

# Introduction

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## **Genesis of the encyclopedia**

Anthropology occupies a quintessentially global position within the humanities and social sciences. It is concerned simultaneously both with universals of the human condition and with the specifics and deep contexts of cultural diversity. In recent years, anthropologists have become increasingly aware of the need to recognize multivocality across the discipline, the existence of distinctive “anthropologies,” and the conversations that take place between them, as opposed to one or a few exclusive paradigms. This shift of vision brings with it a parallel recognition of the need for global anthropology to reach outward beyond its traditional academic boundaries and to connect both with neighboring disciplines in the human and social sciences and with broader spheres of civil society, such as those of public policy, health care, international development, and education.

Cutting across these shifts in the global positioning of anthropology are longer-standing divisions within the subject itself. These have taken varying forms within different national traditions: differences that are in turn reflected in the diversity of institutional arrangements for research and teaching of anthropology in universities around the world. The “four fields” conception of anthropology (physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics), which has predominated in the United States for much of the past century and into the present one, has not prevailed elsewhere. Particularly is this so in the United Kingdom, where British social anthropology has carved a distinctive character and range of concerns. The intellectual relations between the major component subdisciplines within anthropology have also shifted over time. For example, throughout much of the twentieth century, and particularly in Britain again, formal contact between biological or evolutionary and sociocultural anthropology was minimal. There were many reasons for this estrangement, and there was more informal exchange of ideas across the subdisciplines than is often recognized. But it is only in recent years that the barriers have begun to dissolve more systematically under the pressure of new knowledge about the roots of our common humanity. At the same time, new areas of study have emerged and established themselves in anthropology’s mainstream over recent decades. Medical anthropology, environmental anthropology, visual anthropology, and the anthropology of tourism are good examples of these newer leading edges of growth. The boundaries of thinking and research in anthropology have become increasingly fluid and negotiable, and this trend is well reflected in the encyclopedia’s content.

To add to the picture's complexity, anthropology in many parts of the world has suffered from a lack of public visibility compared to cognate disciplines across the human and social sciences. Burdened by stereotyped perceptions of the subject as an arcane one concerned only with the "primitive," the "remote," and the "exotic," anthropologists—with some notable exceptions—have been less than successful in explaining to a wider public the discipline's actual subject matter and its capacity to engage deeply and intimately with human life in the here and now. Nor has there been consensus within the discipline on the possibility, or even desirability, of seeking such a public presence. A long-standing difference of vision continues to divide the discipline between those who have been termed "mandarins" and "missionaries"—that is, roughly, between those holding that anthropology deals with issues of such complexity as to be accessible only to advanced specialists, and those holding that its organizing ideas as well as its engrossing detail lend themselves to more general dissemination and can therefore contribute to an informed public understanding of the intricacies of the human world. It is the latter position that we follow here. The twenty-first century brings large challenges to analysts and decision makers in the public sphere, to citizens in a globalizing world, to educators, and to academic disciplines seeking to document and comprehend the diversity and complexity of human life in society. In designing and compiling the encyclopedia, the editors and publisher have taken the view that anthropology has a key part to play in comprehending these challenges and meeting them. Among the work's aims is that of contributing usefully to the task of conveying the distinctive insights of anthropology to its many potential audiences—including, but not confined to, specialist practitioners and students.

These then have been the guiding principles behind the selection of the encyclopedia's themes, topics, and authors: recognition of the many distinctive traditions and voices that interweave to constitute contemporary anthropology; inclusiveness of scope across its historical and emergent subdisciplines; and an outward-looking stance toward related fields and nonspecialist audiences.

In common with similar works of reference, the encyclopedia has been a number of years in the making. In the course of many informal conversations during successive conferences in the United States and United Kingdom through the late 2000s with Rosalie Robertson, then at Wiley Blackwell, it became clear that there was space for a new *International Encyclopedia of Anthropology* and that such a work would find a natural place in the publisher's existing stable of reference works in the humanities and social sciences. The opportunity, which then became the founding manifesto for the encyclopedia, was to create a reference work grounded on the principles here outlined.

### **Selection of topic areas and editorial team**

The encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically by entry title. The logic behind its organization is not visible on the surface. Readers may, however, wish to know the basis on which the content was planned and commissioned. The initial task was to find a way of arranging the total range of anthropological knowledge under discrete headings that could form the basis for appointing specialist associate editors in each of the

major topic areas. These in turn would propose entry titles within their fields, search for expert authors, and be responsible for academic review of the entries commissioned by the publisher at their behest. Any such carving out of topic headings is of course highly arbitrary and can only be, at best, a device to make organization of the material manageable in practical terms. Inevitably there are multiple overlaps, with much content spilling across more than one of the chosen headings. After wide-ranging discussion and seeking of advice, fifteen thematic areas were initially selected as a working frame. As the encyclopedia took shape and experience accumulated, these were expanded and refined to generate the following nonexclusive topics. The latter also form the basis for the entry groupings included on pages lxiii–xciii as a navigational aid to the reader, with many entries appearing under more than one head.

Anthropology, Language, and Education  
Anthropology and the Public Domain  
Anthropology beyond Text  
Applications and Uses of Anthropology  
Archaeology and Paleoanthropology  
Biographies of Key Figures  
Cognitive and Psychological Anthropology  
Development, Global Processes, and Local Responses  
Digital Anthropology and Digital Resources  
Disciplinary Organizations for Anthropology  
Economic Anthropology  
Ethical Issues in Anthropology  
Evolutionary and Biosocial Perspectives in Anthropology  
Food and Nutrition  
Gender and Sexuality  
Governmental, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations  
Health, Illness, and Health Care  
Human Ecology and Environments  
Indigenous Peoples and Topics  
Key Historical Influences on Anthropology  
Key Texts and Journals in the Past and Present of Anthropology  
Kinship, Relatedness, Reproduction, and Life Stages  
Museums and Anthropology  
Politics, Law, Power, and Identity  
Principal Component Subdisciplines within Anthropology  
Relations of Anthropology with Adjacent Subjects and Topics  
Religion, Symbolism, and Belief Systems  
Rights  
Ritual  
Theory and Method in Anthropology  
Visual Anthropology  
World Anthropologies: National and Regional Traditions

## **Tensions inherent in the project**

In common with any attempt to map the discipline of anthropology as a whole, the encyclopedia stands in structural tension within a cluster of pressures and influences. Some of the most significant of these are worth examining.

### *Anthropology and anthropologies*

Across the discipline, the shared sense that there are core organizing concepts that characterize the anthropological style—such as holism, deep local understanding, and comparison—coexists with a diversity of perspectives across the environments in which anthropology is practiced and taught. “Anthropologies” across the globe are deeply situated in their several histories, environments, and contexts of practice. At the same time, partly because of institutional links, publication practices, and the education and career trajectories of individual anthropologists past and present, these same anthropologies converse with one another in a variety of ways. The encyclopedia brings together discussions of “world anthropologies” and those of many distinct national and regional traditions, with parallel examination of the unifying constructs and debates that are the subject’s articulating scaffold. Both this diversity and this commonality of approach also contain multiple individual voices and styles, as well as areas of inevitable disconnection and fracture. Documenting these within the encyclopedia is part of an intentional strategy to convey to the reader an understanding of the subject’s overall complexity and richness.

### *Disciplinary and subdisciplinary boundaries*

In determining content and coverage, the encyclopedia has followed a principle of openness to “what can count as” anthropology. This is in keeping with the discipline’s own history of shifting, fluid, and sometimes contested boundaries. No attempt has been made here to demarcate a rigid territory and frontiers for anthropology. In commissioning entries the associate editors have been encouraged to solicit contributions from scholars who may be institutionally located outside anthropology, but are able to connect their knowledge with anthropology’s own distinctive concerns. In consequence, readers will find abundant material reflecting established subdisciplines—such as economic, medical, and political anthropology—but also entries that signal new areas of potential cross-fertilization with less explored fields, such as brain science, educational theory, evolutionary genetics, philosophy, and contemporary psychology.

### *Anthropology’s history and histories*

Early in the process of designing the encyclopedia, a decision was made not to address the history of anthropology as a separate theme but rather to encourage authors to incorporate a clear historical dimension into their writing wherever appropriate. The aim was, in part, to avoid privileging particular, perhaps dominant, narratives of the

past over others that also merit attention. As there are both anthropology and anthropologies, so there are both a history and histories of the subject. And, in similar fashion, these histories sometimes converge in common roots and intellectual ancestries while at other points they diverge into different presents. Judged by the results, this strategy has paid off handsomely. There are powerful historical analyses to be found within entries throughout the encyclopedia, and the decision has had the effect of giving freedom to individual authors to reach deeply into anthropology's historical roots within their own places.

### *Content, institutional organization, and language*

Also from the earliest planning stages, it was recognized that the encyclopedia needed to convey a broad picture of both the content and the institutional organization of anthropology. The latter is most explicitly represented, first, in the many entries devoted to anthropologies in particular countries and regions, with their specific concerns and institutional platforms for teaching and research (and their diverse relations with states and other external powers), and, second, in those devoted to discipline-based associations and professional bodies, both national and transnational. An important issue here is that of language of publication. We publish here in English but have striven to give voice to the many non-Anglophone authors writing in a language not their own. While English has advantages as a *de facto lingua franca*, the academic biases created by the dominance of English (and of a few other languages to a lesser extent) in scholarly writing and publishing have been well rehearsed and debated elsewhere. Here, we acknowledge the dilemma and have sought where possible to mitigate its distorting effects.

## **Navigating the encyclopedia**

The encyclopedia's over a thousand substantive entries are presented alphabetically by title but are conceptually organized in layers of inclusivity. At the most general level are to be found entries signposting anthropology's fundamental ideas and its major subdivisions: "Anthropology: Scope of the Discipline"; then "Biological and Evolutionary Anthropology," "Social and Cultural Anthropology," "Archaeological Approaches in Anthropology," and "Language and Anthropology"; and then "Economic Anthropology," "Environmental Anthropology," "International Development, Anthropology in," "Law and Anthropology," "Medical Anthropology," "Political Anthropology," and "Visual Anthropology." Cross-cutting these overview entries, and with much intentional overlap of coverage, are entries dedicated to the emergence and practice of anthropology in the principal nations and regions where it has a presence, and those documenting the national and transnational associations and professional organizations in anthropology, as noted. At the next level are entries addressing major areas of research concentration within anthropology, such as cognition, evolutionary psychology, gender, gift giving, kinship and marriage, museum anthropology, and ritual. Nested conceptually within these, once again, are entries focusing in detail

on specific topics and debates. Shorter definitional entries introduce the reader to significant terms and concepts that are or have been current within the discipline, while biographical entries on major scholars, nearly all belonging to past generations, shine a spotlight on the life and achievements of selected figures who have played a constitutive role in shaping the anthropologies of today. Abundant cross-referencing between entries at all levels is intended to help the reader to navigate the encyclopedia and to track an interest or a theme across the entire structure. References and further reading recommendations follow each entry, and offer signposting for further journeys of exploration throughout anthropology's wider reach. Additional navigational assistance is provided through cross-listing of entries under topic heads, on pages lxiii–xciii.

Throughout the encyclopedia, the guiding aim of the editorial team and publisher is, within the confines of space and budget, to present to readers as many as possible of the manifold faces of anthropology. We seek to offer readers an authentic taste of the intrinsic fascination of the subject and its fundamental importance in the world of today.

## **Acknowledgments**

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