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Loaves and Fishes: Sustaining Anthropology at McGill

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Article abstract

The McGill anthropology department provides an example of a small and poorly funded department striving to achieve excellence by concentrating its limited resources on a few highly specific objectives. Initially the goal of the department was to study the impact of economic development on indigenous peoples. While this focus shaped early recruitment of teaching staff and the graduate program, other considerations, especially the needs of the undergraduate program, required a broader coverage of anthropology. In recent decades the shift from a behaviourist to a cognitive orientation in anthropology has encouraged increasing emphasis on cultural anthropology at the graduate level as social change and development have come to be viewed increasingly from a perceptual point of view. The dialectic between the needs of the graduate and the undergraduate programs has promoted a combination of focus and flexibility that in retrospect has served the department well.

Loaves and Fishes: Sustaining Anthropology at McGill

Bruce G. Trigger *

Le département d'anthropologie de McGill nous fournit l'exemple d'un petit département mal financé, visant l'excellence en concentrant ses ressources limitées sur quelques objectifs très spécifiques. A l'origine, le but du département était d'étudier l'impact du développement économique sur les peuples autochtones. Bien que ces objectifs aient d'abord influencé le recrutement du personnel enseignant ainsi que le programme des études supérieures, d'autres considérations, en particulier les besoins des programmes de premier cycle, ont éventuellement poussé le département vers une plus grande diversification. Depuis quelques décennies, le département est passé d'une orientation comportementaliste à une orientation cognitiviste et cela a encouragé une emphase croissante de l'anthropologie culturelle dans les cycles supérieurs. La dialectique entre les besoins des étudiants du premier cycle et des cycles supérieurs a favorisé une combinaison de focalisation et de flexibilité qui, rétrospectivement, a bien servi le département.

The McGill anthropology department provides an example of a small and poorly funded department striving to achieve excellence by concentrating its limited resources on a few highly specific objectives. Initially the goal of the department was to study the impact of economic development on indigenous peoples. While this focus shaped early recruitment of teaching staff and the graduate program, other considerations, especially the needs of the undergraduate program, required a broader coverage of anthropology. In recent decades the shift from a behaviourist to a cognitive orientation in anthropology has encouraged increasing emphasis on cultural anthropology at the graduate level as social change and development have come to be viewed increasingly from a perceptual point of view. The dialectic between the needs of the graduate and the undergraduate programs has promoted a combination of focus and flexibility that in retrospect has served the department well.

Although McGill is one of Canada's oldest and most celebrated universities, the Faculty of Arts has never been one of its major funding priorities. As a result, its Department of Anthropology has long been the smallest one in Canada to offer a doctoral program. The department has striven to achieve excellence by focusing its limited resources on a few highly specific objectives relating to the study of social and cultural change. The differing needs of its graduate and undergraduate programs and the general shift from a behaviourist to a symbolicist orientation in anthropology since the 1960s have created problems for this strategy to which the department has responded slowly and within the constraints imposed by its limited resources. Its history offers a case study of trying to cope with financial strictures within the context of a large university.

IN THE BEGINNING

The first event in McGill's history relevant to anthropology was the failure of its Board of Governors in 1855 to persuade Daniel Wilson to leave Toronto and become the first principal of a fledgling McGill College. Had he not refused this offer, Wilson might have begun in 1857 to teach "Ancient and Modern Ethnology," the first course dealing with anthropology offered at a college in Canada and possibly anywhere in the world, at McGill rather than at University College, Toronto. In retrospect, Wilson probably acted wisely in rejecting McGill's offer. Although he later appreciated McGill's relative freedom from provincial government intervention, he may have concluded that the Montreal businessmen who controlled McGill were more interested in promoting professional studies, such as medicine, law, and engineering, and to a lesser degree the sciences than they were the arts subjects in which he was interested.

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The person who did become principal of McGill, from 1855 to 1893, the Nova Scotian John William Dawson, was also more interested in anthropology than his biographers have realized (Sheets-Pyenson, 1996). In addition to being a celebrated geologist, Dawson was one of the last great academic exponents of natural theology, which maintained that nature complemented the Bible in revealing God's plans. Dawson was a creationist and hence opposed those aspects of biological and cultural evolution that challenged scripture. His principal method of doing this was to demonstrate, sometimes very effectively, the limited and equivocal nature of the evidence on which contemporary evolutionists based their arguments. In his most important anthropological work, *Fossil Men and their Modern Representatives* (1888), which was intended to refute polygenism, he maintained that cultures at all levels of development had coexisted throughout human history. Over the years, Dawson published the first scientific reports on an archaeological site adjacent to the McGill campus which he believed to be the remains of Jacques Cartier's Hochelaga, described a Guanche mummy and accompanying artifacts from the Canary Islands that were in the McGill collections, and wrote a report on the ancient Egyptians' use of stone. Anthropological exhibits were an integral part of the Redpath Museum, which opened under Dawson's direction in 1882.

Yet Dawson did nothing to promote the study or teaching of anthropology at McGill. While he used anthropological data for his own purposes, he opposed the social evolutionary anthropology of the 19th century as a creed that threatened the Christian moral order. No doubt he would have loathed Boasian relativism for the same reason. It seems unlikely that Dawson ever would have allowed the teaching of anthropology to McGill undergraduates, even from the religiously relatively conservative point of view that his friend Daniel Wilson was teaching it at Toronto. Yet he inspired an interest in anthropology in his son, George Mercer Dawson. George did not share his father's conservative religious beliefs and did much to encourage the development of Canadian anthropology within the Geological Survey of Canada.

Following Dawson's retirement in 1893, anthropology is attested neither in teaching nor in research at McGill until 1922. Yet during the early 20th century McGill's ethnological museum holdings greatly expanded. David Ross McCord bequeathed his Canadiana collections, which included large numbers of Indian and Inuit artifacts, to McGill in 1919, and, when the Montreal Natural History Society was dis-

solved in 1925, the extensive collections that it had begun to accumulate as early as 1827 came into the keeping of the university. The McGill ethnological collections were divided between the McCord Museum and a newly created Ethnological Museum tended by Lionel Judah, a demonstrator in the medical faculty. Both museums were closed as a result of economic stringencies and growing pressures on space during the 1930s and 1940s, although fortunately the collections were not dispersed. A tenuous connection with anthropology during the First World War was the presence of an undergraduate named Thomas McIlwraith, who joined the army before graduating.

FIRST COURSES

The first undergraduate anthropology course at McGill was titled "Ethnology." It was taught from 1922 to 1930 in the zoology department by the polymath Arthur Willey and covered topics such as social regulations in the Solomon Islands, the meaning of mana, Bornean soul-catching ceremonies, and matrilineal descent. In later years, he dealt increasingly with race and human evolution.

It was not until 1924 that the first anthropology course was offered by the tiny Department of Social Science, which was soon to be renamed the Department of Sociology. This course, titled "Social Origins: The Culture and Social Organization of Pre-literate Peoples," was taught to undergraduates, often in alternate years, until 1946 by a succession of sociologists: Everett Hughes, Robert Faris, and Forrest La Violette. In 1946, it was replaced by a course called "Social Anthropology," which La Violette offered until 1948.

The McGill sociology department defined its mission as being the empirical study of Canadian society; its members addressing issues such as immigration, the settlement of western Canada, and social change in French Canada. During the Second World War, the Canadian Social Science Research Council promoted studies of economic and social changes that projected development might bring about in northern Canada. Carl Dawson, the chairman of the McGill sociology department, who had previously studied the European settlement of the Peace River district of Alberta, played an active role in this research (Dawson, 1947). When Harold Innis, the president of the Council, created a Committee on Indian Research, that was to draw up a plan for studying contemporary Indian life, he put Dawson in charge of it. Innis cared little for disciplinary boundaries and evidently valued Dawson's

proven skills in studying contemporary social problems more highly than he did the anthropological knowledge of Thomas McIlwraith, even though McIlwraith, who had studied anthropology at Cambridge University in hopes of becoming a British colonial officer, had already demonstrated an interest in applying anthropological insights to improving "Indian administration" (Loram and McIlwraith, 1943). Committee funds allowed La Violette to undertake a study of the suppression of the potlatch, which was published after he had moved from McGill to Tulane University (La Violette, 1961).

Awareness of increasing government interest in native peoples, and hence of a possible new source of funding for research, seems to have been an important consideration in the creation of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at McGill in 1948 and the appointment of McGill's first anthropologist, Frederick Voget. The same year, seven undergraduate anthropology courses were established: Introduction to Anthropology, Culture History, North American Indians, Primitive Religion, Culture Change, Culture and Personality, and Primitive Society. These courses formed two sequences, one relating to social, the other to historical anthropology. Voget continued to teach these courses until 1953, when he left McGill and was replaced by Jacob Fried, a Yale graduate who had done research in Mexico. The following year Philip Garigue, from the London School of Economics, became the second anthropologist in a six person department. In 1958, Garigue transferred to the Université de Montréal and was replaced by Tetsuo Yatsushiro. Three years later, the number of anthropologists rose to three when the Africanist Ronald Cohen transferred to McGill from the University of Toronto to become the department's first Canadian-born anthropologist.

Although none of the first anthropologists hired to teach in the department had done research in Canada, during their stay at McGill all of them investigated Canadian topics. Voget studied religious changes at Caughnawaga, and Fried, Yatsushiro, and Cohen became involved in research on the native peoples of the north. Soon after he arrived at McGill, Fried organized a seminar in which researchers from various institutions surveyed the work that had already been done relating to the aboriginal peoples of Quebec and Labrador. The publication of this seminar constituted a baseline for further anthropological studies in this region (Fried, 1955). Fried, who was interested in culture and personality studies, also forged links with McGill's new Programme in Transcultural Psychiatry. During his stay at McGill, Garigue initiated major

studies of changing French Canadian kinship and community relations.

The growing number of anthropologists allowed the department to offer instruction in anthropology at the master's level. The first thesis, titled "Migration in the French Canadian Extended Family," was produced by P. C. Pineo under Garigue's direction in 1957. Between 1959 and 1961, W. E. Willmott, Nelson Graburn, and R. A. Richardson wrote theses on Inuit social organization and Montagnais acculturation as students of Fried and Yatsushiro.

THE CREATION OF AN ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT

These developments encouraged the sociology and anthropology department to undertake a significant expansion of anthropology with a view to establishing a doctoral program. In 1962, the same year the department was authorized to initiate Ph.D. programs in both disciplines, Richard Salisbury was hired as an associate professor. This talented and dynamic anthropologist, born in England and educated at Cambridge, Harvard, and the Australian National University, was to play a decisive role in the evolution and institutionalization of anthropology at McGill. He already had acquired an international reputation as an economic anthropologist who had studied the integration of new technologies and crops into indigenous production systems in Oceania.

Salisbury was a behaviourist, and more specifically a transactionalist, who believed that it was the duty of anthropologists to gain an understanding of human behaviour and that this could better be done by careful observation than by introspective methods. He was passionately concerned to use such knowledge to serve society wherever such services were needed. In particular, he was committed to the professional training of anthropologists and the application of anthropological knowledge to resolving social problems and promoting the welfare and empowerment of small and isolated peoples. Here in embryonic form were the beginnings of what his students later would call "decentralized" or "putting the people first" development. Salisbury believed in the willingness of all human beings to cooperate in promoting their common good and that information collected by anthropologists, if made available to all interested parties, could play an important role in helping to resolve conflicts. All aspects of his work were guided by a profound faith in the value of moderation, amelioration, and pluralism.

Salisbury worked tirelessly to develop anthropology at McGill, to promote the interests of anthropology and sociology across Canada, and to establish Canadian anthropology's presence internationally. He served on the executives of many Canadian, American, and international anthropological organizations, as well as on numerous committees established by the Canadian and Quebec governments. He also played a major role in activities that promoted cooperation between Anglophone and Francophone anthropologists in Quebec and involved McGill scholars in deliberations being conducted by the Quebec government. His students and colleagues continue to admire the dedication that led him to set their welfare and that of his profession ahead of his personal concerns. In the late 1980s, he confided to me that he regretted that he had not found more time to write up the results of his research. Although he began by being only affinally Canadian (as he liked to put it), as a result of his marriage to the sociologist Mary Roseborough, Salisbury did more to promote the development of social anthropology across Canada than did anyone else of his generation.

Realizing that only a limited number of anthropologists were likely to be hired at McGill in the foreseeable future, Salisbury concluded that specialization was a prerequisite for achieving excellence. It was decided not to compete with the Université de Montréal and the University of Toronto in building a "four-square" anthropology department. Salisbury's own interests corresponded with the sociology department's traditional concentration on studying social change. To take account of this and of the concerns of anthropologists already in the department, he defined the foci of anthropology at McGill as being the study of social change and of transcultural psychiatry. For a time he was deeply involved in the work of the Programme in Transcultural Psychiatry.

Yet Salisbury rejected sociology's exclusive focus on doing research in Canada. Taking account of geographical regions that were already being studied by human geographers, economists, and political scientists at McGill, he identified the Canadian North, Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, and the Middle East as prime areas for research. To encourage mutual support and continuity, he hoped eventually to have two or more McGill anthropologists working in each of these areas. He further sought to establish close working relations with existing McGill institutions, such as the Arctic Institute of North America and the McGill Committee on Northern Research, which received funds from the Department of Indian Affairs and

Northern Development. He also played a major role in founding the Centre for Developing Area Studies, which received money from Samuel Bronfman and the Ford Foundation for research in the Caribbean, West Africa, and South Asia. In keeping with his own guidelines, Salisbury did not seek to turn his personal interest in Oceania into a major focus of the department. While he and a few graduate students continued to work there, much of the research he directed after he came to McGill was done in the more easily accessible Caribbean and the Canadian North.

Salisbury made research central to all other anthropological activities at McGill. An honours program was introduced to prepare undergraduates for graduate studies and the McGill master's program was revised to serve as a preliminary to doctoral work. To ensure that those who had completed the McGill undergraduate program would be exposed to as broad a range of instruction as possible, it was decided that these students would be expected to pursue their graduate studies elsewhere. The department still follows this policy. Salisbury hoped to secure funds that would allow a number of master's students to carry out research each summer under the supervision of McGill staff, in order to prepare them to do doctoral research on their own. The first anthropology doctoral students were admitted to the department in 1964. It was anticipated that about five students would be admitted each year.

The years 1962 to 1965 were a period of dramatic growth and change. The number of anthropologists in the department increased from three to six, but Salisbury was the only anthropologist who remained at McGill throughout this period. Cohen and Yatsushiro left in 1963 and Fried in 1965. In 1963, Peter Gutkind, who studied African urbanism, was hired to replace Cohen, and Norman Chance came to McGill as a northernist. The following year Frances Henry was hired as a Caribbeanist. I was also hired that year (after an offer made the previous year had fallen through for lack of university funding) to teach undergraduate archaeology courses and Middle Eastern ethnology, and to prepare students for the comprehensive examination in archaeology, historical linguistics, and physical anthropology that had to be passed, in addition to a comprehensive examination in social anthropology, by all doctoral candidates.

In 1966 and 1967, another Africanist (Tom Lanagan), two Latin Americanists (Joan Miller and David Holden), and an Africanist and South Asianist (Satish Saberwal) joined the department. All of them,

as well as Chance and Henry, had left McGill by 1973. They were replaced by Peter Sindell (a northernist), Dan Aronson (an urbanist interested in ethnic politics in Nigeria), Philip Salzman (an ecologist who worked in Iran) and Fumiko Ikawa-Smith (an archaeologist studying the Palaeolithic period in Japan). All of these, except Sindell, were to remain with the department for the next two decades. It is indicative of the dynamism of this period of rapid university expansion and of the general volatility of the job market in North America at that time that this rapid turnover in staff was not viewed as being either abnormal or detrimental to the stability of the anthropology program.

The McGill social anthropologists emulated American counterparts at universities such as Cornell and Chicago in seeking to create a centre where anthropological knowledge was deployed to facilitate change in non-western societies; what at that time was called action or applied anthropology. The main theoretical cleavage was between Salisbury's ameliorationist view of development and Gutkind's confrontational, Marxist approach. While this produced heated and sometimes divisive confrontations in the department, it exposed students who were prepared to listen to the major controversies surrounding development at that time. Salisbury was determined that students should become familiar with as many points of view concerning development as possible, including those with which he personally did not agree.

Between 1964 and 1968, an Interuniversity Consortium for Caribbean Research Training, funded by the Ford Foundation and administered by the Research Institute for the Study of Man in New York, financed groups of McGill anthropology students to work in the Caribbean for three summers under the direction of Salisbury, Henry, and Miller. This research produced eight master's and four doctor's theses. It was a great disappointment to the department when this project, which provided supervised field experience for M.A. students, ceased to be funded. As a result of this collapse, recruiting Caribbeanists and South Americanists ceased to be a priority of the department. Nevertheless, many students who had done their master's research in the Caribbean continued to do research for their doctoral dissertations there.

During the 1960s, Chance's studies of the impact of social change on the Cree of northern Quebec led to the establishment of a research unit called the Programme in the Anthropology of Development, which was attached to the sociology and anthropology department. Funding for this program, which came

mainly from the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA) — the precursor of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, was used to train graduate students to do research in the north. Special attention was paid to working for local agencies representing indigenous groups, rather than for the government departments that sought to administer them. After Chance left McGill, Salisbury became the director of this program, which continued to carry out research in the north. Its most notable achievement was the James Bay Cree Project, which began in 1971 and provided both the Cree and the Quebec Government with information that played an important role in the settlement of the James Bay land claim (Salisbury, 1986).

The Programme in the Anthropology of Development expanded over the years to embrace studies of economic development carried out by McGill social anthropologists in various parts of the world. It provided many students with funding for their research and staff and students with congenial, though notoriously Spartan, office space in which to work and exchange ideas. Occasionally there were complaints that the graduate students who were attached to this program became isolated from the rest of the department, but on the whole relations between the program and the department remained close.

The first three Ph.D.s in anthropology were awarded in 1968 to Gillian Sankoff, for her study of multilingualism in New Guinea (a subject which personally interested Salisbury), Saul Arbess, for his investigation of values and socioeconomic change in the George River area of Quebec, and Rochelle Romalis for her analysis of economic change in St. Lucia. All three students were supervised by Salisbury.

During the late 1960s the spectre of separatism was haunting not only Canada but also the McGill sociology and anthropology department. Before I arrived at McGill, an anthropologist who had formerly worked in the department warned me that William Westley, the chairman, would not tolerate any anthropologist who threatened its unity. By 1968, Salisbury had been chairman of the department for two years and nine of the twenty-two professors in the department were anthropologists. It is not surprising that during this era of growing specialization most of the anthropologists and many of the younger sociologists (who were defining sociology more quantitatively than had been done in the past) had come to want separate departments. This view was not shared by Salisbury, who believed strongly in the theoretical unity of the two disciplines. But the sociologists were also becom-

ing increasingly annoyed by the large undergraduate courses they had to teach, while the less pressured anthropologists were forging ahead with their research and a dynamic graduate program. The result was an apparently amicable agreement to divide the department on June 1, 1969. In reality, the anthropologists were ejected by the sociologists, who were determined to free themselves from what they regarded as a growing number of parasites. The sociologists hoped that a far larger number of undergraduate enrolments would secure for their new department a larger share of university funding than they had been receiving in the joint department. Salisbury pragmatically accepted the separation as inevitable and became the first chairman of the Department of Anthropology. Within a year, however, he turned the chair over to me, in order to devote more of his energies to the Programme in the Anthropology of Development.

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

The independence of the anthropology department came at a bad time. McGill was experiencing the first of many periods of financial stringency after several years of unprecedented expansion. In 1971, the department had to secure soft funds in order to avoid having to terminate one of its non-tenured line positions. This stringency meant that, despite a tripling of undergraduate enrolments between 1969 and 1975, there was no significant expansion in the number of anthropologists employed at McGill. By 1977, only two additional academic positions had been added to the budget of the department.

As undergraduate enrolments became increasingly important for the funding prospects of the department, growing attention had to be paid to the needs and wishes of undergraduates. As a result of Salisbury's constructive response to the student protests of 1968, both graduate and undergraduate students had come to play an important role in decision-making. They had the right to appoint voting members to all departmental committees, an arrangement that has continued to serve the needs of staff and students alike to the present. Their participation on these committees also revealed that graduate and undergraduate students pursued different, and often conflicting, goals. Graduate students convinced the department that, in an age of increasingly specialized knowledge, the old-style Ph.D. comprehensives were no longer a useful way to train students. Hence these examinations were abolished in favour of a more individualized and tightly focused program. Hereafter few, if any, social anthropology graduate students elected to take cours-

es in archaeology. This meant that few of them were equipped to work as teaching assistants in the large introductory undergraduate courses in archaeology and physical anthropology and many were later handicapped when they sought teaching positions in smaller universities. Yet, because of keen undergraduate interest, it was impossible to consider eliminating archaeology. On the contrary, the department decided to add a second archaeologist.

During the 1970s, first I and then Ikawa-Smith chaired the department, doing our best to keep the creative but potentially explosive academic and ideological differences among our development colleagues in a dynamic equilibrium. We also played a major role in utilizing the long neglected McGill anthropological collections for teaching and research. I spent this period developing an interest in Iroquoian studies, which had more relevance for potential graduate students than did my research in Egypt and the Sudan.

Ikawa-Smith and I refused to begin graduate instruction in archaeology until there were at least three archaeologists in the department. This did not occur until Michael Bisson, who had studied the development of metallurgy in Zambia, was hired on a full-time basis in 1976. That year an archaeology master's program was launched, with areal specializations in eastern North America, East Asia, and subSaharan Africa. By longstanding design, these interests complemented the international interests of archaeologists at the Université de Montréal in Mesoamerica, Peru, and the Middle East. Because of limited facilities, only students who had received extensive practical training in archaeology at the undergraduate level were admitted and primary emphasis was laid on theoretical issues. The first M.A. in archaeology was awarded to Ronald Williamson in 1980. The Ph.D. program in archaeology was approved the same year and the first Ph.D. granted to Robert Pearce four years later. While much of the early focus of graduate training in archaeology was on Iroquoian studies, students eventually began to research East Asian and African topics. In recent years, both Chinese and Japanese students have been attracted to McGill for doctoral studies.

While archaeology developed as a minor and semiautonomous branch of the department that provided essential elements for the undergraduate curriculum, cultural anthropology posed a more complex problem, which also involved conflict between the interests of graduate students and undergraduates. Cultural anthropology had played an important role in the early days of the department, mainly in the form of

culture and personality studies. This approach was central to the work of Fried, Chance, and Sindell, who had linked it to the investigation of development. Culture and personality waned in importance in North America in the 1960s and, as the advocates of this approach left McGill, the perceived needs of the graduate program led to them being replaced by anthropologists with a more behaviourist orientation. Undergraduates remained fascinated, however, with subjects such as comparative religion, cognition, structuralism, and in due course the cultural construction of reality. The first solution was to hire a single cultural anthropologist to "handle" these topics. Between 1969 and 1972, the resident cultural anthropologist was John Janzen, a specialist in religion and ethno medicine in Zaire. He was replaced by Bernard Arcand, a student of Edmund Leach who had studied South American hunter-gatherers. He remained at McGill until 1976, when he joined the large group of structurally-oriented anthropologists at Laval. Between 1977 and 1988, Lee Drummond, a semiotician interested in Caribbean and North American popular culture, taught in the department. Each of these cultural anthropologists felt isolated at McGill and saw little hope of expanding appointments in their area of interest because of the department's existing commitments to development anthropology and creating a viable archaeology program.

By the late 1970s, the cause of this alienation had largely disappeared. Two more development anthropologists had joined the department in the early 1970s: Carmen Lambert, a northern specialist, and Donald Attwood, who studied rural cooperatives in India. However, the appointment of Jérôme Rousseau in 1973 brought into the department someone whose interest in social stratification and religion in nonstate societies straddled the fields of social and cultural anthropology. While Rousseau was interested in social change, he was not committed to the study of development. In 1975, Harvey Feit, who had worked with the Cree Project, was hired; his research involved studying development in relation to Cree cultural knowledge. Although Feit taught at McGill only briefly, a more lasting combination of cultural and development interests was introduced when John Galaty, a specialist on East African pastoralism, came to McGill in 1977. He combined an interest in Maasai traditional culture with the study of cultural change and development. In this way, the department attempted to broaden its offerings in cultural anthropology and to reduce alienation among its cultural anthropologists, while maintaining its distinctive focus on development.

These appointments also reflected a growing recognition that anthropology as a whole was moving away from the behaviourist bias that had prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s. This shift was evident in undergraduate course preferences and also, despite the careful selection of graduate students so that their interests corresponded with those of existing staff, in graduate dissertation topics. An increasing number of dissertations did not address development issues, while many that did were becoming more cultural and less behaviourist in their orientation.

Another decisive event that promoted cultural anthropology at McGill was the appointment of Margaret Lock to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in Medicine (now Social Studies of Medicine) of the Faculty of Medicine in 1975. The role of anthropologists in that department, which was to understand medical practice in its cultural setting, clearly favoured the appointment of cultural anthropologists. Lock soon had a cross-appointment in anthropology, which laid the basis for the development of medical anthropology at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels. In 1986-87, the anthropology department and the medical faculty formally joined in offering an M.A. program in Medical Anthropology. Lock's and Ikawa-Smith's shared interests in Japan encouraged the recognition of East Asia as yet another areal focus within the department and throughout the Faculty of Arts.

Between 1977 and 1986, the staff of the department remained stable: no one left and no new positions were created. The total number of anthropologists was thirteen, including Lock, who was not on the department's payroll. Variety was provided by temporary replacements for staff who were either on research leave or taking sabbaticals, which had become a right of McGill professors in 1973. Serious constraints were imposed on the graduate program by the department's inability to hire another northernist or to make its own appointment in the increasingly popular field of medical anthropology. Undergraduates, who were enrolling in rapidly increasing numbers through the 1980s, after a period of decline in the late 1970s, were demanding more courses in archaeology, physical anthropology, women's studies, and cultural anthropology generally. These could only be offered on a partial and irregular basis by replacement appointments. The hiring of Rousseau, Galaty, and Drummond had whetted rather than satisfied the undergraduate demand for more cultural anthropology. At the same time, a growing number of graduate students were seeking supervision in cultural anthropology and

applying cultural anthropological approaches to development studies.

When the department prepared its self-study document for the cyclical review of 1986, it was formally recognized that since 1979 the cultural stream had emerged as an important feature of the undergraduate program and that cognitive/cultural and medical anthropology were now secondary foci of sociocultural anthropology at McGill. It was also observed that the distinction between social and cultural anthropology was not as clear as it used to be and that symbolic issues were important for understanding cultural change. These comments still implied, however, the subordination of cultural anthropology to the department's principal focus on development. The self-study document quoted with pride John Bennett's observation, made in 1985, that "McGill has, in my estimation, the most distinguished collection of anthropologists interested in development, pro and con, on the continent."

RECENT ADJUSTMENTS

The department's self-image and its staffing, which had been static for over a decade, began to change dramatically in 1986. Gutkind took early retirement that year and moved to England, and Salisbury, who had gradually been reducing his responsibility for supervising graduate students, effectively left the department to become Dean of Arts until his anticipated retirement in 1991. In 1989, he died after a long illness leaving important scholarly work that he had set aside for his retirement unfinished.

Colin Scott joined the department in 1986; a northernist who like Feit combined an interest in development and the social construction of reality. The burgeoning demand for instruction in medical anthropology was met by cross-appointing two more distinguished anthropologists from the medical faculty: Allan Young and Ellen Corin, both of whom were interested in psychiatric anthropology. Their appointments greatly strengthened the cultural side of the department. Expansion positions were also found for two Canada Post-Doctoral Research fellows: Toby Morantz, an ethno historian who works among the Cree of northern Quebec, and Laurel Bossen, a development anthropologist who had focussed on Guatemala but whose interests were turning to China.

In 1988, James Savelle joined the archaeology program. He quickly attracted a new group of graduate students and initiated a vigorous program of fieldwork

in Arctic Canada. Savelle's interests in ecology and paleotechnology added new strengths to the archaeology program, while his materialist orientation contrasted with the drift towards relativism and particularism among the cultural anthropologists. The archaeology program could now offer technical instruction in zooarchaeology (Savelle), food and nutrition (Ikawa-Smith), lithic technology (Bisson), and settlement analysis (Trigger).

Finally, in 1990, the department had the good fortune to secure Roger Keesing as a replacement for Salisbury, the crucial consideration being Keesing's renown as a theorist rather than that he, like Salisbury, was a specialist on Oceania. Keesing's charisma and exceptional dynamism, his achievements as a cultural anthropologist, his broad theoretical interests, and his passionate concern for the welfare of indigenous peoples and for redefining anthropology's relations with them provided a catalyst for rethinking many fundamental issues relating to sociocultural anthropology and the future directions that anthropology should take at McGill. While the department was still rejoicing that Keesing had wished to live in Montreal, he died suddenly and unexpectedly in May 1993; but not before he had a lasting impact on the department.

In 1994 the department was permitted to hire Kristin Norget as a junior replacement for Keesing. Her doctoral dissertation was a study of popular religion in Oaxaca, Mexico. But, later the same year, Aronson resigned from the department to join the World Bank. The department thus lost one of its most experienced development researchers, as well as a highly respected former chair. As a result of growing financial stringencies, no replacement of his position has been authorized so far. Aronson's departure seriously weakened the department's traditional commitment to development research in Africa. With him an interest in urban development going back to the time of Peter Gutkind's appointment also came to an end, leaving the department focused primarily on rural development.

Changes since the late 1980s have strengthened the role of cultural anthropology in the department. The annual report for 1988-89 observed that "cultural and symbolic approaches have come to the fore during the past decade, and to have claims to distinction in the discipline we must be able to offer advanced instruction and research in this area and to inform our other work with the discourse from this influential perspective." Four streams were now recognized at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels: social change and development; cultural studies; prehistoric archae-

ology; and medical anthropology. In the 1990-91 annual report, the first of these streams was referred to as "social systems and socio-cultural change," placing primary emphasis on the theoretical aspects of development. In the undergraduate program four streams are currently recognized: social anthropology; cultural anthropology; sociocultural change and development; and prehistoric archaeology. These changes acknowledged the growing importance of cultural anthropology and of theoretical concerns as central foci of the department.

There is general agreement that development anthropology has been enriched rather than diluted as a consequence of the increasing emphasis on cultural anthropology in the department. In response to the growing influence of postmodernism, most social anthropologists have become increasingly sensitive to cultural factors for understanding economic and social change. This productive interaction between cultural and development anthropology could have been disrupted, however, had a more dogmatic and extreme form of cultural relativism been advocated, which rejected change and development as valid objects of study. One of Keesing's most valuable contributions was to consolidate relations between development and cultural anthropology. This was possible at least in part as a result of his own rejection of extreme relativism, which facilitated a productive dialogue between these two approaches.

The old dichotomy between the advocates of consensual and confrontational change in development anthropology has been replaced by a spectrum of options that accord differing weights to material and cultural factors in bringing about change. Dogmatism has given way to measured discussion and to an approach to understanding change that is both more empirically based and more theoretically oriented than it had been in the past. Anthropologists of different theoretical persuasions are further united by shared regional interests and common concerns about issues such as ethnicity, inequality, rural development, and nomadic studies.

In retrospect it appears that had various factors, especially the needs of the undergraduate program, not forced the department to diversify, it would have been much harder for development anthropology at McGill to keep abreast of more general changes in anthropology. A continuing narrow focus on economic and political issues would have inhibited the intellectual growth of development anthropology. While specialization may be the key to excellence in small

departments, too much specialization can be counter-productive.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROSPECTS

For a considerable time the McGill anthropology department has been recognized (along with Linguistics) as one of the two most successful departments in the Faculty of Arts. Despite an increasingly heavy load of undergraduate teaching, research and publications remain at a high level and there is still a strong emphasis on the training of graduate students.

Because of the small size of the department, applicants for graduate studies have been expected to have clearly defined objectives, be self-motivated, and have interests that correspond with those of the staff. Rarely have more than 33 percent of applicants in any one year been admitted, and often far fewer. That has meant that our students have had a high success rate in securing funding for their studies and finishing degrees. The department has managed to attract a considerable number of students from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific, as well as from the United States, despite McGill's failure to provide fellowships that are monetarily competitive with those of many other Canadian universities. In 1996, a Japanese student, Junko Habu, won the Governor General's gold medal for her doctoral dissertation on subsistence patterns in the prehistoric Jomon period.

Since the beginning of the anthropology program, the department has (as of June 1996) graduated 119 M.A.s and 81 Ph.D.s. For a time in the 1960s and 1970s, it was turning out half the anglophone anthropology Ph.D.s in Canada. While long outproduced by the University of Toronto and more recently challenged by the University of British Columbia, Laval, and some other institutions, McGill has continued to grant more anthropology graduate degrees in relation to the number of its staff than has any other Canadian university. Moreover, the number of Ph.D. degrees has been increasing in recent years. Graduates teach in universities and work in various applied roles across Canada and abroad.

While the original plan to provide supervised field training for all M.A. students did not survive past 1968, more recently many graduate students have worked in Canada, India, Kenya, and Sardinia as members of research teams organized by McGill staff. The department has created, or helped to create, a series of centres and teams that secure funding and provide stimulating institutional settings for carrying

out research. The Program in the Anthropology of Development continues to support a wide range of research projects in the Canadian North, Africa, India, China, and the Mediterranean. Since 1991, AGREE, the multi-disciplinary and multi-university Aboriginal Government, Resources, Economy, and Environment research team directed by Scott has been carrying out research on indigenous politics, resource management, and development in Canada and Australia. It has developed out of the former James Bay Cree Project. MARE, the Mediterranean Anthropology Research Equipe, directed by Salzman, has been studying rural life in Sardinia since 1990. Teams working in East Africa, India, and China have consolidated to form PASE, the Pastoral and Agrarian Systems Equipe, which adopts a comparative approach to the study of agrarian development. STANDD, the interdisciplinary Centre for Society, Technology, and Development, was created by Galaty, Attwood, Bossen, and staff from other departments and faculties to strengthen collaboration among the natural and social sciences for better understanding agrarian development in third world countries. All these groups carry on the department's tradition of involving graduate students in research that is of practical significance to indigenous and third world peoples. Most of this research has been supported by grants from agencies of the federal and Quebec governments.

Even so, over half the degrees granted by McGill have resulted from individual rather than from team research. There has never been a total correspondence between the formal objectives and the realization of the graduate program. Despite selection procedures designed to harmonize the interests of incoming graduate students with those of the staff, students have been encouraged to develop their research in new directions. It is tacitly recognized that such flexibility is essential for a successful graduate program.

Much staff time is involved providing graduate students with individual tuition and supervision. Between 1985 and 1992, the undergraduate enrolment in the department doubled but there was an increase of only two permanent staff, plus two more cross appointments with the medical faculty. Since then enrolments have continued to rise but Aronson's position has not been replaced.

McGill anthropologists play active roles on the executives of national and international learned societies, on various government and research committees, and at many levels of university administration. The Commission on Nomadic Peoples of the International

Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, which for many years was chaired by Salzman, assisted by Aronson and Galaty, has been recognized as one of the most successful of these bodies, which seek to coordinate international research. It was run with minimal financial support from the university. While such work has benefitted the anthropology department in many ways, it has required the expenditure of much time and energy.

Reviewing the annual reports of the last decade, it is evident that, as most anthropologists in the department have advanced into middle age, their productivity has risen rather than declined. There is a marked increase in the publication of books and articles in major journals, participation in anthropological meetings, and invitations to give lectures at universities around the world. A recent analysis of the *Annual Review of Anthropology* since 1985 indicates that the average number of citations per anthropologist has been higher for McGill than for any other Canadian university. At the same time, these anthropologists have maintained a steadfast commitment to carrying out significant research.

During the years of stability in the department, a fixed staff hierarchy came to be accepted, in which Salisbury and Gutkind were the senior sociocultural anthropologists. After 1990, Keesing occupied that position. What was not adequately appreciated was that a number of younger sociocultural anthropologists had matured into scholars with international reputations in the fields of development, social complexity, cultural anthropology, nomadic societies, and medical anthropology.

The department's small size and increasing work load have forced it to respond more slowly than its faculty would like to new trends in the discipline. Demands to address new topics and for broader theoretical coverage have been made by graduate and undergraduate students throughout the history of the department. It is, I believe, a major accomplishment that over the years the department has been able to respond in a reasonable fashion to these demands, enrich its offerings, and reconceptualize its central mission while not losing sight of the need to focus its resources in order to achieve excellence. With a small staff it is not easy, however, to keep abreast of new trends. A development program requires specialists in key emerging theoretical areas, such as commoditization. This requires either hiring new staff or a major reorientation of the interests of current members of the department.

How has a small department in a cash-starved faculty and a chronically underfunded university managed as well as it has? Most of its success results directly from the long-term dedication and loyalty of its staff, only two of whom have resigned since 1976. The heavy and growing undergraduate teaching loads of recent years might have discouraged good people from staying. Yet most anthropologists feel that, largely as a result of the spirit of mutual support and cooperation within the department, they have had a fair chance to achieve the professional goals they set for themselves. This, combined with Salisbury's example of service and the pursuit of excellence, continues to encourage McGill anthropologists to remain part of a department in which staff members individually and collectively take pride. The department has also been blessed with support staff who strive against daunting odds to create an atmosphere in which teaching, research, and collective governance are possible. For over three decades hope and determination have permitted the department to cope with scarce resources. Salisbury's legacy to the department has not been a static formula for doing anthropology but a highly effective mode of adaptation to an institutional environment in which resources have always been limited and generally grudgingly bestowed.

Yet it is uncertain how long such loyalties can sustain any department. McGill, along with all Quebec universities, faces severe economic cutbacks and no one knows how far the anthropology department's reputation and prudent management of its affairs will protect it against calls for deep across-the-board cuts. The problem of funding good students also poses a serious threat to our graduate program. It is possible that a combination of early retirements, increasing teaching loads, and fewer graduate students could destroy the department as a major Canadian centre of research and doctoral training. While the anthropologists at McGill share a clear and self-renewing vision of their mandate, can they continue to muster the financial and human resources to sustain that vision? In the 1960s it never occurred to those of us who were struggling to build the department that some day it might require more effort and sheer blind faith to sustain our department than it did to establish it in the first instance. Unfortunately, we know that in the current context of Canadian universities, we are far from alone.

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