

# Anthropological Theory and Intelligence

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*This article is a review of anthropological theory that may be of use in intelligence analysis. After addressing the perspectives of both anthropologists and intelligence professionals, it surveys a range of humanistic, scientific and hybrid paradigms, and concludes with a sample of applications of anthropological theory to topics of intelligence and security interest. While noting the limitations of social science and the fact that many theoretical paradigms have potential utility in the intelligence arena, the author proposes that scientifically-minded theories offer, by and large, better prospects for aiding analysts than much recent theory favoring interpretive, postmodern, and critical perspectives.*

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Over the past decade, there has been a surge in interest among intelligence and security professionals in using anthropological expertise to achieve military and political objectives. “Cultural competence” deriving from ethnographic research has been particularly prized as a means of gaining the trust of indigenes, who in turn may be induced to provide intelligence on enemy plans, movements, and dispositions of forces, or even recruited as auxiliary fighters themselves. Cultural competence is equally essential in the context of nation-building or humanitarian efforts. Such competence is created by the acquisition of social facts, ranging from how to conduct polite conversation to detailed knowledge of political hierarchies. Much has been written on why and how military intelligence operators should develop cultural competence, while comparatively little has been done to address the nature of anthropological theory and its role in intelligence work. And yet, only theory provides the tools needed to explain why social groups behave as they do. For instance, it might be helpful to know under what conditions small-scale armed conflict in a society is likely to turn into civil war and under what conditions it simply functions as a “pressure valve” to maintain social order. Theory can help provide that understanding.

This article will begin by presenting perspectives from the worlds of academic anthropology and intelligence. It then moves into a discussion of culture followed by a review of various anthropological perspectives of potential relevance to intelligence and a sample of cases in which theory has been applied to problems of intelligence interest. It wraps up with a few thoughts on the interaction of anthropology and the work of intelligence. Throughout, I draw on my experience from both worlds.

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## **The View from Anthropology**

**I**n reviewing the body of anthropological theory as it applies to intelligence, several points must be made. First, despite the increasing level of mathematical and methodological sophistication in the work of scientifically minded anthropologists, the present era is not a particularly rich one for scientific theorizing in cultural anthropology, mostly because of the pervasive and long-standing influence of postmodernism. For the postmodern anthropologist, science is one way of knowing among many, culturally conditioned and fraught with all sorts of political biases and constraints. A scientific report becomes a “text,” a “fiction” to be analyzed, rather than a source of objective knowledge about the world. So while some see this “post-paradigmatic” era as potentially a rich one for theorizing (Knauff 2006), it is not a rich one for science.

At the same time, there is broad agreement in the discipline that anthropologists should be advocates for the people they study. Such a stance automatically limits any scientific investigation, but has a particularly strong effect on research intended to inform policymakers. This ethical point has been thrown into high relief in the wake of the military deployment of anthropologists to Afghanistan and Iraq (Kelly et al. 2010; Price 2010; Gonzalez 2010). Such advocacy, linked as it is to a moral agenda, also has a vitiating effect on scientific inquiry. As cognitive anthropologist D’Andrade notes:

A large and growing number of American anthropologists appear to believe that the moral agenda of anthropology should take priority over the scientific agenda. An even larger number appear to believe that the scientific agenda of anthropology is in deservedly bad repute because of its association with oppression. “Science” has become a bad word in anthropology. Can we at least hold onto “objectivity?” (D’Andrade 1995, 408).

Moreover, the 2012 Code of Ethics adopted by the American Anthropological Association, the largest professional organization for anthropologists in the United States, contains language that, if followed, would significantly restrict anthropological work undertaken in the service of intelligence collection. Under the principle of “Do No Harm,” the Code states:

A primary ethical obligation shared by anthropologists is to do no harm. It is imperative that, before any anthropological work be undertaken...each researcher think through the possible ways that the research might cause harm. Among the most serious harms that anthropologists should seek to avoid are harm to dignity, and to bodily and material well-being, especially when research is conducted among vulnerable populations. Anthropologists should not only avoid causing direct and immediate harm, but also should weigh carefully the potential consequences and inadvertent impacts of their work. When it conflicts with other responsibilities, this primary obligation

can supersede the goal of seeking new knowledge and can lead to decisions to not undertake or to discontinue a project (“Principles of Professional Responsibility: Do No Harm” 2012).

Even more targeted toward intelligence work is the Code’s stance on transparency:

Researchers who mislead participants about the nature of the research and/or its sponsors; who omit significant information that might bear on a participant’s decision to engage in the research; or who otherwise engage in clandestine or secretive research that manipulates or deceives research participants about the sponsorship, purpose, goals or implications of the research, do not satisfy ethical requirements for openness, honesty, transparency and fully informed consent. Compartmented research by design will not allow the anthropologist to know the full scope or purpose of a project; it is therefore ethically problematic, since by definition the anthropologist cannot communicate transparently with participants, nor ensure fully informed consent.

Anthropologists have an ethical obligation to consider the potential impact of both their research and the communication or dissemination of the results of their research (“Principles of Professional Responsibility: Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work” 2012).

Such epistemological and ethical constraints make anthropology a difficult resource for intelligence professionals to use. This was not so in the past, when anthropologists were more likely to consider themselves to be scientists and conducted their research accordingly. Lacking extensive experience with counterinsurgency and its effects, they were also less likely to find ethical problems in rendering assistance to the military and security apparatus. Since the objective of this article is to educate intelligence professionals on the uses of anthropological theory, the question of ethics, centering as it does on the welfare of the subjects of ethnographic research, is rendered moot. However, the epistemological piece must be addressed.

The fact is that a good deal of the theory discussed here cannot be considered cutting edge by the standards of academic anthropology. Much of the focus will be on theory that originated a century ago, but is both amenable to scientific testing and applicable to intelligence work. Nonscientific or antiscientific postmodern, interpretive, and “critical” paradigms, which comprise much recent anthropological theory, are given a much briefer treatment. While the influence of such “humanistic” theories on the discipline in the past 40 years has been profound, there have been influential anthropologists, such as Gellner (1992), D’Andrade (1995), Kuznar (2008), and Lett (1997) who have argued powerfully against postmodernism and the primacy of advocacy and for a rationalism that permits science to proceed.

## The View from the Intelligence Community

The attitudes, expectations, and needs of intelligence professionals must be considered. A quick review of the literature suggests that military intelligence units and military schools and training centers have shown more overt interest in anthropological insight than national agencies, although the CIA has sponsored anthropological work on intelligence analysis (Johnston 2005). However, as noted above, the military services are chiefly concerned with acquiring valuable “cultural intelligence” and fostering “cross-cultural competence” (“3C”) that will transform military personnel into culturally savvy sensors and ambassadors, able to function effectively in any cultural milieu. Mahir Ibrahimov, Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor at Fort Sill, defines 3C as “a set of knowledge, skills and attributes that enables Soldiers to adapt effectively in any environment” (Ibrahimov 2011, 20). An Army instructor and former military intelligence member views it more simply as “essentially...teaching the now-forgotten *people skills*. These important skills are communication, rapport building, and negotiations, to name a few” (Aube 2011, 15, italics here). While anthropologists have been involved in 3C training, its origins lie not in anthropology, but in the cross-cultural communication studies with its emphasis on business and management (Willis-Grider 2011, 5). From the start, 3C was undertaken with pragmatic results in mind, whether garnering more international business or helping U.S. forces win hearts and minds.

The same instructor, while favoring “a marriage of theory and practice” (Aube 2011, 16), warns that “the purpose of 3C education and training ... is to enhance the Soldier’s ability to effectively perform his/her job and return home safely. Bogged down with theory, this can be almost impossible.” Some senior officers have echoed this concern about the relevance of theory to the warfighter. While the phrase “bogged down” seems uncharitable, it is essentially correct that theory has little to do with collecting actionable intelligence or planning military operations. Basic theoretical concepts such as “culture,” “kinship,” “ritual,” and so forth may be useful, but only insofar as they guide practice. However, a better knowledge of anthropological theory on the part of analysts would improve many analytic products, especially those aimed at providing cultural intelligence. An experienced intelligence officer who wished to remain anonymous agreed. Citing varying corporate cultures in the Intelligence Community (IC), he believed that the agencies most receptive to anthropological theory would be the CIA and State Department.

While cultural differences factored into his opinion—these agencies being the least military in the IC, and also the only organizations that mention anthropology as a desirable major for prospective officers—there is also a difference in terms of product. Unlike discipline-specific agencies such as NSA and NGA, these agencies produce and disseminate finished intelligence product deriving from multiple sources. While analytical product deriving solely from SIGINT, GEOINT, HUMINT, or other disciplines may require every bit as much analytical acumen as finished intelligence, most product based on a single collection source is briefer and more time sensitive than a finished report. For instance, it does not require any theoretical background at all to

report that at 1020Z on September 26, 2014 two probable Tu-95 (BEAR) bombers were on the ground at Eastern Zenda Air Base. Anthropological theory is most useful when the analyst has the need to interpret culturally relevant information and the leisure to do so. Such is most likely to be the case with longer and more complex reports, which tend to be all-source products.

## **Anthropology and Culture**

One of the unique strengths of anthropology is its integrative perspective, combining insights from a range of scientific and humanistic fields. Franz Boas, the trained physicist who founded modern American anthropology, conceived of anthropology as comprising “four fields:” biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, sociocultural (or cultural or social) anthropology, and linguistics. This typology still holds today. These four fields cannot be neatly separated from each other. While there are graduate programs that focus on only one field (most often sociocultural anthropology), most anthropologists are exposed to all four fields in the course of their training, in the belief that the best anthropological explanations incorporate all aspects of what it means to be human.

Of these four fields, the one that is of the most obvious utility in intelligence work is sociocultural anthropology, and therefore that shall be the focus of this article. However, the great majority of sociocultural anthropologists recognize that biology, psychology, history, and language must be considered in an analysis of society and culture.

Before surveying various theoretical approaches, it is appropriate to address the fundamental anthropological concept known as “culture.” Many people, including a number of intelligence professionals and even some anthropologists, speak of culture as if it were something with an objective reality, existing “out there,” to be leveraged as a resource in military or intelligence operations and analysis. In much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries American anthropology and European sociology, culture was spoken of as synonymous with society, a practice noted (and argued against) by Kroeber and Parsons (1958). The fact is culture is a theoretical construct created by anthropologists, other social scientists, and philosophers as an organizing framework for understanding beliefs and behavior shared by a social group. Culture, as most cultural anthropologists construe it, cannot be observed, only inferred.

Nor is there a universally agreed-upon definition of culture. There are popular definitions, to be sure, such as Tylor’s frequently cited “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 1871), but popularity may be based on factors other than evidential support or professional acceptance. These include tradition, acceptance of personal authority, ease of understanding, and widespread dissemination through textbook publishers. Definitions in the natural science are much more easily contained, since they may be subject to experimental testing. For instance, we no longer define biological evolution as the result of passing on acquired characteristics or the sun as the luminous body that revolves around the

Earth. But in sociocultural anthropology, theoretical tools, including definitions, are rarely discarded. Thus, we have nineteenth century definitions of culture, such as Tylor's, continuing to be used.

However, two key elements are common to all anthropological understandings of culture: it is learned and shared. A person is not born with culture—it must be taught by parents, siblings, extended family, friends, and social institutions. Nor can a person be said to have a private culture. Of course, there are idiosyncratic beliefs and behaviors, but these cannot be said to be that person's culture, though they may be shaped by cultural influences. Most would also agree that culture is internalized. That is, cultural beliefs and behaviors do not derive from conscious compliance with a code, but from acceptance of a worldview. Sociologist Peter Berger referred to culture as a "taken-for-granted reality" (1967), and it can constrain personal action as much as gravity.

One area of potential confusion with respect to intelligence professionals is the use of terms such as "cultural" and "cross-cultural," which are often used interchangeably. In fact, the two terms are in opposition. A cultural trait is limited to a particular social group, not distributed throughout humankind, and a cultural analysis is limited to that group. To the extent that a belief or behavior is cultural, it is not universal. By contrast, cross-cultural analysis is concerned with cultural universals, such as marriage or warfare, which exist in all cultures, though in diverse forms. A cross-cultural analysis is comparative, not contextual. Borrowing from linguistics, anthropologist Kenneth Pike coined the terms "etic" (from phonetic, concerned with units of sound) and "emic" (from phonemic, concerned with the smallest units of meaning) to refer to cross-cultural and cultural analysis, respectively. An emic analysis seeks to understand meaning from an insider perspective, whereas an etic analysis seeks to make valid generalizations using data derived from a number of cultures. Most view an etic analysis as being more scientific than an emic one, but also more removed from the people being studied.

Finally, analyses of culture are typically divided into those that are synchronic (at the same time, with a focus on stasis and maintenance) and diachronic (with a focus on change through time). Traditionally, most ethnographies were synchronic, meant to portray a society at a single point in time, and written in the "ethnographic present." For instance, some may say in describing Yanomami society, "The Yanomami are small-scale horticulturists who use traditional hand tools and live in scattered settlements isolated from the rest of Brazilian society," when in fact many young Yanomami have been to school, learned Portuguese, and have a grasp of twenty-first century technology (Petronzio 2014). However, since the 1960s there has been increasing focus on culture change, rather than static description.

## **A Review of Theoretical Paradigms of Potential Relevance to Intelligence Work**

**H**istorically, a number of key paradigms have shaped theorizing about culture, and there have been a number of typological systems proposed for grouping these paradigms. Here, we will group them into three broad categories:

humanistic and scientific, roughly corresponding to emic and etic modes of analysis, and a hybrid category occupied by paradigms such as British symbolic anthropology, French structuralism, and Bourdieu's "theory of practice." These three paradigmatic categories are not of equal value for the intelligence analyst. It is argued here that the various scientific and hybrid paradigms represent the way forward in the application of anthropological theory to intelligence work. As a result, more attention will be paid to this category. However, because of the humanistic perspective's powerful influence on the discipline, some discussion seemed to be in order.

A fourth category, "critical theory," might have been included, but this approach is not so much a body of theory as a program for the deployment of theory. Originating in the late 1930s with Marxists disenchanted with the logical positivism of scientific approaches and the rigidity of orthodox Marxist doctrine, critical theory (as the name suggests) aims to critique social and cultural forms rather than simply understand them. It includes engaged theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, LGBT theory, and other categories of scholarship centering on groups seen as undervalued in academic discourse. Critical theory pursues advocacy and denies the possibility of unbiased understanding. While many anthropologists today favor such a critical approach, it is difficult to see how it can be of use to the intelligence analyst seeking to understand the world as it is, not as it should be.

Some important theoretical paradigms with powerful implications for intelligence work are excluded here, because they are not specific to anthropology and belong to other social science fields. These include various psychological paradigms, especially those belonging to social psychology; the sociology of Talcott Parsons (whose wide-ranging theoretical work, although touching on anthropological issues, never became an important influence in anthropology); event history analysis; and the various economic, political science, and international relations paradigms.

One major omission which some may find puzzling is culture-and-personality, pioneered by Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Abram Kardiner, Clyde Kluckhohn, and other eminent anthropologists, and actually used in the service of the United States during World War II. I wrestled with including this paradigm for some time. However, the reasons for its omission are twofold. First, this paradigm was dismissed for a long time as cultural determinism and stereotyping, treating cultures as if they could be psychoanalyzed as people and treating people as if their personalities were largely a reflection of those cultures, and that each culture produced a particular "modal personality." Owing to the perception that this approach could lead to inaccurate stereotyping and even racial prejudice, it was largely discarded in the postwar period. Related to this concern is the U.S. military's post-9/11 use—some would say misuse—of *The Arab Mind*, by anthropologist Raphael Patai, a 1973 text that worked within this paradigm, and that has been implicated in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. This text contains sweeping generalizations about an eclectic collection of Middle Eastern and North African peoples going under the collective label "Arab," and yet, it was used in the cultural training of U.S. military personnel within the last decade. The potential for such "national character studies" to become unscientific compendia of prejudices that can lead to bad policy and inaccurate intelligence is too great to recommend this

approach. That being said, there is evidence that culture does indeed impact personality, but it derives more from current research in cultural psychology than the culture-and-personality school of anthropology. There are a few serious anthropologists, notably Richard Shweder, producing thought-provoking work along these lines, though they are as likely (or more likely) to publish their work in psychology journals than in anthropological ones. Therefore, while it is important to mention this potentially valuable paradigm here, it is left to the psychologists to explore it further.

It should also be noted that many anthropologists believe that the very notion of theoretical paradigms is not relevant, and that anthropologists today pick and choose among them in carrying out their research in a post-paradigmatic era (Knauff 2006). This is probably true. However, the purpose of this article is to elucidate various theoretical perspectives that might be helpful to intelligence professionals, not the way in which anthropologists use them.

This brings up a final point: audience. This article is written for intelligence professionals and others who may have some knowledge of anthropology, not professional anthropologists. As noted earlier, the selection of theoretical paradigms is not representative of anthropology today, and the description of each theoretical approach is of necessity brief. Some might question the adequacy of such a cursory treatment. However, this is a problem for any anthropologist seeking to go beyond his narrow specialty and map the broad contours of anthropological theory. Those favoring an advocacy or a postmodern approach might point out that intelligence personnel need to hear the criticisms of their practices. While intelligence personnel would certainly welcome criticism that promises to improve intelligence practices, much anthropological criticism of intelligence practices seems aimed at questioning the ethics of intelligence practices or even the very existence of a secret intelligence establishment, not making those practices more effective.

## **Humanistic Paradigms**

Three of the most influential humanistic theoretical paradigms are historical particularism, interpretivism, and postmodernism. The first two of these were developed in the United States, the last in France. In the past 40 years, European, especially French, thinkers from the disciplines of philosophy, semiotics, sociology, and the relatively new field of “cultural studies” have dominated theory in humanistic anthropology. Humanistic, as opposed to scientific, paradigms have the following characteristics in common:

- an emic perspective, with the objective being to see the world as those one is studying see it,
- a focus on meaning,
- a relativistic stance that is skeptical of generalizations,
- an emphasis on qualitative methods and analysis,
- a rejection of reductionism and a skepticism concerning science.

Relativism has a long history in American anthropology. It was advanced by Franz Boas, widely acknowledged as the Father of American Academic Anthropology, as a corrective to the overly broad theories of cultural evolution prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century. Boas's *historical particularism* held that there were no universal evolutionary stages, and that each culture developed according to its own circumstances. Anthropologists must neither suggest that a primitive culture (to use the obsolete term common in Boas's time) represents an earlier stage of one's own, nor that some cultures are more "advanced" than others. Rather, cultures were simply to be seen as different. To create an accurate picture of any given culture, therefore required a suspension of one's own cultural prejudices—ethnocentrism—and the ability to evaluate a culture by its own values. This stance is referred to as "cultural relativism." It does not mean that all cultures are equal or that researchers must shed their own values. But it does mean that our own moral or ethical standards must be set aside if we want to understand the culture we are studying. The task of the anthropologist is therefore primarily descriptive.

Particularism by its rejection of generalizations yields no explanation that could be testable cross-culturally. It arose as a reaction against bad evolutionary (and racist) science, but did not offer any scientific framework to replace it. That said, cultural relativism as a methodological pose offers a corrective against the natural ethnocentrism all of us feel, especially when confronted with a culture different from our own. For an operations officer, possessing a cultural relativist point of view is essential. Analysts, too, must be able to set cultural prejudices aside in order to provide a faithful analysis of cultural intelligence and to understand the dynamics behind decision-making in target countries.

Interpretivism lies in this Boasian descriptive tradition, with its emphasis on context rather than comparison. It may even be considered a refinement of particularism. The first task of an ethnographer as Geertz saw it was to provide "thick description," or a high degree of context for any behaviors he observed. Interpretive theory is more akin to literary than scientific theory, in that it views culture as a text that must be understood and analyzed to discover meaning. The objective is to understand and experience a given culture as a native would, and find meanings embedded in the text of life histories and shared experiences. Much depends on the skill of the ethnographer in conveying his or her experiences to readers. Geertz himself was an excellent writer, and so his descriptions of Balinese ritual are particularly vivid.

Most would consider interpretivism to be nonscientific. However, Geertz believed that what he was doing was a form of science: "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973). In this interpretive science, a great deal depends on the ability of the researcher to discern meaning by a careful reading of cultural symbols—again, like literary criticism. The researcher becomes the instrument through which data is acquired.

In many ways, interpretivism also fits the situation of the intelligence analyst. Most intelligence professionals are probably accustomed to this sort of analysis and

reporting of data. That is, they use their experience and “cultural” (target) knowledge to make sense of raw intelligence and to guide future collection. Faced with a need to make sense of what is happening, the analyst sifts through large quantities of information to produce a thick description that will accurately portray meaning and intent. If the analyst is talented and has spent many years at his target, he may gradually acquire an emic perspective that will allow him to read what he sees correctly, with the eyes of the native. A knowledge of the relevant languages will facilitate this process, especially since the IC nearly always has target languages taught by native speakers. Indeed, interpretation is the “bottom line” for an analyst, the “so what” that a policymaker is seeking. An interpretive reading, like the product of any emic analysis, is validated not through experiment or correlation, but by native informants. As one TRADOC instructor and curriculum developer notes, because of this, an emic analysis of cultural intelligence can be hard to validate (Morrison 2006, 54). However, the reality is that some intelligence analysts are themselves natives of the target culture, placing them in a much better position to evaluate cultural information, reach valid conclusions, and assess the validity of fellow nonnative analysts.

Why, then, isn't interpretivism the way forward? It is not that the IC is devoid of competent interpreters of cultural intelligence. Rather, interpretive theory is the issue. This sort of theory is not a coherent and testable explanatory system, but an ad-hoc explication of meaning. Interpretive approaches are not scientific because they depend on subjective analyses and “thick description.” An interpretive analyst, whether an anthropologist or an intelligence officer, is a sort of subject matter expert. His or her insights, while perhaps quite accurate, are not as readily transferable as a knowledge of, say, Newton's theory of gravitation. Once taught the theory and its equations, anyone can recognize gravity and measure it. One does not need to possess Newton's particular talents and insights. But the respected interpreter of cultural intelligence—the old hand who has worked on a target for 20 years and speaks the language fluently—is much harder to replace. The master's apprentice may understand the master's craft and techniques, but the products he or she produces will likely not be up to the master's standards. It takes time, as well as talent, to grow an effective interpretive analyst.

*Postmodernism* is a radical form of relativism and interpretivism that originated in France and the United States in the 1970s. Although it has obvious connections to Geertz's work, particularly the notion of culture-as-text, French intellectuals such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and especially Michel Foucault have been particularly influential in its development as a philosophical movement and its importation into anthropology. Paul Rabinow, an American anthropologist who studied in France and worked with Foucault, has also played a major role in editing and expanding on Foucault's thought. As particularism began as a reaction against evolutionism, postmodernism began as a reaction against structuralism (see below) and neo-Marxism. Postmodernism's central insight is that all knowledge and all conceptions of truth are constructed in order to legitimate the existing system of power relations.

Postmodernism goes beyond Marx's well-known notion that religion is the “opium of the people,” serving to keep the masses from throwing off their chains in world revolution. Rather, from the postmodernist view, all knowledge, including

knowledge claimed by religion, science, history, ethics, morality, and so forth is socially constructed. Therefore, what we know about society also must be part of a false narrative, and so must be deconstructed. That process requires the Western researcher to engage in reflexive ethnography before attempting to understand “the other,” and critique the cultural hegemony of Western ideas such as truth, love, freedom, progress, and science. Since science itself is viewed as a product of culture and power relations, postmodernism is not only nonscientific, but antiscientific. At the moment, it is also quite influential in the discipline, though it has also provoked a reaction from those critics who favor a scientific approach (see D’Andrade 1995; Gellner 1992; Kuznar 2008; Lett 1997). Some of its critics also suggest its relativism is false and actually masks ethnocentrism, judging other beliefs and practices in terms of its own Western-derived philosophy. Other than critical theory, with which it is often combined, the postmodernist paradigm is probably the least useful to the intelligence professional. This is despite the fact that there are a number of postmodern analyses of intelligence and security services and arrangements in terms of surveillance, crime, and punishment.

### **Scientific Paradigms**

Up to the 1950s, few would have denied that anthropology was a science. Even the Boasians considered what they were doing to be a form of science, laying the empirical and philosophical groundwork needed to dismiss the bad science of the evolutionists. But since that time the view of anthropology as one of the humanities has been in the ascendancy. The best that scientifically oriented anthropologists can hope for is the compromise embodied in the well-worn description of the discipline as “the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities.”

The term “science” has a variety of meanings in our culture. Some would restrict the term to the natural sciences, others would include some or all of the social or behavioral sciences. In the Middle Ages, science referred simply to a body of authoritative knowledge, so that mathematics, theology, and moral philosophy were considered sciences. “Science” in this article is to refer to any discipline that seeks to explain observed phenomena in terms of testable theories. A scientific theory, therefore, is one that is, at least potentially, testable. Much leeway is granted by the term “potentially,” but it is necessary leeway. Anthropology is not a fully developed science, with well-established protocols and usages based on experiment. As seen concerning the concept of culture, there is not even a universally agreed-upon technical vocabulary. What distinguishes these paradigms from the humanistic ones is their framing as scientific concepts, and the commitment of their theorists to ever-increasing scientific rigor. Anthropology will almost certainly never reach the rigor of physics and chemistry, and probably not even biology, the natural science with which it has the greatest affinity. But these paradigms offer the greatest prospect of theoretical advance.

One cautionary note: that a paradigm or theory may be labeled scientific does not necessarily mean that its conclusions will always be truer or yield better results

than nonscientific theory. One of the reasons for the humanistic turn in anthropology after the 1950s was a concern that difficulties in assessing the validity of theoretical constructs or the reliability of data collection and analysis were insurmountable, and that anthropologists may be reflecting their own cultural biases and categories, rather than native ones. Relativism itself was a reaction to the false and racist generalizations of nineteenth-century anthropology inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution. When faced with bad science or pseudoscience, a careful and empathetic interpretation based on thick description may indeed be superior to false conclusions delivered by scientific methods.

The scientific paradigms considered here are:

- an evolutionist paradigm that views society and culture as changing through interaction with the natural and social environment;
- a structural-functionalist paradigm that views society as an organism maintained by social structures performing social functions—influenced by Durkheim;
- a conflict paradigm that emphasizes the role of social structure and culture in maintaining power relations and serving the interests of elites—influenced by Marx;
- a social-networking paradigm that locates social structure in social interactions, leading to the formation of networks that can be analyzed mathematically;
- a systems approach, related to networking and with affinities to structural-functionalism, that analyzes culture as an adaptive system comprised of regulatory mechanisms;
- a functionalist paradigm that views culture as a means of meeting emotional and physiological needs;
- a cognitive-linguistic paradigm that looks for structure in the formal rules of cultural grammar and provides a means of linking culture and cognition.

These paradigms can be further classified as sociological, psychological, and evolutionist/cultural ecological. Structuralism, symbolic anthropology, social constructionism, and Weberian social science might be considered scientific as well, but because of their connections with the “webs of significance” approach of interpretivism, these have been listed under the “Hybrid” section. Systems theory, too, has affinities with interpretivism and even postmodernism, but because of its relationship with mathematics, technology, and biology it is classified as a scientific paradigm. Owing to the plethora of such paradigms, each will be discussed in broad outline below, with more details provided in the following section.

**Evolutionist paradigms:** The earliest attempts at scientific explanation in anthropology focused on cultural change and were energized by Darwin's theory of biological evolution. The initial focus was on stage theories, inspired by the progression of various geological eras. In his book *Ancient Society*, American anthropologist Lewis

Henry Morgan theorized that there were three universal stages through which all societies progress—savagery, barbarism, and civilization—each characterized by differences in food production, technology, and family structures. Besides Morgan, there were other evolutionist theories, such as Edward Tylor’s typology of religions, with animism (the belief that all things have a soul) leading to polytheism, which gave way to monotheism. While it does not appear that the originators of these schemes consciously sought to legitimate Western colonialism, such stage theories tended to do so, since Western culture invariably was located in the highest, most progressive stage.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were influenced by Morgan’s theory, which informed their materialist conception of history. Like Morgan, Marx and Engels believed in progressive evolution founded on technological innovation. In Marx’s scheme, ancient societies run on slavery and ruled by absolute monarchs backed by religion evolved into feudal ones dominated by lords who held tenure over land worked by serfs that, in turn, evolved into modern, bourgeois society run by capitalists employing workers. Each stage had its own mode of production and its own dynamic of exploitation. The final stage, communism, which eliminated exploitation, would be brought about by a workers revolution and a temporary dictatorship of the working class. Morgan’s, Tylor’s, and Marx’s evolutionary schemes are called “unilinear evolution” because they posit one universal line of change through time. They tend to be progressive in nature. The latest form of unilinear evolution was that of American neo-Marxist anthropologist Leslie White, who proposed to measure a society’s progress in terms of its energy capture. His theory is known as the “thermodynamic theory of cultural evolution.”

Early unilinear evolutionism frequently went hand in hand with ethnocentrism and racism, leading to its rejection by the relativists who considered it unscientific, and for a time evolutionism all but disappeared from anthropology departments in the United States. Later theories, such as White’s, were also rejected as too simplistic and not accounting for cultural variation. However, it is undeniable that societies change through time. As a result, new multilinear theories of cultural evolution appeared. One of these, *cultural ecology*, was pioneered by Julian Steward, a cultural anthropologist with ties to archaeology. Cultural ecology focuses on cultural adaptation to particular physical and biological environments. The physical environment does not determine culture change, but it does significantly affect it, just as natural selection affects the form of specific biological adaptations. Later forms of cultural ecology included cultural environments, as well as physical ones, as shaping cultural evolution. Systems theory (see below) began to be used to create cultural ecological explanations. The focus became the interaction of physical, biological, and cultural elements to create nondeterministic explanations in place of straight line cause and effect.

Evolutionism, because of its emphasis on culture change, is probably not of much use to intelligence analysts. This is particularly true of unilinear evolutionary theory. However, understanding how cultures adapt to their environments as both coevolve can potentially help assess pressures on societies that may lead to upheavals, whether in the form of economic dislocations, disease, famine, or warfare, or simply adaptive innovations—political, social, or technological—that help societies persist.

In addition, at least one political scientist has borrowed the evolutionary paradigm (in the form of sociobiology) to help explain war and conflict, and attempt to strengthen support for the “realist” theory of international relations (Thayer 2000).

**Sociological paradigms:** Due to anthropology’s concern with social groups and its extensive intellectual roots in common with sociology, most of the approaches relevant to intelligence work fall under the category of sociological theory. This theoretical orientation suggests that the focus of attention for social scientists should be humans in groups, rather than as isolated individuals. It has its roots in the writings of philosophers such as Karl Marx and Auguste Comte, who argued that a social science must follow the rules of natural science, and infer general laws from empirical observations of human behavior. French sociologist Emile Durkheim, whose work was particularly influential in British social anthropology, endorsed and refined this positivist orientation into a sociological method that led to the structural-functionalist approach to society. Marx’s work became the inspiration for a conflict approach, stressing the role of culture in maintaining the position of elites against the interests of lower classes. However, both Marx and Durkheim focused attention on “society,” rather than “culture.”

Durkheim’s contemporaries Max Weber and Georg Simmel, skeptical of positivistic approaches to the study of intelligent agents, developed a perspective that denied the possibility of formulating laws of human behavior similar to the laws governing the behavior of natural phenomena. However, their work, which emphasized the role of interaction among individuals in groups, continues to be influential in anthropology, and Simmel is credited today as the inspiration for social network analysis (Marin and Weilman 2010). Weber’s work is discussed separately in the “hybrid” section. Sociological paradigms addressed here include structural-functionalism, conflict theory, systems theory, and social network theory.

*Structural-functionalism* is most associated with the work of scientifically oriented Durkheimian social anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, whose theoretical position was refined, elaborated, and sometimes challenged by mid-twentieth-century British social anthropologists such as E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, Raymond Firth, Mary Douglas, Max Gluckman, Edmund Leach, and Victor Turner. It is also known as simply “functionalism,” but the longer term is used here to differentiate it from Malinowski’s theory of need satisfaction, also called “functionalism.” Structural-functionalist theory is focused not on culture, but on society. There is an anti-psychological bent to it in that the individual is of far less importance than groups, and personal attributes are themselves products of social factors such as class, ethnicity, and social networks. Culture, if spoken of at all, is an epiphenomenon of social or economic relations. Its key analytical concepts are social structure, social norms, values, morals, exchange, and ritual.

Durkheim’s notion of social solidarity gave rise to structural-functionalism’s view of society as an organism composed of interdependent parts or structures. These social structures are relatively permanent arrangements of persons into groups that serve to maintain society. Radcliffe-Brown contrasted structure with social organization, or arrangements of activities allotted to various persons and groups (Radcliffe-Brown

1958/2010, 196-198). Structural-functionalist theory is aimed at explaining social stability; therefore, its models concern mechanisms that create stability, such as norms, laws, morals, and values. How social stratification and legitimate political authority are maintained are key concerns of a structural-functionalist analysis.

One powerful source of stability is religion; indeed, Durkheim considered a society's gods or totems to be representations of the society itself (Durkheim 1915). Religious rituals and totems (collective representations of the sacred) operate to reinforce social order. Such rituals may regulate social relationships and reinforce markers of status via ceremonies of transition from one state to another. These "rites of passage" may be performed to mark puberty (transition to adulthood and its rights and responsibilities), initiate new members into voluntary associations, regulate marriage and reproduction, and bury the dead (often ensuring the spirit of the deceased has passed safely to the afterlife and will not trouble the living). These will be discussed further in the section dealing with symbolic anthropology.

Structural-functionalism has been criticized and discarded by many anthropologists because of its supposed glossing over or explaining away conflict in societies. Such critics were generally proponents of some form of *conflict theory* whose influences almost always go back to Karl Marx. Marx is a theorist whose work is often misunderstood. He is associated with political revolutions carried out putatively to establish communism, but for Marx such a revolution was merely the capstone of a larger and earlier social revolution. He considered all states—even the dictatorship of the proletariat—to be evil, but desired the latter as a necessary means of crushing the bourgeois and capitalist exploiters of the working class (Tucker 1969, 86-88). The ultimate communist society would not be a Stalinist or Maoist dictatorship, but a stateless one made possible by a revolution in human nature. His "Marxism" is not so much an ideology (though it has become one) but an eschatological program whose end state was something not much different from the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God on earth—though, of course, lacking God.

All conflict theory, whether explicitly Marxist or not, contends that all states exist to serve the interests of certain groups and oppress other groups. States exercise coercive power over the governed. Unlike structural-functionalists, whose emphasis is on the maintenance of society, conflict theorists are interested in social change, which occurs through competition among groups, whether these be based on class, caste, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, religion, or some other marker of difference. Competition ranges from the use of social advantage to gain scarce resources to open warfare.

Concern about the validity of causal associations asserted by both conflict and structural-functional theories led to a search for a more adequate theory that was not so deterministic. This "new method of doing science," systems theory, was inspired by general systems theory in biology and cybernetics in engineering and information theory. It was brought into anthropology during the 1940s by British social anthropologist and philosopher Gregory Bateson. While other scientific approaches tend toward reductionism, system theory has a holistic perspective emphasizing context. Using a similar organismic metaphor as structural-functionalism, a perspective

in which Bateson was trained, it views culture as a system of interacting elements that act to maintain homeostasis by means of negative feedback loops. There is no simple unilinear cause and effect in such a system—all changes affect the system as a whole. Rather, one speaks of changes of state. It is an ecological model, suitable to analyzing how systems adapt to environmental stresses, and how changes in one element affect other elements and the whole. Positive feedback, or deviation-amplifying loops, can cause dramatic changes. At least in principle, systems theory promises to explain a number of political and economic phenomena of interest to intelligence analysts. However, because of its holism, systems theory in anthropology is difficult to use if one wishes to make testable predictions, and systems explanations are frequently post hoc.

Yet, one early variant of the systems approach is more amenable to use by intelligence analysts, and a common-sense version of this approach is probably already being used. This is Wallace's notion of "revitalization movements" in which an entire cultural system is transformed by those who share that culture (Wallace 1956). In this theoretical construct, informed by psychology and based on ethnohistorical work on the movement headed by Seneca prophet Handsome Lake, people become aware that their culture is dysfunctional and consciously embark on a program of innovation and renewal. Weber's concept of charismatic leadership plays into this formulation, as does the concept of rites of passage, though in this case the passage is effected by the entire cultural system, not simply by an individual. In most cases, the dysfunction occurs, as in the case of the Seneca, after contact with another cultural system. This model resonates with some of the struggles being waged right now within the Islamic world and Russia, and any society which may have suffered from the encroachments of globalization.

Related to systems theory is *social network analysis* or SNA. While SNA is derived from mathematics, it also has connections with anthropology, psychology, and sociology, and is grounded in empirical data, namely the number of connections between individuals. The idea of a "social network" was actually introduced by an anthropologist, John Barnes, in his 1954 work on Norwegian fishermen, and it has remained a topic of interest to anthropologists since that time. This is not surprising, given anthropology's early emphasis on kinship relations, which form a basic type of social network. However, the theory upon which SNA is based is not anthropological or sociological, but mathematical. Specifically, it is an outgrowth of graph theory. But while sociologists Marin and Weilman (2010, 18) acknowledge that SNA is not a theory, they do consider it "a perspective or a paradigm ... (that) takes as its starting point the premise that social life is created primarily and most importantly by relations and the patterns they form". One of the most important contributions anthropology can make to SNA is in looking at those higher level patterns and keeping a focus on the whole system, rather than on isolated nodes. Ethnographic knowledge may help determine the extent of a social network, as well as the meaning of connections between nodes and various flows.

SNA assumed prominence during the Global War on Terror. Owing to its emphasis on connections relative to specific groups and individuals, and its quantitative methods, SNA is especially promising when attempting to analyze the impact of emergent, informal, and formal networks, and determine their extent. It offers a way to quantify and chart the influence of specific actors, and embed their actions in relationships. Like other systems approaches, social network analysis locates causation in the social structure (Marin and Weilmann 2010, 4). SNA can identify key actors (nodes) within a network by examining the number and type of connections they have with other actors. Various types of exchanges, or “flows,” can take place between nodes. Marin and Welman note that these may be resources, information, or influence. Ties between nodes may be strong (such as between close family members or friends) or weak (such as between clients or distant colleagues). There is evidence that weak ties may actually be more important than strong ones in granting access to information and power (Ressler 2006, 1). SNA has already become a very important tool in the intelligence analyst’s toolbox.

**Psychological paradigms:** Psychological paradigms attempt to explain how culture and the individual are related to one another. As a result, psychological paradigms have a great interest in the concept of mind as an object of analysis. While relating mind and culture seems a natural research avenue for anthropology, the use of psychological concepts in anthropology was controversial when they were first introduced, for two reasons. First, there was the widespread belief that explanation in social science must derive from social factors, not innate, individual ones. The individual was either unimportant, as the structural-functionalists believed, or a *tabula rasa* the contents of which were written by society, as Marxists and relativists believed. Part of the relativist concern was that culture might be subordinated to biology or other innate features, evoking the racialism of the evolutionary theorists. A second concern had to do with the state of psychology at the time. Those who sought to import psychological theory into anthropology tended to rely on the work of psychoanalysts, especially Freud and his students, rather than the more empirically grounded work of the behaviorists. Psychoanalytic explanations tended to be very hard to falsify.

In the 1930s British social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who, like Boas, had his training in the physical sciences and placed great emphasis on careful fieldwork, devised a psychologically based theory now known as *functionalism*. Malinowski’s earlier functionalism was sociologically based and bore resemblances to Radcliffe-Brown’s structural-functionalism. This new formulation tied social institutions not to the maintenance of society, but to the satisfaction of individual needs. He classified needs as physiological (reproduction, food, shelter), culturally derived, and instrumental (economics, social control, education, and political organization). Needs were satisfied by direct responses, which then gave rise to cultural needs. Cultural and instrumental responses were reinforced through satisfaction of needs and transformed into drives (Goldschmidt 1996, 510). While Malinowski’s fieldwork methods continue to be esteemed, his functionalism has not received much attention since the 1970s. However, a need-satisfaction analysis, if not the full-blown theory,

could have potential value in intelligence work aimed at understanding motivations. That said, theories from psychology, particularly social psychology, may account for motivation better than an appeal to cultural need satisfaction. Any contribution from anthropology must take account of the extensive experimental work done in support of theories in that discipline.

Malinowski's ethnographic emphasis on gaining an insider perspective on a given culture and indigenous (emic) categories, rather than his psychological theory, combined with the work of Benjamin Whorf (of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which holds that semantics influence thought and cultural categories), led to the development in the United States of *ethnoscience*. The anthropologist most responsible for introducing this paradigm into anthropological theory was the linguistically trained Ward Goodenough. He defined culture as:

...(W)hatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (Goodenough 1957, 167).

Culture, in this view, is neither a way of life, a mechanism to satisfy and generate needs, nor a system to maintain homeostasis. It is a set of rules that comprise mental models. These rules may be explicit or implicit, observed by the researcher and deduced by him/her, but they are completely emic. They apply within the culture and make sense to members of that society. These rules can be elucidated and analyzed by examining linguistic structures and comparing them to cultural beliefs and behavior, a method known as "componential analysis." In this method, the semantic content of words is taken as an indicator of cultural meaning—how people structure their world and life experience. Within a specific area the object is to find the minimum number of features needed to distinguish one term from another.

In kinship, for instance, if Joe speaks of his "mother" he is using that word to distinguish both gender and generation (one generation earlier), but if he speaks of his "sister" he is only distinguishing "gender"—she is the same generation as Joe and has the same mother and father." If Joe speaks of his "brother" he is speaking of someone with the same gender, generation, mother, and father. While there is no society that does not distinguish gender and generation, there are cultures—those that practice unilineal descent—in which the term for father carries differential meanings. In patrilineal societies, reckoning descent through the male line, "father" carries family authority. However, in matrilineal descent, "father" denotes a less authoritative (and more informal) figure than in patrilineal ones; the male with authority is the mother's brother. There can also be different types of cousins. In bilateral societies, such as ours, the same kinship term refers to one's father's sister's or father's brother's (or mother's sister's or mother's brother's) child. All are cousins—what Americans would call "first

cousins.” Americans distinguish cousins by relationship distance in time and space—first cousin, first cousin once removed, second cousin, and so forth. But in unilineal (patrilineal or matrilineal) descent groups, the child of an opposite sex sibling of one’s parent (mother’s brother or father’s sister) is denoted by a different linguistic term (what anthropologists call “cross-cousin”), from the child of a parent’s same-sex sibling (known as a “parallel cousin”).

Kinship terms carry differential rights and obligations, many of which center around marriage. Goodenough, in his landmark paper on status and role, expanded his linguistically informed analytic techniques to rights and obligations accruing to certain social positions, and the use (and breach) of such cultural expectations. He was able to devise a behaviorally based quantitative scale for measuring intensity of emotional states, based on to what extent duties were observed and rights respected (Goodenough 1965). Such analytical techniques offer promise to the intelligence analyst, particularly one who is well versed in the language of his or her target, because it provides a way of gaining an insider perspective that can yield testable insights and can be compared with other insider perspectives from other cultures. This seems to be the essence of cultural intelligence.

Despite its promise, ethnoscience has not become the mainline of anthropological theory, perhaps because of the strong turn toward humanistic perspectives in the late 1960s. However, it gave rise to the subfield of *cognitive anthropology*, which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in the wake of the cognitive revolution in psychology. Like ethnoscience, cognitive anthropological theory is concerned with the relationship of mind and culture, and the construction and maintenance of mental models. Borrowing from psychology the idea of a schema, or a mental pattern for organizing and making sense of the world, cognitive anthropologists have expanded on the concept to include cultural models, cognitive schemas that are intersubjectively shared. According to Roy D’Andrade, one of the founders of the field, a schema is intersubjectively shared when everyone in a social group knows it, everyone knows that everyone knows it, and everyone knows that everyone knows that everyone knows it (D’Andrade 1987).

Humans develop schemas for everything we perceive. Cognitive psychologists have determined that humans can hold about seven, plus or minus two, pieces of information in memory at any given time. Schemas help us to overcome this limitation by functioning as mental shortcuts or heuristics. When these pieces of information are themselves schemas, we can deal with much larger volumes of information. Schemas become more elaborate with experience, but also serve to exclude certain information. For instance, we may have a simple schema for “chair” that we apply to lawn chairs, rocking chairs, armchairs, and thrones. We develop subordinate schemas for these subtypes of chair. When faced with a stool or a sofa, we must decide whether it matches our schema or belongs to a different, but related category. We may discover that chairs, sofas, and stools (and mats and pews) all belong to a higher order schema, perhaps “seats.” This reveals the hierarchical nature of schemas and also their heuristic function. Cultural models share in this hierarchical arrangement, with the highest level of cultural model being worldview.

Understanding the cultural models members of a society use to organize experience has clear implications for both cultural competence and the intelligence analysis. In a sense, these models are their tools for analyzing us. A knowledge of them can tell us how various behaviors, verbal and nonverbal, will be interpreted. To map and describe cultural models, cognitive anthropologists use structured interviews or survey questionnaires to measure agreement with certain propositions. An example of this procedure is found in D'Andrade's elucidation of the "folk model of the mind" in the United States (D'Andrade 1987). Analysts without direct access to informants may create such models based on intercepts, debriefs, or other intelligence sources involving verbal communication, and test them retrospectively by searching on other such sources. As with schemas, there is a wide range of cultural models. There are models of illness, morality, warfare, terrorism, religion, leadership, democracy, and Americans. Many such models would be of interest to policymakers, diplomats, and military commanders.

### Hybrid Paradigms

The survey of anthropological theory concludes with five approaches that have one foot in the scientific domain and one in the humanistic one. All have their roots in sociology, but four have significant connections to psychology as well. The remaining perspective, Bourdieu's "theory of practice," has connections to a wide range of fields.

The first of these, *structuralism*, like ethnoscience and cognitive anthropology, is heavily influenced by structural linguistics. However, structuralism is also tied closely to the interpretive, and even postmodern, school, due to its reliance on literary texts and emphasis on narrative. Its founder, French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, like Goodenough, began his analysis by looking at kinship terms. However, unlike Goodenough, who wanted to create emic analyses of specific cultures using quantifiable variables that could be compared cross-culturally, Levi-Strauss was interested in finding universal cultural patterns of meaning that regulated mental activity. The "structure" that interested him was not the social structure of structural-functionalism, but the structure of the human mind, which does not vary from culture to culture. The same structure can underlie apparently diverse social systems, beliefs, and practices. To use a literary metaphor, a structural analysis would compare the musicals *Oliver!* and *Annie* and conclude they were both instances of the same text.

Levi-Strauss and his followers thought they could detect such universal structures by delving deep into the ethnographic record to find the most basic commonalities possible—the smallest units of meaning, analogous to the concept of phoneme pioneered by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Myths proved especially good fodder for this kind of analysis. These sacred stories can be compared cross-culturally by comparing their corresponding smallest units of meaning—what Levi-Strauss called "mythemes." Examining the ethnographic record and drawing on the structural linguistic concept of "minimal pairs" of contrasting phonemes, structuralists

discerned a structure of binary oppositions of such units of meaning—male/female, dark/light, living/dead, raw/cooked, marriageable/taboo, and so forth—which he believed were characteristic features of human thought. These symbolic oppositions could be resolved or reconciled through the mediation of a third term. However, such a third term, which often represented an imposition of the sacred or supernatural, could also be threatening.

Structuralism's heyday was in the 1960s and 1970s, but it faded in the 1980s under assault from postmodernism (a number of leading proponents of which had been structuralists), and also from its lack of verifiability. While Levi-Straus believed his work to be scientific because of its careful placement and measurement of corresponding terms, it relies greatly on the experience of the analyst. In that and in its mining of myths for clues to human mental life, structuralism bears a resemblance to Freudian psychoanalysis. A structuralist analysis can become a sort of systematized interpretivism. But at its most rigorous, it also bears a resemblance to ethnoscience and cognitive anthropology.

Sharing structuralism's concern with myth and symbol is *symbolic anthropology*, which has also been called a British version of Geertzian interpretivism (Lett 1997). However, the founders of symbolic anthropology (here, we will focus on Victor Turner) were trained in the sociological paradigm of structural-functionalism. Turner, who is well known for his ritual studies, identified symbols as the “molecules of ritual” that are manipulated and enacted in ritual performance. Multiple meanings are condensed in the symbol, so that we might say that a symbol has a heuristic function. Symbols polarize meaning into an ideological and sensory pole—they mobilize ideology by engaging the senses, in order to renew the social order.

An important division in an analysis of ritual is between rites of passage and rites of intensification. As noted above in the discussion of structural-functionalism, rites of passage mark (and regulate) changes of status with ceremonies surrounding puberty, graduation, marriage, childbirth, and other important life events. Rites of intensification are group oriented and mobilize support for social institutions. Both serve to maintain social order. Turner (1969) focused most of his attention on rites of passage, developing Arnold van Gennep's (1965) three-stage model of separation (preliminal phase), transition (liminal phase), and reincorporation (postliminal phase). He paid particular attention to the “liminal” (threshold) phase, where transition actually takes place, into the concept of “liminoid” social groups and phenomena.

Turner spoke of liminal and liminoid both as “betwixt and between” states. The initiate going through a rite of passage is, in the liminal phase, neither his old state (Van Gennep also used the term “world”) nor yet his new one. The initiate's status is ambiguous, anomalous, and, to that extent, powerful and threatening, much as the mediating term can be in one of structuralism's binary oppositions. In the rite of passage, the status is resolved, but in liminoid phenomena, the ambiguity remains. Turner uses the terms “structure” to refer to social structure and “antistructure” to refer to liminal and liminoid phenomena that are outside of, and challenging to,

the social order. Liminoid groups include artistic communities, countercultures, certain new religious movements, and any other group that exists in tension with the dominant culture. Such groups are characterized by what Turner called *communitas*, a state in which everyone is equal, there are no fixed statuses, and there is a high degree of intimacy among members. Boundaries are low or nonexistent in liminoid groups, so that the antistructure they exhibit with respect to society is present in interpersonal relations. The self in such communities is a social self, and individuality is diminished. This provides a great deal of in-group solidarity.

The concepts of rites of passage, liminality, and liminoid groups are of potential use to intelligence analysts, particularly if a target organization is isolated from some dominant culture, subordinates individual will to the collective, and is actively engaged in recruitment. When they join such groups, individuals are frequently in a “betwixt and between” state, having found their existing pattern of social relations no longer adequate. Thinking about these concepts may provide insight into recruitment practices—or conversion experiences—and help assess their likelihood of success. Much of this terrain has already been worked over by social psychology, but Turner’s work can help provide context and improve analytical judgments.

Social structure is also a means of structuring reality. *Social constructionism*, a theoretical paradigm first articulated fully by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their 1966 book *The Social Construction of Reality*, and elaborated by Berger in *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), holds that culture represents not just a set of rules, but the reality that we all experience, constructed in order to survive in a hostile world. Noting that humans are unfinished creatures and, unlike other animals, helpless at birth, Berger notes that culture fills the gaps left by biology. It is what makes us human. But beyond that, culture is a “world” that we inhabit, possessing a “taken-for-granted reality” that shapes and constrains our lives. This reality is maintained by our everyday conversation and other interactions, as well as by “plausibility structures” — social institutions such as schools, churches, and governments that reinforce cultural roles, norms, and beliefs. Culture and humans stand in a reciprocal relation to each other—we externalize what is within us, we objectify it as a world, and that world in turn is internalized to create ourselves. As Berger says, “Man creates a self within a world” (1967).

Nearly everyone would agree that the social self is constrained by the statuses we occupy and the roles we play. We, in essence, obey certain cultural rules. But constructivist theory obliterates the distinction between us and the rules we follow. Rather than obeying rules as an external imposition, we embody them. That is, we don’t exist apart from those rules. Our humanity is constructed by society, through culture. This, interestingly, is identical to the position of Marxism. We are not simply biological entities, the product of a series of genetic accidents. We are created by our culture.

This notion is intriguing, but it’s hard to see how this approach could be of help to an intelligence professional, except as a reminder of the powerful effects of culture in shaping perception, personality, and worldview. The sole exception is the concept

of plausibility structures, those sources of social authority that maintain the reality. Identifying such features of a group or society would assist in forwarding U.S. policy, whether by undermining a perceived reality in which the United States is viewed as a negative force or strengthening one that holds that the United States is a friend and that our values are to be emulated.

The final two theoretical paradigms are hardly paradigms at all, but a sampling of the theoretical insights of two men. The first of these is Max Weber, a political economist of enormous intellectual breadth who (along with Durkheim and possibly Marx) founded modern sociology. His approach is referred to here simply as *Weberian social science*, because it is impossible to place his ideas into one overarching category. He was a substantivist in economics, was the inspiration for symbolic interactionism in sociology, and in his skepticism about reductionism, also connects with the interpretivists. He coined the term “webs of significance” that energized both Geertz and the constructionists. Weber’s most important theoretical contributions to anthropology, at least in this author’s opinion, are his theories relating to religion (and its relationship to the economy), political leadership, and the development and function of bureaucracies. For the purposes of this article, which is aimed at identifying approaches that are potentially useful for intelligence analysis, we will focus on his work on leadership, especially charisma, and bureaucracy, related to each other through the concept of “rationalization.”

Weber identified three kinds of leaders: charismatic (governing a family or religious cult), traditional domination (feudal lordship), and legal domination (law and bureaucracy in the modern state). He noted that charismatic leadership is, by its nature, unstable, because it depends on personal characteristics. To create a more stable political structure, charisma becomes “rationalized” so that, for instance, an outstanding leader may be seen as passing his gifts to his children. Personal power becomes hereditary authority. But the charismatic leader’s teachings, as well, are rationalized, so that they become embodied in laws and principles. Eventually societies evolve into a mode of “legal domination,” characterized by a high degree of rationalization, embodied in bureaucracies. The trend in this evolutionary scheme is for increased rationalization and impersonalization, with decisions made by reference to laws and established procedures. While this frees subjects/citizens from the caprice of rulers, it also allows less and less space for individual freedom. Behavior is bounded by rules that people cannot escape, making for, as Weber lamented, an “iron cage” of rationality.

This model seems readily applicable to societies in the developing world confronted with Westernization, and therefore of interest to intelligence analysts. The response can vary from acceptance and assimilation to rejection and revolution. But even in instances in which diverse bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, thrown together into an arbitrarily (from their perspective) defined colony to be subjected to Western rules reinforced by Western education, have been granted self-rule by policy or revolution, the indigenous rulers still govern according to some form of the bureaucratic model. Even with the reemergence of a charismatic leader, that leader—who may

represent only one traditional ethnicity among many—must rely on the rationalized, bureaucratic machine left before by the colonial power. Exploring these development issues using the theoretical framework devised by Weber can only lead to better understanding of such phenomena, and therefore better analytic judgment.

Last is the similarly cross-cutting work of French social scientist and left-wing activist Pierre Bourdieu, who has been extremely influential in contemporary anthropology. Bourdieu is probably best known for his *theory of practice*, which might be considered a sociology of culture itself. A concept of this theoretical paradigm is “habitus,” a system of “dispositions” or “second nature,” produced by historical events or, as Bourdieu described it, “history turned into nature” (Bourdieu 1977, 410). A habitus is a “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” (p. 409), or a structure produced by other structures, and possessing in itself the potential to structure practices and representations (p. 407). “Habitus” evokes “culture” as viewed by the constructionists, but also a means of passing on or “reproducing” culture. In that, it resembles the classical concept of socialization, but is not a rule-learning process. Rather, habitus is embodied and hence observable in terms of behavior. It may be helpful to imagine it in terms of “habit”—habitus is the set of principles that shape our habitual behavior, our “second nature,” our practices. Habitus is an “immanent law ... laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing” (p. 411).

Agency is a central part of Bourdieu’s theoretical focus. Some other sociological theories, notably structural-functionalism and various Marxist-influenced approaches, minimize the role of individual agency in social life, viewing social factors such as class and collective representations as primary objects of analysis. By contrast, Bourdieu believed social reproduction of structure and objective meaning was carried on, and most importantly, embodied in individuals. But his notion of agency is not as cut and dry as the notion of agency held by rational choice theory, which he opposed. For Bourdieu, social agents operated not by calculation, but by a “sense of the game” that is that agent’s habitus.

Agents move and act within a social universe consisting of a number of social “fields” (such as “science,” “art,” “economy,” “religion,” and so forth), each constructed and distinguished by certain properties and each able to provide the agent with force or power. Fields are autonomous from the larger social structure, and through the actions of agents, may become more complex. Agents, for their part, develop certain mannerisms, opinions, tastes, and so forth, and the interaction (via practice) shapes each agent’s habitus. Interaction with these fields endows the agent with a certain “capital,” a term Bourdieu used to refer not merely to economic capital, but to any resource, typical of a field, that can be deployed by an agent. The key forms of capital are symbolic capital (deriving from honor or prestige), social capital (deriving from one’s social relationships), and cultural capital (deriving from competencies, skills, and qualifications that enhance the agent’s cultural authority).

While much of his work has affinities to postmodernism, Bourdieu believed that objectivity was possible, given certain historical circumstances, and held

that science was able to operate with such objectivity. However, he also cautioned investigators against their own biases, some of which derived from “doxa,” or a taken-for-granted reality that tends to favor dominant social arrangements in a given field. To combat biases, he urged reflexivity or continual awareness of the investigator’s own internalized structures.

Bourdieu’s perspective can assist analysts both in gaining a practical sense of how people interact in a reciprocal manner with their social environments, remedying the reductionism typical of structural-functionalist and conflict theory. For instance, an analyst seeking to understand the forces that have shaped the personality of a leader or the motives of a suicide bomber might try to see the world through the habitus of that individual. The notion of various kinds of capital seems to be a particularly intuitive concept and one that seems applicable to a wide variety of situations in which the analyst wishes to examine the relative influence of an actor operating within a certain social universe. Finally, Bourdieu’s work dovetails well with both ethnoscience/cognitive anthropology in its emphasis on cultural distinctions and fields with various rule sets, and social network analysis, which can provide quantitative measures of social capital.

### **Applying Anthropological Theory to Intelligence Work**

In science the best theory is the one that best fits the data and the predictions of which best survive empirical testing. But the objective here is to find the theoretical paradigm that is most useful to practitioners. The analyst (or operator) does not care about adherence to a particular paradigm. She is more likely to value such intellectual tools for their practical usefulness, namely in developing cultural intelligence that is as accurate and, if possible, predictive as possible. In many cases, combining various theoretical paradigms may be the most fruitful alternative—which, as noted above, is what most anthropologists actually do.

It is difficult to find examples in the literature of the application of anthropological theory to intelligence work. When intelligence and security is mentioned it is either to condemn or at least problematize the participation of anthropologists in intelligence or police work, or to apply anthropological insight to the operations of police or security agencies (Bajc 2007; Innes, Fielding, and Cope 2005). The latter is more useful, since many nations of interest to U.S. policymakers have security services that our own intelligence agencies would like to understand. That said, there are plenty of writings by anthropologists of potential interest to intelligence analysts, but these tend to be either descriptive ethnographies or statistical associations, with minimal theory (Shahrani 2002) or else use the theory and methods of other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, or political science, more than anthropology (Shahrani 2002; Ember and Ember 1994).

However, some illustrative examples do exist. A sampling of these is presented below, grouped by theoretical paradigm.

## Structural-Functionalism: Maintaining Social Order

Sometimes social order is reinforced in apparent chaos. Max Gluckman's structural-functionalist analysis of what he termed "rituals of rebellion" in the Zulu and Swazi kingdoms of southeast Africa suggested that the periodic overturning of established hierarchies, in which the powerful are brought low and the humble exalted, serve as a means to reinforce, rather than challenge, the social order. For instance, in the *incwala* festival in Swaziland the king was publicly insulted, women were raised over men, and the young exercised authority over the elders. The rituals functioned to release tension in society through a socially endorsed, cyclical pressure valve, and prevented real rebellion (Gluckman 1954). While the *incwala* is often rendered in English as "first-fruits" festival, the official Swaziland tourist website notes that it is really "about cleansing and renewal and—above all—celebrating kingship" (thekingdomofswaziland.com). This accords with Gluckman's view that every such rebellion is really "a fight in defense of royalty and kingship" (1963, 130).

Gluckman also examined a Zulu fertility festival related to the Zulu Princess of Heaven, in which gender boundaries and roles were transgressed. Women and girls assumed tasks typically allotted to men. They also ran naked and sang obscene songs while males hid. He found similar festivals in other southeast African cultures in which women—usually considered an inferior sex in such cultures—assumed the dominant position, humiliating and in some instances, actually attacking men. He theorized that these female rebellions reinforced the social order by allowing girls and women to escape and then return to it once the festival ceased. Their behavior may also have reinforced perceptions of females as requiring subordination.

Other researchers extended Gluckman's thesis. Robert Dirks found that annual rituals of rebellion, or "rituals of conflict" as he called them, were present worldwide and associated with the elevation of the community over the individual, tight controls on individual liberty, and a sudden infusion of food energy (Dirks 1988). This theory accounts for similar inversions of status and authority occurring at Carnival and even at Christmas in Renaissance England. Susanne Schroter (2004), while not a structural-functionalist, has adapted Gluckman's thesis to other societies as well, finding that sometimes (e.g., Melanesian cargo cults) the ritual aspects were secondary to the rebellion, which really was aimed at overturning authority; sometimes (e.g., the Dayak of Indonesia) a ritualized rebellion can make use of real violence to assert ethnicity against an alien government; and sometimes (e.g., Western youth culture), a ritual of rebellion can be a rite of passage.

The youth culture example cited above illustrates another important aspect of structural-functionalist theory: the regulation of social relationships via markers of status and ceremonies of transition from one state to another. These "rites of passage" channel young or low status people into higher status positions, fostering identification with authority figures. Paired with these are "rites of intensification," which are communal, rather than individual. These remind the community of the fundamental beliefs of society, and foster allegiance to the society and those who exercise authority

within it. An example from American society would be Independence Day festivities or religious holidays.

Clearly, understanding how systems sustain themselves and order is reinforced would assist an intelligence analyst or operator in evaluating information or observations before him. Conflict among tribal groups, for instance, may be long standing and cyclical, and may not represent some novel response to new situations. Indeed, displays of aggression—and even real aggression—may be highly stereotyped and ritualistic. Theories such as Gluckman's, refined and corrected by other researchers, can help place upheavals in context and discern the purpose and consequences of political uprisings.

### **Conflict Theory: Interests and Identification**

**T**he conflict theorist looks for associations between variables relating to group identity, economic or political structure, and competition or armed conflict. For instance, one study of armed conflict and the state found that in state societies, an emphasis on military glory is significantly related to killing noncombatants, killing more enemy combatants, torture during warfare, and destruction of enemy resources in external war. In non-state societies, there are no significant relationships between military glory and atrocities (Ember, Adem, and Skoggard 2013, 46). This finding supports the theory that states encourage such violence by linking it with a psychological incentive.

Conflict theory also holds that internal warfare, such as feuding, civil war, or revolutionary war, arises from tensions between groups that become unmanageable. The genocide in Rwanda, in which Hutus were encouraged to murder Tutsis and their Hutu collaborators, arose from a long-standing sense that the Tutsis were a privileged class who had helped the colonial power oppress the Hutus. An intelligence professional can use insights from conflict theory to seek out fault lines within and among societies that may be used, with other variables, to predict armed conflict or guide psychological operations.

Much conflict theory has been concerned with the interests of the parties involved, particularly focusing on competition over scarce resources. This view is inspired by an evolutionary paradigm and the physical environment often plays an important role in structuring the conflict. However, social anthropologist Günther Schlee has taken a different tack, examining not interests, but the parties involved: namely, who is fighting and how do they draw the line between friend and foe? (Schlee 2004). He attempted to synthesize two theoretical approaches to this issue of group identification, economic cost-benefit analysis (gain versus risk) and a social structural and cognitive representational model (social identity of group members). The issue centers on recruitment and shifting alliances: how and why people decide to take sides in a conflict, an issue of great importance to all parts of the IC, especially in the context of international and militarized terrorism.

A key concept for Schlee is the size of competing groups, which depends on

rules of inclusion and exclusion, the values members attach to various dimensions of social identity (language, religion, descent, and so forth), and the costs and benefits of expanding alliances. An important and often overlooked point has to do with ethnicity and clan—clans can overlap ethnic lines. He applied his ideas to two types of warfare: genocide (rare, but easy to model in purely conceptual and mathematical terms) and a series of wars or raids, with focus on tensions between winners and losers following armed conflict. He examines cases from East Africa (the Rendille, Gabra, and Somali ), but also includes examples from New Guinea (the Tauade and Manambu) and Northern Pakistan (the Swat Pukhtuns ) to illustrate the complexity of the interplay of economic and social identity factors.

For instance, segmentary lineages, which among the Somali can serve as a means of mobilizing allies of closely related segments, serve the opposite function among the Pukhtuns, where rivalry over land is high among neighboring (and closely related) lineage segments (Schlee 2004, 146). Thus, Somali warlords favor local allies, while Pukhtuns prefer distant ones. The interaction of clan and ethnicity is illustrated in an example involving the Rendille, a small exclusive pastoralist society reluctant to accept strangers. Schlee cites a case in which members of the Elemo clan, whose ancestors had been Gabra 200 years ago, but was now (1992) Rendille, successfully sought refuge with their Gabra clan brothers when the Gabra attacked the Rendille. Yet the existence of Elemo among the Rendille did not prevent clan members from attacking the Rendille in the first place.

### **Symbolic Anthropology: Liminality and Security Services**

**V**ictor Turner's work on rites of passage is of interest to intelligence professionals in two arenas: the recruitment of members of armed and subversive groups, including terrorist groups, and also the "meta-ritual" enacted by security services to minimize uncertainty and control public spaces during an important political event. The role of ritual in mobilizing commitment has sometimes been said to be due to the content of religious belief. While evocative myths and symbols play an important role, these do not have to be religious. And as Sosis and Alcorta (2008) note, the process of enacting rituals itself fosters commitment among initiates. Commitment is created by removing potential members from their previous social networks and status and role sets and placing them in a place in which none of that matters anymore. Under conditions of ambiguity, uncertainty, and *communitas* with other initiates, they are prepared to receive new statuses and new certainties. This process occurs in secret societies, reeducation camps, religious groups often termed cults, and in certain revolutionary or terrorist groups.

A more novel approach to liminality can be seen in Vida Bajc's concept of the security meta-ritual (2007). Drawing on Mark Salter's work on the post-9/11 efforts of governments to introduce new rites of passage at airports in order to contain terrorist threats and eliminate uncertainty in public spaces, Bajc extends Salter's theory to focus not on the ritual process of separating insiders from outsiders, but on the public

space such rituals create. Such public spaces are transformed into liminal spaces as Turner defines them. Although these spaces reduce uncertainty in one sense, they increase it in another by disrupting normal (preliminal) social relations without creating a new system of relations. Those caught in the security zone are “betwixt and between,” unsure how to behave, unable to rely on their established knowledge of social norms, and kept ignorant of events by secrecy. The example Bajc uses is the 2005 inauguration by President George W. Bush in Washington, DC. “Real Washington,” as Bajc puts it, is transformed to “inaugural Washington,” a purified space created by the establishment of fences and checkpoints. Surveillance procedures eliminate or reduce personal privacy. The people who come to inauguration, like initiates (or pilgrims), are all treated the same, leveling statuses so that all are equal—another characteristic of liminal spaces. It is a meta-ritual because it is the process that allows the public ritual itself—the inauguration—to take place.

The ways in which states protect their leaders and public rituals, and structure security arrangements, are of obvious interest to intelligence professionals. But the logic behind it, the notion that there are rites of passage, helps gain insight into the thought processes of senior security officers, as well as the behavior and emotional state of publics subjected to such rites.

### **Cultural Systems and Individual Psychology: Revitalization Movements**

Wallace’s paradigm of the revitalization movement seems a natural tool for the intelligence analyst seeking to understand revolutionary groups and their base of support; yet scholars whose work touches on this area—mostly political scientists of one sort or another—have been slow to use this tool, most likely because they are unaware of it. In 2005, however, political scientist Bradley Whitsel used Wallace’s framework to describe domestic extremist groups, focusing on the right-wing anti-statist West Virginia Mountaineer Militia, but also the white supremacist group The Order and the left-wing terrorist group the Weathermen. Whitsel’s work is more descriptive than analysis, and it gives too much focus to the idea of an extremist mindset, thereby importing an essentialism that does not comport with Wallace’s general model. However, it is valuable in raising some salient points of Wallace’s construct and encouraging use of the construct in analyzing similar movements.

Wallace himself extended the revitalization movement concept into another area of interest for intelligence analysts, namely international development (Wallace 1967/2008). Returning to his original ethnohistorical material, he noted that the revitalization movement began after Quaker missionaries began working with the Seneca. Their objective was not to convert the Seneca to Christianity, but to teach them technical skills that would enable them to be effective farmers and citizens, and encourage sobriety, one of the central tenets of the Handsome Lake movement. Speaking of a “revitalization process,” Wallace made the point that the “technical movement” (development) would succeed best in an environment in which it

understood and respected native revitalization movements. For instance, attaching “strings” to aid would undermine a revitalizing process that sought to renovate the indigenous self-image and create a “new man,” provoking resistance to the development effort. Many indigenous revitalization movements (e.g., Melanesian cargo cults, the Native American Ghost Dance, the Taiping Rebellion in China) are in opposition to development processes. Successful development must draw its energy from the revitalization movement itself, even if the sponsors of development dislike the direction of revitalization. In terms of U.S. policy, this suggests a de-emphasis on ideological similarity may be required in order to achieve mutual self-interests.

## **Social Network Analysis**

While SNA as it is known today is relatively new, as Department of Homeland Security official Steve Ressler points out in his concise summary of the potential for SNA in intelligence work, its precursor, link analysis, has been in use for decades. For example, in the 1960s a CIA officer in Thailand was able to trace a clandestine network of communist organizations using a standard anthropological research tool, the unstructured interview (Ressler 2006, 6). Link analysis has also been used in SIGINT; Ressler notes that traffic analysis, the study of message externals such as addressees and gatekeepers that has been used since World War II, is a form of link analysis (Ressler 2006, 6).

With the appearance in 1991 of an article by former mathematician and British police officer Malcolm Sparrow on using SNA to produce criminal intelligence, social network theory has been more rigorously and explicitly linked to both anthropology and intelligence analysis. According to Koschade (2006, 4), there have been a number of attempts to harness SNA for intelligence networks, ranging from tracking illegal networks in industry to examining organized crime networks to analyzing networks in the government of Iran. There have also been Koschade’s own social network analyses of the southeast Asian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiya, which in 2002 detonated three bombs on the Indonesian island of Bali, killing 202 people, mostly Australian, Indonesian, and British (Koschade 2006) and an Aum Shinrikyo cell that conducted gas attacks in Australia (Koschade 2005). The Human Terrain System, which has recruited and deployed anthropologists—to the condemnation of many in the discipline—emphasizes SNA. There have been many other uses of SNA in the IC and by scholars working in this area. These include Marc Sageman’s *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) and its follow-on work *Leaderless Jihad* (2008), in which its author, a forensic psychiatrist and former CIA operations officer, shows how SNA may be used to identify key clusters of activity that denote networks of grassroots terrorists. He argues that al-Qaeda central is a less important threat than leaderless networks of self-declared jihadists—a position at odds with that of many terrorism experts (Hoffman 2008). SNA is a cornerstone of IBM’s data management, analysis, and presentation package “The Analyst’s Notebook.” CIA lists familiarity with this software package as a desirable skill among potential CIA hires ([www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)).

## **Other Perspectives**

I believe that some other key theoretical perspectives from anthropology, particularly ethnoscience and its related subfield of cognitive anthropology, which lack published connections with intelligence and security problems, will prove valuable to analysts in the future. These paradigms can provide testable data that lead to valid conclusions, and yet grant access to an insider perspective. Linguistic data, which is of maximum use in an ethnoscientific, cognitive, or structural analysis, is the sort of data most likely to be acquired through SIGINT intercepts or HUMINT. In fact, it may be possible, when analyzing intercepts, to create a parallel data stream that would forward messages to an analytic team dedicated to componential analysis, with the aim of elucidating the relevant cultural rules and the logical structure of thought used by speakers of the language being targeted.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

This review article has been an attempt to provide intelligence professionals with an overview of theory in anthropology that could potentially be of use in intelligence work, particularly intelligence analysis. It is neither exhaustive nor in-depth. The choice of theoretical paradigms was made on the basis of my estimate of value in intelligence work. Others may disagree. But regardless, the selection cannot be said to represent the current state of theory in anthropology. Many colleagues might view the paradigms presented as a Cook's tour of the history of anthropology, of little relevance to the present. But in social science, more than in natural science, newer is not necessarily better. Anthropology is not physics, in which classical mechanics are improved by the addition of relativity and then superseded by quantum mechanics. There is no agreement that Levi-Strauss is superior to Durkheim. Old explanations may be used and explored for many decades, or get discarded for reasons of fashion as much as adequacy in accounting for the data. Natural science marches forward, while we stagger like a drunk walking a line. And then postmodernism appears and the question arises: should we—or can we—even try to walk at all? As Rob Johnston, an anthropologist who has performed ethnographic work studying the culture of CIA, puts it:

The basic sciences that underpin intelligence are not physical sciences. It is difficult to measure what is meant by “progress” in the human sciences. The human sciences are considerably more multivariate than the physical sciences and it is much more difficult to control those variables.

There are numerous domains from which intelligence may borrow. Organizational behavior is better understood today than ever before. Problem solving and decision making have been researched since the 1920s. Structural anthropology addresses many of the acculturation and identity issues that affect individual behavior. Cognitive scientists are

building models that can be tested in experimental conditions and used for developing new tools and techniques. Sociology and social theory have much to offer in studying social networks and communication (Johnston 2008).

At the same time, in intelligence and security work, theory can be a bad word—after all, what the commander or policymaker needs to know is the news, what is happening now and what is likely to happen in the future. Facts and accurate predictions matter, not theories. Yet, any prediction, whether in science or intelligence, is based on a theory. An analyst always works with a theory—a set of propositions that make sense of the world—in mind, even if that theory is implicit. The better the theory, the better the predictions. A knowledge of theoretical paradigms that scores of researchers have found useful—their basic propositions, applications, and limitations—cannot help, but improve the quality of cultural intelligence, and even intelligence generally.

Analysts like to talk about their work as “art” or “tradecraft.” And in my experience, most analysts have been interpreters: they use their analytic judgment, akin to clinical judgment, to make the best interpretation they can, given the facts at hand. An experienced analyst could be a great asset. But he or she may also have years of experience in honing biases and drawing incorrect conclusions. And even if we grant that an experienced analyst is generally a good one, what about the new one? A knowledge of anthropological theory would arm that new analyst with the tools he/she needs to make connections and draw valid conclusions that will make for a better intelligence product. As Johnston—who has also used the medical analogy—notes:

Intelligence analysis is art and tradecraft. There are specific tools and techniques to help perform the tasks, but, in the end, it is left to individuals to use their best judgment in making decisions. This is not to say that science is not a part of intelligence analysis. Science is born of organized knowledge, and organizing knowledge requires effort and time. The work on this taxonomy is intended to help that process by sparking discussion, identifying areas where research exists, and ought to be incorporated into the organizational knowledge of intelligence, and identifying areas where not enough research has been performed (2008).

Finally, all of us, anthropologists and intelligence personnel alike, must be careful not to make all behavior cultural. Culture is learned and shared among members of a social group, but there are many social influences that are not specifically cultural. For instance, I may be a Christian in the United States or in Korea, and my Christianity will influence my behavior in both places. But Christianity per se, while taking different forms in different cultures, is transcultural. I doubt that most people, upon reflection, would consider that all Christians in the world represent a social group. On the other hand, I may have grown up with certain family traditions, beliefs, behaviors, and other peculiarities. I say “davenport” where others where I grew up refer to the same piece of furniture as a “sofa,” because that is the word my family uses. Now the use of that word

by my family may have been cultural at one time, but it is not for me. We may think of such inherited verbal behavior as vaguely cultural because it is learned and shared by a social group, but I doubt many would think of a family as having a “culture” or that there are as many cultures as there are families. So we must be careful about assigning proper importance to culture in any given situation. And again, we must always be aware that our notion of culture, even our own, is itself a construct through which we organize our perceptions of how people live.

The future of anthropology in intelligence work is uncertain, not least because of prevailing attitudes within academic anthropology. It may be hard for the average non-anthropologist to understand the magnitude of that obstacle. Some anthropologists who have worked in the intelligence or security fields have tried to argue that if anthropologists fail to provide guidance to security professionals, those professionals will turn to others less qualified and less ethical than we are. This smug appeal to critical colleagues as an enlightened in-group of fellow progressives has not been persuasive. On the other side, some of us have overpromised on what anthropology can deliver to the security mission.

All of that being said, it is my belief that anthropological method and theory can contribute to creating intelligence that is empirically grounded and theoretically sound. Intelligence analysis, as Johnston (2008) has noted, is not yet a science, but it must develop scientific rigor if we are to produce reliable and valid reports and estimates for policymakers. To do that, the analyst must develop a body of theory deriving from the various human sciences, including anthropology. Some of the theory I have selected may prove fruitful in this effort and some may prove of limited scientific or analytic utility. There are also many promising theoretical perspectives from outside anthropology, especially social psychology and statistics, some of which I have mentioned. A number of these are already in use by analysts. In any case, it is my hope that this modest survey will add to the discussion on the uses of anthropological theory in intelligence and will spark more detailed contributions in the future.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Code is an ethical framework, but unenforceable by AAA, since there are no licensing requirements to practice anthropology.

<sup>2</sup> A recent article in the New York Times noted the distinction between scientists and advocates in its treatment of the controversy surrounding Napoleon Chagnon’s classic work on the Yanamamo. The AAA posted on its website a rebuttal of the notion that anthropology had turned away from science. However, my observations of a number of AAA Annual Meetings suggest that advocacy exercises primacy in the organization, and likely in the discipline as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> It seemed fitting that his recommendation was based on a cultural analysis, however ad hoc.

<sup>4</sup> Behaviors may be observed, but the set of all behaviors, public and private, of members of a social group cannot be said to be culture, or else culture becomes a superfluous term empty of significance. And “material culture” (the artifacts produced and used by members of a social group) may also be observed, but few would limit culture to those material objects.

<sup>5</sup> That may be due to a variety of epistemological, social, and political factors, all of which revolve around the fact that anthropology's objects of study talk back to the researchers. Those definitions that have been dismissed (such as racial classifications) tend to have strong ties with biology and hence are treated more like natural than social science definitions. Humans and social groups are, in fact, object and subject at the same time, and as such, resist reductionist theorizing and verification techniques. Owing to this, social science can never have the authority of the natural sciences with respect to its objects of analysis. Lacking such authority to dismiss or accept most definitions, old definitions linger, and we are free to choose whatever one best suits our needs at the time. If science is likened to natural selection, we might say that such definitions (and theoretical approaches) survive because they are not subject to the kind of selective pressure concepts natural science must endure.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from James Lett's 1997 interpretive/rationalist classification scheme. The change in terminology is to allow for inclusion of humanistic perspectives not ordinarily called "interpretive" (such as historical particularism and postmodernism) and to avoid the sense that anything not scientific is non-rational. A notable exception to the emic/etic division is ethno-science.

<sup>7</sup> There are many exceptions, notably the 2005 CIA-sponsored ethnography *Analytic Culture in the U.S. Intelligence Community* by anthropologist Rob Johnston.

<sup>8</sup> The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

<sup>9</sup> There are a number of postmodernist analyses of intelligence and security services, and surveillance arrangements, but none that could conceivably be applied to assist in intelligence collection or analysis.

<sup>10</sup> The source of this quote is disputed. Some attribute it to Eric Wolf, others to A.L. Kroeber, and still others suggest the source is unknown.

<sup>11</sup> It is tempting to include the culture-and-personality paradigm, which indeed has been used in the "national character" studies sponsored by the War Department during World War II. However, the notion that cultures have personalities as people do, susceptible to psychoanalysis, is without empirical basis, and could foster stereotyping that interferes with real insight.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that Radcliffe-Brown rejected the idea of "-isms" in anthropology, including structural-functionalism, as inappropriate labels for a science (Barnard 2000, 77-78).

<sup>13</sup> By "state" is meant the governing political organization of any complex society, ancient or modern; that is, a society with a complex division of labor, not a post-Westphalian nation-state.

<sup>14</sup> Not to be confused with a more recent application of the term, which is simply an indigenous practice or body of knowledge preserved by tradition and tested by experience. This new meaning is nearly identical to the old term "primitive science."

<sup>15</sup> There is frequently a taboo against marrying parallel, but not cross, cousins. An exception is in countries with unilineal descent that became Islamized; in such cases it became legitimate for a man to marry a father's brother's daughter.

<sup>16</sup> The correct plural is "schemata." Both forms of the word appear in the literature, but I have chosen to use "schemas" here because it accords with English vernacular usage.

<sup>17</sup> Camel-herding nomads living on the Ethiopia-Kenya border.

<sup>18</sup> Also known as Pathans, Pashtuns, or Pushtuns. Here, I employ Schlee's spelling.

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