

**PECULIAR ASPECTS OF THE FORMATION OF ANTHROPOLOGY
IN GREAT BRITAIN**

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***Abstract:** This article discusses the factors that influenced the formation of the science of anthropology in Great Britain, in particular, the intellectual environment in Britain and the impact of colonial expansion on the development of the field.*

***Key words:** Great Britain, evolutionism, diffusionism, functionalism, structuralism, field research, socio-cultural anthropology, biological anthropology.*

British anthropology emerged as a formal academic discipline in the 19th century as part of the intellectual and scientific developments of the time. The emergence of British anthropology is connected with several factors.

The first of these is the expansion of colonies and encounters with other cultures. The expansion of the British Empire led to increased contact with different cultures around the world. Encountering different societies and customs has led to an interest in understanding and classifying these cultures. The second is evolutionary theory and social Darwinism, created in the 19th century. The official history of anthropology in Britain dates from the founding of the

Anthropological Society of London in 1863 and the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (after 1907 the Royal Anthropological Institute).

Social Darwinism, which applied evolutionary ideas to human societies, played an important role in the formation of anthropological thought. Initially, evolutionary anthropologists needed a large amount of material covering the most primitive tribes of the earth in order to scientifically substantiate the theory of evolution. In this regard, sending questionnaires to different parts of the British Empire was considered the most convenient means. In 1874, Taylor (1832-1917) initiated and organized the creation of such a questionnaire under the auspices of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. As a result, there was a regular dialogue between theorists and amateur ethnographers. Among the amateur ethnographers who responded to anthropologists' calls for cooperation were many missionaries, as well as officials, businessmen, and even teachers. This process gives Taylor access to a large database. Taylor first carefully studies the works of Bastian and other teachers and develops the concept of cultural development. In 1896, he received the title of the first anthropologist at Oxford University. In 1912, Taylor was knighted for his research. Taylor first expressed his views based on evolutionary theory in his work "Researches in the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization", and later in such books as "Primitive Culture" and "Primitive Society". During his lifetime, the anthropologist tried to develop the theory of cultural traditions. Because the study of the development of such ancient traditions is considered important in the restoration of human evolution. Since many of the theories characteristic of the evolutionary theory have not been confirmed, this direction gradually began to lose its influence on society. Edward Taylor's contribution to modern anthropology through his little research is his definition of the concept of culture. This definition is given on the first page of his work "Primitive Culture": Culture or civilization includes ethnographic knowledge: belief, art, custom, law and other characteristics, and as a member of society, man owns them.

At the end of the 19th century, the crisis of the evolutionary paradigm became evident. This is reflected in the research of V. Rivers, one of the founders of the British anthropological school, on the new diffusionist theory. In 1914, his two-volume *History of Melanesian Society* was published. As the scientist says in the introduction of this work: "due to diffusionist Nazism, society has been freed from the power of crude evolutionary doctrine." Later, the diffusionist theory that he started was continued by his students. The most famous of them was Grafton Elliott Smith (1871-1937), the leader of the scientific movement of hyperdiffusionism. In the history of British social anthropology, his works in the field of comparative study of the cultures of the peoples of the world attracted special interest. In 1911 Elliot Smith's book "Ancient Egyptians and their Influence on European Civilization" was published.

However, due to this and the fact that the ideas of "pan-Egyptianism" were widely used in the book "Early Cultural Migrations" published in 1915, this concept did not gain popularity among professional anthropologists.

The history of British anthropology is distinguished by separate theoretical movements, and among them the period of functionalism occupies an important place. By the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of functionalism emerged as a response to the shortcomings of the evolutionary and diffusionist approaches that dominated throughout the 19th century. Functionalism shifted its focus from the historical development of cultures to examining how cultural institutions and practices function in the present.

An emphasis on fieldwork, in which anthropologists conduct research directly in the communities they study, has become a hallmark of British anthropology. This approach was reinforced by influential figures such as Bronisław Malinowski, who conducted ethnographic research in the Trobriand Islands. Malinowski's purpose in his fieldwork in the Trobriands was to identify the various themes—magic, economics, kinship, politics—that were woven into even the most basic of activities, such as house-building, sailing, or gardening.

From 1930 to 1960, British anthropology was dominated by structural anthropology.

Structural anthropology is a school of sociocultural anthropology based on Claude Lévi-Strauss's idea that all cultures have immutable deep structures, and therefore all cultural practices have homologous counterparts in other cultures, essentially all cultures are equal. We can determine the influence of not only British anthropologists, but also foreign anthropologists from British territory on the formation of British social and cultural anthropology. This is especially related to the emergence of the theory of structuralism in Britain. The transition to structuralism in British anthropology can be traced to the influence of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who introduced the structuralist framework in the mid-20th century. Lévi-Strauss's ideas challenged the functionalism that dominated English anthropology and provided a new lens for the analysis of cultures.

In short, British anthropology was shaped in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by colonial expansion, evolutionary theory, and encounters with different cultures. The efforts of early anthropologists, the establishment of anthropological societies, and the institutionalization of the discipline contributed to the development of a distinctly British tradition in anthropology.

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