Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 22:535–552, 2012

ISSN: 1091-1359 print/1540-3556 online
DOI: 10.1080/10911359.2011.598727

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Anthropology of Violence: Historical and Current Theories, Concepts, and Debates in Physical and Socio-cultural Anthropology

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This literature review describes the theoretical contributions of physical and socio-cultural anthropology to an understanding of violence, based on the common themes expressed by founders of anthropology that are still visible in today's post-modern anthropological concepts and theories. The review focuses on three distinct eras: founding theories and concepts (1880s–1940s); modern theories and concepts (1950s–1970s); and post-modern theories and concepts (1980s to the present). Though anthropologists have been accused of maintaining or perpetrating violence themselves due to theoretical and methodological trends, new post-modern concepts have moved toward integrated theories of violence that encourage an activist anthropologist and incorporate concepts such as globalization and colonialism. The review concludes with a conceptual map.

KEYWORDS Anthropology, violence, theory

INTRODUCTION

Since anthropology's early beginnings as a unique discipline of academic inquiry, anthropologists have engaged in scholarly work around issues that fall into the larger category of "violence" or are closely related to violence and have proposed concepts and theories that have been used to understand aspects of violence. Interestingly, the usage of the term *violence* to represent a specific area of study in anthropology, as in "anthropology of violence," has come into popular discussion only since the 1980s and has been the subject of much debate between prominent scholars in the field. However, in 2004,

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anthropologist Neil Whitehead took others to task, writing that anthropology has proven resistant to confronting some of the major violence in the twentieth century and perhaps has even perpetrated violence itself; unless anthropology can move forward conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically, Whitehead warns that anthropology "risks becoming intellectually marginal to both the subjects and consumers of its texts" (p. 2). This provocative issue has framed the present-day discussion of anthropology of violence and provides the backdrop for this literature review.

This review provides an overview of the historical and contemporary anthropological theories and concepts in physical and socio-cultural anthropological studies of violence and will also discuss the current tensions and debates within the growing field of anthropology of violence. Three distinct eras are considered (1880s–1950s, 1950s–1970s, and 1980s to the present), with physical anthropology reflecting the general theme of objective theory and socio-cultural anthropology representing more subjective theory. Though anthropologists have disagreed on many theoretical and conceptual aspects of violence, their work has converged on a few key issues. First, it is clear that anthropologists who study violence have generally shifted from older theories (more simplistic, one-dimensional conceptions of violence based on fieldwork in more stable and smaller societies) to more complex and multi-layered theories and concepts (incorporating the greater reality of larger, unstable societies impacted by colonialism and globalization). As it is impossible for an anthropologist to leave behind his or her own cultural values and paradigms when studying violence, anthropologists need to remain aware of the dangers of making judgments about the practices of another culture to not stand by as injustices are done. Though both historical and current anthropologists have been charged with inadvertently overlooking violence (purposely ignoring violence for various reasons or even contributing to violence through methodological techniques and certain anthropological practices), the discipline of anthropology has made significant contributions to a conceptual and theoretical understanding of violence.

METHODS

Using the Google search engine, the search began with the key phrase "Anthropology of Violence" and led to four course syllabi on "anthropology of violence" from various campuses across the country. In addition to the readings found on the syllabi, each professor was contacted for further recommendations. Also, faculty in the U.C. Berkeley Department of Anthropology provided suggestions for additional sources.

The U.C. Berkeley electronic database system (Melvyl Pilot and OskiCat) was used to search two major anthropological databases (Anthrosource and

Anthroplus). Keywords included *anthropology of violence*, *violence*, *aggression*, *theory*, *genocide*, and *warfare*. In addition, five major collections (published from 1986–2004), entitled similarly to "Anthropology of Violence," were reviewed.

This literature review has several limitations. Though anthropology includes four main fields (physical, archaeological, socio-cultural, and linguistic anthropology) (Moore, 2008, p. 33), this review focuses on physical and socio-cultural anthropology of violence and does not address archaeology or linguistics. As anthropologists have written so extensively on aspects of violence, this review is not comprehensive but highlights several of the most prominent theoretical concepts and debates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Theory in Anthropology of Violence

Before continuing, it is important to acknowledge a debate among anthropologists about the role and nature of theory in anthropology. Interestingly, until the 1960s, theories directly dealing with violence were fairly scarce, except for evolutionary theories (Otterbein, 1999; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Whitehead, 2004c). Though anthropologists were conducting ethnographies on topics related to violence, such as warfare practices and violent rituals within societies, they did not often directly theorize about violence. Several reasons have been suggested as to why violence was so neglected early on in anthropological theory. Otterbein (1999) has proposed the following explanations: (1) anthropologists did not often conduct fieldwork in societies where warfare (and thus obvious violence) was occurring, (2) anthropologists were often pacifists and morally opposed to warfare and violence and so chose not to study these topics, and (3) anthropologists failed to understand the historical and political contexts of the people they studied and so missed the importance of war and violence (p. 795). Other explanations include (1) anthropologists did not want to buy into the stereotype of barbaric, savage cultures, (2) anthropologist have tended to "see the good" in cultures, or (3) anthropology has not developed proper techniques for training students to conduct fieldwork in violent environments, so anthropologists either deliberately or unconsciously avoided studying and theorizing on violence (Nordstrom & Robben, 1996; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004).

Theoretical Trends in Anthropology of Violence

This review traces several theoretical and conceptual debates that have occurred throughout studies of violence in anthropology. This section briefly

outlines several of the main trends that are rooted in concepts proposed by founders of anthropology, have been prevalent throughout the study of violence in anthropology, and are reflected throughout this review.

First, Moore (2008) and Layton (1997) describe two trends of thought that have developed in anthropological theory: (1) objective lines of theory influenced by the biological sciences that attempt to find explanations, causes, and laws for human social behavior and that view "social life as transactions in goods and services" (Layton, 1997); and (2) subjective lines of theory, connected to the humanities, that are more concerned with interpretation and finding meaning. These two lines of theoretical inquiry date back to some of the founders of anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, namely Lewis Henry Morgan, who proposed a scientific, developmental stage theory of social and cultural evolution, and Franz Boas, who rejected evolutionary theories and embraced an anti-theoretical, more humanistic perspective, questioning the usefulness of theory because cultures are so complex and the results of different historical processes, requiring the use of ethnographic methods to conduct objective, detailed studies of cultures (Moore, 2008). Similarly, anthropologists who study violence have reflected specifically on the utility of theory in understanding and studying violence. Whitehead (2004c) summarizes the current debate as tensions between scientific voices, suggesting that anthropologists should focus on creating theories of violence using scientific evidence or on more humanistic efforts to record, observe, and create narratives about violence.

Also, as the world had become increasingly fragmented and interconnected, anthropological theory has both diverged and converged (Moore, 2008). Early on in anthropological inquiry, there were only a few theoretical frameworks from which anthropologists operated (evolutionary theories and anti-theoretical, culturally relative theories), leading to fairly concrete, one dimensional conceptions of culture (Hinton, 2002). Currently, however, the world has become more complex through globalization and technology, and anthropologists operate from multiple and diverse theoretical perspectives that reflect this more abstract and interrelated, yet disjointed, reality (Hinton, 2002; Kuper, 2002; Moore, 2008).

However, anthropologists have agreed on two points regarding theory. First, culture is inherently more complex and nuanced than originally understood, and theories must reflect this (Moore, 2008). Second, theories are culturally and politically constructed, so anthropologists must examine their own cultural and political contexts when developing theory about culture (Kuper, 2002; Layton, 1997; Moore, 2008).

Debates about evolutionary versus non-evolutionary theories of violence remain one of the most hotly contested topics. Physical anthropologists have leaned toward explanations of violence that are based in evolutionary theories, stating that characteristics such as aggression and competitiveness are inherent in humans, and violence is one of the tools that has served an

evolutionary function of helping species to survive and thrive (Otterbein, 1999; Silverberg & Gray, 1992; De Waal, 1992; Schroeder & Schmidt, 2001). Conversely, social and cultural anthropologists have leaned toward explanations of violence that are based in structural, symbolic, and experiential theories (Layton, 1997; Moore, 2008; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Whitehead, 2004c). Though some have proposed approaches that integrate these two fundamentally different perspectives (Silverberg & Gray, 1992; Stewart & Strathern, 2002), there has been, and remains, a divisive split between those who accept an evolutionary perspective and those who reject it (DeWaal, 1992). Theories are, in the end, both useful and dangerous (Layton, 1997).

FOUNDING PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS (1880s–1950s)

Physical anthropology is built on evolutionary, biological theories that are rooted in the work of Charles Darwin. In 1859, Darwin published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, forever changing the nature of the social sciences by proposing that humans are descended from apes and that through a process of evolution and natural selection, the strongest individuals survive and the weakest die out (Moore, 2008). In essence, random variations in genetics account for survival in various environments, and aggressiveness and competition are inherent human traits that help the strongest in a species to survive (Layton, 1996). Early anthropologists applied these ideas to culture. In 1877, Lewis Henry Morgan published his classic work *Ancient Society*, in which he proposed a stage theory of social and cultural evolution for understanding the development of human society (Moore, 2008). Morgan suggested that a continuum of cultural progress exists and that all cultures fall somewhere on this continuum, with "most primitive," including savagery and barbarism, at one end, and "most civilized" on the other (Moore, 2008, p. 23). Differences in cultures merely meant that they were in different stages of development (not that they were biologically inferior), and thus, cultures with savage or barbaric violent practices were just further behind on the evolutionary continuum. Evolutionary theories of culture, building on Darwin and Morgan, gained increasing popularity.

In an example of early physical anthropologists utilizing an evolutionary model to explain aspects of violence, in *The Evolution of Culture and Other Essays* (1906), Pitt-Fox uses an evolutionary model to explain why weapons of war have developed similarly in different cultures over time. Pitt-Fox states that primitive and savage societies utilize weapons that have been copied from weapons used by animals, (e.g., monkeys throw stones and porcupines throw quills at intruders), giving primitive humans the ideas of building and throwing spears as a means of protection (pp. 82–84). As civilizations

have advanced, they have created more specialized and complicated tools. Though he states that it might be hard for people from a "civilized society" to admit that their ancestors were once "incapable of designing the weapons we find in the hands of savages of the present day" (p. 96), he concludes that the development in the use of primitive weapons to advanced weapons has occurred cross-culturally, and societies are merely in different stages of development.

The work of Bronislau Malinowski (1926) and his ideas of functionalism also contributed to an understanding of violence during these early years. Malinowski studied people living on the Trobriand Islands off New Guinea from 1914 to 1920 and concluded that culture provides a medium to meet the basic biological, physiological, and social needs of humans (Layton, 1997). He argued against ideas of evolution, stating that culture is not the result of evolutionary stages but is a function of the society's present needs (Layton, 1997). Every society has the same needs, and these needs could be identified and compared, along with the cultural practices to meet these needs, using detailed ethnographic methods (Moore, 2008). Malinowski's functional theory, though influential in cultural anthropology as well, was also used by physical anthropologists to connect his ideas about the functional quality of culture to the ideas that violence was used by societies to gain status and resources (Moore, 2008).

MODERN PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS (1950s–1980s)

Due mostly to the idea of cultural relativism and the anti-evolutionary influence of Franz Boas and his students, evolutionary theories were unpopular from the early 1900s until the 1950s, (Layton, 1996; Moore, 2008). However, evolutionary theories once again gained credence in the 1950s due in part to the work of anthropologist Leslie White (Moore, 2008). Through his studies of Native American communities throughout the American Southwest, White suggested that there are scientific ways to study and compare cultures, coming from a culturally deterministic viewpoint that emphasized that culture exists independently from societies, and so generalizations about culture are possible and can be learned by studying and comparing societies (Moore, 2008). With the advent of scientific inquiry, anthropology faced a need to become more scientific, and evolutionary theories provided a platform for this type of inquiry.

Physical anthropologists (also called sociobiologists or socioecologists) after the 1950s often used scientific and statistical methods to study violence through comparing aggression and conflict in animals and humans (Leyton, 2003). One common theory is that aggression is an innate tendency that all living species possess, and thus aggressive, and/or violent, acts have served

an evolutionary purpose of allowing living creatures to establish dominance and thus have more access to resources, including, for example, material items such as food and also sexual partners (Knauft, 1991). Many studies have observed the behavior of monkeys and have applied these understandings to human interactions.

For example, Pereira (1992) conducted a study on two free-ranging groups of yellow baboons in Kenya from 1980 to 1981 to better understand why dominant females interfere in fights between offspring. He found that dominant females prevented their own decline in rank among other females, and the decline of their matrilineal line, by intervening in fights between juvenile females and supporting either their own kin over non-kin or the oldest participant. However, dominant females intervened less in fights between juvenile males and did not promote status acquisition among male kin members, instead only supporting the larger, higher-positioned male. Pereira suggests that it is too risky for adult females to intervene with juvenile males, who are getting much bigger and stronger, and so might endanger the status of their daughters in getting males. He concludes that with more research, "the interplay between process of development and their reproductive ramifications will be revealed and roles for development in the evolution of social behavior should be illuminated" (p. 143). This study demonstrates several important principles (refined in the 1950s to the 1970s) that physical anthropologists have used to study violence. First, Pereira uses a study of aggression in primates to gain understanding about the evolution of culture and social behavior, suggesting that aggression and violence are strategies used by baboons to help their evolutionary progress. Also, he uses careful, ethnographic fieldwork methods to make objective observations about the subjects of his study, along with accepted statistical methods to carefully analyze his data.

POST-MODERN PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS (1980s TO THE PRESENT)

Physical anthropologists have conducted many kinship studies by using animals to identify how humans have used aggression and violence to keep their own kin lines dominant within society (De Waal, 1992). For example, John Patton (2000) suggests that an evolutionary biological paradigm of aggression has often neglected to address the question of "Why do soldiers die for their country?" (p. 417). He suggests that the concept of reciprocal altruism (putting aside conflicts, based on shared interests, to form coalitions to oppose other groups) can answer this question, citing two studies conducted among chimpanzees and baboons, by Goodall in 1986 and one by Kummer in 1971 (Patton, 2000). Patton applied these findings to the Conambo, an Ecuadorian agricultural community that has a history of violence with other

communities, observing that male warriors who took the most risks in battle had the highest status within the community (and thus more access to resources) and had significantly more wives than other men. He took this to mean that violence served an instrumental function in the Conambo community of helping men gain status: The higher the risk, the more status a man received. Warriors took extreme risks in battle because if they survived, a biological, evolutionary-driven cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that the benefits of status, prestige, and resources were worth it.

It is important to note that most post-modern physical anthropologists have acknowledged that violence cannot be explained solely by evolutionary and biologically based theories, because culture and the environment always play a role (Cronk & Irons, 2000; De Waal, 1992; Knauft, 1991; Silverberg & Gray, 1992). As De Waal writes, "Biologists obviously know that ... attitudes towards war and peace can be molded through education and culture; that genes create potentials, not inevitabilities ..." (p. 41). Integrated theories that acknowledge the contribution of physical anthropologists to an understanding of violence but also combine concepts from both physical and social-cultural anthropology are necessary (De Waal; Silverberg & Gray, 1992). This review will next consider socio-cultural anthropological theories of violence.

1880s–1950s: FOUNDING SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Altogether, socio-cultural anthropologists of the 1880s through the 1950s published only minimally on topics directly related to violence and did not contribute significantly to developing anthropological theories on violence. During this time, though cultures with violence were often studied and violent practices were recorded in ethnographies, due to themes of cultural and moral relativism (leading to anti-theoretical and comparative approaches) and salvage anthropology, plausible theories and concepts on violence were seldom advanced. In fact, some have argued that due to these themes, anthropologists actually perpetrated violence upon the communities they were studying.

Franz Boas is considered the founder of socio-cultural anthropology. The views and the strategies he put forth have had tremendous impact on the development of socio-cultural theories, including historical and current socio-cultural theories of violence. Franz Boas' views on anthropology were both anti-theoretical and anti-evolutionary (Layton, 1997). In 1911, he conducted a study of the craniums of 17,821 immigrants and determined that cranial form was very irregular among family lines and also countries of origin; he concluded from these results that traits that were proposed by evolutionists to be genetically fixed, such as cranium shape, had in fact been

modified by something else, presumably the environment (Moore, 2008). This study formed the basis of Boas's conclusions that cultures are integrated wholes that are produced by specific historical contexts, not at all reflections of evolutionary stages. He insisted on cultural relativism, suggesting that it is not possible to compare cultures, as each culture is so complex and has been formed by so many different processes within such specific and diverse contexts (Layton, 1997). He suggested that the best way to learn about a culture was to take a humanistic (as opposed to scientific) approach and immerse oneself in detailed, objective studies of other cultures, influencing many generations of anthropologists to use ethnography and fieldwork (Moore, 2008). These theories and concepts have been reflected throughout cultural anthropology's approach to violence themes and have been particularly built upon by post-modern anthropologists of the 1980s to the present.

The ideas of Boas led inadvertently to the development of "salvage anthropology," a tradition in anthropology that dominated cultural anthropology from the 1900s to the 1950s and influenced the development of theories of violence and even perpetrated violence themselves. Salvage anthropologists tended to study small, self-contained, mostly stable, non-Western societies by recording information on disappearing societies before they were lost forever (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004).

Arthur Kroeber (2004) was strongly influenced by the ideas of Boas and used them to advance the concept of salvage anthropology through his studies of Native Americans in California (Moore, 2008). Kroeber felt strongly that culture is a mental construct that could not be explained by organic individual needs. Using themes of cultural relativism and anti-theoretical approaches, he noted that culture consisted of learned and shared elements unique to each culture given its own historical processes (Moore, 2008).

Scheper-Hughes (2004) cites Kroeber's work as an example of the dangers of salvage anthropology and the violence it committed against its subjects of study. Ishi, an Indian from one of the last Northern California tribes to live in the wilderness, was captured by police in 1908 and spent the last years of his life living at the University of California, Berkeley's Museum of Anthropology, a "live" specimen for anthropologists to study. Scheper-Hughes scathingly denounces this "salvage anthropology" approach, stating that anthropologists were primarily concerned with scientifically studying Ishi and learning about his culture before he died, and any chance to study his culture died with him. However, anthropologists completely overlooked the fact that Ishi's tribe had died out as a direct result of genocide committed by the colonial American government and white settlers living in California; in an attempt to create anthropological conceptual and theoretical frameworks by studying Ishi's use of tools and language, anthropologists both ignored and contributed to the violence perpetrated against Ishi, his tribe, and Native Americans throughout the country. It was only in 1999, after Ishi's brain was found preserved (against his explicit wishes to have his body

buried in a traditional ritual) that the UC Berkeley Anthropology Department issued an apology for its role in perpetrating violence against both one man and an entire civilization.

Unfortunately, the concepts of cultural relativism (the idea that cultures are the results of their own historical processes and thus are not comparable) and salvage anthropology had long-ranging negative effects on the study of socio-cultural violence during this period (Otterbein, 1999; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). For example, cultural relativism led to a moral relativism philosophy, where anthropologists attempted to observe cultures without judgment in an attempt to avoid stereotyping practices in different cultures (Whitehead, 2004b). Unfortunately, this well-intentioned attempt resulted in anthropologists' often ignoring violence happening before their eyes or even missing the warning signs that violence, such as genocide, was about to happen (Scheper-Hughes, 2004). Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois give the example of anthropologist Richard Geertz, who studied communities in Bali, Indonesia in the years leading up to the 1965 massacre of 500,000 people by Islamic fundamentalists but whose research did not ever mention the clear signs of the impending massacre. When Geertz was asked in 1996 why he did not report on these signs, he stated that he had not wanted to draw away from his other theoretical points or to engage in the "politics of advocacy" (p. 6).

1950s–1970s: MODERN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Beginning in the 1950s, publications on warfare and general violence increased dramatically (Ferguson, 2005; Otterbein, 1999). Anthropologists from the 1950s to the 1970s tended to move away from attributing violence to "traditional" or "tribal" societies and began to acknowledge that violence occurs in all societies (Whitehead, 2004c). The focus of studies shifted from small, contained communities to studying larger, more complex communities that were dealing with the affects of globalism, colonialism, and capitalism. One explanation for this can be found in WWI and WWII, both of which forced an acknowledgement that violence existed in many forms in the Western world and inspired a new wave of theories on violence.

Modern theories and concepts of violence (1950s–1970s) focused more on physical violence. They started to recognize that the definition of violence is always relative and dependent on who is involved and that cultures might define violence differently, bringing up concepts of legitimacy versus illegitimacy and the rationality of violence. With all this came the beginning recognition of the economic and political forces associated with violence through colonialism and globalization.

Riches (1986) published an early collection of writings on an "anthropology of violence" reflecting the growing attention given to violence through-

out the 1950s to 1970s and led up to current, post-modern anthropological concepts of violence. Riches proposed a theory of rational preemption to explain why violence is utilized; in essence, perpetrators of violence always have choices, but they pick violence because it secures an advantage over an opponent before the opponent can act. Though violence has both expressive (violence is a performance in that it communicates a message to all involved) and instrumental (violence serves a specific purpose in the moment) motives, he suggests that violence is usually utilized rationally and strategically by perpetrators and with the intention to send a message to those involved and also to the community at large. Riches also proposes a "triangle of violence," stating that there are always three people involved in violence: the actor, the victim, and the witness. Riches asserts that though violence is always legitimate in the eyes of the actor, it may or may not be legitimate in the eyes of the victims or witnesses.

Modern theories also started to acknowledge the role of economic and political processes in violence though did not thoroughly start to acknowledge the impact of forces such as colonialism and globalization. Riches (1986) states that violence is often used as a strategy of choice because violence is easily manipulated in political conflict; violence's legitimacy is always questionable, thus making it a choice strategy for getting people's attention quickly in political contexts.

POST-MODERNISM ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS (1980s TO THE PRESENT)

During the post-modern period, from the 1980s to the present, anthropologists have actively engaged in the study of violence, including establishing a subfield of socio-cultural anthropology called *Anthropology of Violence*. Post-modern anthropologists have proposed many diverse theories and conceptualizations of violence, including the impact of colonialism and globalization on anthropology, symbolic violence, structural violence, a violence continuum, anthropologist as activist, and questioning definitions of violence and the utility of theory. All of these theories and concepts reflect the themes of socio-cultural anthropology: anti-evolutionary, anti-theoretical, and cultural relativism.

As globalization became a recognized phenomenon in the twentieth century, it became more and more apparent that early anthropologists had often studied small, relatively stable societies instead of larger, more complex, unstable societies, the types of societies that had more violence and were disrupted by colonialism (Ferguson, 2005; Hinton, 2002; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Stewart & Strathern, 2002). In addition, the civil war in Vietnam and the visibility of genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Cambodia drew attention to the fact that anthropologists had not considered violence

as stemming from its colonial context (Ferguson, 2005; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Otterbein, 1999; Whitehead, 2004a). In fact, many post-modern anthropologists have asserted that violence previously observed in "tribal" or "primitive" cultures was actually directly a result of colonialism (Ferguson, 2004; Hinton, 2003; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Whitehead, 2004a).

The colonial impact on anthropological subjects of study has greatly influenced socio-cultural approaches to violence. Two important concepts, symbolic violence and structural violence, have gained popularity and are related to the idea of the colonial impact on cultures. The concept of symbolic violence was explored extensively by anthropologist Bourdieu (1977) in his fieldwork in Algeria and other parts of Africa.

Bourdieu criticized anthropologists for spending so much time carefully "decoding" the customs of other cultures using their own culture as a base point and for reducing foreign cultures to things that are familiar (kinship systems, gift giving, etc.; Leyton, 2003). He suggested that anthropologists lack a true understanding of what the customs symbolize to the people inside the culture because they had not understood the symbolic systems used by the people (how things are understood and represented to the people). Following this line of thought, he suggests that symbolic power is a potent force that does not rely on systems but instead rests on its acknowledgement by the people with power and the ones who are acted upon with power (Bourdieu, 1977). Similarly, symbolic violence is "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2004). Symbolic violence is a powerful idea that has appealed to many anthropologists because it accounts for the shared dynamic between a perpetrator, a victim, and a witness when both are taking their established customs and patterns for granted, as part of their unconscious worldview. Bourdieu and Wacquant give the example that male domination of women no longer needs to be justified through contests of physical strength; instead, it is a subconscious, symbolic construct that both men and women buy into because it is part of a shared, internalized cultural norm. This concept has been instrumental in forcing anthropologists to acknowledge violence that is couched in all sorts of structures that are considered "normal," and that this everyday quality of this violence often result in its "invisible" quality (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, p. 21).

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence helped formulate another widely utilized post-modern theory: Structural violence (not to be confused with structuralism), the result of the large-scale, invisible social forces that permeate society, makes up normal social practice that an individual takes for granted but that, by their existence, commit violence (e.g., poverty, racism, sexism, colonialism, government). Farmer (2004) gives the example of a poor woman in Haiti who contracted AIDS after being forced into sexual relations with a rich, married man and died after many years of working

as a maid for minimal pay; Farmer suggests that colonialism and structural violence all contributed to this woman's suffering, as great inequities and small opportunity for social mobility were created by America's financial support of the military coup, which put a few in power but increased suffering in the lives of many others.

The theories of colonial violence, symbolic violence, and structural violence have all contributed to a post-modern anthropological conception that violence occurs in both war and peace and that the invisible, everyday violences, as exemplified in the concept of structural violence, are often the results of the larger, overarching political, economic, and institutional forces that shape the visible violence that occurs between individuals and families, such as domestic violence, rape, or one gang member's shooting another (Farmer, 2004; Bourgois, 2004; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). However, anthropologists have failed systematically to recognize and name structural violence during fieldwork, to understand its roots, and to connect the micro-violences in everyday life as related to the larger, invisible, but potent structural forces of violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Whitehead, 2004a).

Post-modern anthropologists have also turned their attention to one other form of violence that has often been ignored in anthropology: "extraordinary violence that is authorized, public, visible, and rewarded" (Scheper-Hughes, 2008, p. 81). This violence is exemplified in genocide ("dirty wars" or "state terror as usual") when governments use violence for control against their own civilians in a public fashion that is generally condoned by society. This type of violence has aspects of both invisible/structural violence and the visible/everyday violence; the state uses structural violence to set the stage for its own individual violences that are condoned by society even when these violences, in fact, act to keep the structural violence in place. Bourgois gives a heart-wrenching example of this by describing his experiences during the Salvador Civil War in 1981, when the government, supported by U.S. finances, killed and tortured civilians while "pursuing" the guerilla rebel fighters (Bourgois, 2004). Scheper-Hughes posits a modern-day example, drawing a striking parallel between the El Salvador Civil War and the American government's post-911 actions in both invading Iraq and condoning torture of supposed terrorists (Scheper-Hughes, 2008). Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois have thus suggested a "continuum of violence" to account for the interconnectedness of all forms of violence, from the invisible/structural violence to the visible/every day micro-violence, to extraordinary/reasonable/public violence.

The idea that anthropologists must change their role from one of objective observer to pro-active, human rights activist is one of the most debated assertions in post-modern anthropology (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Whitehead, 2004c). It is proposed that anthropologists themselves have committed violence by standing by and

observing and recording violence, or ignoring violence, or trivializing violence, over the years. Scheper-Hughes feels strongly that anthropologists and journalists and nongovernmental organization workers have a responsibility to the communities they study and to the field of anthropology, to be, at the least, an "engaged witness" as opposed to a "scientific spectator" advocated by Boas and many other founders of anthropology (p. 26). Voncersely, others, such as Nordstrom and Robben in their classic *Fieldwork Under Fire* (2004), worry that an activist anthropologist runs the risk of pushing their own (and most likely Western) values and world views and doing more harm than good.

Nordstrom and Robben (1996) propose a more humanistic approach to understanding violence, stating that "theory emerges from experience" (p. 4). Stewart and Strathern (2002) call for a more integrated theory of violence that draws on the understanding of many disciplines, including biology, sociology, and psychology, in addition to anthropology. Whitehead (2004c) insists that new theories need to be developed to meet new understandings of violence, theories that focus more on the experiential aspects of violence and view violence as a symbol and as a performance, not just as an instrument of power and ritual.

An integrated theoretical perspective, combining the perspectives of all different theories on violence, has been proposed by a few anthropologists. Many physical and socio-cultural anthropologists have accepted that anthropology of violence must incorporate both a biological and an environmental, cultural perspective. However, tensions remain, as Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) state, "We reject that violence is fundamentally a question of hard-wiring, genes, or hormones, while accepting that these contribute to human behavior ..." (p. 3). Nordstrom and Robben (1996) suggest that balancing these tensions is part of the job of an anthropologist; if post-modern anthropologists truly seek growth, they must focus on the experience of violence above all else and must keep the current debates in mind when conducting fieldwork (recalling the subjective line of theory posited at the beginning of the paper). Stewart and Strathern (2002) propose moving toward an anthropological theory of violence that combines the findings of physical and socio-cultural anthropology and also brings in biological, historical, psychological, sociological, and other theories on violence. Though post-modern anthropologists have theorized in many different directions, they seem to feel strongly that anthropology of violence must continue to move from studying small, stable communities and safe, simplistic topics to engaging with larger, more complex societies that are dealing with the more complex issues brought on by industrialization, globalization, colonialism, and life in the modern world; they also seem to agree that in this changing world, it is ever-more important for anthropologists to continue to questions their own assumptions that they bring to every field setting.

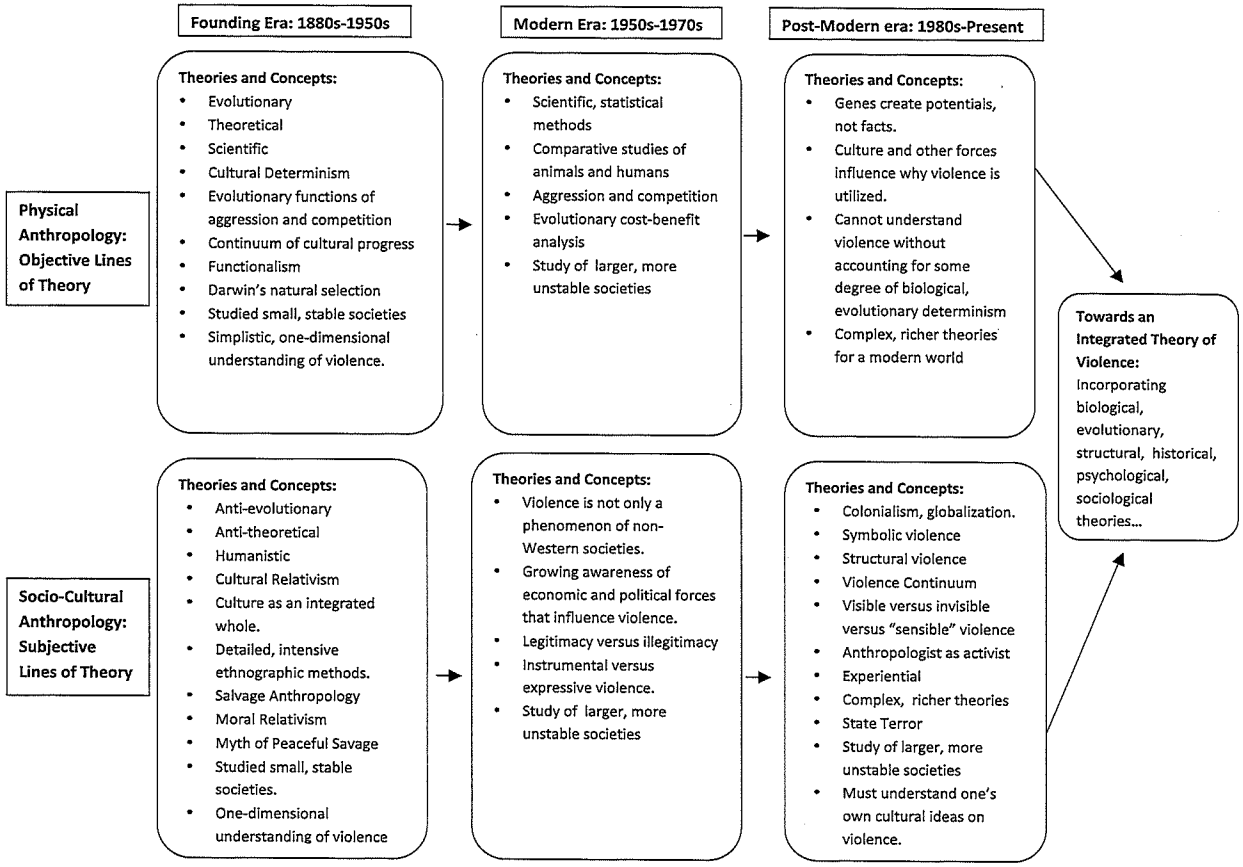

FIGURE 1 Conceptual map of anthropological theories and concepts of violence.

CONCLUSION AND CONCEPTUAL MAP

Though anthropology of violence gained popularity only as a subfield of study within anthropology since the 1980s, anthropologists have contributed a significant body of work on violence. This review provides an overview of the historical and current theories and concepts in both physical and socio-cultural anthropology of violence. In an attempt to organize these theories and concepts, three time periods have been suggested, including Founding Theories and Concepts (1880s–1940s); Modern Theories and Concepts (1950s–1970s); and Post-Modern Theories and Concepts (1980s to the present). A conceptual map tracing these ideas is illustrated in Figure 1.

It is clear that physical anthropology has moved from its primary focus on evolutionary, theoretical, and cultural determinism perspectives to emphasizing scientific, statistical methods and accounting for both genetic and cultural forces. Though socio-cultural anthropology has stayed relatively focused on the same anti-evolutionary, anti-theoretical, and cultural relativism perspectives, new understandings of violence now take into account colonialism, globalization, symbolic, and structural violence and a continuum of violence. Anthropologists also agree that any understanding of violence is impacted by one's own culture and thus have committed, across the board, to remaining vigilant of judging violence based on personal values and paradigms. An integrated theory of violence, proposed by many anthropologists in different fields, shows promise in continuing to move the field forward.

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