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ABSTRACT

This chapter is an exploration of theory and practice that could be useful for the articulation of a "bioarchaeology of community." "Community" is a more complex and vexing concept than meets the eye, and its meaning has changed significantly over the past few centuries. This chapter reviews the varied meanings of community in the recent past, evaluates archaeological understandings of community, and explores current uses of social theory in bioarchaeology. Lastly, I lay out a potential theoretical and ethical roadmap for bioarchaeologists who wish to investigate past communities. [Bioarchaeology, Community, Theory, Ethics]

Bioarchaeology is in an interesting and creative, if perhaps tenuous, theoretical moment, as evidenced by this volume and recent examples in the literature (Agarwal and Glencross 2011; Baadsgaard et al. 2011; Knudson and Stojanowski 2008; Tilley 2015). More bioarchaeologists are employing archaeological and sociocultural theory in their work than ever before. These bioarchaeologists are also reflexively crafting their research around sociocultural issues, and re-evaluating received disciplinary premises about how they should engage with both the human remains of the past and their resonance in the present (Boutin 2011; Deskaj this volume; Geller 2006; Martin et al. 2013). A bioarchaeology of community can be a robust addition to this trend in the field, if its practitioners are prepared to stretch their scientific training into new spheres, ones where questions of the social—relationships between individuals, their kin and ancestors, the structures of power and control that limited people, and the dynamic cultural features that engendered change—are allowed to set the tone for their research.

Bioarchaeology, however, exhibits a longer record of hewing to an objective and materialist scientific tradition, where empirical analyses and interpretations have come from the bottom, or the bones, up (see Buikstra and Beck 2006 and Larsen 1997). In other words, bioarchaeologists have conventionally read the features that may be discerned from human skeletal remains from archaeological contexts, then suggested interpretations based on foundational research linking the morphological and chemical properties of bone to lived experiences, from the dietary, to the physiologically stressed, and even to questions of identity in the past. Bioarchaeology, though, has never been solely a descriptive science; rather, the last four decades of its existence have clearly shown that the practice of bioarchaeology is rooted in both archaeological and anthropological approaches to the study of human remains. Despite this, there has traditionally been an anti- or atheoretical ethos in bioarchaeology—when it has come to *social* theory. Certainly, there is nothing inherently wrong with a bioarchaeology that is both hypothesis-driven and geared toward "anthropological problem solving" (Buikstra 2006a:xviii). If bioarchaeologists want to explore issues around community, though, I believe engagement with social theory is required, something that is a relatively newer practice in the field.

Below, too, I will assert, as others have done before me, that bioarchaeology is and has been a deeply processual endeavor (Buikstra 2006a:xviii). Yet, when bioarchaeology has considered cultural issues it has not, at least until recently, done so in a way driven by the use and consideration of

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sociocultural theory. The biocultural approach (see bioarchaeological contributions to Goodman and Leatherman 1998 and also Martin et al. 2013, among others) is a lively and strong exception to this trend, but here I would like to reach even further toward the sociocultural, and suggest that more than a "biocultural" approach, what some bioarchaeologists seem to be reaching for is a *sociohistorical* bedrock for their scientific and interpretive work, one that of course would not exist without the influence of those who do bioculturally oriented and archaeologically contextualized work[1]. I define sociohistorical in this context as a deeper attention to not only how contemporary social theory may inform bioarchaeology, but to how bioarchaeologists can and should be as historically and culturally specific as possible in their interpretations, even in the absence of written histories. Bioarchaeologists have all too often employed a Tylorian comparative method to ground their interpretations in something that is already known, such as a cultural practice that leaves marks on bone, or a set of behaviors that are expressed skeletally in similar ways, even if those instances are far from the places and times they study. Buikstra (2006a) and Goldstein (2006:377) have long called for bioarchaeology to be a deeply contextual endeavor, and here I wish to stretch a smidgen past that, and recommend that bioarchaeologists historically contextualize their work as well, even if that means being left in a place of not knowing the culturally specific significance of a given feature, adaptation, or cultural modification. I will discuss the potential for "sociohistorical" bioarchaeology below, but it is this attention to historical and cultural specificity that will, in my estimation, most effectively ground a bioarchaeology of community, or any kind of bioarchaeology that wishes to concern itself primarily with the recovery and reconstruction of sociocultural relationships in the past. If these approaches are to take hold and influence research in and outside of bioarchaeology, scholars should be open to further theoretical and cultural exploration.

This chapter, then, is a theoretical consideration of the "bioarchaeology of community" in three parts—or, in archaeological parlance, phases, or, in "sociocultural-ese"—movements. First, I will critically consider the concept of "community," specifically how it has been employed in anthropology as a whole, as well as in archaeology. I will evaluate the possibilities of a bioarchaeology of community given Canuto and Yaeger's (2000) earlier call for an archaeology of community. Second, I will enumerate the particular history of how bioarchaeology has gotten to a place where we are considering multiple socially and culturally oriented "bioarchaeologies," borrowing from Buikstra, Baadsgaard, and Boutin (2011:9), and framing at least some of our research in the context of social theories little used in the field before the last decade or so (e.g., Knudson and Stojanowski 2008). Last, I will end by discussing both disciplinary and ethical potentials and pitfalls, as at least some bioarchaeologists, many represented in this volume, attempt to move forward in establishing a "bioarchaeology of community." Each of these topics clearly deserves a much longer exposition, and I very much hope readers will see them as initial sketches for understanding where we have come from theoretically, and to where we might proceed. Part of this chapter will still tell a rather cautionary tale, but in bioarchaeology's current disciplinary and theoretical context, there is a good deal of interesting work that can be done—if it is done carefully—toward forging a "Bioarchaeology of Community."

The Many Meanings of Community

Why a "bioarchaeology of community" and why now? Before examining the ways community has gained currency within sociocultural anthropology and archaeology, I want to present some cultural and etymological information courtesy of Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1985), and stress these passages in particular:

> From C17 [the 17th century] there are signs of the distinction which became especially important from C19, in which **community** was felt to be more immediate than SOCIETY (q.v.), although it must be remembered that *society* itself had this more immediate sense until C18, and *civil society* (see CIVILIZATION) was, like *society* and *community* in these uses, originally an attempt to distinguish the body of direct relationships from the organized establishment of *realm* or state. From C19 the sense of immediacy or locality was strongly developed in the context of larger and more complex industrial societies [Williams 1985:75].

and,

> The complexity of **community** thus relates to the difficult interaction between the tendencies originally distinguished in the historical development: on the one hand the sense of direct common concern; on the other hand the materialization of various forms of common organization, which may or may not adequately express this. **Community** can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (*state, nation, society,* etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably [sic], and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term [Williams 1985:76].

"Community," then, as "warmly persuasive" has had a contrary relationship to conceptualizations of larger forms of

social organization, especially in the industrialized West. In particular, early social theorists bemoaned the loss of a traditional sort of community in the tumult of industrial capitalism (see primarily Tönnies 1887). Throughout the 20th century, *community*, at least in the West, indexed a kind of social and cultural intimacy between people that was lacking at larger, institutional levels of society[2]. Yet, political theorist Nikolas Rose (1999) asserts that modern ideas of community are actually tied to capitalist forms of governance, where relations of affect are produced and maintained as a type of self-governance, all still ultimately controlled by the nation-state (186,190). Gender theorist Miranda Joseph takes this further, arguing that in order to even be considered a community, a group of people must conform to bureaucratically intelligible traits that, in effect, "turns the raw material of community into subjects of the nation-state and capital" (Joseph 2002:28). She goes on to assert two important points: that when a group exists or moves in circles outside of or unrecognized as positive to state interests, that it is constructed as a "'gang' or an 'underground network'" (Joseph 2002:28) and that the discursive, and the actual use of community as a concept in the West, has flattened distinctions of power, making "one group equivalent to another . . . (white ethnic groups versus African Americans)" (Joseph 2002:28).

From the vantage point of contemporary sociocultural anthropology, Gerald Creed (2006) takes a similar tack, with this pointed statement about the increasing use of "community" in anthropology during the 1980s:

> The dangerous potential of the culture concept was exposed in the emergence of culturally defined racisms . . . and ideas about the clash of civilizations . . . Community seemed a safe generic alternative . . . it is an alternative, but not always or altogether a safe one; many uses reproduce the problematic qualities and dangers of culture [7].

The proliferation of the word community to denote ties of identification between people, in particular marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ community, or the African-American community—or, closer to archaeology and bioarchaeology, descendant communities—leaves us with a thin layer of community that actually quite uneasily covers more culturally charged gendered, raced, and even biologized identities (see also Joseph 2002). In other words, in this usage, community becomes equivalent to culture, with non-Western or non-majority groups having or possessing community or culture (or both) and dominant groups occupying the unmarked category, in no need of the false security of a "community," since they may reap the benefits of institutional power without question.

Additionally, "community," according to Creed, contains at least three sometimes co-occurring parts, which, though, may or may not be mutually inclusive in all social or cultural situations:

1. a group of people
2. a most often positive comment on the quality of human relationships
3. a given circumscribed place or location [Creed 2006:4]

Community, therefore, is neither a simple nor an unloaded term, especially in recent critical political theory and in the qualitative social sciences. The adoption of the concept of "the community" for a program of research focusing on people, from any time or place, should be done with care and with a clear set of definitions. What might community have meant in the place and time period under investigation? Is there historical or material documentation to substantiate the existence of a community or communities? What kind of community is under investigation? How can the social relationships displayed or evident in the material record be construed to make up the activities of a community, and not some other form of social organization, such as kinship or larger sociocultural dynamics? Does it make sense to tie a given community to a certain place, or are the cultural links spread further and wider?

Likewise, archaeologists have tackled the concept of community and the identification of communities in fairly concrete—but also contradictory—ways, with Canuto and Yaeger (2000) promoting an interactionist model of community based on dynamic human relationships (5), and MacSweeney (2011), an archaeologist of Anatolia, recently advocating for a geographically specific understanding of ties to a particular location or region. Since the editors of this volume have subscribed to Canuto and Yaeger's (2000) notion of community within archaeology, their vision of its theoretical foundations and practice deserve some further explication. First, Canuto and Yaeger review previous social scientific models for the study of community—"structural-functionalist, historical-developmental, ideational, and interactional" (2). Structural-functionalist approaches, as the name implies, consider how communities function within a culture or society, and therefore, like functionalism within anthropology, conceive of communities as inherent and unchanging. The historical-developmental model, named as such by Canuto and Yaeger, is equivalent to world systems theory and political economy, where larger forces are responsible for the relations observed both inside and outside a given community. They find this approach wanting in that it ignores local people's understandings of themselves and the creative ways in which people translate outside influences in their own ways and for their own uses.

They also reject a purely ideational model, the obverse of the historical-developmental approach, where people's own ideas inform the social scientific research on their identities. In this case, they find the exclusion of "external structures" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:3) incompatible with gaining a full understanding of community dynamics. Instead, they adopt an interactionalist perspective (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:6), where multiple levels of culture/society and identity formation at the individual and local level can be accommodated within the rubric of practice theory. They recommend "pairing the concepts of shared space and practice . . . [to] avoid the reification and essentialization of 'community'" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:6). They argue that community is "an inherently social entity, diverse in its manifestations and temporally ephemeral" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:6).

This sophisticated understanding of community leads to an equally nuanced discussion of methodologies for an archaeology of community. Because their idea of a community is versatile and applicable to multiple temporal contexts, they lay out a broad set of methodological concerns, ones also useful to bioarchaeology. First, they warn that a community need not map onto the bounded space of the archaeological site: "the community is not a spatial cluster of material remains to be observed, but rather a social process to be inferred" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:9). Similarly, bioarchaeologists should not assume a given burial population naturally forms the basis for community that may be examined as such. Second, Canuto and Yaeger advise that archaeologists should take "an explicitly middle level approach" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:9) in between the level of the individual and that of the larger social and spatial organization, such as the region. Third, Canuto and Yaeger are committed to establishing patterns of interaction as the basis for defining an archaeology of community. And last, they remind their readers that "the archaeological record actually represents a palimpsest of the material outcomes of interactions whose contemporaneity cannot be assumed" (Canuto and Yaeger 2000:11). All three of the above methodological concerns make it incumbent upon bioarchaeologists, then, to understand the archaeological and historical literature and context(s) in the region(s) in which they work, in order to accurately define community at the site, intra-site, or inter-site level. Not only that, but as the "materials" with which bioarchaeologists work are human remains, establishing interaction will require the careful use of both archaeological and historic documentation, if available. Being interred with other people in the same burial location is certainly a kind of interaction, but it may or may not represent an expression of "community" that is separate from kin (or ancestral) relationships, or macro-level relationships such as those at the regional or even state level.

Obviously "community" is, and has been, a conceptual and intellectual moving target in the social sciences. So what are bioarchaeologists to make of these complicated issues around community? Clearly, we should not simply project a late-19th or even a 21st century idea of community onto the past. That is not to say, however, that building a bioarchaeology of community should be forever mired in thought experiments about what community means. The model provided by Canuto and Yaeger (2000) can be especially useful, especially when bioarchaeologists solidly ground themselves in the archaeological context. Bioarchaeologists, however, have a few discipline-specific challenges to face with regard to formulating workable models of community.

History Lesson 1: Populations are Populations, Not People

To enumerate one of those challenges, a sketch of the history of physical anthropology's shift to the population framework is required. Sherwood Washburn's call for a "New Physical Anthropology" (1951) spurred researchers in many of the varied physical anthropological subdisciplines to turn away from individual-oriented case studies and racial-typological work toward population-oriented research on evolution, adaptation, and process. Bioarchaeologists were also later influenced by the rise of processualism in archaeology—quickly defined here as the concern with past processes, systems, or large cultural changes over time, not simply particular or isolated events (Binford 1962; Willey and Phillips 1958; Trigger 1989). The conceptual problem with focusing on populations is, however, that like "pots are pots, not people" so populations are populations, and not people. Even though individuals with their kin are obviously the constituent parts of both populations and communities, populations and communities are not immediately equivalent to each other. Certainly, a researcher could employ a geographically oriented definition (à la MacSweeney 2011) of community to try to avoid the knotty problem of applying patterns of affect to skeletal groups, whatever their size. It strikes me that such a definition, though, may not work for all places, regions, and time periods. Moreover, a simple replacement of the term "population" with "community" is theoretically lazy, at best. Although it may be impossible, in many cases, to emically define and interpret community interactions with biology, or material culture, or historical documentation, grafting population onto community, in essence, is simply a surrender to an unnecessarily etic perspective on a past people.

Second, biology and morphology do not easily map onto community either. Establishing the cultural, ethnic, or class

identities of the individuals that make up a skeletal sample is not demonstrating the existence of a community, or more precisely, the character of the relationships between said individuals that may suggest the presence of a community. It is not principally that relationships within a rubric of community are primarily (or even exclusively) cultural and ephemeral as discussed above—although that is part of the challenge. However, in the pursuit of community, bioarchaeologists may have to pivot even closer to archaeology, history, and ethnohistory.

These moves may be easy, or nigh impossible, depending on the richness of the historical and archaeological record of a particular place, or during a specific time period. Furthermore, when we use archaeological and/or historical sources, we could be much more aware of continuing and contested dialogues in these disciplines about given times and peoples, and we should be cognizant of the dangers of over generalization across long swaths of time. This is the crux of what I called above a sociohistorical approach to bioarchaeology. Beyond contextual or biocultural approaches, a sociohistorical bioarchaeology would rigorously employ social theory and responsibly rely on the archaeological, historical, and ethnohistorical literature, all for the aim to illuminate past sociocultural relationships through the study of human skeletal remains. This would not necessarily be a post-processual bioarchaeology. The ability to observe, analyze, and interpret skeletal morphology, pathology, cultural modifications, and activity patterns represents highly technical skills to learn, requiring years of training, and dependent on decades of received (and sometimes standardized) methodology (i.e., Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Bioarchaeologists need not leave their science behind. Bioarchaeologists might, though, more effectively reach out to other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities if they show a more nuanced understanding of the limits of strictly objective and materialist approaches to the past[3]. The bioarchaeology of community could be a useful vehicle for experimentation in this direction.

History Lesson 2: Theory in Bioarchaeology

The emergence of bioarchaeology in the mid– to late–1970s (Buikstra 2006a:xviii)—and its fluorescence into an anthropological subdiscipline with diverse presences at professional meetings and in anthropological, archaeological, and scientific journals—was deeply influenced by two parallel approaches in anthropology: Washburn's (1951) aforementioned "New Physical Anthropology" and the "New Archaeology"—or processualism—in archaeological practice (Buikstra et al. 2011:8-9). This history is well known and already more richly developed in other venues, as cited above. To this moment, mainstream bioarchaeology remains a solidly processual field, focused on what information can be reconstructed from and what questions we can ask of the surviving material remains of humans in numerous archaeological and temporal contexts. In short, we strive to know more about the past through multifaceted empirical examinations and analyses of skeletal bodies.

I would like to, though, construct a parallel timeline between archaeology and bioarchaeology for the purpose of situating post-processual archaeology alongside the increased attention to sociocultural theory in bioarchaeology we are experiencing, if not promulgating. For approximately two decades, the "New Archaeology" flourished; this period overlaps with the birth of bioarchaeology as we know it. In the 1980s, post-processual or interpretive (Johnson 2010:105) archaeology burst onto the scene (e.g., Hodder 1982; Shanks and Tilley 1987). The interpretive archaeologists of the last thirty years come in many different flavors and orientations, but what has united them is an explicit rejection of scientism, or the exclusive reliance on scientific objectivity in archaeology, and an attention to the ways in which archaeological interpretations are socially and culturally situated products of the present.

For bioarchaeology, though, no such fundamentally divisive, and here clearly over-simplified, rift currently exists. If we were to track the different theoretical and methodological underpinnings in United States' bioarchaeology since the mid-1970s, we might come up with a theoretical trajectory that opposes large population-based studies, and research that enumerates past behaviors (i.e., Larsen 1997; and see Hegmon 2003:215-216 for a discussion of behavioral archaeology) with a "contextualized" bioarchaeology that draws from historical and social theoretical currents in anthropology as a whole, as Buikstra and her coworkers have incisively explained it (Buikstra et al. 2011:9-10). I would add to this contextual "side" the biocultural approach as aforementioned. Yet, bioarchaeology as a general *practice* has not eschewed reliance on objective scientific or even hypothesis-driven empirical approaches; rather, it seems that what we are seeing now in the field is a continuing emergence of a "theoretically-aware bioarchaeology." That is, bioarchaeologists are increasingly using sociocultural theory from areas such as sex and gender, the body (Geller 2004, 2006), ethnicity and ethnogenesis (Stojanowsi 2010), narrative approaches (e.g., Boutin 2008, 2011), materiality (Sofaer 2006), and other frameworks, at the same time they are exploring newer scientific models and even more technical approaches toward empirical understandings of variability between individuals or groups (as evidenced

by some of the papers in this volume, including Deskaj and Novotny).

Theoretically aware bioarchaeology is, then, roughly equivalent to Hegmon's delineation of a "processual-plus" archaeology, where she asserts that "many concepts from the postprocessual archaeology of the 1980's . . . including interests in meaning, agency, and gender—have been incorporated into the processual (plus) mainstream" (2003:216-217). Like processual-plus archaeology, a theoretically aware bioarchaeology still uses the same meticulous analytical methods, though incorporating a greater emphasis on social theoretical trends. Additionally, in archaeology processual-plus is a pragmatic development from inside the discipline. Bioarchaeology, however, has not experienced its own post-processual moment. Therefore, a bioarchaeological turn to social theory probably owes as much to developments in processual-plus archaeology as it does to the social theoretical interests of its practitioners. It has been a few disciplinary generations since post-processual archaeology became popular, and students in bioarchaeology are also heavily (and hopefully) influenced by the archaeologists with whom they have the opportunity to work.

There is really no "post-processual bioarchaeology" as such then, at least not yet. The subject positioning practices evident in the post-processual tradition, and interpretive archaeological critiques of science *in toto* (see Johnson 2010:105–111), are clearly not paths bioarchaeology has chosen to follow (also see Meyer in this volume). That does not mean, however, that bioarchaeology is not potentially positioned to sprout a post-processual wing, as it were. I am sure at least a few disciplinary insiders and outsiders would find such a development intriguing. As it is, though, bioarchaeology remains firmly placed on the scientific side of anthropology and archaeology proper. This also does not mean, however, that bioarchaeology is necessarily "behind" archaeology or the more sociocultural fields. Rather, akin to culture history in archaeology, bioarchaeology stands on the much longer history of paleopathology, osteology, and physical anthropology as a whole. In fact, if we take a social theoretically informed or aware bioarchaeology as a contemporary benchmark, it has only been a few decades since the 1990s, the beginning of bioarchaeology's articulation as a way to interpret behavior, which I will cautiously dub the processual highpoint of the field.

Nevertheless, if we turn to sociocultural theory more and more, we are calling for our objects or subjects of study—call them remains, skeletal individuals, or even ancestors (Kakaliouras 2014)—to become increasingly *social*. That is at least how I interpret a call for a "bioarchaeology of community," or our interesting and increasing emphasis on theories of identity, personhood, ethnicity, gender, as well as other sociocultural categories, in the field[4]. When we use social theory to craft interpretations about past social and cultural life, we are often going beyond the ways the bodies we examine are "marked," physically, biologically, and even chemically. As an initial foray into "thinking with" community in bioarchaeology, perhaps earlier insights in medical anthropology, such as distinctions that Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1990) made between the individual body, the social body, and the body politic, would be useful in delineating the scale of analysis we want to work within. In this framework, the individual body, and the distinction between the self and the individual, varies widely in different cultural contexts. Similarly, the social body is a body in conversation with others, and a body influenced by sociocultural norms, whether said body is healthy, strong, sick, or weak. Finally, the "body politic," as a set of relations between individual and social bodies, can be marked by regulation, and even law. A contemporary example of the actions of the body politic are the "bathroom bills" that attempt to protect women from the different bodies of transgender and gender non-conforming people (Edelman 2016). Within and around these "bodies," "community" might lie precariously in-between the social and the political (see also Lock 1993 and Martin et al. 2013:71-72). A bioarchaeology of community might, with careful use of historical and archaeological evidence, be able to detail these sorts of bodily constructions for people in the past.

Another fruitful area for bioarchaeologists to continue to pursue theoretically, would be work around the issue of embodiment (See especially Knudson and Stojanowski 2008:412–414). Here I would call for embodiment, and the perspective of the body as a social construction, writ large and small, where everything from general morphology to bone chemistry could be seen as just different levels of an individual's (or community's) process of biological and perhaps cultural formation during life. It is clear, though, that when we ask skeletal individuals and assemblages to enact identities and to culturally relate to each other, it behooves us to carefully consider the social site(s) of our analyses.

An Ethic for the Bioarchaeology of Community

Last, the complex valences around the concept of community also ask us to consider potential ethical responsibilities bioarchaeologists have in representing past human groups as communities. Working with descendant communities and contemporary people with claims to ancestral skeletal remains and the archaeological past has thankfully become a more regular part of archaeology and bioarchaeology

in the past few decades. Rationales, models, and examples for how ethically to pursue this kind of research are increasingly showing up in the literature as well (e.g., Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007; Larsen and Walker 2005; Lippert 2008; also see more examples in Buikstra 2006b:407–412 and Martin et al. 2013:45–49). Contributions to this volume also point the way to how recent and contemporary peoples' understandings of dying, ritual, and place can articulate with those of the past (Deskaj, Novotny, and Zuckerman, this volume).

Rather than expound on the benefits of working with descendant communities (especially those whose pasts had been appropriated by archaeology and physical anthropology), or deconstruct the meaning of "community" in descendant communities (which would also be a useful exercise), I will focus here, briefly, on a single ethical aspect of community construction in the past with reference to contemporary people. This ethical concern is simply that bioarchaeologists who wish to focus on communities should be especially careful they do not reify a conception of community that serves to deny descendants their claims to their past and their ancestors. There are two issues that come into play here. First, archaeological and bioarchaeological nomenclature is often highly technical, alienating, and operates in scholarly circles that can have little resonance for laypeople (Dongoske 1997; Kakaliouras 2010). That is, archaeological phases, and names for sites and regional occupations are rarely consonant with descendant communities' understandings of their own pasts (e.g., Kennewick Man vs. The Ancient One). Secondly, and especially with reference to indigenous and marginalized peoples, making a claim as a member or representative of a descendant community is a deeply contradictory process. As religious scholar Greg Johnson (2005) articulates it for the context of repatriation under NAGPRA:

> [R]epatriation politics, which are defined at least in part according to the predilections of majority publics and polities, demand that indigenous orators articulate representations of themselves that are simultaneously pre-modern (pre-colonial identity) and high-modern (identity announced according to the rule of law) [484].

Similarly, 19th and early 20th century anthropology successfully appropriated the pasts of indigenous others for its own purposes (For a discussion of this history, see Reardon and Tallbear 2012), and the residue of that conceit led subsequent generations of archaeologists and biological anthropologists to discount contemporary indigenous people as not authentic enough—the "real" Indians were those we were excavating (McGuire 1997). This is cultural baggage within bioarchaeology that should not be blithely discarded.

Nonetheless, many descendant communities are caught in this very bind of not exhibiting the level of cultural and biological authenticity that anthropologists expect, yet being responsible for proving that authenticity using terms and frameworks developed by anthropologists. Given this disciplinary history and its politics in the present, it would be easier to construct a picture of past communities that seemed somehow more essential, more real, or more basic—more like the now commonsense conceptions of community as a warmly intimate subset of a culture or society discussed above. Bioarchaeologists who wish to investigate community, however, can disrupt the narrative of past community as simply a step up from kin and down from culture, and as a smaller expression of a more pure but illusory form of culture that is potentially inaccessible to descendant claims. The methodological key is, in my estimation, to approach the study of community "bioarchaeologically" with as much care and detail with the archaeological and historical context as bioarchaeologists are able to accomplish with human remains. A potential theoretical key would be to come to the study of community with the realization that there is no fundamentally common or unimpeachable model for what makes a human community for all places and times.

Conclusion

A bioarchaeology of community is certainly possible, even though all this is a very tall order, and I have certainly presented many more complications than solutions in this chapter. There is, too, clearly much more to say about community, and in particular around the complex, dynamic, and sometimes fragmented relationships between ancestral and descendant communities[5]. Even with all these challenges, though, there is a certain excitement around the formation of a new strand in the increasingly varied theoretical landscape of bioarchaeology. The field is as diverse and robust as it ever has been, so simply put, now is as good a time as any to stretch our theoretical legs. I look forward to the historically and culturally informed work this community of bioarchaeologists will propose and produce.

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bioarchaeology of community. Lastly, I would like to thank all the bioarchaeologists who have been striving to make social and sociocultural theory a part of the discipline; you know who you are. If I have not cited this work as extensively and appropriately as I should have, I regret that error and welcome both feedback and critique.

Notes

1. Biocultural researchers in particular may, understandably, take strong exception to this statement, and to the thin line I am attempting to draw between biocultural and sociohistorical research in bioarchaeology. Biocultural work, though, was and is deeply grounded in political economy, an approach I deeply respect. When dealing with scales of analysis between the individual and the cultural though (such as "community"), and the exploration of social and cultural relationships therein (still of course inflected with the power dynamics of their places and times), I think a little playing with nomenclature may be in order, primarily to explore how deep this social theoretical rabbit hole might go. The most laudable, if somewhat uneven, recent contribution to what I would call a sociohistorical approach to bioarchaeology is *Breathing New Life into the Evidence of Death: Contemporary Approaches to Bioarchaeology* (Baadsgaard, Boutin, and Buikstra 2011).

2. See, however, Anderson (2006), who made the distinction between real and "imagined" communities—which are formed at the level of the nation state—and who inspired a generation of critical inquiry about both.

3. The most interesting work along these lines has been done by Alexis Boutin (Sonoma State University), who crafts fictional narratives from her osteological analyses of burials from the Near East (Boutin 2011). While other bioarchaeologists may not choose to take her particular direction, the level of familiarity with the archaeological and historical literature evident in her work is commendable.

4. See Martin and coworkers (2013 66–81) for a rich and nearly comprehensive review of the uses of social theory in bioarchaeology, from evolutionary to sociocultural approaches. See Knudson and Stojanowski (2008, 2009) for a nuanced treatment of identity in bioarchaeology. And, see Tilley (2015) for an articulation of an emerging emphasis on the "bioarchaeology of care."

5. We should remind ourselves that the term *descendant community* was probably not invented by descendant communities (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008), though it is a useful catchall. Similarly, we should not assume that members of descendant communities conceive of the composition and function of community in the same way that archaeological and bioarchaeological researchers do. Recently, in a thoughtful contribution to the repatriation literature, Liv Nilsson Stutz argued that "in a world that is increasingly dominated by hybrid cultures, diaspora cultures and transnational migration, the past-present paradigm for culture heritage politics may come to constitute a real problem" (2013:187). Here she is referring to the employment of "strategic essentialism" (186) in claiming continuity between the past and present by indigenous communities in their fight for repatriation; this is also the model that is required by the definition of cultural affiliation under NAGPRA. However, because some indigenous people value their freedom to practice and live as closely as they can to their traditional culture(s), and argue for their similarity to their ancestors (even if it is an essentialist argument), we cannot then assume that they also hold static notions of their communities, and the changes they have and will experience (see also Holtorf 2009 for a similar critical read of indigenous archaeology).

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