

03th October 2024

What we will do today?

Introduction of some concepts,
keywords and debates in
“anthropologies”

Anthropology as “the study of the human”

Several disciplines focus on “the human” (such as ?)

Every discipline has its own specific focus (such as ?)

So what about the anthropology?



THE FAR SIDE® BY GARY LARSON



"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"

The study of cultures (cultural anthropology)

The study of societies (social anthropology)

The study of the biology of humans (biological anthropology)

The study of human evolution (evolutionary anthropology)

Today we will briefly introduce the first two: cultural and social anthropology

Origins of socio-cultural anthropology:

2600 years BP: Herodotus

700 years BP: Ibn Khaldun

500 years BP: European invasion of the American continent

400 years BP: European Humanism

1799: *Société des observateurs de l'homme*

Around 150 years BP: the first academic chairs in anthropology (from medicine and sociology)



Image: Ibn Khaldun (source: <https://muslimheritage.com/ibn-khaldun-life-works/>)



Everybody is an anthropologist!

Roy Wagner (1975)*: Melanesian *cargo cults* as a “reverse anthropology”, a way of explaining Western wealth as the result of magic action.

Sylvia Caiuby Novaes (1993)**: studying people that, as us, create an image of themselves from what they suppose the others see on them

Anyhow, here and now, we will concentrate on “academic” anthropology

*Wagner, Roy. 1975. *The invention of culture*. Hoboken: Prentice-Hall.

** Caiuby Novaes, Sylvia. 1993. *Jogo de Espelhos*. São Paulo: Edusp.

What socio-cultural anthropologists do?

At the beginning, the study of people and societies living “far away” from the hegemonic euro-american panorama

Focus on social institutions, religions and cults, technics and material culture, arts, knowledges, etc.

Colonial heritage: knowing to control

At the beginning rare cases of first-hand fieldwork, and uses of reports from travellers, missionaries, colonial administrators, etc.

From the end of the Twentieth Century, fieldwork and first hand experience:
ethnography



Image: Signe Howell (source: <https://www.uniforum.uio.no/nyheter/2007/06/signe-howell-faar-uio-forskingspris.html>)

Ethnography

Howell, Signe. 2017. Two or three things I love about ethnography. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7(1): 15-20.

“Anthropology is an academic discipline that constructs its intellectual imaginings from a wide range of knowledge about human worlds”

“Ethnography is the practice developed in order to bring about that knowledge according to certain methodological principles”

“together they have become a basic premise for the anthropological epistemology”

Uses of “ethnography” in other disciplines:

- humanizing research
- move away from libraries
- beyond structured interviews
- beyond large numbers

Is it enough? According with Howell: it is not!

“The fieldwork must be informed throughout by anthropological concerns”

“what the people we study say they do and why is often very different from what they actually do. This becomes apparent only through long-term fieldwork”

[“What people say, what people do, and what they say they do are entirely different things” attributed to Margaret Mead]



Image: Tim Ingold (source: <http://www.radio-univers.com/tim-ingold-nous-nappr-enons-quen-faisant-n855/>)

“Ethnography and theory resemble nothing so much as the two arcs of a hyperbola [...], which cast their beams in opposite directions [...] they are back to back and darkness reigns between them. [...] if we reverse the orientation of the two arcs of ethnography and theory, so that each embraces the other in an encompassing brightly illuminated ellipse” (Ingold 2106: 393)

Ingold, Tim. 2016. That's enough about ethnography! *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4 (1): 383-395.

“The field ethnographer has seriously and soberly to cover the full extent of the phenomena in each aspect of tribal culture studied, making no difference between what is commonplace, or drab, or ordinary and what strikes him as astonishing and out-of-the way”
(Malinowski 1922: 11)*



*Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Image: Malinowski at the Trobriands (source: <https://www.unibz.it/it/news/128678-ethnocafe-malinowski>)

“Anthropology is a comparative discipline. Our aim is continuously to expand our knowledge about the way humans organize their lives”

Adventurous character

“Anthropology as a speculative discipline predicated upon ethnographic fieldwork provides our identity”

Anthropology/ethnography as academic and personal self-identity

“the continuing expanding source of my knowledge about human sociality and about human potentials”

Anthropology/ethnography as the multiplication of the possibles

Anthropology/ethnography as a continuous rethinking the human experiences and possibilities: *“the old anthropological texts based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork never lose their salience for us”*

Relevance of “classical authors”

- detailed ethnographies
- despite theoretical assumptions
- appointing debates and experiences

Discussing the canonical history of anthropology

- colonial origins
- gender gaps
- eurocentrism



Image: anthropological library (source: <https://teachinganthropology.org/2019/02/01/feminizing-the-canonical-history-of-anthropology-from-the-perspective-of-female-authors/>)

Examples of alternatives to canonical scholars:

Zora Hurston and the ethnography of afro-american suburbs*

Charles Eastman and the native ethnography of Iroquees**

Margaret Pattison Thom (Makereti) and the native ethnography of Maori***

Among others...

An overview of anthropology not for authors but for topics...

*Hurston, Zora N. 2018. *Barracoon: The story of the last "Black Cargo"*. New York: Amistad.

**Eastman, Charles A. (Ed.). 1905. *Red Hunters and the Animal People*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

***Makereti. 1938. *The Old-Time Māori*. London: Victor Gollancz.



Image: Makereti (source: <https://twitter.com/MahiTahi1/status/1070860470133772288>)

Culture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2Bj8OCmxb4&t=215s>

Object of anthropology are similarities and differences among people, at both internal and external levels

First academic definition by Edward B. Taylor in 1871: “*Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*”*



Culture as the human nature

Culture as models “for” doing something and as models “of” what something is*

Culture as operational to solve requests and problems**

Culture as dialectics and mutability, internal and external***

Culture as creativity and invention****

*Gertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

**Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London, Routledge.

***Balandier, George. 1972. *Political Anthropology*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books

****Wagner, Roy. 1975. *The Invention of Culture*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

How to study “cultures”?

Ambition of holism:
“each aspect of tribal culture studied” *

The “local” with the “global”**

Attention to the context

Anti-ethnocentrism

Dialogue and translation

Application and action



Image: Applied Anthropology (source: <https://www.appliedanthro.org>)

*Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

**Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimension of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Examples of debates in socio-cultural anthropology: **kinship systems**

Kinship as the relations that irradiate from an “ego”

Biological and social dimensions

Focus on kinship terminology*

Organization of consanguinity (descendance and filiation) and affinity (alliance and marriage)

I.e. Lévi-Strauss and theory of alliance**:
elementary structures, indirect exchanges,
complex systems

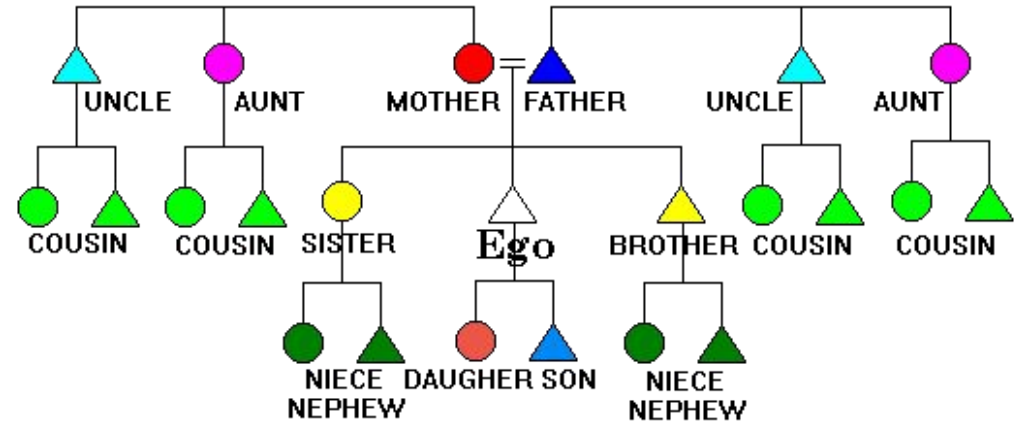


Image: English kinship system (source: <https://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/kinterms/english.htm>)

*Fox, Robin. 1996. *Kinship and Marriage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1949. *The elementary structures of kinship*. Boston: Beacon Press



Image: Potlach (source: *The North American Indian* by Edward S. Curtis)

Examples of debates in socio-cultural anthropology: **economic life**

Every society produces resources (material and symbolical) and circulate them

Production: hunter-gathers, pastoralism, agriculture, industry, finance, etc.

Reciprocity and gift: i.e. Kula*, Potlach**, and generalized economy***

Formalist (rational player) versus substantivist (effective practices)

*Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

**Boas, Franz. 1921. *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl*. *Thirty-fifth annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1913-1914*, 43–794

***Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton

Exercise: create and describe your kinship network

- 1) Create the diagram using the appropriate symbols
- 1) List the kinship relation terminologies in your language and using the appropriate “letters”
- 1) Describe the different relations among parents (in a couple of sentences each)

KINSHIP DIAGRAM SYMBOLS



MALE



DECEASED



FEMALE



FEMALE EGO



NONSPECIFIC
GENDER



MALE EGO



MARRIED TO



CONNECT
SIBLING



DIVORCED FROM



CONNECT
PARENTS &
CHILDREN

M : MOTHER
F : FATHER
S : SON
D : DAUGHTER
B : BROTHER
Z : SISTER
H : HUSBAND
W : WIFE

For the next week

Please read:

Jantz, R. L. 1995. Franz Boas and Native American Biological Variability. *Human Biology* 67(3): 345-353. DOI: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41465390>

Send your kinship diagram and description to:

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Enjoy the rest of the week!