

Anthropological Research Methods

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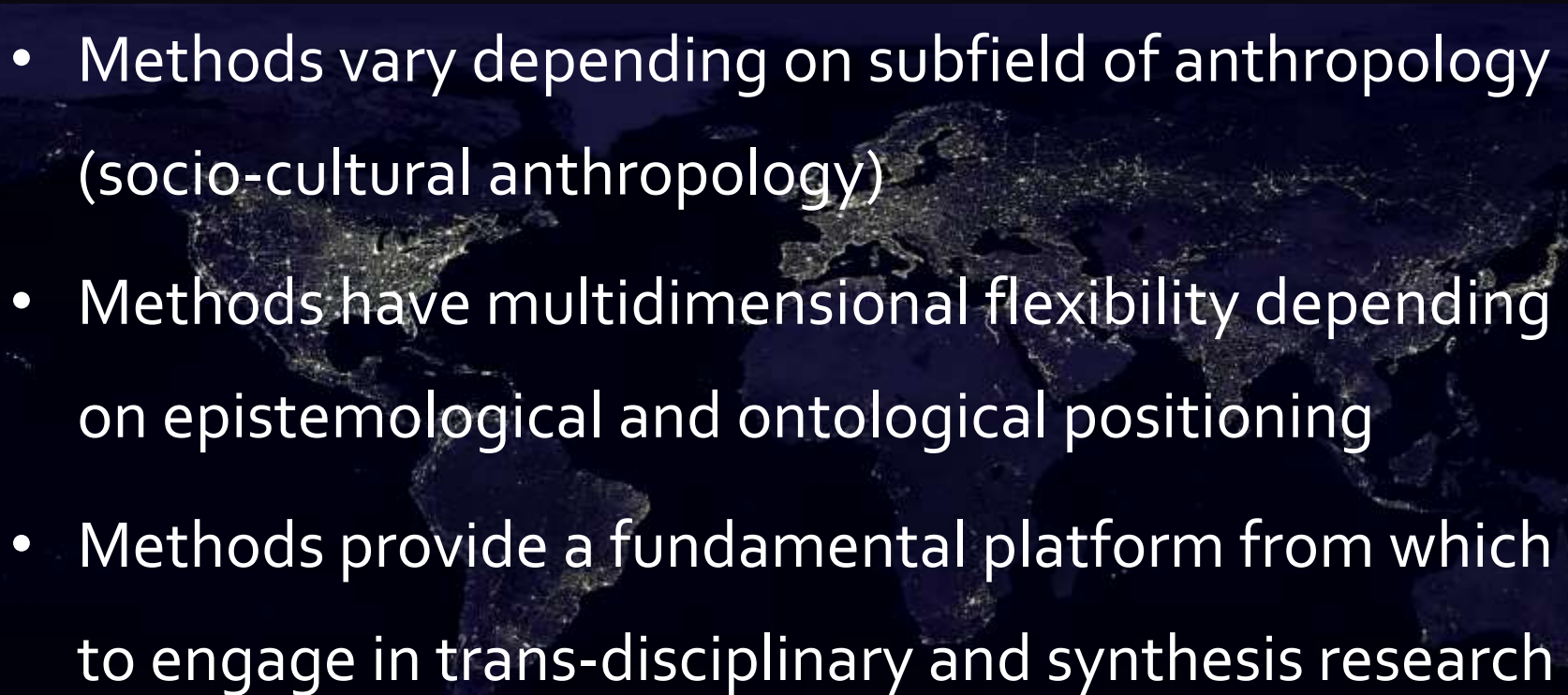
Department of Anthropology

Anthropology Immersion Workshop

National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center

Feb 29, 2016

Anthropological Research Methods: Caveats and Promises

- Wide range of methods depending on theoretical orientation and problem
 - Methods vary depending on subfield of anthropology (socio-cultural anthropology)
 - Methods have multidimensional flexibility depending on epistemological and ontological positioning
 - Methods provide a fundamental platform from which to engage in trans-disciplinary and synthesis research
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Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology

(Bernard & Gravlee 2015)

PART I. PERSPECTIVES

- 1 Epistemology: The Nature and Validation of Knowledge
Michael Schnegg
- 2 In Search of Meaningful Methods
James W. Fernandez and Michael Herzfeld
- 3 Research Design and Research Strategies
Jeffrey C. Johnson and Daniel J. Hruschka
- 4 Ethics
Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban
- 5 Feminist Methods
Christine Ward Gailey
- 6 Participatory Methods and Community-Based Collaborations
Stephen L. Schensul, Jean J. Schensul, Merrill Singer, Margaret Weeks, and Marie Brault

PART II. ACQUIRING INFORMATION

- 7 Sampling and Selecting Participants in Field Research
Greg Guest
- 8 Participant Observation
Kathleen Musante (DeWalt)
- 9 Behavioral Observation
Raymond Hames and Michael Paolisso
- 10 Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation
Robert I. Levy and Douglas W. Hollan

- 11 Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction
Susan C. Weller
- 12 Discourse-Centered Methods
Brenda Farnell and Laura R. Graham
- 13 Visual Anthropology
Fadwa El Guindi
- 14 Ethnography of Online Cultures
Jeffrey G. Snodgrass
- 15 Social Survey Methods
William W. Dressler and Kathryn S. Oths

PART III. INTERPRETING INFORMATION

- 16 Reasoning with Numbers
W. Penn Handwerker and Stephen P. Borgatti
- 17 Text Analysis
Amber Wutich, Gery Ryan, and H. Russell Bernard
- 18 Cross-Cultural Research
Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember, and Peter N. Peregrine
- 19 Geospatial Analysis
Eduardo S. Brondizio and Tracy Van Holt
- 20 Social Network Analysis
Christopher McCarty and José Luis Molina

Research Methods: Principles and Practices

Holism	Cultural relativism
Fieldwork	Ethnography
Multi-sited	Large tool kit
People Centered	Culture, Structure and Process

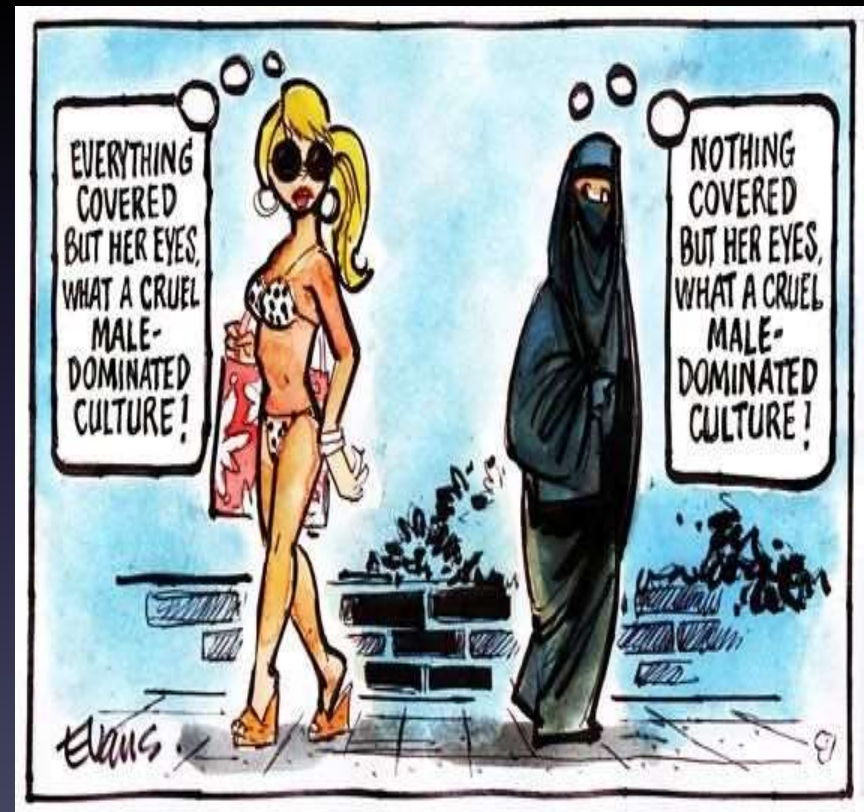
Holism



- Meaning, understanding and behavior are generated by interconnections of a whole
- The specific cannot be understood without reference to that whole, or some subset of that whole
- Reductionism and parsimony are suspect unless holistically contextualized

Cultural Relativism

- Resistance to universal assumptions about socio-cultural processes
- Focus on cross cultural or group patterns and also exceptions and alternatives to those patterns
- Provide a voice and articulate value to socio-cultural phenomena in marginalized, under-served and under-represented populations
- Focus on inter-cultural or group patterns of agreement and disagreement



Fieldwork: Then and Now



Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, New Guinea 1938



Bronislaw Malinowski, Trobriand Islands (1918)

- The real-world places for engaging people;
- Still fundamental to our discipline both real and imagined;
- Opportunity for grounding and validating our theories, methods, and goals;
- Professionally and personally challenging (rite of passage)



Susan Crate, Pacific Islands (2012)



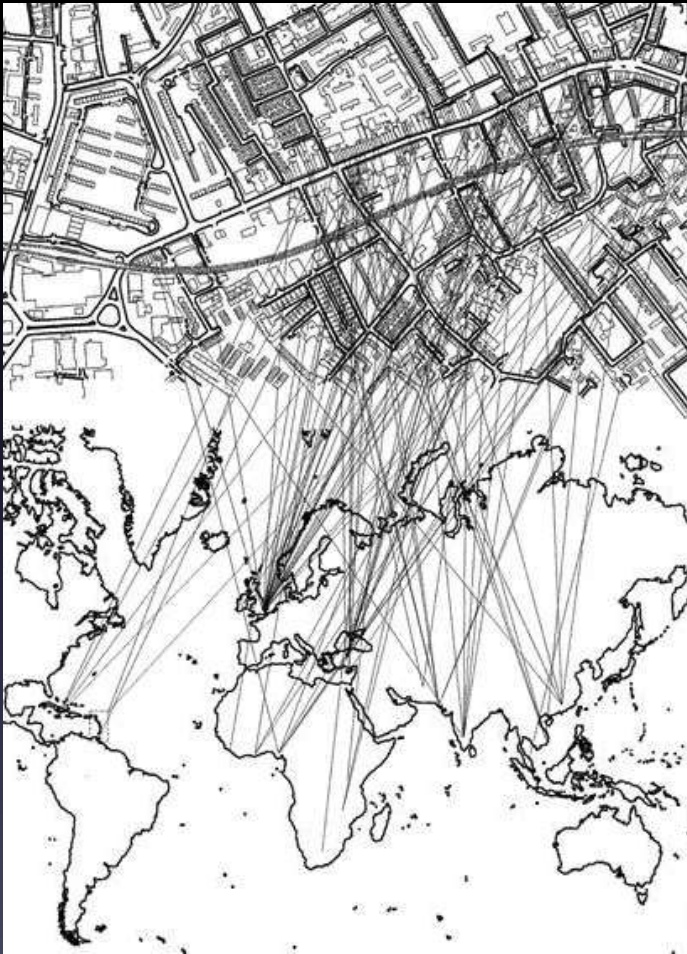
Joshua Bell, Papua New Guinea (2005)

Ethnography



- Empirical grounding of our research during fieldwork
- Engaged, inductive and reflective
- Focused but flexible
- Triangulation of practices and tools
- Participatory and Collaborative

Multi-Sited



- Ethnographic fieldwork across more than one geographic, community or institution site
- Examination of linkages among sites at different spatial and temporal scales
- Focuses on inter-site flows of knowledge, values, power, materials and their human and environmental consequences (justice, decisions, policies)

Methodological Toolkit

Participant Observation



Interviews and Surveys



Qualitative-Quantitative
Analysis



Modeling

Participant Observation

- A defining method for anthropology
- Participate in and observe people and groups
- The anthropologist as instrument or interlocutor
- Data or information subject to post modern, scientific and humanistic analysis
- Stand alone or complementary to other methods

Interviews and Surveys

- Use informal interviews to identify relevant issues and topics and to complement participant observation
 - Key informants and collaborators
 - Very open ended
- Use semi-structured interviews to simulate natural discourse
 - Large group of experts that represent diverse views (n=10-40)
 - Set open-ended questions asked to all with probing
 - Non quantitative but amenable to qualitative analysis/modeling
- Surveys
 - Developed from interview data for statistical and model analysis
 - Used to transition from subset of interviewees to larger populations
 - Results validated and interpreted using qualitative interview and p/o data

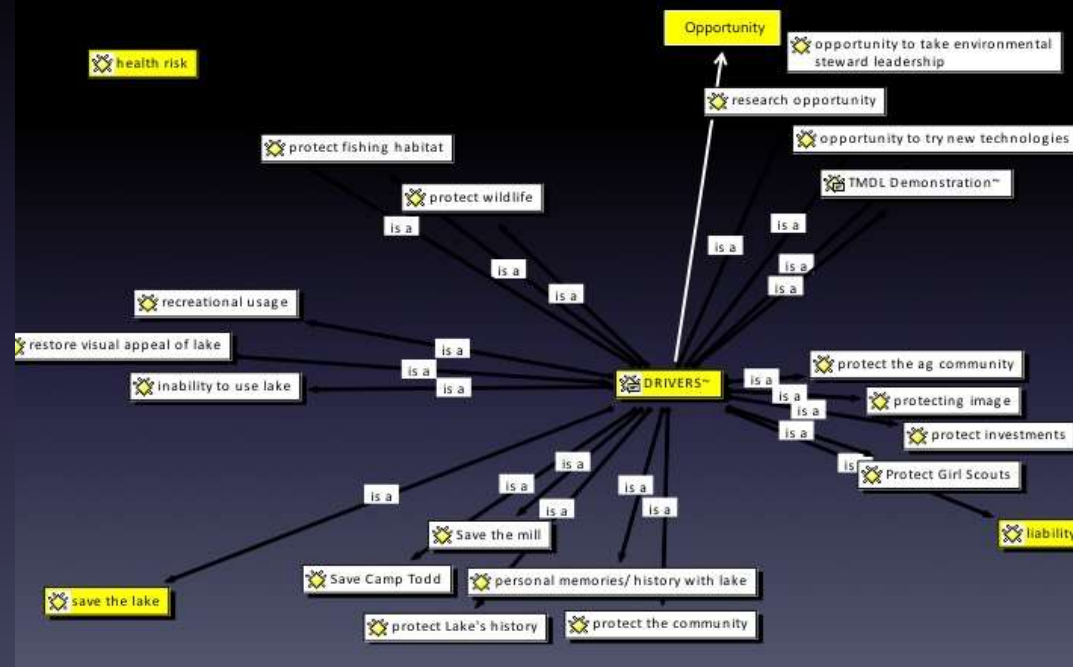
Anthropological Modeling

Examples

- Text Models (Atlas.ti)
- Cultural Modeling
- Cultural Consensus
- Social Network Analysis
- Complex Adaptive Systems
- Agent Based Modeling
- Participatory GIS

Text Model: Harmful Algae Bloom

Common Motivators Among Stakeholders



Outcomes of Methodological Goals, Principles, and Practices

- Ethnography or case study
- Comparative research
- Inter- and trans-disciplinary research
- Participatory and collaborative research
- Valuation and agency of knowledge, values and practices within and between groups
- Attention to structures and processes across time and space

Methods tell much about Anthropology

- We produce ethnographies and people-centered accounts
- Our methods organize our goal to talk and understand people and their contexts
- Produce data that are valid ethnographically
- Essential to evaluating our theoretical assumptions

Thanks

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"Physical or Social Science?"