

Nature Vs. Nurture ^[1]

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Within anthropology and other academic disciplines, there is often much debate between the respective influences of nature and nurture.

Nature refers to what we are born with and includes our biology, genetics, and similar characteristics. In contrast, nurture refers to what is learned, through our cultural community and other individuals. For anthropologists, this debate often centers on the influences of nature and nurture in different cultural elements. Today, most academics—including anthropologists—recognize that both nature and nurture influences affect the human beings and their culture. Therefore, the nature versus nurture debate can be considered a false dichotomy, but it still has an impact on research today. However, now most disagreement between academics is regarding the extent of nature or nurture influences.

Some questions about nature and nurture that anthropologists have and do ask are:

- What influence does culture have on personality?
- What influence does nature have on language?
- Is there any influence of nature on the existence of religion?

Clearly, these are complex questions with no black and white answer. However, it is important to recognize the relative influences of both what is learned (nurture) and what we are born with (nature).

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