

Theories of Practice in Anthropology: A Critical Appraisal

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Applied physics is engineering, and applied anthropology is social work.

—A. L. Kroeber¹

Applied research is viewed by a majority of anthropologists as less profound, less scientifically valid, and hence less worthy of applause than research seen as having no immediate practical ends. [Foster 1969:131]

Applied endeavor in anthropology is typically viewed as lacking in intellectual rigor, ethically suspect, unimaginative, bereft of theoretical sophistication. [Chambers 1987:309]

Through the years anthropologists have engaged in criticism of applied anthropology, [the first being] that applied anthropology has *no theory of its own* and that it borrows only superficial ideas from academic or scholarly anthropology or other disciplines. [Bennett 1996:S30, emphasis in the original]

Some Anomalies

To sample from reflections on the intellectual status of applied anthropology over the past half-century is to be reminded that the knowledge content of practice still is not appreciated or valued inside our discipline. Reading the potent ideas and arguments for a theory of practice found in the literature of applied anthropology,² and then realizing that applied knowledge does not contribute significantly to the emergent theoretical core of the discipline, gives one the cold understanding that practitioners have not yet succeeded in establishing practice as a mature arm within anthropology. The maturation of practice in a discipline means that lessons learned in application are seized upon by theorists as a means to sharpen their understanding and to gain fresh insights into new and old phenomena (see Bastide 1971; Foster 1969). This is the way it is in medicine, psychology, the natural sciences, and even economics.

Unfortunately, it is not this way in anthropology. Applied anthropologists continue to do research and publish (often in isolation from one another), but as Bennett (1996) forcefully demonstrates, our discoveries seem to have little or no impact on the intellectual direction of anthropology. There is a profound disconnect between applied work and theory, with both theorists and applied anthropologists often failing to understand the importance of applied knowledge as a foundation for theoretical development. Sometimes it seems as if the only value that applied work is

accorded inside anthropology is that of a pedestrian marker identifying locations where graduates might find employment.³ Indeed, the employment of large numbers of graduates outside the academy drives the point home. Despite the inevitability of their nonacademic destinations, most graduates of traditional departments are not required to study applied anthropology. Colleagues in those departments argue that there is no "fifth subdiscipline," only the original four (Bennett 1996). Students may wander into practice by happenstance, but there is no need to train in this area. The implication is that there is nothing of anthropological value to be learned in the no-man's-land of application.

That the knowledge content of applied* work appears to have value only to nonanthropologists is ironic, but it may be an outcome that we ourselves helped to engineer. Definitions of applied anthropology found in the works cited above suggest that the practical endeavor is something that exists primarily to serve others. For instance,

Applied anthropology is the phrase commonly used by professional anthropologists to describe their professional activities in programs that have as their primary goal changes in human behavior . . . *rather than the development of social and cultural theory.* [Foster 1969:54, emphasis added]

Applied anthropology [is] the field of inquiry concerned with the relationships between anthropological knowledge and the uses of that knowledge *in the world beyond anthropology.* [Chambers 1987:309, emphasis added]

The term 'applied anthropology' . . . refer(s) mainly to the employment of anthropologists by organizations involved in inducing change or enhancing human welfare. . . . *The goal is not to produce general theory but to solve problems.* [Bennett 1996:S25, S28, emphasis added]

These definitions imply that we practitioners view our work as beneficial primarily to those outside the discipline and of lesser importance inside anthropology. (In fact, our role inside anthropology is not mentioned in these definitions.) This perspective reflects a limited theoretical framework that interferes with the potential contributions of applied anthropology. If we conceive of our own work in this way, it is small wonder that the knowledge we gain seldom is repatriated to the academic home of the discipline.⁴

The premise of this essay is that an actualized theory of practice in anthropology requires quite a different conception of the applied endeavor. If we embraced seriously such a theory, we would turn these definitions inside out and point them directly at anthropology. While the knowledge of application still would be gained through an interaction between anthropology and action outside the discipline, the greatest knowledge value would be realized when the lessons learned came back home again.

It is my contention that applied anthropologists in America have participated in a process that alienates our knowledge from the discipline, first by defining our practice as basically external to anthropology, then by

structuring our work in ways that makes integration with theoretical anthropology difficult if not impossible, and finally by refusing to take seriously our own arguments about the theoretical significance of practice (i.e., seriously enough to actualize them).

In this chapter, I explore several distinctive theories of practice that have emerged within anthropology and examine their implementation and interactions over time. Our review will suggest that theory and practice are connected in ways that are poorly understood and possibly even obfuscated, either consciously or unconsciously, within the discipline. An argument for the interdependence of theory and practice will be advanced, an argument that points toward a future course for applied and practicing anthropology that is different from the path that has been taken in the latter part of the 20th century. All of this will remind us that our conceptualization of applied anthropology in America is culturally constructed, an aspect of our disciplinary subculture that can be subjected to cultural criticism.

What Is a Theory of Practice, and Why Do We Need One?

In the West there is broad acceptance of the idea that a discipline (a formal body of knowledge) should have some utility within its social context. The positivist movement that gave rise to the traditions of modern science was founded on the premise that systematic knowledge of the objective universe would bring benefits to humanity (Copleston 1993). A discipline's members who are responsible for the instrumental or functional utility of a discipline's knowledge base are called practitioners. They exist in virtually every modern field of inquiry (e.g., psychology, political science, economics, even history and philosophy). Usually, in such disciplines there are systems of ideas that connect the discipline, and society, to its practice.

In economics, for example, there is a system of ideas that suggests that society wants to know how to allocate scarce resources efficiently, that economics provides knowledge to enable this allocation, and that practitioners should be deployed to support the allocation process at the micro and macro levels. Similarly, in psychology, there are both widely accepted notions about the social problems that derive from abnormal psychological processes and specific theoretical constructs that validate the efficacy of psychotherapy in ameliorating these problems. A *theory of practice* is a set of ideas that explains and legitimates the role of practice inside and outside the discipline. A theory of practice answers questions such as: What is the *use value* of the discipline, and to whom? Upon what foundation does this value reside? How can this value be further developed and implemented? Answers to these questions are valuable in the following ways:

Defining the Interdependence of Theory and Practice. A theory of practice explains the necessary relationships that exist between theoretical knowl-

edge and the utilization of that knowledge within a discipline. Why theory is useful, how theory may best be put to use, and what benefits derive from the application of theory are all aspects of the theory-practice relationship that define the value of theory for practice. Another aspect of the theory-practice relationship involves contributions that practice can make to theory: Testing the "real world" validity of concepts and theoretical relationships, opening new fields of research, discovering new phenomena, and advancing societal support for the theoretical arm of the discipline through demonstration of practical value are all ways in which practice is shown to be necessary for theoretical vitality. Together, these two basic dimensions of theory-practice relations explain why theorists and practitioners need and should value one another, based both on their individual self-interests and on their common interest in seeing the discipline grow and develop over time.

Defining Conditions under Which Practice May Contribute to Theory. A theory of practice also helps to establish the epistemological and methodological grounds upon which practice may contribute to theory. In other words, it delineates the special conditions and mechanisms which enable practice to generate new knowledge that would not be generated otherwise. For example, in most disciplines with mature practice, practitioners must rigorously employ specific methodologies if their findings are to be taken seriously by theorists. By requiring sound methodology in practice, a theory of practice legitimates application as germane to disciplinary knowledge under the canons of inquiry in a particular discipline.

Establishing Requirements for Education and Training. A theory of practice is fundamental to education and training. It is important that both the knowledge and use value of practice be understood clearly by a community of learners, so that future practitioners can be properly prepared for competent professional work. The training requirement ensures not only that practice will deliver its intended societal outcomes but that useful knowledge will be generated from practice as well. This suggests that not only practitioners but everyone involved in training those who eventually will become practitioners (including theorists) must understand relations between theory and practice.

Formulating Guidelines for Ethical Conduct. Another role for a theory of practice is in the area of ethics. Understanding the values that underlie the disciplinary knowledge base and its application helps both theorists and practitioners to understand the scope and limits of their knowledge, and the ways in which knowledge can be abused. Such understanding is a prerequisite for the sustainment of ethical conduct among professionals.

Structuring Institutional Linkage Mechanisms. Institutions also need a theory of practice so that they can establish appropriate structural mechanisms that enable continuing linkages between practitioners and

academia. If practice has value to the discipline, then institutions want to ensure that practice is connected to mainstream academic structures in order to support the training of future practitioners, the continuing education of current practitioners, and the enabling of productive interaction between practitioners and scholars.

Enhancing the Legitimacy and Authority of Disciplinary Practice. A theory of practice is necessary to establish and grow the legitimacy and authority of both the discipline and its practice. The more explicit the theory of practice, the greater the value that it reflects; the more this value is acknowledged and respected, then the greater will be the authority that practitioners carry with them into their professional contexts and the greater the power of the discipline within society.

The foregoing suggests that a theory of practice rests upon two basic types of relationships: the relationship between the discipline as a whole and its social context, and the relationship between theoretical/scholarly and practitioner responsibilities. The reciprocal nature of exchange relationships between a discipline and its social context establishes that discipline's responsibility for the practice it generates. Society supports disciplines by making research and teaching possible. In return, society expects to receive some benefit from these activities. Where no benefit is forthcoming, support dwindles and may dry up. Practitioners help to demonstrate the direct value of a discipline to society, thereby helping to ensure future support. The theoretical arm of the discipline thus is dependent, either directly or indirectly, on the role of practitioners in society, just as practitioners are dependent on theory.

In light of these interdependencies, enlightened self-interest would argue for an investment of intellectual effort in improving both the knowledge and the use value that derives from the theory-practice relationship. Without a general disciplinary consensus on the importance of these interdependencies, however, a mature theory-practice relationship, in which applied knowledge is used to build the discipline, is impossible. Since *relationships* are involved, it is not sufficient for practitioners alone to gain this understanding if theorists do not hold it as well. Unfortunately, anthropology has not experienced a consistent, disciplinewide consensus on the importance of these relationships, as the following discussion makes clear.

Four Theories of Practice

Traditional definitions of applied anthropology assume that the value of practice is determined primarily by those beyond our discipline who employ us and that such value should be directed to problems originating outside our discipline. Most applied and practicing anthropologists do not rebel against this definition, or even question it; indeed, we embrace it. Yet

this is not the only theory of practice that is conceivable, as a review of the literature demonstrates.

At least four theories of practice are evident in the literature of applied anthropology. Before reviewing these, however, it is important to note that there is another type of theory which is relevant to our discussion. Called *theoria* (theory of theory), this is a set of ideas that explains how we get the knowledge base that is the core of a discipline (see for discussion Partridge 1986). In the Aristotelian sense, *theoria* is knowledge of the objective universe; for example, in anthropology it includes knowledge pertaining to the unity and diversity of humanity. The philosophy underlying *theoria* holds that knowledge should be sought for its own sake: it is good in and of itself (Cohen 1954). Any utility beyond fulfillment of the human thirst for truth and understanding, or curiosity, is not required as justification.

In *theoria*, the universe is viewed as an object that may be manipulated intellectually. The best way to know this world, according to Aristotle, is contemplation through rigorous intellectual discipline: empirical observation and inquiry, quiet reflection, and hard thinking and writing.⁵ The necessary action of application and intervention distracts from and crowds out the intellectual discipline needed for *theoria*. Action should be left to others. Even though postmodern critiques of positivist science have done much to weaken our commitment to the existence of an objective universe, they have, if anything, strengthened the notion that contemplation remote from action is a sound pathway to knowledge (see Sangren 1988).

As we shall see, the practices of theoreticians that derive from this particular theory of theory have been crucial in shaping the various theories of practice that are extant in anthropology. Further, we will discover that *theoria* is not the only way in which theory can be generated.

The First Theory of Practice: Linear

Aristotelian *theoria* is foundational to our understanding of the first theory of practice, which also has been called *Cartesian* (Bastide 1971) and *positivist* (Chambers 1987). This theory was articulated several decades ago by the British social anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown:

Applied anthropology must, of course, be based on pure anthropology. What is therefore necessary in the first place is the development of the pure science by the discovery or formulation of the fundamental principles of social integration. [1931:276]

This view holds that science may be born of practical necessity (as was the case in anthropology) but that it cannot become a science until it transcends such necessities and becomes an objective body of knowledge (Bastide 1971). It does so through intellectual discipline, as argued by Aristotle. In this theory of practice, the value of application is derived

from the basic knowledge of scientific theory (theoria), which must precede practice. Knowledge is developed under the discipline of “pure science” (inquiry driven by the goals of the discipline), and the knowledge value flows one-way to application (hence the designation of this theory as linear; see Figure 1). There is little or no role envisioned for practice within the theoretical realm. There may be value in practice, but it must be value to someone else, for practice is not “pure science”⁶ Indeed, in anthropology some theorists have maintained that the utilization of theory is not their responsibility (e.g., see Baré 1997). This means that a principal incentive for the incorporation of practical knowledge into theory, namely, ensuring the validity and thus the efficacy of theory with respect to practice, is absent.

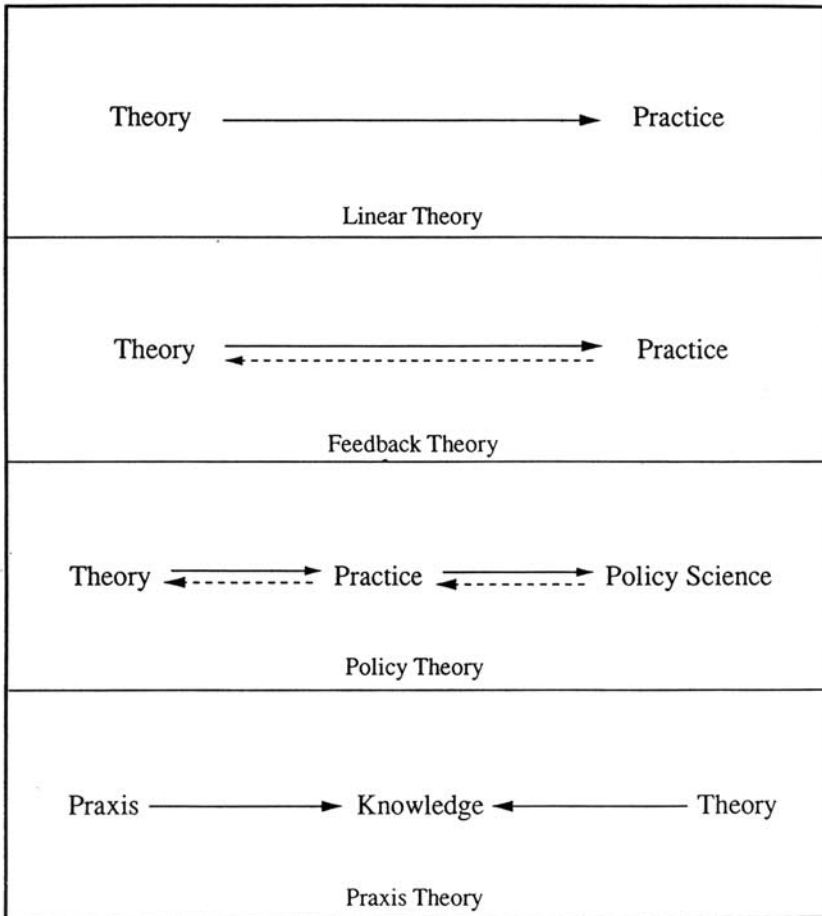


Figure 1. Theories of Practice in Anthropology

The linear model of theory-practice relations tends to produce practitioners who are viewed as shallow extensions of theoretical science. From the theorist's perspective, practitioners have appropriate disciplinary training to do a decent job of cranking out case studies or technical reports, by applying more or less mechanically anthropological concepts and methods, but they are not capable (whether by virtue of training, temperament, and/or situation) of doing the complex mental gymnastics required to generate theory. Historically, the practitioners of the linear school also were, like their theoretical genitors, unabashed positivists; they ironically argued for the value-neutral nature of their science while simultaneously joining the ranks of the other technocrats who sought to engineer a "better" society (Bennett 1996). Such internal contradictions drew criticisms that later fueled a very different conception of theory-practice relations, namely, that of praxis (see discussion below).

The Second Theory of Practice: Feedback

While the British (with their explicit consciousness around class) institutionalized the linear theory of practice (which casts theoreticians as the intellectual elite), it was the Americans (with their penchant for pragmatism and democratic populism) who conceived of a significant revision in the British model. A number of applied anthropologists in the United States have argued for a view of practice which places it in a significant exchange relationship with theory (e.g., Foster 1969, van Willigen 1986). In this approach, theory continues to inform practice with a conceptual apparatus and methodological guidance, but practice now sends signals back to theory (see Figure 1). These signals may take several forms.

First, practical research may suggest theoretical revisions based on the results of "tests" of theory that are implicitly embedded in practice (e.g., when research on culture change assesses the relative importance of material versus symbolic factors in the change process). Or they may open areas of inquiry by expanding the frontiers of research into fields that are accessible mainly to practitioners (as when development anthropologists observe the practices of federal bureaucrats). Also, when applied researchers are commissioned to gather data on cultural groups that have not been studied previously, they may end up writing basic ethnographies that could become fodder for theorists. Finally, practitioners may discover heretofore unreported phenomena, a discovery that provides a stimulus to the development of new theory (as when organizational anthropologists find that people working on cross-cultural teams negotiate the creation of new cultural patterns; see Gluesing 1998).

It was Foster (1969) who initially developed the notion of a two-way interaction between theory and application, in his critique of the linear theory of practice. Based on the writing of Leighton (1946), Foster's work argued that anthropology was not like physics; that is, our discipline is not suffi-

ciently developed as a science to enable theorists to “hand off” exact formulations or lawlike generalizations to a class of technicians (i.e., the “engineering model”). Rather, practitioners need to be trained to manipulate the same basic concepts and methods as theorists, and their intellectual work is much the same as that of theorists: it is creative, discovery oriented, and capable of knowledge generation.⁷ This view was called the “clinical” model, based upon the two-way interactions between theory and practice in clinical sciences such as medicine and psychology. Foster envisioned many benefits that could be derived from a feedback theory of practice: it offered opportunities for research experience that were not readily available to traditional theorists, it imported research questions from other intellectual domains, it broadened the range of topics studied, and it created pressure to improve research methods. The broader the range of social systems examined by anthropologists, the more robust our theories would become.

The Third Theory of Practice: Policy

In an environment where disciplinary observers often questioned the theoretical content and significance of applied anthropology, some theorists of practice developed a distinctive conception of the intellectual merit of applied knowledge. Chambers (1985) has been a leader in advancing the argument that the *primary* aim of applied research should not be to inform theory but to help people make better decisions. This argument does not deny that practice may contribute to theory in anthropology, but it turns attention away from that objective as the primary pursuit of application and redirects it toward the question of whether or not applied work results in decisions that yield measurable improvements in the human condition. In other words, application should inform and improve policy. Certainly, many would agree that applied anthropology has developed knowledge that has the potential to inform a wide range of policy arenas in the human sciences. Exactly how anthropology can and should inform policy, however, is a contested issue.

First, there is the notion of applied anthropology as a *policy science*, that is, a distinct domain of inquiry and generalizable knowledge that pertains to the formulation and implementation of governing principles in formal policy-making contexts. As a policy science, applied anthropology would develop its own theory, separate and distinct from both general theory and applied practice (see Figure 1). This could be a theory focusing on the utilization of anthropological knowledge (Chambers 1987) and/or a theory of planned change and human intervention: a “study of the action of men on nature, and the search for its laws, processes of action, and limits” (Bastide 1971:176). The notion of a special body of theory that fills the gap between anthropological knowledge, on the one hand, and utilization of that knowledge, on the other, is a distinctive conceptualization of theory-

practice relations. While there is no direct two-way exchange between application and *anthropological* theory, applied knowledge does have a theory-building role in anthropology, albeit theory that is directed toward actors beyond our discipline (i.e., policy makers).

There is a second conceptualization of anthropology's role in policy making which is less theoretical. This second point of view, sometimes referred to as *policy research*, is defined by Rylko-Bauer et al. as "the process by which objective, representative information is collected, analyzed and communicated to help decision makers set guidelines for the goals and activities of various agencies, firms, and governments" (1989:2). In this model, the anthropologist is a consultant or technician who gathers and analyzes policy-relevant information and attempts to bring this information to bear on the policy process.⁸ While this role certainly would be enhanced by knowledge drawn from a policy science, it does not appear that the existence of such a science is a strict prerequisite; anthropologists may engage in technical aspects of the policy process strictly on the basis of their credentials as wielders of anthropological knowledge and methodology. While policy research expands the knowledge base, this expansion mainly benefits the subject matter area in which the research is conducted (e.g., development). Anthropological methods also may be improved, but the generation of anthropological theory is not an objective of this approach. The connections between anthropological theory and practice in this approach appear to be largely undifferentiated from those found in the linear, or positivist, model.⁹

The Fourth Theory: Praxis

Warry (1992) noted that the term *praxis* is used incorrectly in applied anthropology as a synonym for practice. In fact, *praxis* has a special meaning that reflects a radically divergent view of the relationship between knowledge and action. It was Marx who first conceptualized this relationship in terms that have meaning for the social sciences. For Marx, the truth is that which our revolutionary practice verifies. As we attempt to change the world through our actions, we discover the world. Thus theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge develop together, through the movement of *praxis*, or revolutionary practice (Bastide 1971). *Praxis* is not simply any kind of practical activity but a commitment to action that is organized explicitly around specific values and purposes, namely, those of liberating individuals from alienating and exploitative processes.

Praxis in applied anthropology is a way of knowing that relies on engagement in social reality, on being embedded in the processes of social life. *Praxis* is, in part, subjective since the practitioner is not a spectator but an actor. The practitioner of *praxis* is engaged in complex interactions with social reality, as it is lived "on the ground." This engagement throws up multiple contingencies, each of which has the potential to transform the re-

relationship between theory and practice. There is an interaction among the objective knowledge of the world (*theoria*), the subjective experience of the world, and emergent reality. Praxis consists of a tension or negotiation between objective knowledge of the world which is operative in a given time and place (e.g., our ideas about "culture") and the subjective experience of the world found in ongoing human action. This negotiation teaches us about the implicit patterns that underlie human existence.

Partridge (1986) has argued that the implicit patterns learned through subjective experience are essentially *habitus*, habits of personal mastery (Bourdieu 1977). Subjective experience entails mastery of the unspoken yet essential rationale that lies behind all social structure and process. The habits of personal mastery are not accessible to objective instrumentation: surveys, interviews, and content analysis will turn up the objective structures and symbolic logic that reflect and reinforce it. It is only by direct observation and recording of sequences of visible and audible behavior that the subjective rationale of a particular phenomenon can be discovered. These are most accessible to the practitioner, through her or his lived experience.

When social structures and processes change or new ones are created, the generative motion grows primarily out of social action, not out of objective knowledge. According to proponents of praxis, *subjective experience has priority over objective knowledge* in the creation of social structure and process (i.e., praxis has priority over *theoria* in the generative act of cultural construction; Partridge 1986). Further, it is only when armed with the understanding gained through subjective experience that one can be ethically responsible and politically effective. Action is ethical; it is good not only because it produces knowledge but because it contributes to human self-determination. To be ethical, one must act and be politically effective. If not, one will learn much less. Moreover, ethical and effective behavior sustains one's engagement in the field; otherwise, one is at risk and may be forced to leave the field prematurely. One can even make the point that those who refuse to act are upholding the existing order and, thus, holding back knowledge. Partridge concluded that praxis as a way of knowing is at least coequal with, and possibly superior to, the knowledge gained through *theoria*. If the goal is responsible and effective action, praxis definitely is a superior way of knowing.

All of the other theories of practice in anthropology have been influenced heavily by positivism, which classically views theory as value-neutral knowledge that is prior to practice. From the positivist perspective, practice is dependent on the theory of "pure science." The epistemology of praxis, however, gives independent authority to action, apart from theory. While practice always is influenced by theory in some way, practice is able to gain knowledge in ways that are not dependent on theory. Thus, rather than viewing practice as something flowing from *theoria*, the praxis model envisions theory and practice as distinctive poles of knowledge that

are negotiated through action but cannot be fully reconciled (see Figure 1). In addition, praxis is the only model of theory-practice relations in anthropology that *explicitly requires* the pursuit of values-laden goals or ends in its quest for knowledge.

Theories of Practice and "The Fifth Subdiscipline"

The distinctive theories of practice described above are, indeed, the "theory of applied anthropology": they are theories that describe and explain the value of practice and its potential role in the discipline. Applied anthropology need not and should not be expected to give birth to and nurture its "own" theories of humanity, separate and apart from those of general anthropology, as if practitioners worked with a different species of human on a different planet. We are all part of the same anthropology; our knowledge base must be one. Theory in applied anthropology means *theory of practice*. The existence and actualization of these distinctive theories of practice may help to establish applied anthropology as a "fifth subdiscipline," a definable body of knowledge which has its own unique relationship to general anthropology, one that is not replicated by any of the other four subfields but is generative of new knowledge in the ways discussed above.¹⁰

Theory-Practice Relations: A Cross-cultural Perspective

Theory and Practice in American Anthropology

Having described four theories of practice, we now turn our attention to their actualization by anthropologists. In the following section, we will explore the extent to which each of the theories has realized its potential in U.S. anthropology. Following this review, we will compare the U.S. experience with that of anthropologists in the Second and Third Worlds.¹¹

Linear Theory. The dominant theory of practice throughout the West is linear, or positivist. The definitions of applied anthropology presented earlier make this clear: one starts with something called anthropology (the knowledge base of the discipline) and then employs this substance in problem-solving outside the bounds of the discipline. Theory first, then application.

In the early years of applied anthropology in America, practitioners were criticized regarding the theoretical grounding of application in anthropology (Chambers, personal communication, 1996; see also Bennett 1996). Given the multidisciplinary tendencies of practitioners, many observers questioned whether or not applied anthropologists actually applied anthropological theory or whether they, instead, assembled an eclectic grab bag of concepts from whatever other disciplines happened to be relevant to the problem at hand. Partially in response to such criticism, a literature was generated in which applied anthropologists at-

tempted to demonstrate that the roots of application lay in "bona fide" anthropological concepts and approaches (see, e.g., Angrosino 1976; Eddy and Partridge 1987; van Willigen 1993; Wulff and Fiske 1987). Despite the fact that most anthropological theories actually grow out of larger theoretical movements that cross-cut the social, natural, and even physical sciences, these works were successful in arguing that the intellectual legacy of anthropology is richly displayed in practice. A sophisticated understanding of culture theory and intercultural relations, for example, is the hallmark of anthropological practice across a diverse range of contexts (Chambers 1987).

Feedback Theory. Given that practitioners apply anthropological theory (together with whatever other discipline's concepts are needed to work in an applied domain), the next question is to what extent practical efforts have fed back to theoretical development. A close examination of the literature reveals that applied and practicing anthropologists have made significant theoretical contributions in all of the ways predicted by Foster and other theorists of practice. There follow a few examples:

Opening New Frontiers of Research. Applied anthropologists in the United States have been remarkably successful as pioneers in opening new frontiers of research in diverse domains. Van Willigen (1993) cites more than 32 new fields of research opened by applied anthropologists since 1945. On a new frontier, differences between basic and applied research often are blurred significantly. When little is known about an area, any credible research effort is likely to yield new knowledge that can advance fundamental understanding. This is true in new fields of science such as bioengineering and artificial intelligence, where problem-oriented and basic research often cannot be distinguished from one another. It is also true when anthropologists make forays into previously uncharted cultural areas, such as the initial ethnographic research that formed the basis for anthropology as a discipline, which was gathered by British anthropologists working in the service of colonial administration. This early work provides a clear example of the way in which problem-oriented research can stimulate fundamental knowledge that leads to theory.

Extension and Revision of Existing Theory. When practicing anthropologists situate anthropological theory in new contexts, existing theoretical constructs are challenged in a way that can yield new insights. One example is reflected in the work of Weidman (1976), who contributed significantly to our understanding of cross-cultural interaction through development of the concept of *coculture*, an extension of Eric Wolf's original thinking about culture brokers (van Willigen 1993). While culture brokers originally were conceived as liaisons between more and less powerful cultural dyads, the concept of *coculture* suggests that different cultures should exist in an egalitarian relationship, where each one can provide something of value to a domain of mutual interest (in this case, health

care). The coculture concept is an original idea grounded in a philosophy of cultural relativism but emerging directly from Weidman's practical experience in the field of medical anthropology. This new idea now guides the health care practices of culture brokers in a diverse, multicultural community, much as "pure" theory is supposed to guide application.

Discovery of New Phenomenon. In their Yankee City series, Warner and Low (1946) were the first to document a systematic causal relationship between social changes in a formal organization (i.e., a factory) and changes in that organization's environmental context (i.e., the national economic system and the community). This fundamental discovery was stimulated by Warner's work on Elton Mayo's Hawthorne project, a problem-oriented research program aimed at understanding the sources of human fatigue in factories. Warner pursued his basic research in Yankee City in part because he wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the interconnections among social institutions in order to interpret the findings of the Hawthorne project (Partridge and Eddy 1987). In other words, Mayo's "applied" research triggered Warner's "basic" research (although, in fact, both of these research endeavors comingled basic and applied objectives). The discovery of *organization-environment interactions* is recognized today, both in anthropology and in organizational science, as one of the fundamental dimensions of social organization in complex societies (see Britan and Cohen 1980).¹² Another first for problem-oriented anthropology in industry was the discovery of *informal organization* by Warner and Mayo's research group during the Hawthorne project (see Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939). Informal organization is a basic theoretical concept used widely by practicing anthropologists and others in applied research on organizations.

Testing of Theory. There is a long-standing tradition whereby applied anthropologists attempt to draw theoretically oriented generalizations from their research on culture change. Bennett (1996:S31) cites 19 examples of published articles and books, many well known, which represent collections of applied insights into the theory of change. These works may be viewed as reports on deductive "tests" of what we know about cultural systems. (i.e., they examine the results of applied research to determine whether or not theoretically postulated relationships hold in concrete instances.)

Clearly, there exists reason to believe that practice holds the potential to generate theoretically relevant knowledge and that practice actually generated such knowledge in the past. In fact, in the early years of anthropology, and especially prior to 1960, there probably was a recognized feedback loop connecting the results of practical research back to theory. Unfortunately, in today's world, the feedback loop appears to be short-circuited. Learning derived from application generally does not connect back to the place where theory in anthropology is generated (i.e., to the theorists). As we have seen, it is not that the work of practitioners is not ac-

cessible to theorists. Rather, this learning is ignored by theorists. Furthermore, the fact that theoretically relevant knowledge derived from practice is available in the literature generally is not acknowledged within our discipline; many anthropologists believe just the opposite.

Bennett (1996) contends that the form and content of practical learning is not appealing to (Western) intellectuals: it is prosaic, even banal in form and content. His comments are worth reporting at length:

It seems to me that many details of change theory as developed by anthropologists over most of a century have been tested by the applied people, but the results are largely ignored by the academic theorists (mainly, I suppose, because they are still preoccupied with cultural essences rather than change). The point is that the "tests" were usually made in the context of specific, everyday situations and lacked rhetoric which cut ice with the intellectuals. To paraphrase a typical example: "We found that acceptance of wells dug by power equipment was much more easily come by than acceptance of irrigation canals dug with locally made wooden shovels." Basic principles of the relationship of change processes to material culture and symbolism might be embedded here, but if so, they are not apparent as written. However, applied anthropologists have from time to time assembled such statements as collections of case studies of change or as thinkpiece essays, but much of this material is considered thin or trite by scholars. From the scholarly point of view, theoretical statements of cultural behavior ought to be phrased in exotic terms such as symbolism or some other behavioral or mental process; therefore, if theory is hidden in empirical generalizations, it is viewed as a matter of routine reporting. But this also means that applied anthropologists test social-behavioral theory by *using* it and constantly rediscovering its basically mundane nature. [Bennett 1996:S30-S31, emphasis in the original]

In other words, the writings of practical anthropologists are not sufficiently erudite or esoteric for theorists to take seriously. This habitus, the tendency to demand that theory be couched in exotic terms, is an important characteristic of anthropological culture, one that requires for its development an education accessible only to the few.¹³ The resulting exclusivity of theory construction and its exotic nature maintains the closed nature of the theoretical inner circle and safeguards the claims of theoretical elites to a privileged position within our disciplinary subculture.¹⁴ Given the influence and prestige of theoretical elites in anthropology, their reticence to acknowledge the intellectual value of practice may contribute to an obfuscation of its theoretical potential.

Policy Theory. The policy theory of practice (i.e., policy science) has been written about extensively (see Chambers 1987; van Willigen 1993) but has never materialized as a distinctive body of literature with its own knowledge base. There are substantive areas in which the literature is rich with policy-relevant insights (e.g., agriculture in developing nations, industry and organizations), but this knowledge has not given rise to a policy science. For example, in the area of industrial anthropology, research by an-

thropologists at Xerox has played a key role in shaping corporate research policy (Brown 1991), an example of effective "policy research" (i.e., substantive research that shapes the policy-making process). Yet this research has done little to stimulate the emergence of a "policy science" (i.e., generalizable knowledge regarding the formulation of governing principles in organizations), although it might if we examined it intentionally for that purpose. Instead, there has emerged in the West a distinctive literature of policy critique in which policies are criticized by anthropologists (e.g., see Shore and Wright 1997) and in which anthropologists criticize themselves for being unable to affect policy (e.g., see Weaver 1985). These latter criticisms seem to repeat themselves generation after generation, without resolution or improvement of the situation.

Chambers (1987) has noted that this redundant criticism's pessimism over anthropology's role in policy results from confusion between the two types of policy that anthropology discussed earlier, i.e., the involvement of anthropologists as researchers or technicians in the policy process (which is the target of the critiques) and the potential of anthropology as a policy science (and anthropologists as policy scientists). Anthropologists appear to be yearning for a way to impact policy directly (which can be done most effectively when one is an actual policy maker) but in reality only seem to be willing or able to undertake the more limited role of policy researcher or critic. Although several subfields contain the literature that could provide the knowledge base for a policy science in our discipline, we appear to lack the will to create an "administrative anthropology" that would produce actual policy makers. We in the West appear to be more comfortable in the role of spectator on the policy scene and less comfortable in the role of activist, someone who makes and implements policy. As we will see, this reservation regarding policy does not necessarily hold in the Second and Third Worlds.

Praxis Theory. The creation of fundamental insights from subjective engagement in real world experience, one of the hallmarks of praxis theory, is not an alien concept in anthropology (either for scholars or practitioners). In anthropology, this process is known as participant observation. When any anthropologist undertakes activity that parallels the experience of native community members in order to gain a deeper understanding of another person's world, he or she is *gaining new knowledge through immersion in doing* rather than solely by abstract intellectual manipulation of ideas. While practitioners often are primarily participants who also may choose to be observers, this does not negate the validity of their experience as a source of new knowledge, any more than the academic researcher's insights are negated due to the fact that he or she is typically an observer who also may choose to be a participant. Indeed, the experience of the practitioner-turned-observer probably is more intense and therefore more valid (in the sense of actually *being* a native) than the engagement of

the scholar-turned-participant. Even though it can be very difficult for practitioners to maintain the distance required for good participant observation, it is not impossible, as evidenced by ethnographic works created by cultural insiders (see, e.g., Applebaum 1981).

Practice alone, however, does not constitute praxis, which also requires an ethical objective, one that often is defined as activity that supports the self-determination of peoples and the actualization of human potential. There is an interesting tradition of such values-oriented action in anthropology. Probably the best-known example is Tax's action anthropology, which embedded an ethical imperative similar in many ways to that of praxis theory. Tax's ideas drew from the liberal-humanist tradition of John Dewey. According to Dewey, all inquiry is communal in nature and should return to the community something of value: something good in a fundamental sense (Campbell 1995). The good was defined as that which enables the actualization of human potential, especially personal growth and development. Research and new knowledge should help humanity solve problems that inhibit growth and development. Tax also believed that anthropologists should engage in action aimed at improving a community's capacity for self-determination, which could be viewed as a form of growth and development. Other values-oriented approaches from the 1970s that echo Deweyan principles include research and development anthropology, and advocacy anthropology (van Willigen 1993).

More recently, some applied anthropologists have joined a worldwide movement toward ethical forms of research practice that empower people to act on their own behalf. Often called *participatory action research*, this values-oriented method involves members of communities (i.e., formerly "subjects") in discussions of theory underpinning research designs, centrally values indigenous knowledge at all stages in the research process, and returns knowledge for use to its point of origin (see Warry 1992; Whyte 1991; see also Kozaitis, this volume). The involvement of the community in the research process resolves in part a fundamental ethical problem that is created when an anthropologist simultaneously must rely on community members for knowledge, while also serving as an agent of noncommunity interests (e.g., science or scholarship, government, corporations). With members of the community centrally involved in the research process, the community's perspectives and interests can be better represented, protected, and advanced, thus balancing to a certain extent the power of external elites (Deetz 1985).¹⁵

Just because practitioners engage in activity that has the potential to yield new knowledge and because they attempt to maintain an ethical stance that will sustain their engagement over time does not mean that new theory is generated from problem-oriented research. Examining the Western record for advances in anthropological knowledge that may be attributed to subjective engagement in real world experience is not a fully satisfying exercise. Both Partridge (1986) and Cernea (1995) point to an-

thropological literature that contains theoretically relevant insights drawn from practical involvement (i.e., Goodenough 1963; Hoben 1980, 1982). These writings embed fascinating and authoritative accounts of the inner workings of bureaucratic agencies and the anthropological role therein. No doubt, insights from such work could contribute much substance to an anthropological policy science and to an anthropological theory of organizations. Unfortunately, they remain isolated cases and have not stimulated the development of a body of generalizations that are needed to complete the link from practice to theory in anthropology.¹⁶ More recent work by Whyte et al. (1991) gives evidence of intriguing theoretical contributions derived directly from participatory action research. These contributions, however, are largely in the area of organizational science rather than anthropology per se. Again, the promise is there, but it has not yet come to fruition in our discipline. Applied and practicing anthropologists must bear some responsibility for this state of affairs. We conduct individualized case studies that build vertically, but we seldom engage in serious efforts to synthesize horizontally across a body of applied work to extract the generalizations that lie dormant there (Cernea 1995). We do not demand synthesis as part of our practice, and when we do synthesize, it is rare that we attempt to link applied generalizations back to the corpus of anthropological theory.

Theory-Practice Relations in the Second and Third Worlds

One obtains a different view of theory-practice relations from the perspective of non-Western nations.¹⁷ Here, anthropological theory often has been "tested" through conscious embedding in larger state-level political and economic theories that have been used broadly to construct and implement national policy over many decades (see Baba and Hill 1997; Hill and Baba 1997). This was true not only in colonial periods but also following independence. In Mexico, for example, anthropological theories of diffusion and functionalism influenced state policies designed to assimilate indigenous peoples into the fabric of the nation (Nahmad 1997). Reformist/socialist and Marxist-Leninist state policies in Mexico and the former Soviet Union, respectively, also recognized (either implicitly or explicitly) the inextricable connection between Marxist thought and the theories of unilineal evolution and cultural materialism (Nahmad 1997; Yamskov and Dubova 1997). The implementation of state-level policies in these nations, aimed at transformation and modernization of indigenous people's economic and social lives, thus constituted an implicit "test" of major anthropological theories.¹⁸

As such "tests" were conducted over several decades, the possibility of theoretical flaws came to the attention of the nation as a whole when policies failed to achieve their intended results.¹⁹ In Mexico, for example, the state was unable to assimilate indigenous people, and the goal of assimi-

lation ultimately was challenged on both cultural and political grounds. This challenge stimulated policy-level consideration of alternative theoretical schema, such as dependency theory and multilineal evolution. In Russia, the damage done to local peoples and environments as a result of policies aimed at forced modernization was corrected by a conscious shift from unilineal evolution/Marxist theory to cultural ecology within a democratic capitalist framework.

The ability to test theory through state-level policy implementation is a result of the way in which anthropology is situated outside the West (see Bozzoli De Wille 1997; Dike 1997; Mahapatra 1997; Nahmad 1997; Yamskov and Dubova 1997). In non-Western nations, the development of anthropological theory is not always the number one concern of disciplinary elites. Rather, practice or the utilization of theory to solve national problems may become the most important objective (much in the same way that the majority of American anthropologists became practitioners during World War II). This preference grows out of the conscious recognition that in a resource-scarce or crisis environment, problem-solving has priority. Further, because of the priority given to practice outside the West, disciplinary elites in Second and Third World nations may become intellectuals within the state apparatus, where they work actively to implement policy in line with theory and knowledge. As a result, such elites may serve as high- or middle-level administrators, with career-long objectives focused on the successful implementation of theory through policy intervention. Finally, because of the priority given to practice, knowledge emerging from practice (e.g., the results of policy implementation) is taken quite seriously by anthropological policy elites because it has a direct bearing both on their careers and on the well-being of their nations. Knowledge born of practice merges with the public's political consciousness and puts theoretical change, impacted by practice, high on the policy agenda. The failure of established theory to enable successful nation-building can become the impetus for development of new theory, this time emerging not as a Western import but from national experience.

The theory of practice found in the Second and Third Worlds appears to represent a fifth model of theory-practice relations that is unique to this context and not replicated in the West. This fifth model integrates elements found in each of the four theories discussed earlier in this chapter. The linear theory is in evidence, as *theoria* may be imported from the West or invented in situ, and then put into practice. More significantly, however, *theoria* is tested through policy implementation, at times under the jurisdiction of an anthropological administrator. This represents an interesting merger of the feedback and policy theory models (including the unique aspect of anthropologists as policy-makers). Further, the subjective engagement of the nation emerges as an authoritative source of collective knowledge that must be considered in the interpretation of social reality, much as knowledge gained in *praxis* informs our understanding of empirical

phenomena. This national experience creates political pressure, which becomes part of the impetus by which *theoria* is replaced or transformed.

Ironically, the theories that are applied and tested through policy implementation in nations outside the West often originated in the West, where ironically they are neither applied in policy nor tested. From the vantage point provided by this discussion, theory-practice relations in anthropology appear to exist as a global system in which theory constructed in the West may be exported for policy application to non-Western or marginalized peoples, albeit in a postcolonial world (Hill and Baba 1997). Western theorists maintain a privileged position from which they are empowered to create theory, but are not responsible for its consequences. This is, in some ways, the same theory-practice situation in which Western anthropologists found themselves under colonialism. The one-way linear model of theory-practice relations in the West feeds directly into this system by its failure to examine the relevance of experiential knowledge and action to the construction and modification of theory.

The End of Dualism: An Argument for the Unity of Theory and Practice

A global and historical view presents theory and practice as interdependent elements in a *spiral of new knowledge* (see Figure 2). The beginning of this spiral may be a societal problem or question which calls for disciplined inquiry (e.g., government administrators' need to understand indigenous peoples and cultures). This problem-oriented research, because it occurs in a new field of investigation, yields basic information that provides a foundation for the development of theoretical knowledge (e.g., social anthropology). The emerging body of theory is then drawn upon to investigate and solve other problems in related domains, for example, in overseas development projects. Finally, as professional practitioners continue to push out into brand-new contexts beyond the frontiers of what is known, they again generate fundamentally new knowledge that informs and develops theory (e.g., culture in transnational business contexts; e.g., Hamada 1998).

Figure 2 suggests that each of the four theories of practice fulfill important roles within the global system of new knowledge development. The initial kick to the knowledge generation system that is provided by problem-solving practice is not widely recognized (van Willigen 1993), nor is the constructive interplay between theory and practice. Both of these phenomena suggest that practice is coequal to theory in the process of knowledge creation, rather than supplemental or secondary. Theory and practice exist in a mutually causal relationship, so that it is very difficult over time to determine what exactly led to what. Policy research plays a constructive role in this process, since it is often policy needs that drive problem-oriented research into new fields of inquiry (although the form of policy research practiced in the United States today is not significantly different

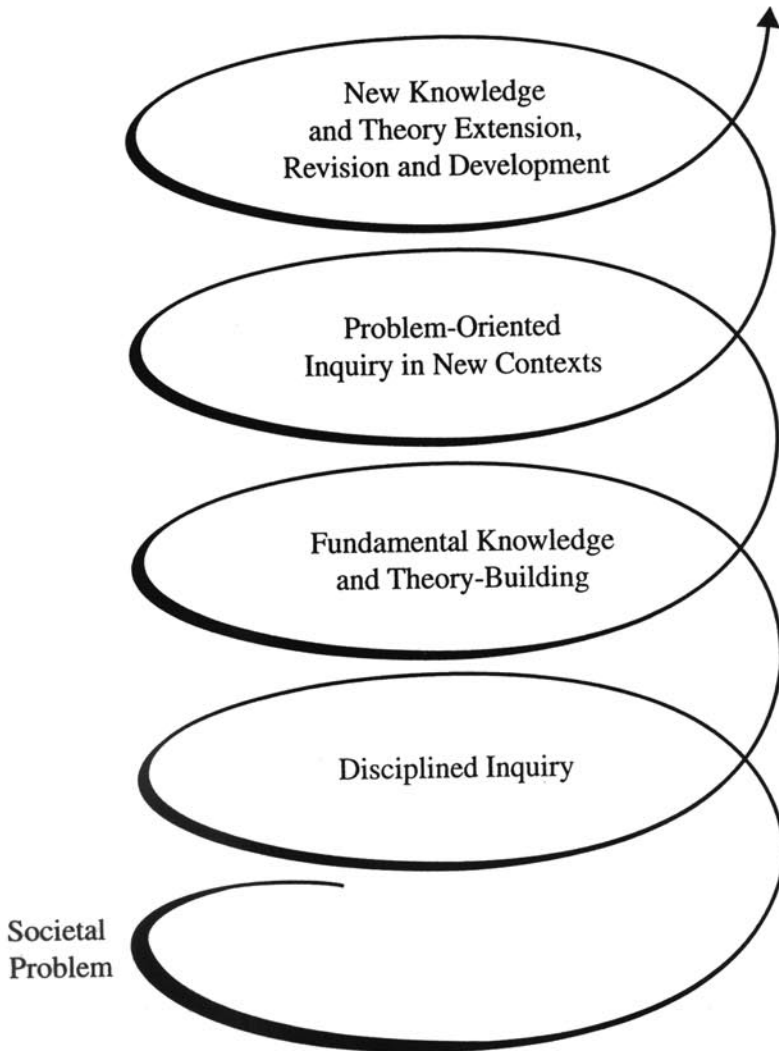


Figure 2. The Spiral of New Knowledge

from the linear model of theory-practice relations).²⁰ As for the role of praxis, it is likely that the participant observation of practitioners is integral to the insights that they generate and to their value as policy consultants. The ways in which praxis-oriented ethics generates new knowledge, however, is not often highlighted in the anthropological literature (for an exception, see Warry 1992).

The system of new knowledge generation described above has been partially obscured in Western anthropology for reasons discussed pre-

viously. As a result of their obscured view, few anthropologists recognize *the need of theory for practice*. Anthropological theory needs practice because practice leads theory into *new contexts*. New contexts, in turn, yield new problems to be solved. In a new context, it is less likely that the information required to solve problems already is contained within the store of existing knowledge. Thus the inferences generated and the feedback received from further observation of the context will tend to produce insights that represent substantive modifications of, or additions to, what is known, or will challenge or refute what is known in more fundamental ways. All of this leads to extension, revision, and/or new development of the knowledge base. Without such dynamic inputs from practice, theory may stagnate and be relegated to an archaic state of increasing irrelevance in the contemporary world.²¹

An unobscured view of theory-practice relations suggests that we must transform our own conceptualizations of ourselves and move beyond our dualistic discourse that reifies the notions of "basic or pure" and "applied" anthropology. The separation of basic and applied knowledge can only be valid in a stable world, where problems are so well understood that no new knowledge is gained by examining them. Clearly, this does not describe our present situation. To advance our base of knowledge in the future, we must recognize that knowledge production and knowledge utilization are integrally united dimensions of the same process by which we gain a deeper understanding of our world.

Conclusion: Pathways to Rapprochement

Let us return for a moment to the two relationships that underlie any theory of practice, namely, the relationship between a discipline and its society, and the relationship between theoretical knowledge and that knowledge's utilization. In anthropology, both of these relationships are fractured, crippling our discipline's capacity to make a full contribution to the world around us. In the future, as resource constraints in the West continue to pressure academic disciplines to justify their existence on the basis of contributed value, it will be necessary to mend these relationships, or the discipline as a whole surely will suffer a diminished stature. The discipline requires a rapprochement between theory-building and problem-oriented inquiry.

Fortunately, there appear to be several possibly converging pathways through which theory and practice might join forces for the benefit of their singular and mutual interests. One of these is reflected in calls for a newly *engaged anthropology* (Rappaport 1993). Engagement with the troubles of our own social context has been represented as a strategy by which anthropology can revitalize theory, as well as make a contribution to the amelioration of social problems. Another possible pathway for rapprochement, based upon the idea that knowledge and action are interdependent, is

found within participatory action research (PAR), a contemporary form of praxis theory. By placing the subjects of inquiry directly in the center of the research process and making human communities collaborators in both the acquisition of knowledge and its utilization, this strategy provides an intellectual framework for agreement around the moral and epistemological status of action (issues that long have divided basic and applied anthropologists). A third pathway to the unity of anthropology lies through the "institutional anthropologies" (e.g., medical, educational, legal, industrial). Although at first glance it may seem that the institutionals are contributing to the fragmentation of anthropology, in fact they may hold the key to its unification. This key is the *anthropology of institutions and organizations*. Competence in any institutional anthropology requires a basic understanding of institutional and organizational cultures within complex societies. These structural phenomena are rapidly becoming the most powerful forces shaping the human condition now and in the future. Anthropology could readily project (indeed, is doing so already) its own theory of institutions and organizations, which would unite all of the institutional anthropologies and provide a common literature to which both theorists and practitioners could contribute. Significantly, the institutional anthropologies encourage a style that is at once theoretical and problem-oriented, and already these fields have proven themselves capable of generating excellent scholarship (see Bennett 1996).

The pathways to rapprochement require an integration of all of the theories of practice discussed here. Since all of them embrace societal or community problem-solving as a mainstream disciplinary pursuit while also aspiring to the development and improvement of theory, they would begin to reduce the now monumental separation of scholarship and application in anthropology. That our theories of practice, once actualized, are not independent of one another was a lesson learned from examining the experience of Second and Third World nations, and ironically, it may be a lesson that we are destined to learn once again in the West (see also Chambers 1987). It may be that economic and political changes in the West motivate all of us toward this understanding.

Notes

Acknowledgments. Earlier versions of this chapter were presented originally at the 1995 and 1996 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association and the 1996 spring meeting of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology.

1. Cited from Hackenberg 1987:172. According to Hackenberg (personal communication to Michael Reed, 1996), the statement was attributed to Kroeber by Robert R. Spencer in a lecture Spencer delivered at the University of Minnesota around 1950.

2. See, for illustration, Foster 1969, Bastide 1971, Tax 1975, Partridge 1986, Chambers 1987, and Bennett 1996.

3. Note, for instance, Bennett's comment that "applied anthropology is not a discipline or even a subdiscipline but a set of opportunities that some people with anthropology degrees pursue out of hunger or genuine social dedication or both" (1996:S48).

4. Academia is referred to as the "home of the discipline" because most, if not all, modern anthropologists begin their careers with formal academic training in anthropology.

5. The word *theoria* is derived from the same Greek word as theatre, in which observers view the spectacle of actors acting but do not participate.

6. This approach is positivist in its assumption that "good" knowledge ultimately will lead to "good" uses, somehow or other (Chambers 1987).

7. These arguments illustrate the way in which a theory of practice structures epistemological criteria and training requirements for practitioners.

8. An interesting twist on the policy research approach is represented by Schensul's (1987) suggestion that policy formulations may be analogous to theoretical statements and, thus, subject to "testing" through applied research. Although on the surface this idea appears to link application to theory through a feedback-type of relationship, it actually creates no direct connection between practice and anthropological theory. The tie that would be made in this model is between policy (applied) research and policy, not theory. This approach may thus be viewed as a variant of the policy research model.

9. Shore and Wright (1997), drawing on critical theory, argue that anthropologists should become policy critics rather than consultants. While criticizing policy is substantially different from helping to construct it, the relationship to theory seems much the same.

10. I am grateful to Chambers for pointing out the role of theories of practice in legitimating applied anthropology as a "fifth subdiscipline."

11. The four theories of practice described here emerged from anthropological experience in the industrialized West, primarily western Europe, the United States, and Canada. Our review of actualization, however, focuses on our experience in the United States. For a discussion on the status of theory-practice relations in western Europe and Canada, see Baba and Hill 1997.

12. Organizational science recognizes the relationship between an organization and its environment as a critical element of modern contingency theory, the leading theoretical framework in studies of organizations. Organizational scholars generally cite Selznick 1949 as the point of discovery of this relationship, but Warner and Low appear to have found it somewhat earlier.

13. At times, the erudition is so "dazzling" that the clarity of the argument is obscured. See, for example, Peter Gathercole's comments on the back cover of Sahlins's *Islands of History* (1987). Erudition of this variety is a form of exclusivity. Note also the observations of a famous "outsider" on the culture of the exotic in anthropology:

Anthropology has developed its own restrictive taboos, its own little culture, and has been surrounded, if not strangled, by it. It has developed status symbols which proliferate trivia and, even worse, the quest for trivia as a status symbol in the profession. [Nader 1975:32, cited in Bennett 1996:S27]

14. The perpetuation of class structures inside disciplines has negative consequences for the generation of knowledge. In medicine, for example, early learning was inhibited by social prohibitions against touching the bodies of people from lower classes. In anthropology, the filtering of knowledge through the lens of a class structure also has serious implications. How can anthropology adequately comprehend phenomena such as social class when the lenses of knowledge are clouded by largely unacknowledged class biases?

15. Collaboration with native community members in the ethnographic process also has been undertaken by the literary anthropologists, but primarily for epistemological reasons related to the validity of representation (see, for discussion, Marcus and Fischer 1986).

16. Indeed, in the exceptional work of Hoben (1982), cited twice by Partridge (1986), Hoben asks twice, once at the beginning and once at the end: What has development anthropology contributed to anthropology? But this question is never answered. Instead, he writes pages about the contribution of anthropology to *development*. We seem to be more comfortable making theory for other disciplines.

17. The observations contained in this section rely heavily upon data found in *The Global Practice of Anthropology* (Baba and Hill 1997). See especially the first chapter, "The Global Practice of Anthropology: An Overview." The book is the product of a scientific symposium organized by the Commission on Anthropology in Policy and Practice, at the 1993 World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. The works cited in this section are chapters in that volume.

18. It was John Dewey who first noted that policies represent an implicit "test" of theory. To Dewey, policies are experiments that put to the test the validity of the basic conceptions that are acted upon (Campbell 1995). If this is true, then policy research overlaps with the feedback model of theory-practice relations, since policy research tests the policies that test theory.

19. Of course, failure also could result from faulty implementation, but the point here is that the act of "testing" put the theory at risk and contributed to conditions that made the theory politically infeasible, which is the same as saying that, in this particular case, the theory failed in practice.

20. When policy implements anthropological theory (as it often does in the Second and Third Worlds), then policy research becomes an integral part of the feedback loop from practice to theory.

21. Classical culture theory, for example, is inadequate in conceptualizing the reality of cultural diversity in many transnational corporations, where individuals with multiple cultural identities negotiate new cultural patterns that are simultaneously transient yet reflective of fundamental change (Gluesing 1998; Hamada 1998; see also Hamada, this volume). Practitioners often lead the way into these contexts. They exchange their problem-solving work for access, which is almost impossible to gain otherwise.

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