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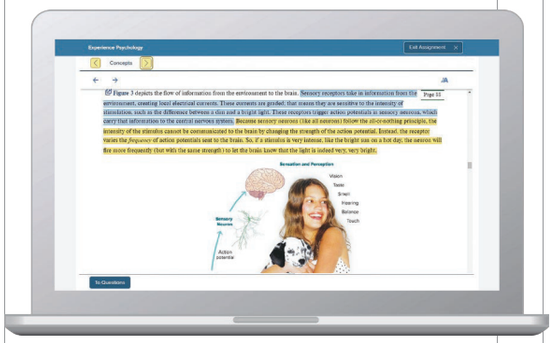

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cultural anthropology

APPRECIATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

NINETEENTH EDITION

Conrad Phillip Kottak
University of Michigan

Mc Graw Hill

To my mother, Mariana Kottak Roberts

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY: APPRECIATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY, NINETEENTH EDITION

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LWI 24 23 22 21

ISBN 978-1-260-25927-8 (bound edition)
MHID 1-260-25927-7 (bound edition)
ISBN 978-1-260-71156-1 (loose-leaf edition)
MHID 1-260-71156-0 (loose-leaf edition)

Managing Director: *Katie Stevens*
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contents in brief

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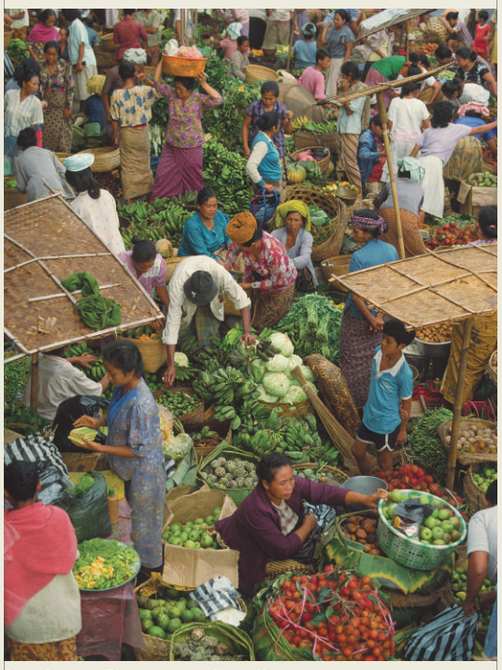

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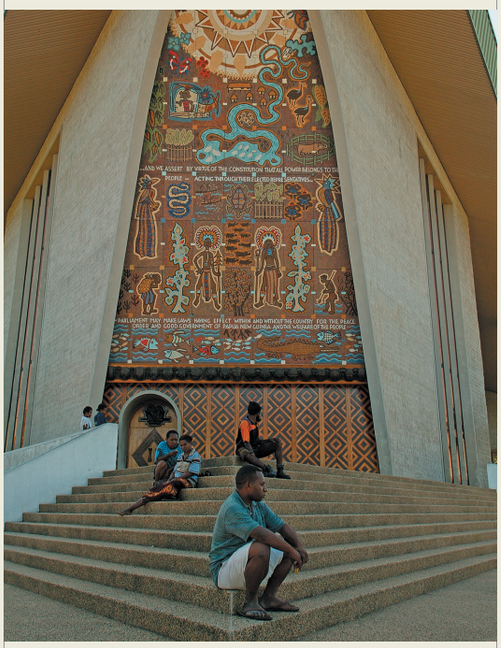

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list of boxes

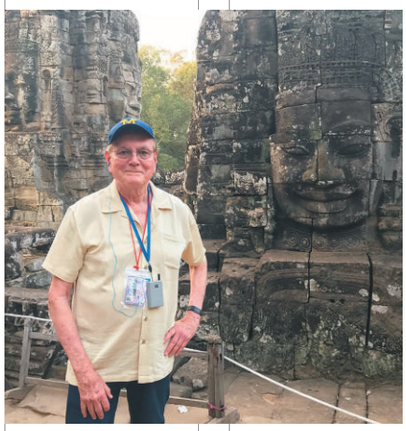
appreciating ANTHROPOLOGY

appreciating DIVERSITY

focus on GLOBALIZATION

RECAP

about the author



Conrad Phillip Kottak

The author at Bayon temple, Angkor Thom, Cambodia in February 2018.
Courtesy Isabel Wagley Kottak

Conrad Phillip Kottak (A.B. Columbia College, Ph.D. Columbia University) is the Julian H. Steward Collegiate Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, where he served as anthropology department chair from 1996 to 2006. He has been honored for his undergraduate teaching by the university and the state of Michigan and by the American Anthropological Association. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences, where he chaired Section 51, Anthropology from 2010 to 2013.

Professor Kottak has done ethnographic fieldwork in Brazil, Madagascar, and the United States. His general interests are in the processes by which local cultures are incorporated—and resist incorporation—into larger systems. This interest links his earlier work on ecology and state formation in Africa and Madagascar to his more recent research on globalization, national and international culture, and the mass media, including new media and social media.

Kottak's popular case study *Assault on Paradise: The Globalization of a Little Community in Brazil* (2006) describes his long-term and continuing fieldwork in Arembepe, Bahia, Brazil. His book *Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture* (2009) is a comparative study of the nature and impact of television in Brazil and the United States.

Kottak's other books include *The Past in the Present: History, Ecology and Cultural Variation in Highland Madagascar; Researching American Culture: A Guide for Student Anthropologists;* and *Madagascar: Society and History.* The most recent editions (19th) of his texts *Anthropology: Appreciating Human Diversity* (this book) and *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity* are published by McGraw-Hill. He also is the author of *Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (12th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2020) and *Window on Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Anthropology* (9th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2020). With Kathryn A. Kozaitis, he wrote *On Being Different: Diversity and Multiculturalism in the North American Mainstream* (4th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2012).

Conrad Kottak's articles have appeared in academic journals, including *American Anthropologist, Journal of Anthropological Research, American Ethnologist, Ethnology, Human Organization,* and *Luso-Brazilian Review.* He also has written for popular journals, including *Transaction/SOCIETY, Natural History, Psychology Today,* and *General Anthropology.*

Kottak and his colleagues have researched television's impact in Brazil, environmental risk perception in Brazil, deforestation and biodiversity conservation in Madagascar, and economic development planning in northeastern Brazil. More recently, Kottak and his colleague Lara Descartes investigated how middle-class American families use various media in planning, managing, and evaluating the competing demands of work and family. That research is the basis of their book *Media and Middle Class Moms: Images and Realities of Work and Family* (Descartes and Kottak 2009). Professor Kottak currently is collaborating with Professor Richard Pace of Middle Tennessee State University and several graduate students on research investigating "The Evolution of Media Impact: A Longitudinal and Multi-Site Study of Television and New Electronic/Digital Media in Brazil."

Conrad Kottak appreciates comments about his books from professors and students. He can be reached by e-mail at the following address: **ckottak@bellsouth.net.**

a letter from the author

Welcome to the 19th Edition of *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity!*

I wrote the first edition of this book during a time of rapid change in my favorite academic discipline—anthropology. My colleagues and I were excited about new discoveries and directions in all four of anthropology's subfields—biological anthropology, anthropological archaeology, sociocultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. My goal was to write a book that would capture that excitement, addressing key changes, while also providing a solid foundation of core concepts and the basics.

In preparing this edition, I benefited tremendously from both professors' and students' reactions to my book. Just as anthropology is a dynamic discipline that encourages new discoveries and explores the profound changes now affecting people and societies, this edition of *Cultural Anthropology* makes a concerted effort to keep pace with changes in the way students read and learn core content today. Our digital program, **Connect Anthropology,** includes assignable and assessable quizzes, exercises, and interactive activities, organized around course-specific learning objectives. Furthermore, **Connect** includes an interactive eBook; **LearnSmart,** which is an adaptive testing program; and **SmartBook,** the first and only truly adaptive reading experience. The tools and resources provided in **Connect Anthropology** are designed to engage students and enable them to improve their performance in the course. This 19th edition has benefited from feedback from thousands of students who have worked with these tools and programs while using the previous editions. We were able to flag and respond to specific areas of difficulty that students encountered, chapter by chapter. I used this extensive feedback to revise, rethink, and clarify my writing in almost every chapter. I started work on this 19th edition by once again reviewing how students had done on the probes and quizzes for each chapter in the previous edition. It became apparent that areas of difficulty reflected ambiguities both in the LearnSmart probes and in the textbook. Accordingly, I reviewed and, when necessary, rewrote every question for every chapter in the LearnSmart probes. I also wrote new probes for content new to this edition. I am eager to see, as students work with this new edition, whether my detailed work on both supplements and text enhances understanding and performance.

As I embark on each new edition, it becomes ever more apparent to me that while any competent and useful text must present anthropology's core, that text also must demonstrate anthropology's relevance to the 21st-century world we inhabit. Accordingly, each new edition contains thorough updating and substantial content changes as well as a series of features that examine our changing world. For example, several "Focus on Globalization" essays in this book examine topics as diverse as disease pandemics, world sports events (including the Olympics and the World Cup), and the expansion of international finance and branding. Several chapters contain discussions of new media, including social media. Many of the boxes titled "Appreciating Anthropology" and "Appreciating Diversity" (at least one per chapter) also present new discoveries and topics.

Each chapter begins with a discussion titled "Understanding Ourselves." These introductions, along with examples from popular culture throughout the book, show how anthropology relates to students' everyday lives. My overarching goal is to help students appreciate the field of cultural anthropology and the various kinds of diversity it studies. How do anthropologists think and work? Where do we go, and how do we interpret what we see? How do we step back, compare, and analyze? How does anthropology contribute to our understanding of the world? The "Appreciating Anthropology" boxes focus on the value and usefulness of anthropological research and approaches while the "Appreciating Diversity" boxes focus on various forms and expressions of human cultural diversity.

Most students who read this book will not go on to become anthropologists, or even anthropology majors. For those who do, this book should provide a solid foundation to build on. For those who don't—that is, for most of my readers—my goal is to instill a sense of appreciation: of human diversity, of anthropology as a field, and of how anthropology can build on, and help make sense of, the experience that students bring to the classroom. May this course and this text help students think differently about, and achieve greater understanding of, their own culture and its place within our globalizing world.

Conrad Phillip Kottak

preface

For over 40 years, students have found Conrad Kottak's Introductions to Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology thoughtful guides to the ever-changing discipline. His books are classics in the field offering undergraduates a comprehensive and robust set of materials that support and expand on the instruction they receive in the classroom or online. Students engage with rich content with an effective, efficient, and easy-to-use platform in Connect.

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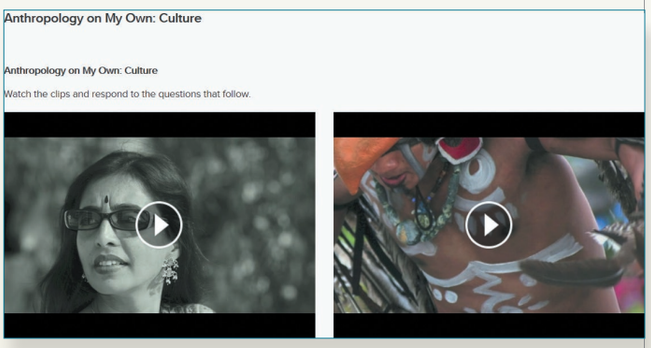

New to this edition, **Newsflash** activities bring in articles on current events relevant to anthropology with accompanying assessment. Topics include "Why Racism is Not Backed by Science" and "What Each of Facebook's 51 New Gender Options Means."

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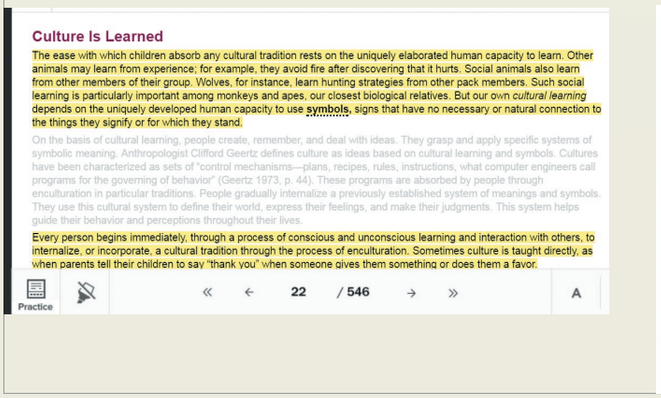
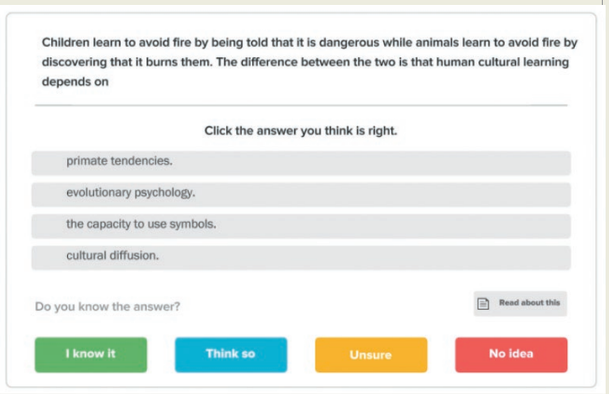
New to this edition, SmartBook is now optimized for phones and tablets and accessible for students with disabilities using interactive features.





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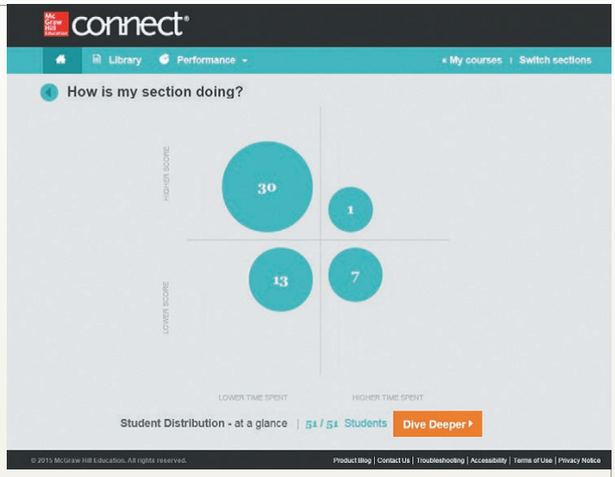

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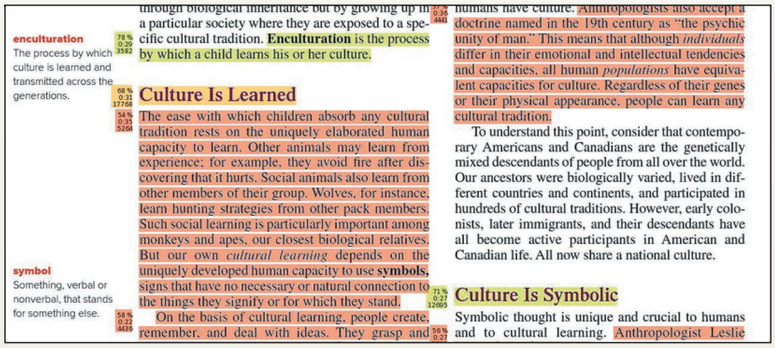
Updates and Revisions—Informed by Student Data

Revisions to the 19th edition of *Cultural Anthropology* were extensively informed by student data, collected anonymously by McGraw-Hill Education's SmartBook. Using this data, we were able to graphically illustrate "hot spots," indicating content area students struggle with (see image below). This data provided feedback at the paragraph and even sentence level. Conrad Kottak relied on this data when making decisions about material to revise, update, and improve. Professor Kottak also reviewed and, when necessary, revised probes to make SmartBook an even more efficient and effective study tool. This revision was also informed by the many excellent reviews provided by faculty at 2- and 4-year schools across the country.



In addition to updated source research and statistical data, new photographs and illustrations, and newly titled "Think Like an Anthropologist" questions (formerly "Critical Thinking" questions) throughout the text, the following chapter-by-chapter changes have been made for the 19th edition:

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

- The chapter has been updated throughout, and the writing has been simplified in the section on the scientific method.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURE

- Recent studies of tool making by capuchin monkeys in Brazil and chimps in Guinea are discussed.
- President Trump's January 2020 threat to bomb Iranian cultural sites is used to frame the updated discussion of why heritage should be preserved and protected.
- There is new information on transnational communication in the section on globalization.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD AND THEORY IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

- This chapter has been extensively updated, with revisions in writing to enhance clarity.

CHAPTER 4: APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY

- The section on Urban Anthropology has been revised and updated.

CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- The major section on "Sociolinguistics" has been reorganized, with new subheads added for clarity.
- The "Appreciating Diversity" box, "Words of the Year," has been updated and rewritten to reflect how the personal expression of gender identity (as in [my] pronouns and singular *they*) has become an increasing part of our shared discourse.
- A new "Focus on Globalization" box, "Naming a Pandemic: Do Geographic Names Stigmatize?" examines the naming of diseases, including the COVID-19 coronavirus.
- I streamlined the section on African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

CHAPTER 6: ETHNICITY AND RACE

- This chapter has been significantly updated, reorganized, and revised, with much new material. Specifics include:
- To the section "American Ethnic Groups," I have added the most recent changes in composition of racial and ethnic groups/categories in the United States.
- I have updated the section "Minority Groups and Stratification, with new data on the relation between poverty, income, and minority status.
- An updated discussion of "Race in the Census" describes the 2020 census form and its detailed questions on ethnicity, race, and national origins.
- A new discussion of biracial Japanese has been added.
- Recent election results now inform the "Backlash to Multiculturalism" section.
- The section "Ethnic Groups, Nations, and Nationalities" incorporates new data on ethnic diversity by country.
- Material formerly in the "Focus on Globalization" box on "The Gray and the Brown" has been moved into the text, as part of a new discussion of demographic projections for the United States through 2060, including significant growth in the dependency ratio.
- There are expanded discussions of the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides in the section on "Ethnic Conflict."

CHAPTER 7: MAKING A LIVING

- I updated the "Focus on Globalization" box, "Our Global Economy."
- A new "Appreciating Anthropology" box "To Give Is Good: Reciprocity and Human Survival" describes ongoing research by the Human Generosity Project, with a focus on recent fieldwork among the Ik of Uganda.
- I moved the old "Appreciating Anthropology" box on deindustrialization to Chapter 14.

CHAPTER 8: POLITICAL SYSTEMS

- To enhance clarity, I revised the discussions of bands, nomadic politics, and chiefdoms, offering clearer or more familiar examples.
- I updated the "Appreciating Anthropology" box, "The Illegality Industry: A Failed System of Border Control."

CHAPTER 9: GENDER

- I wrote a new "Appreciating Anthropology" box, "Patriarchy Today: Case Studies in Fundamentalist Communities," to replace the old one, which was dated. This one highlights Maxine Margolis's recent comparative study of female status in three fundamentalist religious communities.
- The section "Changes in Gendered Work" includes a revised and thoroughly updated discussion of labor force participation by gender.
- The section "Work and Happiness" contains an updated and expanded discussion of workforce participation and national feelings of wellbeing.
- The section titled "The Feminization of Poverty" has updated information on the relation between wealth and family structure.
- The "Beyond Male and Female" section has been revised substantially to clarify American gender categories in flux.

CHAPTER 10: FAMILIES, KINSHIP, AND DESCENT

- The section "Changes in North American Kinship" contains a revised and updated discussion of changing characteristics of American families, households, and children's living arrangements.
- There is a new discussion of "Relationships Queried in the 2020 Census."

CHAPTER 11: MARRIAGE

- I streamlined the section on "Divorce."
- The section on "The Online Marriage Market" has been substantially revised and updated.

CHAPTER 12: RELIGION

- I wrote a new "Appreciating Anthropology" box, "Rituals in a Pandemic's Shadow."
- In the section "Religion and Change," I added a new subsection on "Religious Change in the United States," informed by 2019 surveys and focusing on the shift to nonaffiliation.

CHAPTER 13: ARTS, MEDIA, AND SPORTS

- This chapter has been updated and streamlined throughout.
- There is a retitled, reorganized, and substantially rewritten section on "Online Access and Connectivity" in the major section "Media and Culture."

CHAPTER 14: THE WORLD SYSTEM, COLONIALISM, AND INEQUALITY

- The section "Wealth Distribution in the United States" has been revised and incorporates the latest available statistics on inequality, and its relation to political mobilization.
- Thoroughly revised and updated section on "Neoliberalism and NAFTA's Economic Refugees," including discussion of the USMCA trade pact revision.
- A new box for this chapter, "When the Mills Shut Down: An Anthropologist Looks at Deindustrialization," was moved here from Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 15: ANTHROPOLOGY'S ROLE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

- Two major sections: "Energy Consumption and Industrial Degradation" and "Global Climate Change" have been thoroughly revised, updated, and reorganized, including an updated Table 15.1, "Energy Consumption for the Top 12 Countries, 2018."
- In the section on "Emerging Diseases," there is a new discussion of the 2020 coronavirus, as well as a report on the Trump administration's termination of the USAID-supported PREDICT program, which searched for, identified, and catalogued potentially lethal zoonotic pathogens.

Acknowledgments

I'm grateful to many colleagues at McGraw-Hill Education. I offer particular thanks to product developer Bruce Cantley, who helped me plan and implement this revision, and worked with me to complete and submit the manuscript on schedule.

Bruce responded rapidly, efficiently, and encouragingly to my revisions, making helpful suggestions, and keeping track of all the changes I made chapter-by-chapter. Thanks, too, to Claire Brantley, portfolio manager; Dawn Groundwater, lead product developer; Elisa Odoardi, editorial coordinator; and to McGraw-Hill's entire team of sales reps and regional managers for the work they do in helping professors and students gain access to my books. I also acknowledge Michael Ryan, President of Higher Education.

As usual, Rick Hecker has done a great job as content project manager, guiding the manuscript through production and keeping everything moving on schedule. Sue Culbertson, buyer, worked with the printer to make sure everything came out right. Thanks, too, to Charlotte Goldman, freelance photo researcher. I also thank Amy Marks for copyediting, Marlena Pechan for proofreading, and Egzon Shaqiri for executing the design.

Carrie Burger also deserves thanks as content licensing specialist.

I'm also indebted to the reviewers who have evaluated this book and, through their comments, helped guide its development.

Their names are as follows:

AnnMarie Beasley, *American River College*
Beau Bowers, *Central Piedmont Community College*
Robert B. Chamberlain, *Eastern Florida State College*
Carolyn Coulter, *Atlantic Cape Community College*
Alexa Dietrich, *Wagner College*
Jennifer Elliott, *Estrella Mountain Community College*
Pam Frese, *College of Wooster*
Allison Harnish, *Albion College*
Ridge Harper, *Bainbridge State College*
John Henderson, *Cornell University*
Elizabeth Hoag, *Cuyahoga Community College*
Mary Hotvedt, *Western New Mexico University*
Kendi Howells Douglas, *Johnson University*
Danielle James, *Community College of Baltimore County*
Shepherd Jenks, *Central New Mexico Community College*
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Wayman Smith, *Georgia State University–Perimeter College*
Lisa Volle, *Central Texas College*
Deborah J. Wickering, *Aquinas College*
LaCretia Williams, *Alabama State University*
Andre Yefremian, *Chaffey College*

I'm also grateful to the reviewers of previous editions of this book and of my *Cultural Anthropology* text. Their names are as follows:

Julianna Acheson, *Green Mountain College*
Stephanie W. Alemán, *Iowa State University*
Mohammad Al-Madani, *Seattle Central Community College*
Maria Altemara, *West Virginia University, Robert Morris University*
Douglas J. Anderson, *Front Range Community College*
E. F. Aranyosi, *University of Washington*
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Very, very, special thanks as well to the thousands of students whose responses in SmartBook helped me pinpoint content and writing that needed clarification. Never have so many voices contributed to a revision as to this one.

Other professors and students regularly share their insights about this and my other texts via e-mail and so have contributed to this book. I'm especially grateful to my Michigan colleagues who use my books and have suggested ways of making them better. Thanks especially to a 101 team that has included Tom Fricke, Stuart Kirsch, Holly Peters-Golden, and Andrew Shryock. By now, I've benefited from the knowledge, help, and advice of so many friends, colleagues, teaching assistants, graduate student instructors, and students that I can no longer fit their names into a short acnowledgment. I hope they know who they are and accept my thanks.

As usual, my family offers me understanding, support, and inspiration during the preparation of this book. Dr. Nicholas Kottak, who, like me, holds a doctorate in anthropology, regularly shares his insights with me, as does my daughter, Dr. Juliet Kottak Mavromatis, and my wife, Isabel Wagley Kottak. Isabel has been my companion in the field and in life during my entire career in anthropology, and I can't imagine being without her. I renew my dedication of this book to the memory of my mother, Mariana Kottak Roberts, who kindled my interest in the human condition and provided many insights about people and society.

Over my many years of teaching anthropology, feedback from students has kept me up to date on the interests and needs of my readers, as does my ongoing participation in workshops on the teaching of anthropology. I hope this product of my experience will be helpful to others.

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Also Available from McGraw-Hill by Conrad Phillip Kottak

Anthropology: Appreciating Human Diversity,
19th ed. (2021)

Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology,
12th ed. (2020)

Window on Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Anthropology,
9th ed. (2020)

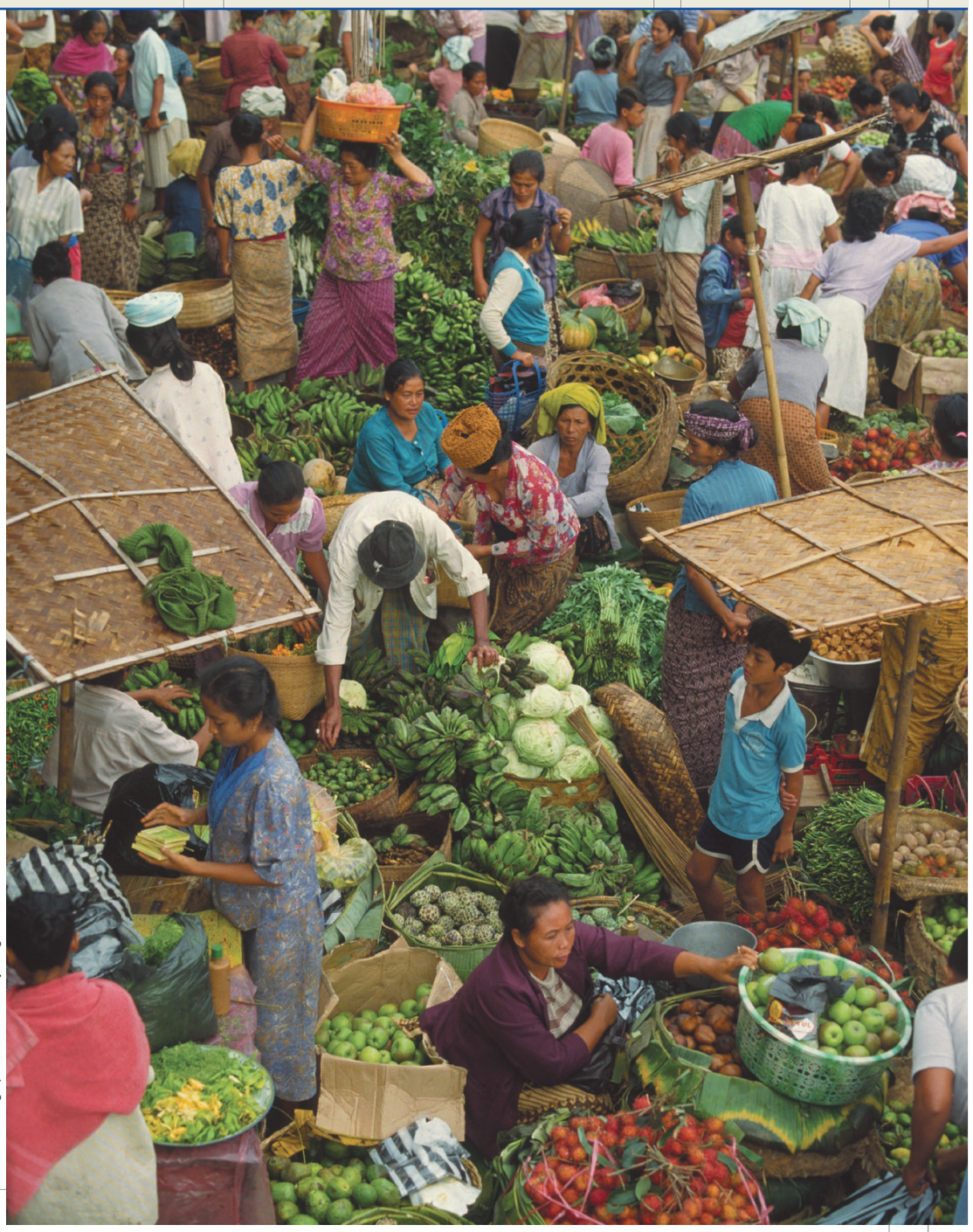
Culture,
2nd ed. (2014, with Lisa L. Gezon)

On Being Different: Diversity and Multiculturalism in the North American Mainstream,
4th ed. (2012, with Kathryn A. Kozaitis)

CHAPTER 1

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?



Steve Satushek/Photographer's Choice/Getty Images

A produce market in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia.

chapter outline

understanding **OURSELVES**

When you grew up, which sport did you appreciate the most—soccer, swimming, football, baseball, tennis, golf, or some other sport (or perhaps none at all)? Is this because of "who you are" or because of the opportunities you had as a child to practice and participate in this particular activity? Think about the phrases and sentences you would use to describe yourself in a personal ad or on a networking site—your likes and dislikes, hobbies, and habits. How many of these descriptors would be the same if you had been born in a different place or time?

When you were young, your parents might have told you that drinking milk and eating vegetables would help you grow up "big and strong." They probably didn't recognize as readily the role that culture plays in shaping bodies, personalities, and personal health. If nutrition matters in growth, so, too, do cultural guidelines. What is proper behavior for boys and girls? What kinds of work should men and women do? Where should people live? What are proper uses of their leisure time? What role should religion play? How should people relate to their family, friends, and neighbors? Although our genetic attributes provide a foundation for our growth and development, human biology is fairly plastic—that is, it is malleable. Culture is an environmental force that affects our development as much as do nutrition, heat, cold, and altitude. Culture also guides our emotional and cognitive growth and helps determine the kinds of personalities we have as adults.

Among scholarly disciplines, anthropology stands out as the field that provides the cross-cultural test. How much would we know about human behavior, thought, and feeling if we studied only our own kind? What if our entire understanding of human behavior were based on analysis of questionnaires filled out by college students in Oregon? Get in the habit of asking this question: What is the basis of any statement or generalization you may read or hear concerning what humans are like, individually or collectively? A primary reason anthropology can uncover so much about what it means to be human is that the discipline is based on the cross-cultural perspective. A single nation or culture simply cannot tell us everything we need to know about what it means to be human. We need to compare and contrast. Often culture is "invisible" (assumed to be normal, or just the way things are) until it is placed in comparison to another culture. For example, to appreciate how people use media, and the effects of such use, we need to consider not just contemporary North America but other places—and perhaps even other times. Right now, for example, I am part of a research team that is studying the evolution of media (including broadcast and streaming TV as well as social media) and its use in Brazil from the 1980s through the present. We will eventually compare this evolution with changes in media use and effects in the United States over a comparable period of time. The cross-cultural test is fundamental to the anthropological approach, which orients this textbook.

HUMAN DIVERSITY

Anthropologists study human beings and their products wherever and whenever they find them—in rural Kenya, a Turkish café, a Mesopotamian tomb, or a North American shopping center. Anthropology explores human diversity across time and space, seeking to understand as much as possible about the human condition. Of particular interest is the diversity that comes through human adaptability.

Humans are among the world's most adaptable animals. In the Andes of South America, people wake up in villages 16,000 feet above sea level and then trek 1,500 feet higher to work in tin mines. In the Australian outback, people worship animals and discuss philosophy. Humans survive malaria in the tropics. A dozen men have walked on the moon. The model of the USS *Enterprise* in Washington's Smithsonian Institution symbolizes the desire to "seek out new life and civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before." Wishes to know the unknown, control the uncontrollable, and create order out of chaos find expression among all peoples. Creativity, adaptability, and flexibility are basic human attributes, and human diversity is the subject matter of anthropology.

Students often are surprised by the breadth of **anthropology,** which is the study of humans around the world and through time. Anthropology is a uniquely comparative and **holistic** science. *Holism* refers to the study of the whole of the human condition: past, present, and future; biology, society, language, and culture. Most people think that anthropologists study fossils and nonindustrial, non-Western cultures, and many of them do. But anthropology is much more than the study of nonindustrial peoples: It is a comparative field that examines all societies, ancient and modern, simple and complex, local and global. The other social sciences tend to focus on a single society, usually their own nation, such as the United States or Canada. Anthropology, however, offers a unique cross-cultural perspective by constantly comparing the customs of one society with those of others.

People share **society**—organized life in groups—with other animals, including monkeys, apes, wolves, mole rats, and even ants. **Culture,** however, is more distinctly human. Cultures are traditions and customs, transmitted through learning, that form and guide the beliefs and behavior of the people exposed to them. Children learn such a tradition by growing up in a particular society, through a process called enculturation. Cultural traditions include customs and opinions, developed over the generations, about proper and improper behavior. These traditions answer such questions as: How should we do things? How do we make sense of the world? How do we distinguish between what is right, and what is wrong? A culture produces a degree of consistency in behavior and thought among the people who live in a particular society.

The most critical element of cultural traditions is their transmission through learning rather than through biological inheritance. Culture is not itself biological, but it rests on certain features of human biology. For more than a million years, humans have possessed at least some of the biological capacities on which culture depends. These abilities are to learn, to think symbolically, to use language, and to make and use tools.

Anthropology confronts and ponders major questions about past and present human existence. By examining ancient bones and tools, we unravel the mysteries of human origins. When did our ancestors separate from those of the apes? Where and when did *Homo sapiens* originate?

society
Organized life in groups; shared with humans by monkeys, apes, wolves, mole rats, and ants, among other animals.

culture
Traditions and customs transmitted through learning.

anthropology
The study of the humans around the world and through time.

holistic
Encompassing past, present, and future; biology, society, language, and culture.

Today's anthropologists work in varied roles and settings. Nory Condor Alarcon (left photo) is an anthropologist who works for the Forensic Laboratory of the Public Ministry of Ayacucho, Peru. Here she comforts a young woman as she confirms that the lab's forensic team has identified the remains of several of her close relatives. In the photo on the right, a group of experts including anthropologist Mac Chapin (left), hold a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York introducing a new high-tech map of Indigenous Peoples of Central America.

(left): Robin Hammond/IDRC/Panos Pictures/Redux Pictures; (right): EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ/Stringer/Getty Images

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 (occurs over generations)	Biological	Larger "barrel chests" of native highlanders
Long-term physiological adaptation (occurs during growth and development of the individual organism)	Biological	More efficient respiratory system, to extract oxygen from "thin air"
Short-term physiological adaptation (occurs spontaneously when the individual organism enters a new environment)	Biological	Increased heart rate, hyperventilation

How has our species changed? What are we now, and where are we going? How have social and cultural changes influenced biological change? Our genus, *Homo,* has been changing for more than one million years. Humans continue to adapt and change both biologically and culturally.

Adaptation, Variation, and Change

Adaptation refers to the processes by which organisms cope with environmental forces and stresses. How do organisms change to fit their environments, such as dry climates or high mountain altitudes? Like other animals, humans have biological means of adaptation. But humans also habitually rely on cultural means of adaptation. Recap 1.1 summarizes some of the cultural and biological ways in which humans adapt to high altitudes.

food production
An economy based on plant cultivation and/or animal domestication.

Mountainous terrains pose particular challenges, those associated with altitude and oxygen deprivation. Consider four ways (one cultural and three biological) in which humans may cope with low oxygen pressure at high altitudes. Illustrating cultural (technological) adaptation would be a pressurized airplane cabin equipped with oxygen masks. There are three ways of adapting biologically to high altitudes: genetic adaptation, long-term physiological adaptation, and short-term physiological adaptation. First, native populations of high-altitude areas, such as the Andes of Peru and the Himalayas of Tibet and Nepal, seem to have acquired certain genetic advantages for life at very high altitudes. The Andean tendency to develop a voluminous chest and lungs probably has a genetic basis. Second, regardless of their genes, people who grow up at a high altitude become physiologically more efficient there than genetically similar people who have grown up at sea level would be. This illustrates long-term physiological adaptation during the body's growth and development. Third, humans also have the capacity for short-term or immediate physiological adaptation. Thus, when lowlanders arrive in the highlands, they immediately increase their breathing and heart rates. Hyperventilation increases the oxygen in their lungs and arteries. As the pulse also increases, blood reaches their tissues more rapidly. These varied adaptive responses—cultural and biological—all fulfill the need to supply an adequate amount of oxygen to the body.

As human history has unfolded, the social and cultural means of adaptation have become increasingly important. In this process, humans have devised diverse ways of coping with the range of environments they have occupied in time and space. The rate of cultural adaptation and change has accelerated, particularly during the last 10,000 years. For millions of years, hunting and gathering of nature's bounty—*foraging*—was the sole basis of human subsistence. However, it took only a few thousand years for **food production** (the cultivation of plants and domestication of animals), which originated some 12,000–10,000 years ago, to replace foraging in most areas. Between 6000 and 5000 B.P. (before the present), the first civilizations arose. These were large, powerful, and complex societies, such as ancient Egypt, that conquered and governed large geographic areas.

Much more recently, the spread of industrial production has profoundly affected human life. Throughout human history, major innovations have spread at the expense of earlier ones. Each economic revolution has had social and cultural repercussions. Today's global economy and communications link all contemporary people, directly or indirectly, in the modern world system. Nowadays, even remote villagers experience world forces and events (see "Focus on Globalization"). The study of how local people adapt to global forces poses new challenges for anthropology: "The cultures of world peoples need to be constantly rediscovered as these people reinvent them in changing historical circumstances" (Marcus and Fischer 1986, p. 24).

focus on GLOBALIZATION

World Events

People everywhere—even remote villagers—now participate in world events, especially through the mass media. The study of global–local linkages is a prominent part of modern anthropology. What kinds of events generate global interest? Disasters provide one example. Think of missing airplanes, nuclear plant meltdowns, and the earthquakes and tsunamis that have ravaged Thailand, Indonesia, and Japan. In July 2018, the world was riveted to the plight of Thai kids trapped in a cave and their daring rescue. Think, too, of space—the final frontier: As many as 600 million people may have watched the first (Apollo 11) moon landing in 1969—a huge audience in the early days of global television.

Consider, too, the British royal family, especially the photogenic ones. The wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton attracted 161 million viewers—twice the population of the United Kingdom. A generation earlier, millions of people had watched Lady Diana Spencer marry England's Prince Charles. Her funeral also attracted a global audience. In 2020, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, Duke and Duchess of Sussex, fled with their son Archie to Canada. To escape global media attention, the Sussexes were willing to give up their royal duties and titles.

And, of course, think of sports: Billions of people watched at least some of the last Summer Olympics. Consider the FIFA World Cup (soccer), also held every four years. In 2006, an estimated 320 million people tuned in to the tournament's final game. This figure almost tripled to 909 million in 2010, and more than one billion viewers saw Germany defeat Argentina in the 2014 final. Four years later, more than 3.5 billion people, half the world's population, watched at least some of the 2018 World Cup. Once again, more than a billion people (1.12) tuned in the for the final, in which France beat Croatia 4-2. The World Cup generates huge global interest because it truly is a "world series," with 32 countries and five continents competing. Similarly, the Cricket World Cup, held every four years (most recently in 2019), is the world's third most watched event: Only the Summer Olympics and the FIFA World Cup exceed it. Live coverage of the 2019 Cricket World Cup attracted a cumulative audience of 1.6 billion people in over 200 countries.

It's rather arrogant to call American baseball's ultimate championship "The World Series" when only one non-U.S. team, the Toronto Blue Jays, can play in it. (The title dates back to 1903, a time of less globalization and more American provincialism.) Baseball is popular in the United States (including Puerto Rico), Canada, Japan, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. South Korea, Taiwan, and China have professional leagues. Elsewhere the sport has little mass appeal (see Gmelch and Nathan 2017).

Even so, when we focus on the players in American baseball we see a multiethnic world in miniature. With its prominent Latino and Asian players, American baseball is more ethnically diverse than American football or basketball. Consider the finalists for the major MLB (Major League Baseball) awards (Most Valuable Player, Cy Young, Rookie of the Year) for the years 2018 and 2019. Those finalists included players from Canada, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Japan, Puerto Rico, South Korea, the United States, and Venezuela. Can you think of a sport as ethnically diverse as baseball? What's the last world event that drew your attention?

Cultural Forces Shape Human Biology

Anthropology's comparative, biocultural perspective recognizes that cultural forces constantly mold human biology. (**Biocultural** refers to using and combining both biological and cultural perspectives and approaches to analyze and understand a particular issue or problem.) As we saw in "Understanding Ourselves," culture is a key environmental force in determining how human bodies grow and develop. Cultural traditions promote certain activities and abilities, discourage others, and set standards of physical well-being and attractiveness. Consider how this works in sports. North American girls are encouraged to pursue, and therefore do well in, competition involving figure skating, gymnastics, track and field, swimming, diving, and many other sports. Brazilian girls, although excelling in the team sports of basketball and volleyball, haven't fared nearly as well in individual sports as have their American and Canadian counterparts. Why are people encouraged to excel as athletes in some nations but not others? Why do people in some countries invest so much time and effort in competitive sports that their bodies change significantly as a result? Why do Americans engage in combat sports such as football, which can cause irreversible damage to brains and bodies.

biocultural
Combining biological and cultural approaches to a given problem.

Cultural standards of attractiveness and propriety influence participation and achievement in sports. Americans run or swim not just to compete but also to keep trim and fit. Brazil's beauty standards traditionally have accepted more fat, especially in female buttocks and hips. Brazilian men have had significant international success in swimming and running, but it is less common to see Brazilian women excelling in those sports. One reason why Brazilian women are underrepresented in competitive swimming may be that sport's

Athletes primed for the start of the 10 kilometer women's marathon swim at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Years of swimming sculpt a distinctive physique—an enlarged upper torso and neck, and powerful shoulders and back.

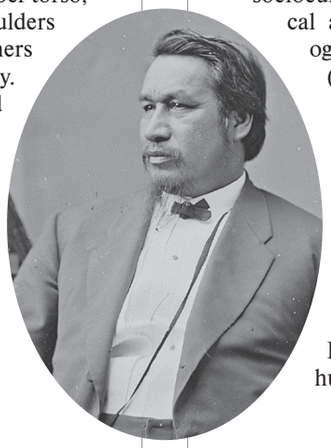
Tim de Waele/Getty Images

effects on the body. Years of swimming sculpt a distinctive physique: an enlarged upper torso, a massive neck, and powerful shoulders and back. Successful female swimmers tend to be big, strong, and bulky. The countries that have produced them most consistently are the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, the Scandinavian nations, the Netherlands, the former Soviet Union, and (more recently) China, where this body type isn't as stigmatized as it is in Latin countries. For women, Brazilian culture prefers more ample hips and buttocks to a more muscled upper body. Many young female swimmers in Brazil choose to abandon the sport rather than their culture's "feminine" body ideal.

general anthropology
Anthropology as a whole: cultural, archaeological, biological, and linguistic anthropology.

GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The academic discipline of anthropology, also known as **general anthropology** or "four-field" anthropology, includes four main subdisciplines or subfields. They are sociocultural anthropology, anthropological archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. (From here on, I'll use the shorter term *cultural anthropology* as a synonym for "sociocultural anthropology.") Cultural anthropology focuses on societies of the present and recent past. Anthropological archaeology reconstructs lifeways of ancient and more recent societies through analysis of material remains. Biological anthropology studies human biological variation through time and across geographic space. Linguistic anthropology examines language in its social and cultural contexts. Of the four subfields, cultural anthropology has the largest membership. Most departments of anthropology teach courses in all four subfields. (Note that general anthropology did not develop as a comparable field of study in most European countries, where the subdisciplines tend to exist separately.)



Early American anthropology was especially concerned with the history and cultures of Native North Americans. Ely S. Parker, or Ha-sa-noan-da, was a Seneca Indian who made important contributions to early anthropology. Parker also served as commissioner of Indian affairs for the United States.

National Archives and Records Administration

There are historical reasons for the inclusion of the four subfields in a single discipline in North America. The origin of anthropology as a scientific field, and of American anthropology in particular, can be traced back to the 19th century. Early American anthropologists were concerned especially with the history and cultures of the indigenous peoples of North America. Interest in the origins and diversity of Native Americans (called First Nations in Canada) brought together studies of customs, social life, language, and physical traits. Anthropologists still are pondering such questions as these: Where did Native Americans come from? How many waves of migration brought them to the New World? What are the linguistic, cultural, and biological links among Native Americans and between them and Asians?

There also are logical reasons for including anthropology's four subfields in the same academic discipline. Answers to key questions in anthropology often require an understanding of both human biology and culture and of both the past and the present. Each subfield considers variation in time and space (that is, in different geographic areas). Cultural anthropologists and anthropological archaeologists study (among many other topics) changes in social life and customs. Archaeologists have used studies of living societies and behavior patterns to imagine what life might have been like in the past. Biological anthropologists examine evolutionary changes in physical form, for example, anatomical changes that might have been associated with the origin of tool use or language. Linguistic anthropologists may reconstruct the basics of ancient languages by studying modern ones.

The subdisciplines influence each other as members of the different subfields talk to each other, share books and journals, and associate in departments and at professional meetings. General anthropology explores the basics of human biology, society, and culture and considers their interrelations. Anthropologists share certain key assumptions. Perhaps the most fundamental is the idea that we cannot reach sound conclusions about "human nature" by studying a single nation, society, or cultural tradition. A comparative, cross-cultural approach is essential.

THE SUBDISCIPLINES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Cultural Anthropology

Cultural anthropology, the study of human society and culture, is the subfield that describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains social and cultural similarities and differences. To study and interpret cultural diversity, cultural anthropologists engage in two kinds of activity: ethnography (based on fieldwork) and ethnology (based on cross-cultural comparison). **Ethnography** provides an account of a particular group, community, society, or culture. During ethnographic fieldwork, the ethnographer gathers data that he or she organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, an article, or a film. Traditionally, ethnographers lived in small communities, where they studied local behavior, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion. Today, any ethnographer will recognize that external forces and events have an increasing influence on such settings.

An anthropological perspective derived from ethnographic fieldwork often differs radically from that of economics or political science. Those fields focus on national and official organizations and policies and often on elites. However, the groups that anthropologists traditionally have studied usually have been relatively poor and powerless. Ethnographers often observe discriminatory practices directed toward such people, who experience food and water shortages, dietary deficiencies, and other aspects of poverty. Political scientists tend to study programs that national planners develop, whereas anthropologists discover how these programs work on the local level.

Communities and cultures are less isolated today than ever before. In fact, as the anthropologist Franz Boas (1940/1966) noted many years ago, contact between neighboring tribes has always existed and has extended over enormous areas. "Human populations construct their cultures in interaction with one another, and not in isolation" (Wolf 1982, p. ix). Villagers increasingly participate in regional, national, and world events. Exposure to external forces comes through the mass media, migration, and modern transportation. (This chapter's "Appreciating Anthropology" box examines the role of a residential school in eastern India in bridging barriers between cultures.) City, nation, and world increasingly invade local communities with the arrival of tourists, development agents, government and religious officials, and political candidates. Such linkages are prominent components of regional, national, and global systems of politics, economics, and information. These larger systems increasingly affect the people and places anthropology traditionally has studied. The study of such linkages and systems is part of the subject matter of modern anthropology.

Ethnology examines, interprets, and analyzes the results of ethnography—the data gathered in different societies. It uses such data to compare and contrast and to generalize about society and culture. Looking beyond the particular to the more general, ethnologists attempt to identify and

ethnography
Fieldwork in a particular cultural setting.

cultural anthropology
The comparative, cross-cultural study of human society and culture.

ethnology
The study of sociocultural differences and similarities.

appreciating **ANTHROPOLOGY**

School of Hope

A school is one kind of community in which culture is transmitted—a process known as enculturation. A boarding school where students reside for several years is fully comparable as a enculturative setting to a village or other local community. You've all heard of Hogwarts. Although fictional, is it not a setting in which enculturation takes place?

Often, schools serve as intermediaries between one cultural tradition and another. As students are exposed to outsiders, they inevitably change. In today's world, opportunities to become bilingual and bicultural—that is, to learn more than one language and to participate in more than one cultural tradition—are greater than ever before.

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is a boarding school in Bhubaneswar, India, whose mission is to instill in indigenous students a "capacity to aspire" to a better life (Finnan 2016). KISS is the world's largest residential school for tribal children. Located in Odisha, one of India's poorest states, KISS supports 25,000 students from first grade through graduate training. Its students represent 62 of India's tribal groups. Children as young as age 6 travel to KISS by bus or train, sometimes from hundreds of miles away. They leave their families for up to 10 months at a time, returning to their villages only during the summer.

KISS students at an assembly for visiting foreign dignitaries. KISS officials use such events not only to showcase the school to visitors but also to help build solidarity among students. Courtesy Christine Finnan

During six months of research at KISS in 2014–2015, anthropologist Christine Finnan gathered stories and personal accounts about the school and its effects. Working with three Indian research partners, she interviewed 160 people: students, former students, parents, staff, teachers, administrators, and visitors. Her team observed classes, meals, celebrations, and athletic competitions. They also visited several tribal villages to find out why parents send their children so far away to school. Finnan wanted to determine what children gained and lost from growing up at KISS.

explain cultural differences and similarities, to test hypotheses, and to build theory to enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work. (See the section "The Scientific Method" later in this chapter.) Ethnology gets its data for comparison not just from ethnography but also from the other subfields, particularly from archaeology, which reconstructs social systems of the past. (Recap 1.2 summarizes the main contrasts between ethnography and ethnology.)

RECAP 1.2 Ethnography and Ethnology—Two Dimensions of Cultural Anthropology

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

(For a fuller account of the research described here, see Finnan [2016] at www.sapiens.org.)

Acceptance to KISS is based on need, so that the poorest of the poor are chosen to attend. The school offers cost-free room and board, classes, medical care, and vocational and athletic training to all its students. The value system at KISS encourages responsibility, orderliness, and respect. Children learn those behaviors not only from KISS employees but also from each other—especially from older students. Students are repeatedly reminded that they are special, that they can rise out of poverty and become change agents for their communities. Many students hope to return to their villages as teachers, doctors, or nurses.

KISS receives no government support. Most of its funding comes from its profitable sister institution, the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), a respected private university. By targeting indigenous children, KISS meets an educational need that is unmet by the government. In India's tribal villages, the presence of teachers is unreliable, even when there are village schools. At KISS, in sharp contrast, teachers don't just instruct; they also serve in loco parentis, living in the dormitories or in nearby housing, and viewing many of their students as family members.

During her fieldwork, Finnan found attitudes about KISS among all parties to be overwhelmingly positive. Students contrasted their KISS education with the poor quality of their village schools. Teachers mentioned their shared commitment to poverty reduction. Parents were eager for their children to be admitted. Although KISS encourages students to take pride in their native language and culture, both students and parents understand that change is inevitable. Students will adopt new beliefs, values, and behaviors, and they will learn Odia, the state language used at KISS. They will become bilingual and bicultural.

When Finnan began her research, she was aware of the now-notorious boarding schools for indigenous students that were established during the 19th and 20th centuries in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Children were forcibly removed from their families, required to speak English and accept Christianity, and taught that their own cultures were inferior. The educational style was authoritarian, and its goal was forced assimilation. Finnan found KISS's positive educational philosophy and respect for indigenous cultures to be very different from those archaic institutions.

To fully evaluate KISS's success in meeting its goals, Finnan has retained her connection with KISS. In 2018 she received data indicating that their promise of improved employment opportunities is being realized. A survey of 10,023 former students indicates that approximately 85 percent have jobs that are likely a result of their KISS education. In addition, while over 80 percent of tribal students drop out of district schools before completing tenth grade, only about 20 percent of KISS students do so. Those who stay at KISS score higher than the state average on state-mandated tests, and considerably higher than averages for tribal children. KISS also can point to a series of successful scholars, ambassadors, and athletes among its graduates. Each year, 5 percent of its graduating class is admitted tuition-free to KIIT. At that highly selective university, students can study engineering, medicine, and law, among other subjects.

Later in this chapter, we examine applied anthropology—how anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods can be used to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems. Think about whether Finnan's research is academic or applied, and whether there is a sharp distinction between these two dimensions of anthropology. Even if Finnan did not intend her work to be applied anthropology, her findings certainly suggest educational lessons that can be applied beyond this case. What are some of those lessons?

Anthropological Archaeology

Anthropological archaeology (or, more simply, archaeology) reconstructs, describes, and interprets human behavior and cultural patterns through material remains. At sites where people live or have lived, archaeologists find artifacts, material items that humans have made, used, or modified, such as tools, weapons, campsites, buildings, and garbage. Plant and animal remains and garbage tell stories about consumption and activities. Wild and domesticated grains have different characteristics, which allow archaeologists to distinguish between the gathering and the cultivation of plants. Animal bones reveal the age and sex of slaughtered animals, providing other information useful in determining whether species were wild or domesticated.

Analyzing such data, archaeologists answer several questions about ancient economies. Did the group get its meat from hunting, or did it domesticate and breed animals, killing only those of a certain age and sex? Did plant food come from wild plants or from sowing, tending, and harvesting crops? Did the residents make, trade for, or buy particular items? Were raw materials available locally? If not, where did they come from? From such information, archaeologists reconstruct patterns of production, trade, and consumption.

Archaeologists have spent much time studying *potsherds,* fragments of earthenware. Potsherds are more durable than many other artifacts, such as textiles and wood. The quantity of pottery fragments allows estimates of population size and

anthropological archaeology
The study of human behavior through material remains.

Sabrina Shirazi, a sophomore at University of Maryland, measures the elevation of the unit she has dug at an archaeological site called "The Hill" in Easton, Maryland. This site may be the oldest settlement of free African-Americans in the United States.
Kenneth K. Lam/Getty Images

density. The discovery that potters used materials unavailable locally suggests systems of trade. Similarities in manufacture and decoration at different sites may be proof of cultural connections. Groups with similar pots may share a common history. They might have common cultural ancestors. Perhaps they traded with each other or belonged to the same political system.

Many archaeologists examine paleoecology. *Ecology* is the study of interrelations among living things in an environment. The organisms and environment together constitute an ecosystem, a patterned arrangement of energy flows and exchanges. Human ecology studies ecosystems that include people, focusing on the ways in which human use "of nature influences and is influenced by social organization and cultural values" (Bennett 1969, pp. 10–11). *Paleoecology* looks at the ecosystems of the past.

In addition to reconstructing ecological patterns, archaeologists may infer cultural transformations, for example, by observing changes in the size and type of sites and the distance between them. A city develops in a region where only towns, villages, and hamlets existed a few centuries earlier. The number of settlement levels (city, town, village, hamlet) in a society is a measure of social complexity. Buildings offer clues about political and religious features. Temples and pyramids suggest that an ancient society had an authority structure capable of marshaling the labor needed to build such monuments. The presence or absence of certain structures, like the pyramids of ancient Egypt and Mexico, reveals differences in function between settlements. For example, some towns were places where people came to attend ceremonies. Others were burial sites; still others were farming communities.

Archaeologists also reconstruct behavior patterns and lifestyles of the past by excavating. This involves digging through a succession of levels at a particular site. In a given area, through time, settlements may change in form and purpose, as may the connections between settlements. Excavation can document changes in economic, social, and political activities.

Although archaeologists are best known for studying prehistory, that is, the period before the invention of writing, they also study the cultures of historical and even living peoples. Studying sunken ships off the Florida coast, underwater archaeologists have been able to verify the living conditions on the vessels that brought ancestral African Americans to the New World as enslaved people. In a research project begun in 1973 in Tucson, Arizona, archaeologist William Rathje launched a long-term study of modern garbage disposal practices. The value of "garbology," as Rathje called it, is that it provides "evidence of what people did, not what they think they did, what they think they should have done, or what the interviewer thinks they should have done" (Harrison, Rathje, and Hughes 1994, p. 108). What people report may contrast strongly with their real behavior as revealed by garbology. For example, the garbologists discovered that the three Tucson neighborhoods that reported the lowest beer consumption actually had the highest number of discarded beer cans per household (Podolefsky and Brown 1992, p. 100)! Findings from garbology also have challenged common misconceptions about the kinds and quantities of trash found in landfills: Although most people thought that styrofoam containers and disposable diapers were major waste problems, they were actually relatively insignificant compared with plastic, and especially paper (Rathje and Murphy 2001; Zimring 2012).

Biological Anthropology

biological anthropology
The study of human biological variation through time and as it exists today.

Biological anthropology is the study of human biological diversity through time and as it exists in the world today. There are five specialties within biological anthropology:

1. Human biological evolution as revealed by the fossil record (paleoanthropology)
2. Human genetics
3. Human growth and development

4. Human biological plasticity (the living body's ability to change as it copes with environmental conditions, such as heat, cold, and altitude)
5. Primatology (the study of monkeys, apes, and other nonhuman primates)

A common thread that runs across all five specialties is an interest in biological variation among humans, including their ancestors and their closest animal relatives (monkeys and apes).

These varied interests link biological anthropology to other fields: biology, zoology, geology, anatomy, physiology, medicine, and public health. Knowledge of osteology—the study of bones—is essential for anthropologists who examine and interpret skulls, teeth, and bones, whether of living humans or of our fossilized ancestors. *Paleontologists* are scientists who study fossils. *Paleoanthropologists* study the fossil record of human evolution. Paleoanthropologists often collaborate with archaeologists, who study artifacts, in reconstructing biological and cultural aspects of human evolution. Fossils and tools often are found together. Different types of tools provide information about the habits, customs, and lifestyles of the ancestral humans who used them.

More than a century ago, Charles Darwin noticed that the variety that exists within any population permits some individuals (those with the favored characteristics) to do better than others at surviving and reproducing. Genetics, which developed after Darwin, enlightens us about the causes and transmission of the variety on which evolution depends. However, it isn't just genes that cause variety. During any individual's lifetime, the environment works along with heredity to determine biological features. For example, people with a genetic tendency to be tall will be shorter if they have poor nutrition during childhood. Thus, biological anthropology also investigates the influence of environment on the body as it grows and matures. Among the environmental factors that influence the body as it develops are nutrition, altitude, temperature, and disease, as well as cultural factors, such as the standards of attractiveness that were discussed previously.

Biological anthropology (along with zoology) also includes *primatology.* The primates include our closest relatives—apes and monkeys. *Primatologists* study their biology, evolution, behavior, and social life, often in their natural environments. Primatology assists paleoanthropology, because primate behavior and social organization may shed light on early human behavior and human nature.

Linguistic Anthropology

We don't know (and probably never will know) when our ancestors started speaking, although biological anthropologists have looked to the anatomy of the face and the skull to speculate about the origin of language. As well, primatologists have described the communication systems of monkeys and apes. We do know that well-developed, grammatically complex languages have existed for thousands of years. Linguistic anthropology offers further illustration of anthropology's interest in comparison, variation, and change. **Linguistic anthropology** studies language in its social and cultural context, throughout the world and over time. Some linguistic anthropologists also make inferences about universal features of language, linked perhaps to uniformities in the human brain. Others reconstruct ancient languages by comparing their contemporary descendants and in so doing make discoveries about history. Still others study linguistic differences to discover varied perceptions and patterns of thought in different cultures.

linguistic anthropology
The study of language and linguistic diversity in time, space, and society.

Historical linguistics considers variation over time, such as the changes in sounds, grammar, and vocabulary between Middle English (spoken from approximately 1050 to 1550 C.E.) and modern English. **Sociolinguistics** investigates relationships between social and linguistic variation. No language is a homogeneous system in which everyone speaks just like everyone else. How do different speakers use a given language? How do linguistic features correlate with social factors, including class and gender differences? One reason for variation is geography, as in regional dialects and accents. Linguistic variation also is expressed in the bilingualism of ethnic groups. Linguistic and cultural anthropologists collaborate in studying links between language and many other aspects of culture, such as how people reckon kinship and how they perceive and classify colors.

sociolinguistics
The study of language in society.

APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

What sort of man or woman do you envision when you hear the word *anthropologist*? Although anthropologists have been portrayed as quirky and eccentric, bearded and bespectacled, anthropology is not a science of the exotic carried on by quaint scholars in ivory towers. Rather, anthropology has a lot to tell the public. Anthropology's foremost professional organization, the American Anthropological Association (AAA), has formally acknowledged a public service role by recognizing that anthropology has two dimensions: (1) academic anthropology and (2) practicing, or **applied anthropology.** The latter refers to the application of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems. As American anthropologist Erve Chambers (1987, p. 309) has stated, applied anthropology is "concerned with the relationships between anthropological knowledge and the uses of that knowledge in the world beyond anthropology." More and more anthropologists from the four subfields now work in "applied"

applied anthropology
The use of anthropology to solve contemporary problems.

Applied anthropology in action. Professor Robin Nagle of New York University is also an anthropologist-in-residence at New York City's Department of Sanitation. Nagle studies curbside garbage as a mirror into the lives of New Yorkers. Here she accompanies sanitation worker Joe Damiano during his morning rounds in August 2015.
Richard Drew/AP Images

areas such as public health, family planning, business, market research, economic development, and cultural resource management.

Because of anthropology's breadth, applied anthropology has many applications. For example, applied medical anthropologists consider both the sociocultural and the biological contexts and implications of disease and illness. Perceptions of good and bad health, along with actual health threats and problems, differ among societies. Various ethnic groups recognize different illnesses, symptoms, and causes and have developed different health care systems and treatment strategies.

Applied archaeology, usually called *public archaeology,* includes such activities as cultural resource management, public educational programs, and historic preservation. Legislation requiring evaluation of sites threatened by dams, highways, and other construction activities has created an important role for public archaeology. To decide what needs saving, and to preserve significant information about the past when sites cannot be saved, is the work of **cultural resource management** (CRM). CRM involves not only preserving sites but also allowing their destruction if they are not significant. The *management* part of the term refers to the evaluation and decision-making process. Cultural resource managers work for federal, state, and county agencies and other clients. Applied cultural anthropologists sometimes work with public archaeologists, assessing the human problems generated by the proposed change and determining how they can be reduced.

science
A field of study that seeks reliable explanations, with reference to the material and physical world.

cultural resource management
Deciding what needs saving when entire archaeological sites cannot be saved.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND OTHER ACADEMIC FIELDS

As mentioned previously, one of the main differences between anthropology and the other fields that study people is holism, anthropology's unique blend of biological, social, cultural, linguistic, historical, and contemporary perspectives. Paradoxically, while distinguishing anthropology, this breadth also is what links it to many other disciplines. Techniques used to date fossils and artifacts have come to anthropology from physics, chemistry, and geology. Because plant and animal remains often are found with human bones and artifacts, anthropologists collaborate with botanists, zoologists, and paleontologists.

Anthropology is a **science**—a "systematic field of study or body of knowledge that aims, through experiment, observation, and deduction, to produce reliable explanations of phenomena, with reference to the material and physical world" (*Webster's New World Encyclopedia,* p. 937). This book presents anthropology as a *humanistic science* devoted to discovering, describing, understanding, appreciating, and explaining similarities and differences in time and space among humans and our ancestors. Clyde Kluckhohn (1944) described anthropology as "the science of human similarities and differences" (p. 9). His statement of the need for such a field still stands: "Anthropology provides a scientific basis for dealing with the crucial dilemma of the world today: how can peoples of different appearance, mutually unintelligible languages, and dissimilar ways of life get along peaceably together?" (p. 9). Anthropology

has compiled an impressive body of knowledge, which this textbook attempts to encapsulate.

Besides its links to the natural sciences (e.g., geology, zoology) and social sciences (e.g., sociology, psychology), anthropology also has strong links to the humanities. The humanities include English, comparative literature, classics, folklore, philosophy, and the arts. These fields study languages, texts, philosophies, arts, music, performances, and other forms of creative expression. Ethnomusicology, which studies forms of musical expression on a worldwide basis, has close links to anthropology. Also linked is folklore, the systematic study of tales, myths, and legends from a variety of cultures. One can make a strong case that anthropology is one of the most humanistic of all academic fields because of its fundamental respect for human diversity. Anthropologists listen to, record, and represent voices from a multitude of nations, cultures, times, and places. Anthropology values local knowledge, diverse worldviews, and alternative philosophies. Cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology in particular bring a comparative and non-elitist perspective to forms of creative expression, including language, art, narratives, music, and dance, viewed in their social and cultural context.

Cultural Anthropology and Sociology

Sociology is probably the discipline that is closest to anthropology, specifically to cultural anthropology. Like cultural anthropologists, sociologists study society—consisting of human social behavior, social relations, and social organization. Key differences between sociology and anthropology reflect the kinds of societies traditionally studied by each discipline. Sociologists typically have studied contemporary, Western, industrial societies. Anthropologists, by contrast, have focused on nonindustrial and non-Western societies. Sociologists and anthropologists developed different methods to study these different kinds of society. To study large-scale, complex nations, sociologists have relied on surveys and other means of gathering quantifiable data. Sociologists use sampling and statistical techniques to collect and analyze such data, and statistical training has been fundamental in sociology. Working in much smaller societies, such as a village, anthropologists can get to know almost everyone and have less need for sampling and statistics. However, because anthropologists today are working increasingly in modern nations, use of sampling and statistics is becoming more common in cultural anthropology.

Traditionally, ethnographers (field workers in cultural anthropology) studied small and nonliterate (without writing) populations and developed methods appropriate to that context. An ethnographer participates directly in the daily life of another culture and must be an attentive, detailed observer of what people do and say. The focus is on a real, living population, not just a sample of a population. During ethnographic fieldwork, the anthropologist takes part in the events she or he is *observing,* describing, and analyzing. Anthropology, we might say, is more personal and less formal than sociology.

In today's interconnected world, however, the interests and methods of cultural anthropology and sociology are converging (becoming more similar), because they are studying some of the same topics and areas. For example, many sociologists now work in non-Western countries, smaller communities, and other settings that used to be mainly within the anthropological orbit. As industrialization and urbanization have spread across the globe, anthropologists now work increasingly in industrial nations and cities, rather than villages. Among the many topics studied by contemporary sociocultural anthropologists are rural–urban and transnational (from one country to another) migration, urban adaptation, inner-city life, ethnic diversity and conflict, crime, and warfare. Cultural anthropologists today may be as likely as sociologists are to study issues of globalization and inequality.

Anthropology and Psychology

Psychologists, like sociologists, typically do their research in only one—their own—society. Anthropologists know, however, that statements about "human" psychology cannot rely solely on observations made in a single society. Cross-cultural comparison suggests that certain psychological patterns may indeed be universal. Others occur in some but not all societies, while still others are confined to one or very few cultures. *Psychological anthropology* studies cross-cultural similarities and differences in psychological traits and conditions (see Church 2017; Matsumoto and Juang 2019). During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, several prominent anthropologists, including Bronislaw Malinowski (1927) and Margaret Mead (1935/1950; 1928/1961), described how particular cultures create distinctive adult personality types by inculcating in their children specific values, beliefs, and behavior patterns. Anthropologists have provided needed cross-cultural perspectives on aspects of developmental and cognitive psychology (Boyer 2018; Brekhus and Ignatow 2019; Fox 2020), psychoanalytic interpretations (Paul 1989), and psychiatric conditions (Bures 2016; Dos Santos and Pelletier 2018; Khan 2017).

Anthropologists are familiar, for example, with an array of *culturally specific syndromes.* These are patterns of unusual, aberrant, or abnormal behavior confined to a single culture or a group of related cultures (see Bures 2016; Khan 2017). One example is *koro,* the East Asian term for intense anxiety arising from the fear that one's sexual organs will recede into one's body and cause death. A distinctive Latin American syndrome is *susto,* or soul loss, whose symptoms are extreme sadness, lethargy, and listlessness. The victim typically falls prey to susto after experiencing a personal tragedy, such as the death

of a loved one. A milder malady is *mal de ojo* ("evil eye"), most typically found in Mediterranean countries. Symptoms of evil eye, which mainly affects children, include fitful sleep, crying, sickness, and fever. Western cultures, too, have distinctive psychiatric syndromes (e.g., anorexia nervosa), some of which appear now to be spreading internationally through globalization (see Watters 2010).

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Anthropology, remember, is a science, although a very humanistic one. Any science aims for reliable explanations that *predict* future occurrences. Accurate predictions stand up to tests designed to disprove (falsify) them. Scientific explanations rely on data, which can come from experiments, observation, and other systematic procedures. Scientific causes are material, physical, or natural (e.g., viruses) rather than supernatural (e.g., ghosts).

Theories, Associations, and Explanations

In their 1997 article "Science in Anthropology," Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember describe how scientists test hypotheses in order to provide explanations. A **hypothesis** is a *proposed* explanation for something. Until it is *tested,* it is merely hypothetical. If the test confirms the hypothesis, then we have an explanation. An *explanation* shows how and why one variable causes or is closely associated with another variable. An **association** means that the variables *covary:* when one variable changes, the other one also changes. A **theory** is a framework of logically connected ideas that helps us explain not just one, but many, associations. As an example, Darwinian evolutionary theory is used to explain giraffes' long necks and other adaptive features in multiple species.

We *generalize* when we say that something usually follows (or is usually associated with) something else. Some generalizations turn out to be laws. A *law* is a *generalization* that applies to and explains *all* instances of an association. An example of a law is the statement "water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit." This law states a uniform association between two variables: the state of the water (whether liquid or ice) and the air temperature. We confirm the truth of the statement by repeated observations of freezing and by the fact that water does not solidify at higher temperatures. The existence of laws makes the world a more predictable place, helping us to understand the past and predict the future. Yesterday ice formed at 32 degrees F, and tomorrow it will still form at 32 degrees F.

The social sciences have few, if any, absolute laws of the water-freezing sort. "Laws" in social science tend to be imperfect generalizations, and explanations in social science tend to be probable rather than certain. They usually have exceptions; that is, sometimes the explanation does not hold. Does that mean such explanations are useless? Not at all. Imagine a law that said that water freezes at 32 degrees 83 percent of the time. Although we cannot make an exact prediction based on such a generalization, it still tells us something useful, even if there are exceptions. Most of the time, we would predict correctly that water was going to freeze. To take a real example from social science, we can generalize that "conflict tends to increase as a group's population size increases." Even if this statement applies only 83 percent of the time, it still is useful. In the social sciences, including anthropology, the variables of interest only *tend* to be associated in a predictable way; there are always exceptions. Recap 1.3 summarizes the key terms used in this section: association, hypothesis, explanation, theory, generalization, and law.

hypothesis
A suggested but as yet unverified explanation.

association
An observed relationship between two or more variables.

theory
A set of ideas formulated to explain something.

The Kwashiorkor Rehabilitation Facility in Jeremie, Haiti, is a residential treatment center for severely malnourished children. Kwashiorkor, caused by a severe protein deficiency, kills 15 percent of Haitian children before their fifth birthday. Shown here, Sheila Marshall, a nurse and full-time volunteer, comforts a young patient. The name *kwashiorkor* comes from a West African word meaning "one-two." Some cultures abruptly wean one infant when a second one is born.
Avital Greener/Newscom

Case Study: Explaining the Postpartum Taboo

One classic cross-cultural study revealed a strong (but not 100 percent) association, or correlation, between a sexual restriction and a type of diet. A long postpartum sex taboo (a ban on sexual intercourse between husband and wife for a year or more after the birth of a child) tended to occur in societies where the diet was low in protein (Whiting 1964).

This association was confirmed by cross-cultural data (ethnographic information from a randomly chosen sample of several societies). How might one explain why the *dependent variable* (the thing to be explained, in this case the postpartum sex taboo) is related to the *predictor variable* (a low-protein diet). A likely explanation is that, when there is too little protein in their diets, babies can develop and die from a protein-deficiency disease called kwashiorkor. If the mother delays her next pregnancy, her current baby gets to breast-feed longer, thereby getting protein from the mother and enhancing its survival chances. Having another baby too soon—forcing early weaning—would jeopardize the survival of the previous one. The postpartum taboo thus enhances infant survival. When the taboo becomes institutionalized as a cultural expectation, people are more likely to comply, and less likely to succumb to momentary temptation.

Theories suggest patterns and relationships, and they generate additional hypotheses. Based, for example, on the theory that the postpartum taboo exists because it reduces infant mortality when the diet is low in protein, one could hypothesize that changes in the conditions that favor the taboo might cause it to disappear. By adopting birth control, for instance, families could space births without avoiding intercourse. The taboo might also disappear if babies started receiving protein supplements, which would reduce the threat of kwashiorkor.

Recap 1.4 summarizes the main steps in using the scientific method. In hypothesis testing, the

RECAP 1.3 Theories and Associations

Key question: How do you explain associations?

ASSOCIATION	A systematic relationship between variables, so that when one variable changes (varies), the other does, too (covaries). **Example:** When temperatures fall, water solidifies.
HYPOTHESIS	A proposed explanation for an association; must be tested—may be confirmed or not. **Example:** Conflict will increase along with population size.
EXPLANATION	Reasons how and why a particular association exists. **Example:** Giraffes with longer necks have higher rates of survival and more surviving offspring than do shorter-necked giraffes, because they can feed themselves better when food is scarce.
THEORY	An explanatory framework of logically interconnected ideas used to explain multiple phenomena. **Example:** Darwinian evolutionary theory used to explain giraffes' long necks and other adaptive features in multiple species.
GENERALIZATION	A statement that change in one variable tends to follow or be associated with change in another variable. **Example:** When societies have low-protein diets, they tend to have longer postpartum taboos than when the diet is richer in protein.
LAW	A generalization that is universally valid. **Example:** When temperature reaches 32 degrees F, water turns from liquid to solid (ice).

RECAP 1.4 Steps in the Scientific Method

Have a research question.	Why do some societies have long postpartum taboos?
Construct a hypothesis.	Delaying marital sex reduces infant mortality when diets are low in protein.
Posit a mechanism.	Babies get more protein when they nurse longer; nursing is not a reliable method of contraception.
Get data to test your hypothesis.	Use a (random) sample of cross-cultural data (data from several societies; such data sets exist for cross-cultural research).
Devise a way of measuring.	Code societies 1 when they have a postpartum taboo of one year or longer, 0 when they do not; code 1 when diet is low in protein, 0 when it is not.
Analyze your data.	Notice patterns in the data: Long postpartum taboos generally are found in societies with low-protein diets, whereas societies with better diets tend to lack those taboos. Use appropriate statistical methods to evaluate the strength of these associations.
Draw a conclusion.	In most cases, the hypothesis is confirmed.
Derive implications.	Such taboos tend to disappear when diets improve or new reproductive technologies become available.
Contribute to larger theory.	Cultural practices can have adaptive value by enhancing the survival of offspring.

relevant variables should be clearly defined (e.g., "height in centimeters" or "weight in kilograms" rather than "body size") and measured reliably. The strength and significance of the results should be evaluated using legitimate statistical methods (Bernard 2018; Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan 2017). Scholars should be careful to avoid a common mistake in generalizing—citing only cases that confirm their hypothesis, while ignoring negative ones. The best procedure is random selection of cases from a wide sample of societies, not all of which are likely to fit the hypothesis.

The Value, and Limitations, of Science

Science is one way—an excellent way—of understanding the world, but it certainly is not the only way. Indeed, the work of many prominent anthropologists has more in common with the humanities than with a strictly scientific approach. Many cultural anthropologists prefer to analyze and interpret aspects of culture, rather than trying to explain them scientifically. Accordingly, anthropological approaches that are interpretive, qualitative, and humanistic are considered in this book, along with those that are quantitative and scientific.

for REVIEW

summary

1. Anthropology is the holistic and comparative study of humanity. It is the systematic exploration of human biological and cultural diversity. Examining the origins of, and changes in, human biology and culture, anthropology provides explanations for similarities and differences. The four subfields of general anthropology are sociocultural anthropology, anthropological archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. All consider variation in time and space. Each also examines adaptation—the process by which organisms cope with environmental stresses.
2. Cultural forces mold human biology, including our body types and images. Societies have particular standards of physical attractiveness. They also have specific ideas about what activities—for example, various sports—are appropriate for males and females.
3. Cultural anthropology explores the cultural diversity of the present and the recent past. Anthropological archaeology reconstructs cultural patterns, often of prehistoric populations. Biological anthropology documents variety, involving fossils, genetics, growth and development, bodily responses, and nonhuman primates. Linguistic anthropology considers diversity among languages. It also studies how speech changes in social situations and over time. Anthropology has two dimensions: academic and applied. Applied anthropology is the use of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems.
4. Concerns with biology, society, culture, and language link anthropology to many other fields—sciences and humanities. Anthropologists study art, music, and literature across cultures. But their concern is more with the creative expressions of common people than with arts designed for elites. Anthropologists examine creators and products in their social context. Sociologists traditionally study Western industrial societies, whereas anthropologists have focused on rural, nonindustrial peoples. Psychological anthropology views human psychology in the context of social and cultural variation.
5. Ethnologists attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities and to build theories about how social and cultural systems work. Scientists strive to improve understanding by testing hypotheses—suggested explanations. Explanations rely on associations and theories. An association is an observed relationship between variables. A theory is an explanatory framework capable of explaining many associations. The scientific method characterizes any anthropological endeavor that formulates research questions and gathers or uses systematic data to test hypotheses.

key terms

anthropological archaeology 9
anthropology 3
applied anthropology 11
association 14
biocultural 5
biological anthropology 10
cultural anthropology 7
cultural resource management 12
culture 3
ethnography 7
ethnology 7
food production 4
general anthropology 6
holistic 3
hypothesis 14
linguistic anthropology 11
science 12
society 3
sociolinguistics 11
theory 14

think like an anthropologist

1. How might a *biocultural* approach help us understand the complex ways in which human populations adapt to their environments?
2. What themes and interests unify the subdisciplines of anthropology? In your answer, refer to historical reasons for the unity of anthropology. Are these historical reasons similar in all places where anthropology developed as a discipline?
3. If, as Franz Boas illustrated early on in American anthropology, cultures are not isolated, how can ethnography provide an account of a particular community, society, or culture? *Note:* There is no easy answer to this question! Anthropologists continue to deal with it as they define their research questions and projects.
4. The American Anthropological Association has formally acknowledged a public service role by recognizing that anthropology has two dimensions: (1) academic anthropology and (2) practicing, or applied, anthropology. What is applied anthropology? Based on your reading of this chapter, identify examples from current events in which an anthropologist could help identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems.
5. In this chapter, we learn that anthropology is a science, although a very humanistic one. What do you think this means? What role does hypothesis testing play in structuring anthropological research? What are the differences between theories, laws, and hypotheses?

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CHAPTER 2

Culture

Danita Delimont/Alamy Images

This Peruvian Quechua woman weaves while offering handwoven textiles for sale in an outdoor market in Peru's Urubamba Valley. People learn and share beliefs and practices as members of cultural groups.

- What is culture and why do we study it?
- What is the relation between culture and the individual?
- How does culture change—especially with globalization?

understanding **OURSELVES**

How special are you? To what extent are you "your own person" and to what extent are you a product of your particular culture? How much does your cultural background influence your actions and decisions? Americans may not fully appreciate the power of culture because of the value their culture assigns to "the *individual*." Americans like to regard everyone as unique in some way. Yet individualism itself is a distinctive *shared* value, a feature of American culture, transmitted constantly in our daily lives. In the media, count how many stories focus on individuals versus groups. Agents of enculturation, ranging from TV personalities to our parents, grandparents, and teachers, continually insist that we all are "someone special." That we are individuals first and members of groups second is the opposite of this chapter's lesson about culture. To be sure, we have distinctive features because we are individuals, but we have other distinct attributes because we belong to cultural groups.

For example, a comparison of the United States with Brazil, Italy, or virtually any Latin nation reveals striking contrasts between a national culture (American) that tends to discourage physical affection and national cultures in which the opposite is true. Brazilians touch, embrace, and kiss one another much more frequently than North Americans do. Such behavior reflects years of exposure to particular cultural traditions. Middle-class Brazilians teach their kids—both boys and girls—to kiss (on the cheek, two or three times, coming and going) every adult relative they see. Given the size of Brazilian extended families, this can mean hundreds of people. Women continue kissing all those people throughout their lives. Until they are adolescents, boys kiss all adult relatives. Men typically continue to kiss female relatives and friends, as well as their fathers and uncles, throughout their lives.

Do you kiss your father? Your uncle? Your grandfather? How about your mother, aunt, or grandmother? The answers to these questions may differ between men and women, and for male and female relatives. Culture can help us to make sense of these differences. In America, a cultural homophobia (fear of homosexuality) may prevent American men from engaging in displays of affection with other men; similarly, American girls typically are encouraged to show affection, while American boys typically are not. It's important to note that these cultural explanations rely on example and expectation, and that no cultural trait exists because it is natural or right. *Ethnocentrism* is the error of viewing one's own culture as superior and applying one's own cultural values in judging people from other cultures. How easy is it for you to see beyond the ethnocentric blinders of your own experience? Do you have an ethnocentric position regarding displays of affection?

WHAT IS CULTURE?

The concept of culture is fundamental in anthropology. A century and a half ago, in his book *Primitive Culture,* the British anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor proposed that cultures—systems of human behavior and thought—obey natural laws and therefore can be studied scientifically. Tylor's definition of culture still offers an overview of the subject matter of anthropology, and it is widely quoted: "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"

chapter outline

enculturation
The process by which culture is learned and transmitted across the generations.

symbol
Something, verbal or nonverbal, that stands for something else.

(Tylor 1871/1958, p. 1). The crucial phrase here is "acquired . . . as a member of society." Tylor's definition focuses on attributes that people acquire not through biological inheritance but by growing up in a particular society where they are exposed to a specific cultural tradition. **Enculturation** is the process by which a child learns his or her culture.

Culture Is Learned

The ease with which children absorb any cultural tradition rests on the uniquely elaborated human capacity to learn. Other animals may learn from experience; for example, they avoid fire after discovering that it hurts. Social animals also learn from other members of their group. Wolves, for instance, learn hunting strategies from other pack members. Such social learning is particularly important among monkeys and apes, our closest biological relatives. But our own *cultural learning* depends on the uniquely developed human capacity to use **symbols,** signs that have no necessary or natural connection to the things they signify or for which they stand.

Through cultural learning, people create, remember, and deal with ideas. They understand and apply specific systems of symbolic meaning. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) described cultures as sets of "control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions" and likens them to computer programs that govern human behavior (Geertz 1973, p. 44). During enculturation, people gradually absorb and internalize their particular culture—a previously established system of meanings and symbols that helps guide their behavior and perceptions throughout their lives.

Every child begins immediately, through a process of conscious and unconscious learning and interaction with others, to internalize, or incorporate, a cultural tradition through the process of enculturation. Sometimes culture is taught directly, as when parents tell their children to say "thank you" when someone gives them something or does them a favor.

We also acquire culture through observation. Children pay attention to the things that go on around them. They modify their behavior not only because other people tell them to do so, but also because of their own observations and growing awareness of what their culture considers right and wrong. Many aspects of culture are absorbed unconsciously. North Americans acquire their culture's notions about how far apart people should stand when they talk not by being told directly to maintain a certain distance but through a gradual process of observation, experience, and conscious and unconscious behavior modification. No one tells Latins to stand closer together than North Americans do, but they learn to do so anyway as part of their cultural tradition.

Anthropologists agree that cultural learning is uniquely elaborated among humans and that all humans have culture. Anthropologists also agree that although *individuals* differ in their emotional and intellectual tendencies and capacities, all human *populations* have equivalent capacities for culture. Regardless of their genes or their physical appearance, people can learn any cultural tradition.

To understand this point, consider that contemporary North Americans are the genetically mixed descendants of people from all over the world. Our ancestors lived in different countries and continents and participated in hundreds of cultural traditions. However, early colonists, later immigrants, and their descendants have all become active participants in American or Canadian life. All now share a national culture.

Culture Is Symbolic

Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to cultural learning. Anthropologist Leslie White defined culture as

> dependent upon symbolling. . . . Culture consists of tools, implements, utensils, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rituals, games, works of art, language, etc. (White 1959, p. 3)

For White, culture originated when our ancestors acquired the ability to use symbols, that is, to originate and bestow meaning on a thing or an event, and, correspondingly, to grasp and appreciate such meanings (White 1959, p. 3).

A symbol is something verbal or nonverbal, within a particular language or culture, that comes to stand for something else. There is no obvious, natural, or necessary connection between the symbol and the thing that it symbolizes. A pet that barks is no more naturally a *dog* than a *chien, Hund,* or *mbwa,* to use the words for the animal we call "dog" in French, German, and Swahili. Language is one of the distinctive possessions of *Homo sapiens.* No other animal has developed anything approaching the complexity of language.

There also is a rich array of nonverbal symbols. Flags, for example, stand for countries, as arches do for a hamburger chain. Holy water is a potent symbol in Roman Catholicism. As is true of all symbols, the association between water and what it stands for (holiness) is arbitrary and conventional. Water is not intrinsically holier than milk, blood, or other natural liquids. Nor is holy water chemically different from ordinary water. Holy water is a symbol within Roman Catholicism, which is part of an international cultural system. A natural thing has been arbitrarily associated with a particular meaning for Catholics, who share common beliefs and experiences that are based on learning and that are transmitted across the generations. Our cultures immerse us in a world of symbols that are both linguistic and nonverbal. Particular items and brands of clothing, such as jeans, shirts,

Some symbols are linguistic. Others are nonverbal, such as these colorful flags, which stand for countries.
TommL/Getty Images

or shoes, can acquire symbolic meanings, as can our gestures, posture, and body decoration and ornamentation.

For hundreds of thousands of years, humans have possessed the abilities on which culture rests. These abilities are to learn, to think symbolically, to manipulate language, and to use tools and other cultural products in organizing their lives and coping with their environments. Every contemporary human population has the ability to use symbols and thus to create and maintain culture. Our nearest relatives—chimpanzees and gorillas—have rudimentary cultural abilities. No other animal, however, has elaborated cultural abilities—to learn, to communicate, and to store, process, and use information—to the extent that *Homo* has.

Culture Is Shared

Culture is an attribute not of individuals per se but of individuals as members of *groups.* Culture is transmitted in society. We learn our culture by observing, listening, talking, and interacting with many other people. Shared beliefs, values, memories, and expectations link people who grow up in the same culture. Enculturation unifies people by providing us with common experiences. Today's parents were yesterday's children. If they grew up in North America, they absorbed certain values and beliefs transmitted over the generations. People become agents in the enculturation of their children, just as their parents were for them. Although a culture changes constantly, certain fundamental beliefs, values, worldviews, and child-rearing practices endure. One example of enduring shared enculturation is the American emphasis on self-reliance and independent achievement.

Despite characteristic American notions that people should "make up their own minds" and "have a right to their opinion," little of what we think is original or unique. We share our opinions and beliefs with many other people—nowadays not just in person but also via new media. Think about how often (and with whom) you share information or an opinion via texting, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, or WhatsApp. Illustrating the power of shared cultural background, we are most likely to agree with and feel comfortable with people who are socially, economically, and culturally similar to ourselves. This is one reason Americans abroad tend to socialize with each other, just as French and British colonists did in their overseas empires. Birds of a feather flock together, but for people, the familiar plumage is culture.

Culture and Nature

Culture takes the natural biological urges we share with other animals and teaches us how to express them in particular ways. People have to eat, but culture teaches us what, when, and how. In many cultures, people have their main meal at noon, but most North Americans prefer a large dinner. English people may eat fish for breakfast, while North Americans may prefer hot cakes and cold cereals. Brazilians put hot milk into strong coffee, whereas

Cultures are integrated systems. When one behavior pattern changes, others also change. During the 1950s, most American women expected to have careers as wives, mothers, and domestic managers. As more and more women have entered the workforce, attitudes toward work and family have changed. In the earlier photo, a 1950s mom and kids do the dishes. In the recent photo, a doctor and two nurses examine a patient's record. What do you imagine these three women do when they get home?

(left): Steven Gottlieb/Getty Images; (right): Tom Tracy Photography/Alamy Stock Photo

North Americans pour cold milk into a weaker brew. Midwesterners dine at 5 or 6 P.M., Spaniards at 10 P.M.

Culture molds "human nature" in many directions. People have to eliminate wastes from their bodies. But some cultures teach people to defecate squatting, while others tell them to do it sitting down. A generation ago, in Paris and other French cities, it was customary for men to urinate almost publicly, and seemingly without embarrassment, in barely shielded *pissoirs* located on city streets. Our "bathroom" habits, including waste elimination, bathing, and dental care, are parts of cultural traditions that have converted natural acts into cultural customs.

Our culture—and cultural changes—affect the ways in which we perceive nature, human nature, and "the natural." Through science, invention, and discovery, cultural advances have overcome many "natural" limitations. We prevent and cure diseases, such as polio and smallpox, that felled our ancestors. We can use pills to restore and enhance sexual potency. Through cloning, scientists have altered the way we think about biological identity and the meaning of life itself. Culture, of course, has not freed us from natural disasters. Hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other natural forces regularly challenge our efforts to modify the environment through building, development, and expansion.

Culture Is All-Encompassing

For anthropologists, culture includes much more than refinement, taste, sophistication, education, and appreciation of the fine arts. Not only college graduates but all people are "cultured." The most interesting and significant cultural forces are those that affect people every day of their lives, particularly those that influence children during enculturation. *Culture,* as defined anthropologically, encompasses features that sometimes are considered trivial or unworthy of serious study, such as "popular" culture. To understand contemporary North American culture, however, we must consider social media, cell phones, the Internet, television, fast-food restaurants, sports, and games. As a cultural manifestation, a rock star may be as interesting as a symphony conductor, a comic book as significant as a book-award winner.

Culture Is Integrated

Cultures are not haphazard collections of customs and beliefs. Cultures are integrated, patterned systems. If one part of the system (e.g., the economy) changes, other parts also change. For example, during the 1950s, most American women planned domestic careers as homemakers and mothers. Since then, an increasing number of American women, including wives and mothers, have entered the workforce. Only 32 percent of married American women worked outside the home in 1960, compared to about 60 percent today. By December 2019, women outnumbered men in the U.S. workforce, holding 50.04 percent of all payroll jobs–a trend that is likely to continue (Siegel 2020).

Economic changes have social repercussions. Attitudes and behavior about marriage, family, and children have changed. Late marriage, "living together," and divorce have become commonplace. Work may compete with marriage and family responsibilities, reducing time spent at home and interfering with child care. Recognizing this, employers increasingly make it possible for workers to work remotely from home.

Cultures are integrated not simply by their dominant economic activities and related social patterns but also by sets of values, ideas, symbols, and judgments. Cultures train their individual

members to share certain personality traits. A set of **core values** (key, basic, or central values) integrates each culture and helps distinguish it from others. For instance, the work ethic and individualism are core values that have integrated American culture for generations. Different sets of dominant values exist in other cultures.

Culture Is Instrumental, Adaptive, and Maladaptive

Culture is the main reason for human adaptability and success. Other animals rely on biological means of adaptation (such as fur or blubber, which are adaptations to cold). Humans also adapt biologically—for example, by shivering when we get cold or sweating when we get hot. People, however, also have cultural ways of adapting. To cope with environmental stresses, we habitually use technology, or tools. We hunt cold-adapted animals and use their fur coats as our own. We turn the thermostat up in the winter and down in the summer. In summer we have a cold drink, jump in a pool, or travel to someplace cooler. In winter we have hot chocolate, seek out a sauna, or vacation in warmer climes. People use culture instrumentally, that is, to fulfill their basic biological needs for food, drink, shelter, comfort, and reproduction.

People also use culture to fulfill psychological and emotional needs, such as friendship, companionship, approval, and sexual desirability. People seek informal support—help from people who care about them—as well as formal support from associations and institutions. To these ends, individuals cultivate ties with others based on common experiences, political interests, aesthetic sensibilities, or personal attraction. Increasingly, people use such Internet platforms as Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn to create and maintain social or professional connections.

On one level, cultural traits (e.g., air conditioning) are adaptive because they help individuals cope with environmental stresses. On a different level, however, such traits can also be *maladaptive.* For example, emissions from our machines have environmental effects that can harm humans and other life forms. Many modern cultural patterns may be maladaptive in the long run. Examples of maladaptive aspects of culture include policies that encourage overpopulation, poor food-distribution systems, overconsumption, and environmental degradation.

CULTURE'S EVOLUTIONARY BASIS

The human capacity for culture has an evolutionary basis that extends back perhaps 3 million years, to the date of the earliest evidence of tool manufacture in the archaeological record. Toolmaking by our distant ancestors may extend even farther back, based on observations of tool manufacture by chimpanzees in their natural habitats (Mercader, Panger, and Boesch 2002; Schaik 2016).

Similarities between humans and apes, our closest relatives, are evident in anatomy, brain structure, genetics, and biochemistry. Most closely related to us are the African great apes: chimpanzees and gorillas. *Hominidae* is the zoological family that includes fossil and living humans. Also included as **hominids** are chimps and gorillas. The term **hominins** is used for the group that leads to humans but not to chimps and gorillas and that encompasses all the human species that ever have existed.

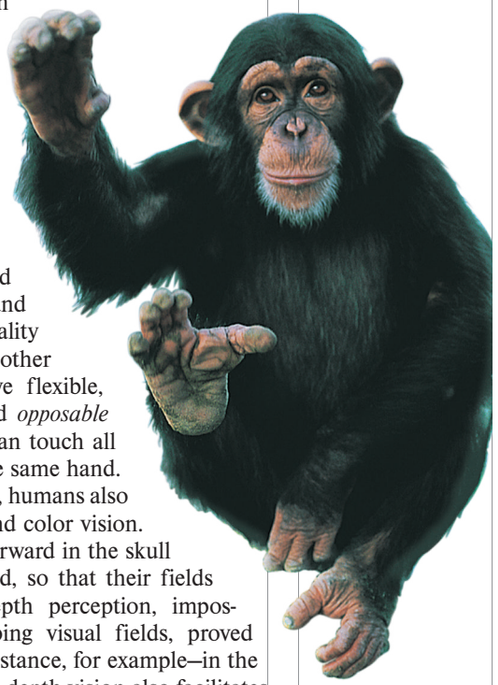
Many human traits reflect the fact that our primate ancestors lived in the trees. These traits include grasping ability and manual dexterity (especially opposable thumbs), depth and color vision, learning ability based on a large brain, substantial parental investment in a limited number of offspring, and tendencies toward sociality and cooperation. Like other primates, humans have flexible, five-fingered hands and *opposable thumbs:* Each thumb can touch all the other fingers on the same hand. Like monkeys and apes, humans also have excellent depth and color vision. Our eyes are located forward in the skull and look directly ahead, so that their fields of vision overlap. Depth perception, impossible without overlapping visual fields, proved adaptive—for judging distance, for example—in the trees. Having color and depth vision also facilitates the identification of various food sources, as well as mutual grooming, picking out burrs, insects, and other small objects from hair. Such grooming is one way of forming and maintaining social bonds.

The combination of manual dexterity and depth perception allows monkeys, apes, and humans to pick up small objects, hold them in front of their eyes, and appraise them. Our ability to thread a needle reflects an intricate interplay of hands and eyes that took millions of years of primate evolution to achieve. Such dexterity, including the opposable thumb, confers a tremendous advantage in manipulating objects and is essential to a major human adaptive capacity: toolmaking. In primates, and especially in humans, the ratio of brain size to body size exceeds that of most mammals. Even more important, the brain's outer layer—concerned with memory, association, and integration—is relatively larger. Monkeys, apes, and humans store an array of images in their memories, which permits them to learn more. Such a capacity for learning is a tremendous adaptive

core values
Key, basic, or central values that integrate a culture.

hominid
Member of hominid family; any fossil or living human, chimp, or gorilla.

hominins
Hominids excluding the African apes; all the human species that ever have existed.



Primates have five-digited feet and hands, well suited for grasping. Flexible hands and feet that could encircle branches were important features in the early primates' arboreal life. In adapting to bipedal (two-footed) locomotion, hominins eliminated most of the foot's grasping ability—illustrated here by the chimpanzee.
Kenneth Garrett/ National Geographic Creative

advantage. Like most other primates, humans usually give birth to a single offspring rather than a litter. Receiving greater parental attention, that one infant has enhanced learning opportunities. The need for longer and more attentive care of offspring places a selective value on support by a social group. Humans have developed considerably the primate tendency to be social animals, living and interacting regularly with other members of their species.

What We Share with Other Primates

There is a substantial gap between primate *society* (organized life in groups) and fully developed human *culture,* which is based on symbolic thought. Nevertheless, studies of nonhuman primates reveal many similarities with humans, such as the ability to learn from experience and change behavior as a result. Apes and monkeys, like humans, learn throughout their lives. In one group of Japanese macaques (land-dwelling monkeys), for example, a 3-year-old female started washing sweet potatoes before she ate them. First her mother, then her age peers, and finally the entire troop began washing sweet potatoes as well. The ability to benefit from experience confers a tremendous adaptive advantage, permitting the avoidance of fatal mistakes. Faced with environmental change, humans and other primates don't have to wait for a genetic or physiological response. They can modify learned behavior and social patterns instead.

Although humans do employ tools much more than any other animal does, tool use also turns up among several nonhuman species, including birds, beavers, sea otters, and especially apes. Nor are humans the only animals that make tools with a specific purpose in mind. It is well-known that capuchin monkeys in South America use rocks to pound shells off nuts, which they then eat. Recent excavations show that they have not only hammered and dug with carefully chosen stones for the last 3,000 years, but they also have selected pounding tools of varying sizes and weights over time. Before 2,500 B.P. (Before the Present), the monkeys used small pounders on tiny foods such as seeds or fruits; by 600 B.P., they were using larger pounders on hard-shelled fruits and nuts, and by 100 years ago, they had turned to downsized pounders to crack cashew nuts. Similar change over time in pounding-tool usage has also been established for chimpanzees (Bower 2019).

Chimpanzees living in the Tai forest of Ivory Coast make and use stone tools to break open hard, golf-ball-sized nuts (Mercader et al. 2002). At specific sites, the chimps gather nuts, place them on stumps or flat rocks, which are used as anvils, and pound the nuts with heavy stones. The chimps must select hammer stones suited to smashing the nuts and carry them to where the nut trees grow. Nut cracking is a learned skill, with mothers showing their young how to do it. Chimpanzees at Bossou, Guinea (West Africa) systematically use sticks to gather algae floating in ponds. They stand at the edge of a pond, each chimp holding a stalk or stick, which they carefully place in the water. Then they slowly lift the sticks covered with algae to their mouths (Matsuzawa 2019).

In 1960, Jane Goodall began observing wild chimps—including their tool use and hunting behavior—at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania, East Africa (see Goodall 2010). The most studied form of ape toolmaking involves "termiting," in which chimps make tools to probe termite hills. They choose twigs, which they modify by removing leaves and peeling off bark to expose the underlying sticky surface. They carry the twigs to termite hills, dig holes with their fingers, and insert the twigs. Finally, they pull out the twigs and dine on termites that have been attracted to the sticky surface. Given what we know about ape tool use and manufacture, it is almost certain that early hominins shared this ability, although the first evidence for hominin stone toolmaking dates back only about 3 million years. Upright bipedalism would have permitted the carrying and use of tools and weapons against predators and competitors.

The apes have other abilities essential to culture. Wild chimps and orangs aim and throw objects. Gorillas build nests, and they throw branches, grass, vines, and other objects. Hominins have elaborated the capacity to aim and throw, without which we never would have developed projectile technology and weaponry—or baseball.

As with toolmaking, anthropologists used to regard hunting as a distinctive human activity not shared with the apes. Again, however, primate research shows that other primates, especially chimpanzees, are habitual hunters. For example, in Uganda's Kibale National Park, chimps form large hunting parties, including an average of 26 individuals (adult and adolescent males). Most hunts (78 percent) result in at least one prey item being caught—a much higher success rate than that among lions (26 percent), hyenas (34 percent), or cheetahs (30 percent). Chimps' favored prey in Kibale is the red colobus monkey (Mitani et al. 2012).

It is likely that human ancestors were doing some hunting by at least 3 million years ago, based on the existence of early stone tools designed to cut meat. Given our current understanding of chimp hunting and toolmaking, we can infer that hominids may have been hunting much earlier than the first archaeological evidence attests. Because chimps typically devour the monkeys they kill, leaving few remains, we may never find archaeological evidence for the first hominin hunt, especially if it proceeded without stone tools.

These two photos show different forms of tool use by chimps. Liberian chimps, like the one on the left, use hammer stones to crack palm nuts. On the right, chimps use prepared twigs to "fish" for termites from a termite hill.

(left): Clive Bromhall/Oxford Scientific/Getty Images; (right): Stan Osolinski/Oxford Scientific/Getty Images

How We Differ from Other Primates

Although chimps often share meat from a hunt, apes and monkeys (except for nursing infants) tend to feed themselves individually. Cooperation and sharing are much more characteristic of humans. Until fairly recently (12,000 to 10,000 years ago), all humans were hunter-gatherers who lived in small groups called bands. In some world areas, the hunter-gatherer way of life persisted into recent times, permitting study by ethnographers. In such societies, men and women take resources back to the camp and share them. Everyone shares the meat from a large animal. Nourished and protected by younger band members, elders live past reproductive age and are respected for their knowledge and experience. Humans are among the most cooperative of the primates—in the food quest and other social activities. In addition, the amount of information stored in a human band is far greater than that in any other primate group.

Another difference between humans and other primates involves mating. Among baboons and chimps, most mating occurs when females enter estrus, during which they ovulate. In estrus, the vaginal area swells and reddens, and receptive females form temporary bonds with, and mate with, males. Human females, by contrast, lack a visible estrus cycle, and their ovulation is concealed. Not knowing when ovulation is occurring, humans maximize their reproductive success by mating throughout the year. Human pair bonds for mating are more exclusive and more durable than are those of chimps. Related to our more constant sexuality, all human societies have some form of marriage. Marriage gives mating a reliable basis and grants to each spouse special, though not always exclusive, sexual rights to the other.

Marriage creates another major contrast between humans and nonhuman primates: exogamy and kinship systems. Most cultures have rules of exogamy requiring marriage outside one's kin or local group. Coupled with the recognition of kinship, exogamy confers adaptive advantages. It creates ties between the spouses' different groups of origin. Their children have relatives, and therefore allies, in two kin groups rather than just one. The key point here is that ties of affection and mutual support between members of different local groups tend to be absent among primates other than *Homo.* Other primates tend to disperse at adolescence. Among chimps and gorillas, females tend to migrate, seeking mates in other groups. Humans also choose mates from outside the natal group, and usually at least one spouse moves. However, *humans maintain lifelong ties with sons and daughters.* The systems of kinship and marriage that preserve these links provide a major contrast between humans and other primates (see Martin 2019).

UNIVERSALITY, GENERALITY, AND PARTICULARITY

In studying human diversity in time and space, anthropologists distinguish among the universal, the generalized, and the particular. Certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features are **universal,** found in every culture. Others are merely **generalities,** common to several but not all human groups. Still other traits are **particularities,** unique to certain cultural traditions.

Universals and Generalities

Biologically based universals include a long period of infant dependency, year-round (rather than seasonal) sexuality, and a complex brain that enables us to use symbols, languages, and tools. Among the social universals is life in groups and in some kind of family. Generalities occur in certain times and places but not in all cultures. They may be widespread, but they are not universal. One cultural generality that is present in many but not all societies is the nuclear family, a kinship group consisting of parents and children. Many middle-class Americans still view the "traditional" nuclear family, consisting

universal
Something that exists in every culture.

generality
Culture pattern or trait that exists in some but not all societies.

particularity
Distinctive or unique culture trait, pattern, or integration.

of a married man and woman and their children, as a proper and "natural" group. This view persists despite the fact that nuclear families now comprise only about 20 percent of contemporary American households. Cross-culturally, too, this kind of "traditional" family is far from universal. Consider the Nayars, who live on the Malabar Coast of India. Traditionally, the Nayars lived in female-headed households, and husbands and wives did not live together. In many other societies, the nuclear family is submerged in larger kin groups, such as extended families, lineages, and clans.

Different societies can share the same beliefs and customs because of borrowing or through (cultural) inheritance from a common cultural ancestor. Speaking English is a generality shared by North Americans and Australians because both countries had English settlers. Another reason for generalities is domination, as in colonial rule, when a more powerful nation imposes its customs and procedures on another group. In many countries, use of the English language reflects colonial history. More recently, English has spread through diffusion (cultural borrowing) to many other countries, as it has become the world's foremost language for business, travel, and the Internet.

Particularity: Patterns of Culture

A cultural particularity is a trait or feature of culture that is not generalized or widespread; rather, it is confined to a single place, culture, or society. Yet because of cultural borrowing and exchanges, which have accelerated with globalization, traits that once were limited in their distribution have become more widespread. Traits that are useful, that have the capacity to please large audiences, and that don't clash with the cultural values of potential adopters are more likely to spread than are others. Nevertheless, certain cultural particularities persist. One example is a particular food dish (e.g., pork barbeque with a mustard-based sauce available in South Carolina, or the pastie—beef stew baked in pie dough—characteristic of Michigan's Upper Peninsula). Besides diffusion, which, for example, has spread McDonald's food outlets, once confined to San Bernardino, California, across the globe, there are other reasons cultural particularities are increasingly rare. Many cultural traits are shared as cultural universals or because of independent invention. Facing similar problems, people in different places have come up with similar solutions.

At the level of the individual cultural trait or element (e.g., bow and arrow, hot dog, HBO), particularities may be getting rarer. At a higher level, however, particularity is more obvious. Different cultures emphasize different things. *Cultures are integrated and patterned differently and display tremendous variation and diversity.* When cultural traits are borrowed, they are modified to fit the culture that adopts them. They are reintegrated—patterned anew—to fit their new setting. The television show *Big Brother* in Germany or Brazil isn't at all the same thing as Big Brother in the United States. As was stated in the section "Culture Is Integrated" earlier in the chapter, patterned beliefs, customs, and practices lend distinctiveness to particular cultural traditions.

Consider universal life-cycle events, such as birth, puberty, marriage, parenthood, and death, which many cultures observe and celebrate. The occasions

Cultures use rituals to mark such universal life-cycle events as birth, puberty, marriage, parenthood, and death. But particular cultures differ as to which events merit special celebration and in the emotions expressed during their rituals. Compare the Balinese cremation ceremony (Left) with the Thai wedding (Right). In the cremation ceremony, participants celebrate the life of the deceased as they carry a body (underneath each creature) to be burned and released from worldly ties. In this Thai Buddhist wedding ceremony, a groom, age 40, and bride, age 26, temporarily lie down in a coffin. This custom is believed to banish bad luck and bring happiness. How would you describe the emotions suggested by the photos?

(left): Tuul & Bruno Morandi/Getty Images (right): Chaiwat Subprasom/Newscom

(e.g., marriage, death) may be the same and universal, but the patterns of ceremonial observance may be dramatically different. Cultures vary in just which events merit special celebration. Americans, for example, regard expensive weddings as more socially appropriate than lavish funerals. However, the Betsileo of Madagascar take the opposite view. The marriage ceremony there is a minor event that brings together just the couple and a few close relatives. However, a funeral is a measure of the deceased person's social position and lifetime achievement, and it may attract a thousand people. Why use money on a house, the Betsileo say, when one can use it on the tomb where one will spend eternity in the company of dead relatives? How unlike contemporary Americans' dreams of home ownership and preference for quick and inexpensive funerals. Cremation, an increasingly common option in the United States, would horrify the Betsileo, for whom ancestral bones and relics are important ritual objects.

Cultures vary tremendously in their beliefs, practices, integration, and patterning. By focusing on and trying to explain alternative customs, anthropology forces us to reappraise our familiar ways of thinking. In a world full of cultural diversity, contemporary American culture is just one cultural variant, more powerful perhaps, but no more natural, than the others.

CULTURE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Generations of anthropologists have theorized about the relationship between the "system" on one hand and the "person" or "individual" on the other. *System* can refer to various concepts, including culture, society, social relations, or social structure. Individual human beings always make up, or constitute, the system. Within that system, however, humans also are constrained (to some extent, at least) by its rules and by the actions of other individuals. Cultural rules provide guidance about what to do and how to do it, but people don't always do what the rules say should be done. People use their culture actively and creatively, rather than blindly following its dictates. Cultures are dynamic and constantly changing. People learn, interpret, and manipulate the same rule in different ways—or they emphasize different rules (or "alternative facts") that better suit their interests. Culture is contested: Different groups in society struggle with one another over whose ideas, values, goals, and beliefs will prevail. Even common symbols may have radically different meanings to different individuals and groups in the same culture. Golden arches may cause one person to salivate, while someone else plots a vegetarian protest. Different people may wave the same flag to support or oppose a particular war or political candidate. Behavior as the U.S. national anthem is played at an NFL game may symbolically pledge allegiance or protest police brutality.

Even when they agree about what should and should not be done, people don't always do as their culture directs or as other people expect. Many rules are violated, some very often (e.g., automobile speed limits). Some anthropologists find it useful to distinguish between ideal culture and real culture. The *ideal culture* consists of what people say they should do and what they say they do. *Real culture* refers to their actual behavior as observed by the anthropologist.

Culture is both public and individual, both in the world and in people's minds. Anthropologists are interested not only in public and collective behavior but also in how *individuals* think, feel, and act. As Roy D'Andrade (1984) has noted, the individual and culture are linked because human social life is a process in which individuals internalize the meanings of *public* (i.e., cultural)

Symbolic acts at a public event, such as an NFL game, may be used to convey very different messages. In the photo on the left, as the national anthem is played, players Eli Harold #58, Colin Kaepernick #7, and Eric Reid #35 take a knee to protest racism and brutality against African Americans. In the photo on the right, hearing the same music, fans display the American flag and stand with hands over heart.

(left): Michael Zagaris/Getty Images Sport/Getty Images; (right): Jonathan Daniel/Getty Images Sport/Getty Images

international culture
Cultural traditions that extend beyond national boundaries.

subcultures
Different cultural traditions associated with subgroups in the same complex society.

national culture
Cultural features shared by citizens of the same nation.

messages. Then, alone and in groups, people influence culture by converting their private (and often divergent) understandings into public expressions.

Conventionally, culture has been seen as social glue transmitted across the generations, binding people through their common past, rather than as something being continually created and reworked in the present. The tendency to view culture as an entity rather than a process is changing. Contemporary anthropologists now emphasize how day-to-day action, practice, or resistance can make and remake culture (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b). *Agency* refers to the actions that individuals take, both alone and in groups, in forming and transforming cultural identities.

The approach to culture known as *practice theory* (Ortner 1984) recognizes that individuals within a society or culture have diverse motives and intentions and different degrees of power and influence. Such contrasts may be associated with gender, age, ethnicity, class, and other social variables. Practice theory focuses on how such varied individuals—through their ordinary and extraordinary actions and practices—manage to influence, create, and transform the world they live in. Practice theory appropriately recognizes a reciprocal relation between culture (the system) and the individual. The system shapes the way individuals experience and respond to external events, but individuals also play an active role in the way society functions and changes. Practice theory recognizes both constraints on individuals and the flexibility and changeability of cultures and social systems.

Levels of Culture

We can distinguish levels of culture, which vary in their membership and geographic extent. **National culture** encompasses those beliefs, learned behavior patterns, values, and institutions shared by citizens of the same nation. **International culture** is the term for cultural traditions that extend beyond and across national boundaries. Because culture is transmitted through learning rather than genetically, cultural traits can spread through borrowing, or *diffusion,* from one group to another.

Many cultural traits and patterns have become international in scope. For example, Roman Catholics in many different countries share beliefs, symbols, experiences, and values transmitted by their church. The contemporary United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia share cultural traits they have inherited from their common linguistic and cultural ancestors in Great Britain. The World Cup is an international cultural event, as people in many countries know the rules of, play, and follow soccer.

Cultures also can be smaller than nations. Although people who live in the same country partake in a national cultural tradition, all nations also contain diversity. Individuals, families, communities, regions, classes, and other groups within a culture have different learning experiences as well as shared ones. **Subcultures** are different symbol-based patterns and traditions associated with particular groups within the same society. In a large nation like the United States or Canada, subcultures originate in region, ethnicity, language, class, and religion. The backgrounds of Christians, Jews, and Muslims—and the diverse branches of those religions—create subcultural differences among them. While sharing a common national culture, U.S. northerners and southerners also differ in aspects of their beliefs, values, and customary behavior. Italian Americans have ethnic traditions different from those of Irish, Polish, Latino, or African Americans. Using sports and foods, Table 2.1 gives some examples of international culture, national culture, and subculture. Soccer and basketball are played internationally. Monster-truck rallies occur throughout the United States. Bocci is a bowling-like sport from Italy still played in some Italian–American neighborhoods.

Nowadays, many anthropologists are reluctant to use the term *subculture.* They feel that the prefix "sub-" is offensive because it means "below."

Illustrating the international level of culture (a world religion), an African-American Muslim woman circles the Kaaba, the cubic building at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Each year, millions of Muslims from around the world make the pilgrimage (haj) to Islam's holiest city.

Mosa'ab Elshamy/AP Images

TABLE 2.1 Levels of Culture, with Examples from Sports and Foods

LEVEL OF CULTURE	SPORTS EXAMPLES	FOOD EXAMPLES
International	Soccer, basketball	Pizza
National	Monster-truck rallies	Apple pie
Subculture	Bocci	Big Joe Pork Barbeque (South Carolina)

"Subcultures" may thus be perceived as "less than" or somehow inferior to a dominant, elite, or national culture. In this discussion of levels of culture, I intend no such implication. My point is simply that nations may contain many different culturally defined groups. As mentioned earlier, culture is contested. Various groups may and do strive to promote the correctness and value of their own practices, values, and beliefs in comparison with those of other groups or of the nation as a whole.

Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism, and Human Rights

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own culture as superior and to use one's own standards and values in judging outsiders. We witness ethnocentrism when people consider their own cultural beliefs to be truer, more proper, or more moral than those of other groups. However, fundamental to anthropology, as the study of human diversity, is the fact that what is alien (even disgusting) to us may be normal, proper, and prized elsewhere (see the discussion of cultural particularities, including burial customs, in the section "Particularity: Patterns of Culture"). The fact of cultural diversity calls ethnocentrism into question, as anthropologists have shown all kinds of reasons for unfamiliar practices. During a course like this, anthropology students often reexamine their own ethnocentric beliefs. Sometimes as the strange becomes familiar, the familiar seems a bit stranger and less comfortable. One goal of anthropology is to show the value in the lives of others. But how far is too far? What happens when cultural practices, values, and rights come into conflict with human rights?

Several societies in Africa and the Middle East have customs requiring female genital modification. *Clitoridectomy* is the removal of a girl's clitoris. *Infibulation* involves sewing the lips (labia) of the vagina to constrict the vaginal opening. Both procedures reduce female sexual pleasure and, it is believed in some societies, the likelihood of adultery. Although traditional in the societies where they occur, such practices, characterized as female genital mutilation, have been opposed by human rights advocates, especially women's rights groups. The idea is that the custom infringes on a basic human right: disposition over one's body and one's sexuality. Indeed, such practices are fading because of worldwide attention to the problem and changing sex/gender roles. Some African countries have banned or otherwise discouraged the procedures, as have Western nations that receive immigration from such cultures. Similar issues arise with circumcision and other male genital operations. Is it right to require adolescent boys to undergo collective circumcision to fulfill cultural traditions, as has been done traditionally in parts of Africa and Australia? Is it right to circumcise a baby boy without his permission, as has been done routinely in the United States and as is customary among Jews and Muslims? (A 2011 initiative aimed at banning circumcision in San Francisco, California, failed to make it to the ballot.)

According to an idea known as **cultural relativism,** it is inappropriate to use outside standards to judge behavior in a given society. We should evaluate such behavior with reference to the culture in which it occurs. Anthropologists employ cultural relativism not as a moral belief but as a methodological position: In order to understand another culture fully, we must try to understand how the people in that culture see things. What motivates them—what are they thinking when they do those things? Such an approach does not preclude making moral judgments. In the female genital mutilation example, we can best understand the motivations for the practice by considering the perspective of those who engage in it. Having done this, one then faces the moral question of what, if anything, to do about it.

We also should recognize that different people and groups within the same society—for example,

ethnocentrism
Judging other cultures using one's own cultural standards.

cultural relativism
The idea that behavior should be evaluated not by outside standards but in the context of the culture in which it occurs.

Left: A Maori haka. Maori men dressed as warriors perform their traditional haka during a festival celebrating Maori heritage in January 2016 in Auckland, New Zealand. Right: Illustrating cultural appropriation, members of New Zealand's Kiwis rugby team enact their version of the haka prior to an October 2016 match against England. The notion of indigenous property rights states that any society has a fundamental right to preserve and manage its cultural base. Does the rugby team have the right to perform the haka?

(left): Hannah Peters/Getty Images News/Getty Images; (right): Jan Kruger/Getty Images Sport/Getty Images