

Applying Anthropology

An Introductory Reader

EIGHTH EDITION

AARON PODOLEFSKY PETER J. BROWN



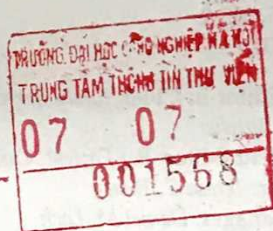
APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY

An Introductory Reader

EIGHTH EDITION

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APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTORY READER

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To the Instructor

Introductory anthropology has become an established part of the college curriculum, and through this course our profession communicates with a large and diverse undergraduate audience. Members of that audience differ in experience, academic concentration, and career aspirations. For those students considering anthropology as a major, we need to provide (among other things) a vision of the future, a view of anthropological work to be done in the public domain as well as within academia. For them, we need to provide some answers to the question, What can I do with a degree in anthropology? For students majoring in other areas, such as business, engineering, or psychology, we need to address the question, How can anthropological insights or research methods help me understand and solve human problems? If we can provide such a service, we increase the likelihood that students will find creative solutions to the professional problems that await them, and we brighten the future for our anthropology majors by underscoring the usefulness of an anthropological perspective in attempts to solve the practical problems of today's world.

Over the years we have found that many introductory texts do little more than include a chapter on applied anthropology at the end of the book. This suggests, at least to students, that most of anthropology has no relevance to their lives. Such treatment also implies that the application of anthropological knowledge is a tangent or afterthought—at best an additional subject area, such as kinship or politics.

We disagree. We believe that the applications of anthropology cut across and infuse all the discipline's subfields. This book is a collection of articles that provide examples of both basic and applied research in all four fields of anthropology.

One of our primary goals is to demonstrate some of the ways our discipline is used outside the academic arena. We want anthropology to be seen as a field that is interesting as well as relevant to the real world. Like the public at large, students seem well aware that the subject matter of anthropology is fascinating, but they seem unaware of both the fundamental questions of humanity addressed by anthropologists and the practical applications of the field. Increased public awareness of the practical contributions of anthropology is a goal that we share with many in the profession. In fact,

this is a major long-term goal of the American Anthropological Association.

Since we first started editing these readers in 1989, the general field of anthropology has changed in precisely this direction of emphasizing public relevance. "Public anthropology" refers to anthropological research and writing that engages important public issues (like many of those addressed in this book) and whose audience is the lay educated public. Our discipline has a long history in this regard, as in the work of Franz Boas on racial discrimination and Margaret Mead's famous articles in *Redbook* magazine. As "public scholars," anthropologists must communicate their perspective on contemporary issues and influence public opinion and policy. In this age of globalization and increased cultural intolerance often linked to religious fundamentalism, the basic messages of public anthropology are more important than ever. Being an effective public anthropologist is just being a great teacher in a larger classroom. A good place to find out what is happening in public anthropology is through the Web site of the American Anthropological Association (www.aaanet.org) or the Public Anthropology Web site (www.publicanthropology.org).

Although people distinguish between basic and applied research, much of anthropology falls into a gray area, having elements of both. Many selections in this book fall into that gray zone—they are brief ethnographic accounts that contain important implications for understanding and resolving problems. We could have included a large number of articles exemplifying strictly applied research—an evaluation report of agency performance, for example. Although this sort of research is fascinating and challenging to do, it is usually not exciting for students to read. We have selected articles that we believe are fascinating for students and convey the dual nature (basic/applied) of social science research. We think that it is not the scholarly writing style that is most important, but rather the content of the research as a way to get students to think and to challenge their own assumptions about the world.

Anthropological research is oriented by certain basic human values. These include being against ethnocentrism, racism, and ignorance. Anthropology is about understanding and appreciating human similarities

and difference. Such an understanding can lead students to new attitudes—like tolerance for cultural difference, commitment to human equality, stewardship of the environment, appreciation of the past, and personal dedication to the continued and honest pursuit of knowledge.

Any student who completes an introductory course in anthropology should learn that anthropological work, in its broadest sense, may include (or at least contribute to) international business, epidemiology, program evaluation, social impact studies, conflict resolution, organizational analysis, market research, and nutrition research, even though their introductory anthropology texts make no mention of those fields. The selections in this book should help students understand why anthropology is important in today's world and also make the course more memorable and meaningful.

FEATURES OF THIS EDITION

- To spark student discussion and thinking about controversial issues and issues of public policy, we have included selections dealing with contemporary topics like globalization, HIV/AIDS, racism, cell phones, Barbie, migration, obesity, intelligent design, and the current war. These selections are clearly anthropological in perspective and approach. When students are able to relate the concepts and examples of anthropology to current debates, they recognize the value of their education.
- We chose readings that complement typical courses in introductory anthropology. The sequence of articles follows the organization of standard anthropology textbooks, grouped under headings with terms such as kinship, ritual, marriage, and religion, rather than headings based on areas of applied anthropology like medical anthropology or the anthropology of development. At the same time, we include headings such as culture and food and globalization, reflecting growth and development in the anthropological discipline and purview. As in most contemporary textbooks, linguistic anthropology is included under culture and communication. Had we meant this book as a reader on applied anthropology, our organization would have been different. Although this book could be used by students in upper-level courses on applied anthropology (as earlier editions have been), those students are not our intended audience. For this reason, we have not

provided extensive discussion of the history or definition of applied anthropology.

- For students interested in pursuing applied anthropology on their own, there are a number of fine books. These include *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide*, by Erve Chambers; *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, by John van Willigen; *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, by Robert M. Wulff and Shirley J. Fiske; *Applied Anthropology in America*, by Elizabeth M. Eddy and William L. Partridge; and *Making Our Research Useful*, by John van Willigen, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne McElroy. Students interested in medical matters may want to consult *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, by Peter J. Brown, or *Anthropology and Public Health* by Robert Hahn.
- To emphasize how anthropology can be put to work in different settings, we include examples of anthropologists whose careers involve applying anthropology outside the university setting.
- To help students better understand the subject matter, we include a number of pedagogical aids: introductions, a list of glossary terms, and guiding questions for each article; a world map that pinpoints the locations of places and peoples discussed in the articles; and, for easy reference, an extensive glossary and index.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

In this edition we have continued to juxtapose "classic" anthropological articles with features that highlight issues of this new millennium. One such juxtaposition is the continued issue of the central biological theory of evolution as opposed to creationism that has recently been reborn as "intelligent design." In the field of human paleontology, we have a new article that explores the continuing "big questions" of human evolution, in part because the corpus of fossil evidence has become so large that it is ever more complex for undergraduate students.

There are twelve new articles that refer to contemporary social issues and events, like Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the current wars in the Middle East. These include new selections that deal with hot-button issues like illegal migration, alternative forms of marriage, and the teaching of evolution in high schools.

We have continued our previous commitment to the discussion of race as a salient topic for introductory anthropology. We continue to put these articles within the cultural anthropology sections because race is a cultural construction, not a biological fact. In this

regard, students need to understand that whiteness is also a cultural construction that brings with it certain privileges. Racism, sexism, severe economic inequality, and intolerance for cultural difference are continuing problems of our society. Throughout this edition we have also newly emphasized globalization and its human dimensions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We especially wish to thank Sarah Willen, Matt Dudgeon and Svea Closser—all fantastic doctoral students in anthropology at Emory University—whose excellent suggestions and editorial talents made it possible

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PART I *Biological Anthropology* 3

1 Teaching Theories: The Evolution-Creation Controversy 6

Robert Root-Bernstein and Donald L. McEachron (*The American Biology Teacher*, 1982)

Through a comparison of evolution and creationism, this article examines the logic of scientific inquiry and the characteristics of scientific theory. Scientific theories are testable and correctable, which is why they lead to new and useful knowledge.

2 Re-reading Root-Bernstein and McEachron in Cobb County, Georgia: The Controversies Continue Between Anthropology and "Intelligent Design" 15

Benjamin Z. Freed (2005)

Cultural conflicts about evolution and creationism have centered on the American classroom. This selection describes recent courtroom skirmishes on this front in a specific local case.

3 What Are Friends For? 20

Barbara Smuts (*Natural History*, 1987)

"Friendship" between adult males and females is an important part of the society of olive baboons of Kenya. These mutually beneficial long-term relationships are usually based on female choice and are only indirectly related to sex. Observations of nonhuman primates make anthropologists rethink the origin and nature of human sociality.

4 What's Love Got to Do with It? 26

Meredith Small (*Discover*, 1992)

In contrast to earlier hypotheses on the importance of territorial control in human evolutionary history, contemporary theories emphasize understanding individual strategies for reproductive success. This selection is more about sex than reproduction and raises the novel question, What is sex for?

5 Mothers and Others 30

Sarah Blaffer Hrdy (*Natural History*, 2001)

Based on observations of other primates and hunter-gatherers, a new way of thinking about our species challenges long-held beliefs and has implications for child rearing and gender roles, the importance of kin groups and neighbors, and the practices and policies of our day-care systems.

6 Great Mysteries of Human Evolution 37

Carl Zimmer (*Discover*, 2003)

Despite the extraordinary number of hominid fossils discovered in the past thirty years, many questions remain open about human origins and evolution. This article asks eight basic questions about what is fundamentally human.

- 7 Ancient Bodies, Modern Customs, and Our Health 43**
Elizabeth D. Whitaker (1998)
 Biological anthropologists believe that our long evolutionary history has shaped our bodies and therefore strongly influences our health. Infant sleeping and breast-feeding patterns are linked to health issues like birth spacing, allergies, diarrhea, and dehydration, as well as increased risk of breast cancer and sudden infant death syndrome.
- 8 Slumber's Unexplored Landscape 53**
Bruce Bower (Science News, 1999)
 Most of our scientific understanding of the biology of sleep is based on laboratory work and assumptions of what are normal patterns of sleep behavior. Collaborations of biological anthropologists and cultural anthropologists show that the rules and expectations of a good night's sleep are quite different in traditional societies than our own.
- 9 Ancient Genes and Modern Health 57**
S. Boyd Eaton and Melvin Konner (Anthroquest, 1985)
 Many of the serious health problems confronting us today may be the result of an incongruity between our genetic heritage as descendants of hunter-gatherers and our current diet and lifestyle. The study of Paleolithic people may be the key to a healthy life.
- 10 The Tall and the Short of It 61**
Barry Bogin (Discover, 1998)
 A biological anthropologist discusses changes in the average height of populations as an example of human plasticity in the context of changing nutrition in childhood. Our environment is shaped by culture, and it affects our outward biological characteristics or phenotype.
- 11 Identifying Victims After a Disaster 66**
Dick Gould (Anthropology News, 2005)
 Forensic anthropology has taken on an important role both in the American public imagination and on the front lines of disaster relief efforts. This selection discusses how archaeology and forensic anthropology have increasingly played a part in the identification of victims of human and natural disasters.

PART II Archaeology 69

- 12 Battle of the Bones 72**
Robson Bonnichsen and Alan L. Schneider (The Sciences, 2000)
 How does one weigh the importance of new, and possibly revolutionary, knowledge about the prehistory of North America against the rights of some Native Americans to rebury the bones of those they believe to be their ancestors? The authors examine this contemporary controversy.
- 13 The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race 78**
Jared Diamond (Discover, 1987)
 The agricultural revolution has long been considered one of the most important transformations in human history. But was it for better or for worse?
- 14 New Women of the Ice Age 82**
Heather Pringle (Discover, 1998)
 Traditionally, scientists have emphasized male hunting activities for the success of humans in the evolutionary story. Ancient bare-breasted "Venus" figurines were interpreted according to prevailing gender stereotypes. Recent research has emphasized the critical role of women in human survival. Women played a host of powerful roles, from gatherers and weavers to hunters and spiritual leaders.

- 15 Disease and Death at Dr. Dickson's Mounds 89**
Alan H. Goodman and George J. Armelagos (Natural History, 1985)
 The intensification of maize agriculture among prehistoric Native Americans of the Mississippian period, combined with their involvement in a trading network, led to a drastic decline in their health.
- 16 The Secrets of Ancient Tiwanaku Are Benefiting Today's Bolivia 94**
Baird Straughan (Smithsonian, 1991)
 Archaeologists working at Tiwanaku discover an ingenious agricultural system used by the Inca that has led to significant increases in crop yields and the quality of life of present-day residents.
- 17 Easter's End 100**
Jared Diamond (Discover, 1995)
 Prehistory has many examples of cultures that once flourished and then collapsed—often within a relatively short period of time. Among the most mysterious and intriguing is the case of Easter Island, well known for its huge statues and speculations of Thor Heyerdahl, captain of the raft *Kon-Tiki*. What can we learn from the tragic story of the demise of an entire culture?
- 18 "Clean Your Plate. There Are People Starving in Africa!" The Application of Archaeology and Ethnography to America's Food Loss Issues 106**
Timothy W. Jones (2005)
 Food waste is a growing problem in industrial countries like the United States. In this selection, an archaeologist looks at patterns of food loss as revealed not just by talking to producers and consumers, but also by looking at their garbage.
- 19 Dawn of a New Stone Age in Eye Surgery 112**
Payson D. Sheets (1993)
 An anthropologist applies his knowledge of the stone toolmaking technology of ancient Maya to the manufacture of surgical scalpels; his obsidian blades are more than 200 times sharper than the surgical steel scalpels currently in use.

PART III Cultural Anthropology 115

CULTURE AND FIELDWORK

- 20 Body Ritual Among the Nacirema 118**
Horace Miner (American Anthropologist, 1956)
 The examination and analysis of the rituals of this tribe shed light on the meaning of culture and help us reflect on our own way of life.
- 21 Crack in Spanish Harlem 122**
Philippe Bourgois (Anthropology Today, 1989)
 Whereas some anthropologists travel long distances to find exotic cultures, others stay closer to home. During fieldwork in a New York neighborhood on the social organization of addicts and sellers and the economics of crack cocaine, the author comes face to face with a culture of terror. Underlying the violence, the drugs, and the ruined lives is a different view of the American dream.
- 22 Tricking and Tripping: Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS 130**
Claire E. Sterk (2000)
 An anthropologist who works at a school of public health describes the fieldwork methods she used to study women's health and sexual behavior among prostitutes in New York City and Atlanta. Gaining access, establishing rapport, and leaving the field create both methodological and emotional challenges.