

## Anthropological Methods

Data Collection, description and analysis

### First Some History

- 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists
  - Edward Taylor, Louis Henry Morgan
- "Armchair Anthropology"
- Created evolutionary scale of increasing complexity

### SAVAGE → BARBARIAN → CIVILIZED

### Franz Boas 1858-1942

- Criticized evolutionary anthropology
- Holistic perspective as a whole
- Fieldwork like participant observation
- Cultural relativism
- Where you see yourself in the society

### Across the Pond

- Growing interest in firsthand data collection and interpretation
- Bronislaw Malinowski 1884-1942
- Native cultural ways were logical and rational

### Ethnography

- Gathering and interpretation of information based on intensive, first hand study
  - Emic ethnography: what ideas & practices mean to members of a culture
  - Etic ethnography: describes & analyzes culture according to Western scientific tradition
  -

How do we go about collecting data?

### Participation Observation

- Gathering cultural data by observing people's behavior and participating in their lives, write fieldwork notes!
  - Respondents offer insights into the culture

What are the advantages of using participant observation?

- When you're personally involved day to day it's a reminder of certain aspects. Getting to know the people very well to know how they live etc. One thing can lead to another that makes information easier to come by.

### Disadvantages?

- Homesick
- Observer effect being biased
- Embarrassed
- Range of people you involve
- Communication barrier

Other Techniques...

- Focus groups- group of people to discuss topic
- Open-ended questions
- Structured interviews- specific questions
- Mapping
- Census
- Photography & Video
- Observation
- Measurement
- Inventories
- Apprenticeship

#### Data Analysis

- Review, code, count, tally to summarize the data
- What important factors emerge?
- Discover patterns & themes
- Share the story

#### Interpretation

- Tell what the story means?- for many people they may find interesting
- Crunching of data is important to discover patterns and themes

#### How to go about "telling the story"

- Coding- categorized data and label important to finding patterns
- Comparisons- compare groups, methods, concepts with ideal vs. actual
- The Narrative- detailed description of behavior or ritual

#### Carrying out a Research Project

- Setting- pick where and what they want to know
- Research interests- what they specifically are interested in or what hasn't been answered

#### Data Collection

- A lot of research needs to be done in journals, books and other encounters etc.

#### Next Steps

- Project Design- straight forward details, justified research and the when, where, why, who, where and how
- Funding- grants and foundations

#### Ethics

- Having obligation to many entities
  - Ex: scientific community, employer, anthropology community, government, ethical obligations and securing permission
- Human research subjects
  - IRB Approval Institutional Review Board- you submit app project design

#### Anthropologist Must:

- Obtain consent of the people to be studied which must be written
- Protect from risk- make them comfortable on every way, shape or form
- Respect their privacy and dignity- write names with alias

#### Fieldwork

- Acquire basic knowledge on how to survive in the cultural context and how to survive with the basics of food, water and shelter
- Adapt to the new environment and people around you
- Formal data collection (once the two above are done you can begin to collect data)
- Focus on quality not quantity
- Culture shock to readjustment to normal life back home

#### After Data Collection

- Data Analysis- coding & interpretation and summarizing the data collected
- Publish/present results

#### Cross-Cultural Comparison

- Ethnology- attempt to find general principles that govern cultural phenomena
- Today this is facilitated by the "human relations area files" HRAF
  - o A resource library for cultures of all sorts

#### How has Anthropology changed?

- Feminist anthropology questions gender bias (in the early studies men studied men only)
- Postmodernism & positionality
- More emphasis on collaboration- local people participate & invest)
- Study of one's own society is more common in the start they would study non-western culture