

Chapter 1: What is Anthropology?

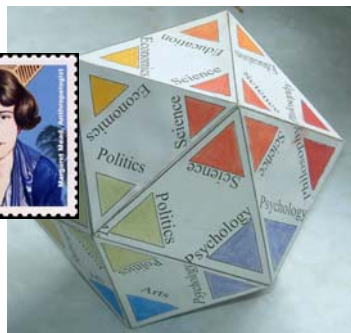


What Is Anthropology?

- What distinguishes anthropology from other fields that study human beings?
- How do anthropologists study human diversity in time and space?
- Why is anthropology both scientific and humanistic?

1. Human Diversity

- Anthropology
- Comparative and Holistic



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." ~Margaret Mead (1901-1978)

- **Cultures:** traditions and customs, transmitted through learning, that form and guide the beliefs and behavior of the people exposed to them.

- Technological
- Sociological
- Ideological

Think

Do Have

(Leslie White)



Adaptation, Variation, And Change

- Humans adapt using biological and cultural means.

RECAP 1.1 Forms of Cultural and Biological Adaptation (to High Altitude)

FORM OF ADAPTATION	TYPE OF ADAPTATION	EXAMPLE
Technology	Cultural	Pressurized airplane cabin with oxygen masks
Genetic adaptation <small>(occurs over generations)</small>	Biological	Larger "barrel chests" of native highlanders
Long-term physiological adaptation <small>(occurs during growth and development of the individual organism)</small>	Biological	More efficient respiratory system, to extract oxygen from "thin air"
Short-term physiological adaptation <small>(occurs spontaneously when the individual organism enters a new environment)</small>	Biological	Increased heart rate, hyperventilation

- Rate of change accelerated during past 10k years
 - **Food production**
 - industrial production

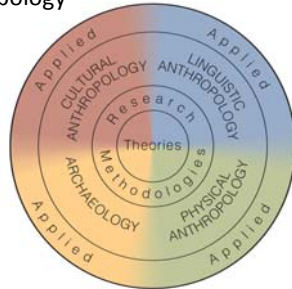
2. General Anthropology

- **General anthropology:** “four-field”
 - Variations in time and space
 - All Anthropology is “cultural.”
- Cultural Forces shape Human Biology (and vice versa)
 - **Biocultural**



3. The Subdisciplines Of Anthropology

- Cultural anthropology
- Archaeological anthropology
- Biological (physical) anthropology
- Linguistic anthropology



Cultural Anthropology

- Describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains similarities and differences
 - **Ethnography:** fieldwork
 - **Ethnology:** comparative, cross-cultural



RECAP 1.2 Ethnography and Ethnology—Two Dimensions of Cultural Anthropology

ETHNOGRAPHY	ETHNOLOGY
Requires field work to collect data	Uses data collected by a series of researchers
Often descriptive	Usually synthetic
Group/community specific	Comparative/cross-cultural

Archaeological Anthropology

- Artifacts (potsherds, jewelry, tools)
- Garbage
- Burials
- Remains of structures
- paleoecology



Biological (Physical) Anthropology

- Human biological variation in time and space
 - Human evolution (paleoanthropology)
 - genetics
 - growth and development
 - biological plasticity
 - primatology



Linguistic Anthropology

- Language in its social and cultural context across space and time
 - Historical linguists
 - Structural linguistics
 - Sociolinguistics
 - Class, gender, ethnicity, etc.

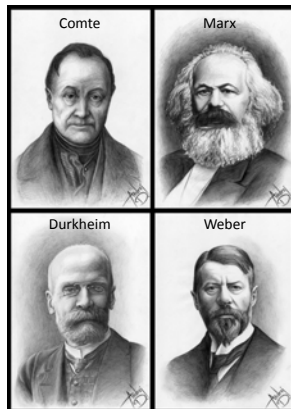
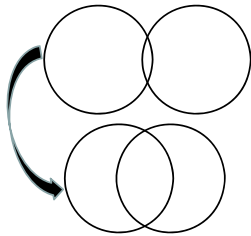


3. Anthropology And Other Academic Fields

- **Humanistic science:** reliable explanations with reference to the material and physical world
 - “Discovering, describing, understanding, appreciating and explaining differences and similarities”
 - Humanities: Literature, classics, folklore, arts, philosophy

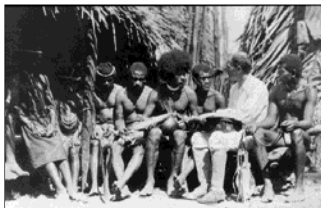
Cultural Anthropology and Sociology

- Industrial West vs. nonindustrial societies
- Different methods of data collection and analysis
- Much overlap today



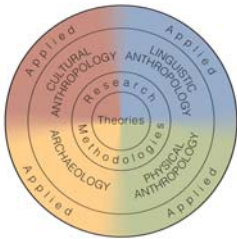
Anthropology And Psychology

- “Psychological anthropology” cross-cultural variations in psychological traits
- Malinowski’s study of Trobriand Islanders and Freud’s Oedipus complex



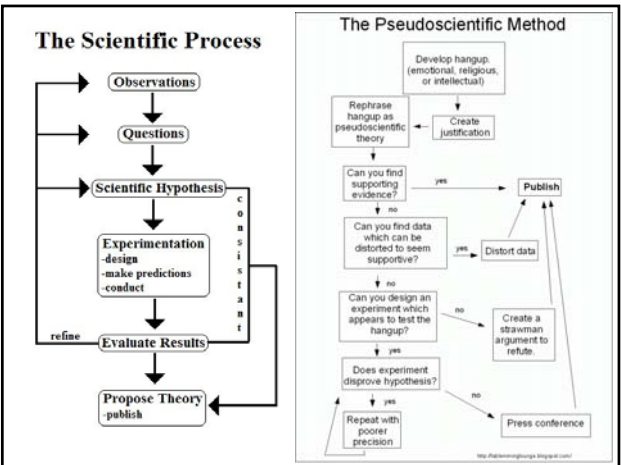
4. Applied Anthropology

- Application of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve social problems
 - Cultural resource management



5. The Scientific Method

- Anthropology a **humanistic** science
- Ethnology a comparative science
 - Attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities
 - Compare, contrast, and make generalizations about societies and cultures
- Generalizations vs stereotypes
 - "Americans *tend* to be individualistic"
 - "Canadians are big hockey fans"

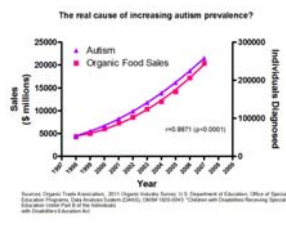


Theories, Associations, And Explanations

- **Theory**: a set of ideas formulated to explain something
 - **Hypotheses**: suggested but as yet unverified explanations
- How is the way we commonly use (and understand) these words different than how they relate to science?

Theories, Associations, And Explanations

- **Association**: observed relationship between two or more measured variables
- Correlation does NOT imply causality:



When Multiple Variables Predict

- How has variable exposure to television affected Brazilians?
 - Current viewing level and length of home TV exposure
 - Strong correlation between liberal social views and current viewing hours
 - Stronger correlation between years of home viewing by individuals and liberal social views
