

Suggested Reading & Glossary

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Glossary

Analogy: a) inference that if two or more things agree with one another in some respects, they will probably agree in others; b) resemblance in some particulars between things otherwise unlike.

Analytic: skilled in, or using, analysis.

Cultural Ecology: examines the strategies cultures use to adapt to various environmental conditions.

Cultural Materialism: explains culture change in terms of technological responses to environmental change, demographic pressure, protein deficiency, etc.

Deduction: the process of reasoning in which a conclusion follows necessarily from the stated premises, for example, an inference by reasoning from the general to the specific; in a good deduction, if the premises are *all* true, the conclusion cannot be false.

Diachronic: occurring or developing through time; in the archaeological sense, conducting a study that considers evidence over multiple periods of time or from multiple components [from Greek *dia-*, through + *khronos*, time].

Empirical: originating in, or based on, observation or experience; capable of being verified or disproved by observation or experiment [from Greek *empeirā*, experience].

Epistemology: investigates the nature and origin of knowledge; a theory of the nature of knowledge [from Greek *epistēmē*, knowledge or understanding].

Explanation: the act or process of making plain or comprehensible; elucidation; clarification. This is a goal of those who view archaeology as a scientific discipline [see Interpretation].

Field Logistics: the practical workings of an archaeological project, i.e. budget, equipment, work schedule, crew, etc.

Hermeneutic: interpretive; explanatory [from Greek *hermēneutikos*, of interpretation].

Heuristic: helping to discover or learn; guiding or furthering one's investigation [from Greek *heuriskein*, to discover or find].

Hypothesis: a provisional assumption made in order to draw out and test its logical or empirical consequences....implies insufficiency of presently attainable evidence and, therefore, a tentative explanation.

Induction: principle of reasoning in which a conclusion does *not* follow necessarily from the stated premises but follows with some degree of likelihood; for example, reaching a conclusion about all the members of a class from examination of only a few members of the class, or reasoning from the particular to the general. Unlike deductive reasoning, even in a good induction it is still possible to draw a false conclusion from premises that are all true.

Interpretation: an assertion that some characteristic or situation in the past is evidenced by some specific characteristic or property of the archaeological record; a knowledge claim made regarding the meaning of an archaeological observation (Binford 2001b:673). This is a goal of those who view archaeology as a humanistic discipline [see Explanation].

Law: implies a statement of order and relation in nature that has been found to be invariable under the same conditions.

Marxist Archaeology: emphasizes the primary significance of the relations of production to the dynamics of social change.

Middle-Range Theory: links specific conceptions of the dynamic cultural subject to static archaeological data.

Model (archaeological): situation analog based on history/anthropology, or simple iconic documentation; it simplifies complex observations while offering a framework with which to structure observations; it separates the 'noise' from the valuable information:

- a) iconic model = simplest model in which attributes are represented in code (maps, charts, graphs); useful as concise documentation and for generalization purposes.
- b) analogue model = observed attributes are studied by substituting other kinds of analogous attributes whose consequences agree with those of the observed attributes; can be dangerous, but most commonly used in archaeology.

c) symbolic model = observed attributes are represented by symbols which, unlike iconic symbols, are interpreted in a specific calculus; most sophisticated and not suitable for archaeology.

Null Hypothesis: a hypothesis (see above), to be tested statistically, that no difference exists within the groups tested or that no correlation exists between the variables. If the null hypothesis can be rejected, the existence of a difference or a relationship can be proved; generally, it is considered more appropriate to disprove a null hypothesis than to “prove” a hypothesis.

Positivism: maintains that, given sufficient data and sound analytical procedures, archaeologists’ interpretations can be uncontaminated by current social conditions, ideology or personal prejudice (see relativism).

Processes: sequential set of operations that lead from A to B, e.g., process of manufacturing autos, mining and smelting raw material, fabrication of parts, assembly of a moving line.

Processual Archaeology: the “New Archaeology” seeking to explain culture change rather than merely describe it, by testing claimed causes with archaeological data; typically stresses technological, ecological, demographic or economic determinism.

Post-Processualism: expands on processualism in its interests in such topics as the roles of power relations, ideology and individual creativity as reflected in the archaeological record.

Relativism: argues that archaeological data are mental constructs and must be understood in relation to the social, political and historical context in which they are retrieved.

Significant Sites: not necessarily those which are the largest or most complex, but rather those that are best able to provide data to answer specific questions in general, regional or local archaeology.

Stochastic: denoting or characterized by conjecture; conjectural [from Greek *stokhastikos*, capable of aiming or conjectural].

Structuralism: maintains that the individual units of any system have meaning only by virtue of their relation to one another; de-emphasizes the individual and his/her intentions.

Synchronic: conducting a study that considers evidence only from a single point in time or from one era; archaeologically, the amount of absolute time involved can vary widely depending on the context [from Greek *sun-* or *xun-*, together, with + *khronos*, time].

Teleological: pertaining to the ultimate purpose or design of something (in archaeology of an artifact, feature, structure, etc.) [from Greek *teleos*, complete or final].

Theory: assumption similar to a hypothesis with a greater range of evidence and a greater likelihood of truth; system of assumptions, accepted principles, and rules of procedure devised to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain the nature or behavior of a specified set of phenomena.