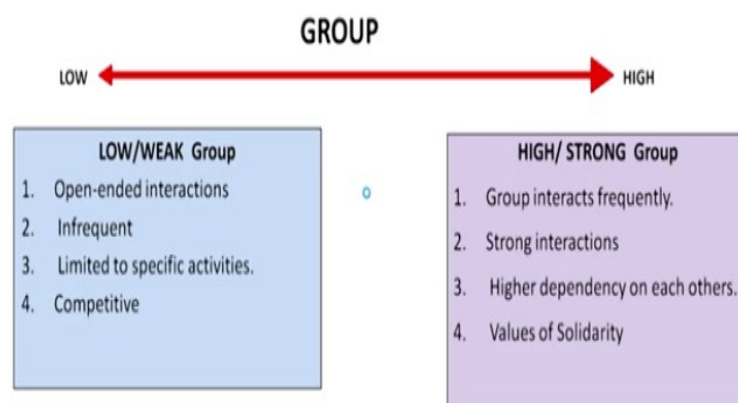
### GROUP :

- Represents the degree of social incorporation of the individual in a social unit.
- The range of social interaction within a social unit.



So, group generally represent the degree of social incorporation of the individual, this result how often I am meeting someone, how dense is the network between the members of that group if I am living in the neighbourhood, how I am interacting with each of them, am I meeting them very frequently or very rarely, do I know everyone or do I know some of them so, how this people are interacting with each other, what extent it depends on a group, okay.

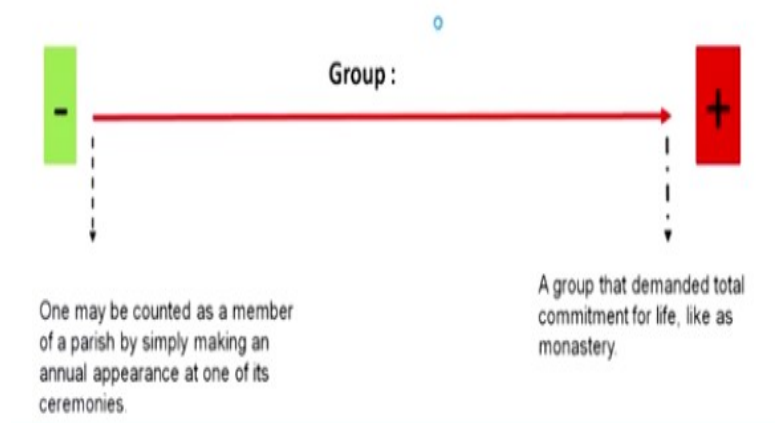
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So, some groups are very flexible, very low, they have very less network, less density, they often they seldom met and some are very high, okay, so low and weak group like open-ended interactions, very infrequent, limited with specific purpose, the reason of people interacting, in some neighbourhood people interact very rarely with each other, right or maybe they are very competitive like the colleagues or co-workers, okay.

They do not working in a hospital or working in a school or working in a company, they are very competitive but they have very less interactions; face to face interactions on the other hand, we have high one which are people are meeting with each other like in the village okay, everybody knows everyone, very strong interactions and people depend on each other services, they have high dependency.

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And they have share common very strong solidarity, okay like you can see in the villages compared to urban areas, so this is one side, we have a low group and one on the side we have high group; 2 extreme group polarizing.

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### Grid :

- A measure of the constraining classification that bear up members of any social grouping.
- Such classification maybe functions of hierarchy, kinship, race, gender , age and so fourth.



Also, we have the grid okay, the grid represents that what kind of rules and regulations I should maintain, I should follow, when I am a member of a particular group, okay that what