

## Intro.

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Characteristics of Anthro.

- holistic: looking at every aspect of a subject (social, political, economic); looking @ changes over time;
- comparative: studying diff. groups and recognizing the similarities & differences between them.
- cultural relativism: acknowledging other values of diff. groups/cultures; withholding judgement; trying to understand values/beliefs of others.
- methodology: conducting fieldwork (long term)
- human variation: biocultural - looks at how paleoanth. primatology and human variation connect
- anthropological linguistics → study of human communication, focuses on relationship between language and culture
  - descriptive → describing & documenting language
  - historical → tracing the history & evolution of language
  - sociolinguistics/ethnological ling. → looking @ the effects of society and culture on language & vice-versa
- cultural anth: the study of society using ethnographic methods.
  - ethnography → description of a society or culture
  - ethnology → looking for patterns; comparing different ethnographies.
- applied anth: application of an anthropological approach in solving real world problems.
  - medical anth.
  - environmental anth.

## Culture

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weekend:

sleep

going out

relaxing

staying up

fun

- culture → a learned system of beliefs, norms, values, ideas, attitudes, knowledge, customs & behaviors shared among members of a group.

- a worldview (cultural goggles)
- how to behave & interpret the behaviors of others.

- culture is:

→ shared

→ learned (enculturation)

→ knowledge & patterns of behaviors (norms & values)

→ symbolic

→ adaptive

→ dynamic (keeps changing)

- enculturation

→ the process by which we learn culture (behaviors AND beliefs)

→ socialization vs. enculturation

↳ learning ~~the~~ correct behavior      ↳ learning reasons behind behavior

→ we learn our culture explicitly (being told what is expected of you).

→ we learn our culture implicitly (learning by observing)

→ enculturation is a continuing process

Norms & values

- norms: social behavior that is considered normal & expected; help us know how to behave in specific social occasions.

- values: shared ~~beliefs~~ ideas of what is right, good, beautiful, and true
- ideal vs. real culture: people don't always follow all ~~cultural~~ aspects of their culture.
  - ex) lying, cheating

### Cultural constructions:

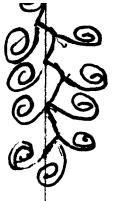
- a "natural fact" with actual cultural origins (created)
- anthropologists deconstruct these assumptions.
  - ex) what makes a "good" marriage?
- importance of cultural relativism

### Cultural universals:

- incest taboo
- use of metaphors
- dream interpretation
- patriarchy
- system of time organization
- sexual double entendres
- proverbs and sayings
- creation stories
- toys for children

### Subcultures & Countercultures:

- subcultures: groups within a single society that have their own unique cultures
- dominant culture: usually the majority; control cultural institutions (education, law, politics)
- counterculture: groups that develop cultures in opposition to dominant culture
  - ex) hippies



### Studying culture:

- emic: the insider's perspective (the native's point of view); the meaning of a cultural belief, custom, etc.
- etic: the outsider's point of view (an analyst's perspective); the sense/function of a cultural belief, custom, etc.

### Methods

#### Doing fieldwork:

- ethnographic research → research that aims to describe a group's culture; involves fieldwork
- fieldwork → in the field, extended period of time, embedded in the local daily life
- ethnographer → someone conducting ethnographic research
- why?
  - establishes rapport and trust
  - more holistic understanding
  - time to refine research plan
  - better able to verify info.

#### The fieldwork process:

- research proposal
- apply for funding
- go to the field
- period of adjustment (culture shock)
- collect data (who, what, where, how)
- analyze data (why)
- research product

#### Ethics:

- consideration of the impacts of research activity and research results
- ethical responsibilities to:

- research subjects
- the discipline
- public
- students

### Quantitative & Qualitative methods:

#### methodology vs. methods

→ approach to collecting data; → a tool for collecting data

- Quantitative: quantifiable data (#'s) (objective properties)
  - collecting data → survey data
  - analysis → statistics
- Qualitative → deals w/ the qualities of things (subjective properties)
  - collecting data → in depth interviews
  - analysis → text analysis

### Sampling:

- sample → selection of research participants that is meant to be representative of the population
- Ideal: random sample
- snowball sampling - talking to one group + gaining access to others
- key informants - initial people that researchers talk to 1<sup>st</sup>; introduce researchers to the rest of the population

### Collecting data:

- participant observation
- interviews (formal & informal)
- life histories: getting historical context of the cultural group
- genealogical charts
- mapping
- photography + video
- archival research
- surveys
- culture domain analysis (used in cognitive anth.)

- Cultural anth. use more qualitative research methods

### Participant observation:

- Taking part in community life as you study it (both observing and participating)
  - living at research site
  - speaking the language
  - participating in daily routines (eating meals w/ participants) & special events (attending a ritual)
  - using everyday conversation as an informal interview technique
  - informally observing during leisure activities (hanging out)
- Field notes → the record of the data (the ethnographer's observations, conversations, interpretations, and suggestions for future info. to be gathered).

### Analyzing Data:

- Drawing conclusions about what the data tells us about the group studied.
- Searching for patterns & themes
- Explaining why the patterns are there
- Examples →
  - text analysis
  - statistical analysis
  - spatial analysis

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# History & Theory (1)

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## Theory:

- a supposition or set of ideas that is used to explain something
- anthropological theory = explain human behavior & cultural diversity
- theory guides research
- multiple theories for same phenomenon
- Theories can be synthesized, built upon, changed, and rejected or disproven.

## Beginnings of Anthropology:

- colonialism, explorers, traders, missionaries
- discovering wide diversity; interest in explaining it.
- early focus was discovery, description, & classification
- armchair anthropologists: created theories on human diversity; did not engage in fieldwork

## Social Evolution:

- all societies & their cultures progress from simple to more complex states in a unilinear fashion (primitive to complex)
- Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)
  - organic analogy - compared human societies to biological organism
  - social darwinism - "survival of the fittest"; western powers dominant
- Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881)
  - "savagery" → "barbarism" → "civilization"

## Historical Particularism:

- Franz Boas (1858-1942) = "father of American Anthropology"
- historical particularism = culture is the product of the specific history of that society; emphasizes direct observation & objective description.

→ participant observation

→ cultural relativism

### Functionalism:

→ Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942)

• Trobriand Islands fieldwork

→ Functionalism = cultural traits have social & biological forms that contribute to the smooth operation of the whole society

→ Cultures adapt to meet society's basic needs (biological & social)

→ cultures are logical & rational

### History and Theory (2)

- ethnography = localized, specific research

- ethnology = looking for patterns from diff. cultures

### Structuralism -

→ Claude Lévi-Straus

→ structuralism = search for unifying patterns of thought (structures); culture is understood as variances on these universal patterns.

→ The forms may be different but the overall structures are the same cross-culturally

→ "The Savage Mind" - The savage structures of thought & meaning are just as complex as the thought & meaning in civilized societies.

### Cultural Materialism:

→ Marvin Harris (1927-2001)

→ Relationships between culture, environment, & economic production

→ cultural materialism = human social life is a



response to the practical problems of earthly existence";

Culture is a response to economic necessity

→ Material forms of culture → abstract nonmaterial forms of culture

→ Example of cows in Hindu culture

→ "what people do influences what they believe"

Conflict Theory

→ Karl Marx (1818-1883)

→ conflict theory = focuses on conflict, social problems, and distribution of power in explaining culture (anti-functionalist)

→ Struggle for power drives cultural change

→ Hegemony - a group/institution/ideology imposed on another group

→ Institutionalized culture

→ use of coercion for social control = promoting a specific ideology

Postmodernism:

→ Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

→ Questions ways of knowing

→ Postmodernism = all knowledge is culturally constructed

→ Multiple knowledges = there is no right answer

→ "power/knowledge" = looks @ relationship between power & knowledge; how do they influence one another?

→ Role of anthropologists?

→ is ethnography useless?