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Doing Cultural Anthropology

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Doing ethnography requires the anthropologist not only to observe and ask questions, but also to participate in the culture and social life of a society, as with this anthropologist living among the Mentawai of Sumatra. Traditionally, these tattoos are incised with needles and vegetable dye, though these are being done with washable pigments.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Ethnography and Fieldwork
Ethnography in Historical Perspective
Franz Boas
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"Anthropology is about taking people seriously. It is about trying to understand how people interpret and act in the world. Anthropologists listen to what people say; watch what they do, and then try to make sense of their words and their deeds by putting them into context . . . this takes time, lots of it."
For more details, see page 60 (MacClancy 2002).

In their attempt to understand human diversity, cultural anthropologists have developed particular methodologies for gathering data and developing and testing theories. The controlled laboratory situation of the physical sciences is, for both technical and ethical reasons, of little use in cultural anthropology. Anthropologists can hardly go out and start a war somewhere to see the effect of warfare on family life. Nor can they control in a laboratory all the factors involved in examining the impact of multinational corporations on villages in the Amazon rain forest. Instead, they look to the existing diversity of human cultures. In place of the artificially controlled laboratory, anthropologists rely on ethnography and cross-cultural comparison.

Ethnography is the gathering and interpretation of information based on intensive, firsthand study of a particular culture (the written report of this study is also called an ethnography). Ethnographies are used as a basis for cross-cultural comparisons: the ethnographic data from different societies are analyzed to build and test hypotheses about general, or even possibly universal, social and cultural processes.

Cultural anthropology encompasses a wide range of activities and specialties: solitary fieldwork in a remote location, delving into historical archives, testing hypotheses using statistical correlations from many different societies, administering a community health care clinic, formal and informal questionnaires, recording life histories, making ethnographic films, curating museum exhibits, and working with indigenous peoples as advocates in cultural and political projects. But all of these diverse activities are based on ethnography, which is not only the major source of anthropological data and theory but also an important part of most anthropologists' experience. We

ethnography The major research tool of cultural anthropology; includes both fieldwork among people in society and the written results of fieldwork.

thus begin this chapter with a discussion of ethnography and then turn to some of the ways in which ethnographic data are used in cross-cultural comparison.

Ethnography and Fieldwork

Ethnography is the written description and analysis of the culture of a group of people based on fieldwork. **Fieldwork** is the firsthand, intensive, systematic exploration of a culture. Although fieldwork includes many techniques, such as structured and unstructured interviewing, mapping space, taking census data, photographing and filming, using historical archives, and recording life histories, the heart of anthropological fieldwork is participant-observation. **Participant-observation** is the technique of gathering data on human cultures by living among the people, observing their social interaction on an ongoing daily basis, and participating as much as possible in their lives. This intensive field experience is the methodological hallmark of cultural anthropology. Typically, the field experience results in an ethnography—that is, an in-depth description and analysis of a particular culture.

The goal of fieldwork is to gather as much information as one can on a particular cultural system, or on a particular aspect of a culture that is the fieldworker's focus. The data are written up to present as authentic and coherent a picture of the cultural system as possible. The holistic perspective of anthropology was developed through fieldwork. Only by living with people and engaging in their activities over a long period of time can we see culture as a system of interrelated patterns. Good fieldwork and ethnography are based both on the fieldworker's ability to see things from the studied person's point of view (the emic perspective) and on the ability to see patterns, relationships, and meanings that may not be consciously understood by a person in that culture (the etic perspective).

Observation, participation, and interviewing are all necessary elements of good fieldwork. The anthropologist observes, listens, asks questions, and attempts to find a way in which to participate in the life of the society over an extended period of time.

Anthropology, like every other scientific discipline, must be concerned with the accuracy of its data. Anthropology is unique among the sciences in that a human being is the major research instrument and other human beings supply most of the data. At least in the initial stages of research—and usually throughout the fieldwork—anthropologists have to rely to a great extent on consultants from the culture being studied as well as observation for their data. **Consultants** (earlier ethnographies referred to these people as informants) are people through whom the anthropologist learns about the culture, partly by observation and partly by asking questions. Many people in a society may act as consultants, but most anthropologists also have a few key consultants with whom they work. **Key consultants** are people who have a deep knowledge of their culture and are willing to pass this knowledge on to the anthropologist. Anthropologists often develop deep rapport with their key consultants, and even lifetime friendships (Grindal and Salamone 1995). These key consultants are essential not only for explaining cultural patterns but also for introducing

Ruth Benedict's major work, *Patterns of Culture,* was a best-seller in the United States when it was published in the 1930s. It is still widely used in college anthropology courses. Benedict worked tirelessly with Franz Boas to demonstrate to Americans that ideologies of racial superiority had no basis in science. The work of Ruth Benedict, her mentor Franz Boas, and her student Margaret Mead had a deep and widespread influence on how Americans think about cultural diversity. Her contributions are recognized by her picture on a United States stamp.

anthropologists to the community and helping them establish a network of social relationships. The establishment of trust and cooperation in these relationships is the basis for sound fieldwork.

In the early stages of fieldwork, the anthropologist may just observe or perform some seemingly neutral task such as collecting **genealogies** (family trees) or taking a census. Within a short time, however, he or she will begin to participate in cultural activities. Participation is the best way to understand the difference between what people *say* they do, feel, or think and what they actually do. It is not that consultants deliberately lie (although they may), but rather, when they are asked about some aspect of their culture, they may give the cultural ideal, not what actually happens. This is especially true when the outsider has higher social status than the consultant. For psychological or pragmatic reasons, the consultant wants to look good in the anthropologist's eyes. Participation also forces the researcher to think more deeply about culturally correct behavior and thus sharpens insight into culture beyond that learned by observation alone.

Ethnography in Historical Perspective

Anthropology began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as a comparative science; although its first practitioners were not fieldworkers, fieldwork and ethnography soon became its defining characteristics (Stocking 1992). For several reasons, the earliest ethnographers concentrated their studies on the small-scale, technologically simpler societies that had developed for thousands of years outside the orbit of European culture. One reason was the fear that much of the traditional culture of these societies was disappearing under the assault of Western culture, and so their cultures needed to be recorded as soon as possible. Another reason was that these cultures were sufficiently homogeneous that patterns and processes of culture could be more easily perceived than was possible in the large, technologically complex, heterogeneous societies of the West. In addition, it was necessary to look at societies outside the orbit of Western society in order to learn about the very diverse ways of being human.

European interest in cultural differences was enormously intensified by the fifteenth-century expansion of European power, which brought Europeans into contact with cultures that were very different from their own. This interest continued to develop and, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, laid the foundation for the emergence of anthropology.

Anthropologists attempted to grapple with the significance of the cultural differences between Europeans and other cultures, initially by placing the cultures they encountered on evolutionary scales of cultural development. On these scales, characterized by different stages of technology and social institutions (such as the form of family or type of religion), European culture was placed at the pinnacle and these other, "primitive" societies were viewed as earlier, less evolved cultures.

The earliest observers of the societies later studied by these nineteenth-century anthropologists were typically amateurs—travelers, explorers, missionaries, and colonial officers who had recorded their experiences in remote corners of the world. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of anthropological theory, including much of cultural evolutionary theory, was developed by "armchair anthropologists" who had not done fieldwork themselves and who based their theories on the often ethnocentric and unsystematic writings of the amateurs.

By the early twentieth century, fieldwork and ethnography had become the hallmarks of cultural anthropology, which attempted to understand other people in a scientific and objective way. Twentieth-century anthropologists hoped

fieldwork The firsthand, systematic exploration of a society. It involves living with a group of people and participating in and observing their behavior.

participant-observation The fieldwork technique that involves gathering cultural data by observing people's behavior and participating in their lives.

consultant A person from whom anthropologists gather data.

key consultant A person particularly knowledgeable about his or her own culture who is a major source of the anthropologist's information.

genealogy A family history; a chart of family relationships.

that detailed ethnographies would illuminate the richness and human satisfactions in a wide range of cultures and thus increase respect among Europeans and North Americans for peoples whose lives were very different from their own. Particularly after the devastation and demoralization of, and disenchantment with, European civilization following World War I, academically trained ethnographers began doing intensive fieldwork in distant places and among peoples whose cultures were not only different from but often in striking contrast to Western culture (Tedlock 1991). This emphasis on fieldwork is linked particularly with the names of Franz Boas in the United States and Bronislaw Malinowski in Europe.

Franz Boas

Franz Boas, sometimes called the father of American anthropology, was the primary influence in anthropology in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. He turned away from armchair anthropology and rejected theories of evolution that held that some societies were more evolved than others. For Boas, the status of anthropology as a science would depend on complete and objective gathering of ethnographic data on specific cultural systems. He insisted that grasping the whole of a culture could be achieved only through fieldwork. This meant recording not only a group's cultural patterns but also descriptions of their languages, statistical measurements of their bodies, and archaeological investigations of their past. Boas was particularly concerned about the urgency of this fieldwork because it was feared that many of these small, non-Western cultures would soon disappear. Boas produced an enormous amount of ethnographic data on Native American cultures, particularly those of the Pacific Northwest.

But Boas's contributions to anthropology were theoretical as well as ethnographic. Boas used ethnographic data to support his key theoretical ideas: that all cultures are products of their own histories, that all human beings have equal capacities for culture, and that although human actions might be considered morally right or wrong, no culture was inherently more or less civilized than another. Boas was an unwavering supporter of the value of other cultures and of racial equality. His work and that of his students, notably Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, were widely used by Americans who argued for the equality of men and women, and the rights of African Americans, immigrants, and Native Americans. Although other anthropological perspectives, such as postmodernism, discussed in the next section, might seem to have displaced earlier, Boasian perspectives, in fact, Boas's contributions remain basic to cultural anthropology. (See the most recent discussion of the relevance of Boas's ideas to contemporary anthropology in Bashkow et al 2004.)

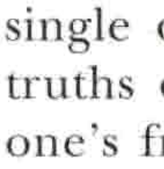
In the first half of the twentieth century, Franz Boas was the primary influence in anthropology in the United States. He emphasized fieldwork and cultural relativism.

Bronislaw Malinowski

Bronislaw Malinowski, whose fieldwork was carried out in the Trobriand Islands, saw as an essential goal that the ethnographer "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (1984/1922:25). Only an anthropologist who could learn to think, feel, and behave as a member of another culture could enter into another cultural experience. And this could be done only through fieldwork—living among the people, observing their behavior firsthand, and participating in their lives. With the publication of Malinowski's unmatched ethnographies of the Trobriand Islands, doing fieldwork and writing ethnography became the dominant activities identified with cultural anthropology.

Boas and Malinowski together set the high standards for fieldwork, the unique methodology of cultural anthropology. The major criterion of good ethnography that grew out of their work was that it grasp the native point of view objectively and without bias. This goal was based on the assumption of **positivism,** an **empirical scientific** approach that dominated the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries. Positivism and empiricism emphasized the possibility and desirability of observing and recording an objective reality. Anthropology reflected this scientific view: the basis of the **ethnographic method** was the confidence that trained, neutral investigators could, through observation of behavior, comprehend the objective reality of a culture.

After World War I, and even more so after World War II, cultural anthropology took yet another turn, expanding fieldwork and ethnography to peasant and urban societies, which were enmeshed in more complex regional and national systems. Gathering data on such societies required some changes in the way fieldwork was practiced, because the study of these "part cultures" is not amenable to the same holistic perspective derived from the study of a small-scale, seemingly isolated cultures. This shift to the study of smaller units in complex societies led to new methodologies as well as new theories about culture, in particular about the relationships of small-scale cultures to larger systems. Indeed, in today's global community, the connections between cultures are so central that no society, no matter how seemingly remote, can be studied as if it existed in cultural isolation.



Changing Directions in Ethnography

Postmodernism

Since the 1970s, many of the assumptions of twentieth-century fieldwork and ethnography, including confidence in the possibility of discovering an objective reality, have become the subject of intense debate in anthropology (R. Lee 1992). These debates have involved **postmodernism,** a perspective that holds that all knowledge is influenced by the observer's culture and social position. Postmodernism claims that there is no single objective reality but rather many partial truths or cultural constructions, depending on one's frame of reference. In anthropology, this philosophy has resulted in intense reflection on why, how, and with what goals cultural anthropologists have done, are doing, and should be doing ethnography.

Under the influence of postmodernism, cultural anthropology today is significantly more sensitive to issues of history and power than it was in the past. It understands these issues in terms of the relationship of the anthropologist to the members of the culture observed, as well as in terms of the relationship of members of that culture to each other and to the larger social, political, and economic world.

positivism A philosophical system concerned with positive facts and phenomena and excluding speculation on origins or ultimate causes.

empirical science An approach to understanding phenomena based on attempts to observe and record a presumed objective reality.

ethnographic method The intensive study of a particular society and culture as the basis for generating anthropological theory.

postmodernism A theoretical perspective focusing on issues of power and voice. Postmodernists suggest that anthropological accounts are partial truths reflecting the background, training, and social position of their authors.

Postmodernism challenges the notion that the ethnographer should be the sole, or even most authoritative, voice in representing a culture. From a postmodern perspective, ethnographies are just one "story" about experienced reality, and the ethnographer's voice only one of many possible representations.

By the 1990s, the postmodernist-influenced trickle of reflection on fieldwork and ethnography had "turned into a flood," and the "observation of participation" became a central focus of cultural anthropology (Tedlock 1991:69). Issues of subjectivity and objectivity in fieldwork, bias in the interpretation of field data, the accuracy of traditional ethnographic representations of culture, the relationship of ethnography to anthropological theory, and the usefulness of the culture concept itself (see Chapter 4), moved from the periphery to the center of cultural anthropology.

The postmodernist emphasis on "observing participation" has led anthropologists to reflect more consciously on how their own status, personality, and culture shape their view of others, and how the anthropologist ethnographer interacts with "the other" to produce cultural data. With this emphasis, fieldwork is now viewed more as a dialogue, a co-production between the ethnographer and the native consultant, rather than an anthropological monologue (see Crapanzano 1980).

Edward Said, an important critic of anthropology, opened the floodgates of postmodernism through his work *Orientalism* (1978). Said showed how Western colonial attitudes "constructed" the "Orient" (now called the "Middle East") and opened the way for new anthropological understandings of this area and its cultures. Said charged that much of the anthropological literature assumed a universal notion of Islam that mysteriously molded social behavior "from above" and that simplified, distorted, and romanticized Middle Eastern cultures. This, he said, drew attention from the reality of these cultures, which were shaped, as all cultures are, by history, economics, political dynamics and ideologies, the formation of social classes, and the diversity and variety of cultural contexts (Waines 1982:652). An "essentialist" view of the Middle East particularly affected the study of gender, which also overemphasized Islam as the only cultural determinant of gender roles and women's status and led to a neglect of study of the places, such as the family or the workplace, where men and women meet and interact. In the contemporary world, where an understanding of the diversity and complexities of the Islamic world is needed more than ever, anthropology's contributions of detailed ethnographies from a wide range of Islamic societies play a vital role.

Depending on their theoretical persuasions, anthropologists have viewed postmodernism as a threat to anthropology's status as a science, a fad that will disappear, or an important contribution to making cultural representations a more accurate reflection of the multisided nature of personal and collective experience. Although most anthropologists reject extreme formulations of postmodernism, postmodern thinking has clearly contributed to anthropology. For example, almost all ethnographies now include some reflection about the conditions under which the fieldwork was carried out, and the nature of the relationships between the anthropologist ethnographer and his or her collaborators.

Feminist Anthropology

Understandings of the Middle East, and other cultures as well, have also been affected by an androcentric, or male bias. A significant contribution of feminist anthropology (see Chapter 10) has been to raise questions about the effects of gender bias in both ethnography and anthropological theory. Although women anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Cora Dubois, have probably had a greater influence in anthropology than in any of the other social sciences, historically much fieldwork was carried out by men who had limited access to women's lives and their own perspectives on their culture. This is particularly true in cultures where men and women lead very separate lives and are often hostile to each other, as in New Guinea (Hammar 1989) or the Middle East, where cultural notions of honor and shame severely restrict the interactions of men and women who are not related (Abu-Lughod 1987).

The description of whole cultures based on male activities grew out of an assumption that the most important cultural activities are dominated by men. A good example is the work of Malinowski himself. His descriptions of exchange among the Trobriand Islanders almost completely excluded women's gift exchanges, an omission rectified more than 50 years later by a female anthropologist whose

Anthropologist Nadine Peacock does participant observation among the Efe.

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restudy of the Trobriand Islands focused on exchanges among women (Weiner 1976).

Gender bias had its effect not only on the accuracy of ethnographies, but also on the development of theories about culture. When the culture of a small society is based on information from just one segment of the community—that is, men—the culture appears to be much more homogeneous than it really is. This erroneous picture may also perpetuate oppression of women by ignoring their perspectives on their own culture, which differ from men's. As we will see in Chapter 10, the recognition of the **androcentric bias** of anthropology has led to a new concern with the lives, thoughts, and activities of women, and also to a new interest in men's lives and activities and the whole subject of gender and sexuality.

These new emphases in ethnography are further evidence of the diversity and dynamism that have always characterized the history of anthropology. Discussions and debates over theory and method in contemporary anthropology highlight the wide range of approaches cultural anthropologists bring to the question of what it means to be human. Anthropology focuses on the "other" as well as ourselves; it is a comparative science as well as a unique, humanistic inquiry. Thus, many ethnographies continue to emphasize "objective" descriptions of a culture, whereas other, more experimental ethnographies try in different ways to incorporate the many voices that make up a culture. In their field studies, some anthropologists still try to be the proverbial "fly on the wall," observing and reporting from the position of outsider, but political activism and advocacy for the people one is studying have also come to be important goals. In meeting the challenges of a changing world, anthropologists are increasingly reflecting on the work they do and its place in the contemporary global society. These reflections have raised new issues and new interests in doing ethnography.

Ethnographic Data and Cross-Cultural Comparisons

The gathering of good ethnographic data through participant-observation is the hallmark of cultural anthropology and the foundation on which anthropological theories are built. Under the influence of anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas, the aim of anthropological fieldwork was the description of a total cultural pattern. Today, however, many anthropologists go into the field with

androcentric bias The distortion in theory and ethnography caused by excessive focus on male activities or male perceptions of female activities.

Global Perspective

Ethnography

An increasingly globally connected world requires anthropologists to expand their methodology as the "bounded cultures" characteristic of small scale, face-to-face societies give way to connections between people with different cultures and the diffusion of culture becomes a hallmark of the contemporary world. One kind of global reach is suggested by the ethnography of the Hare Krishna, studied by Charles Brooks, who examines a cultural phenomena that has its origins in Indian culture, spread to the West, and then spread back to India (see "Ethnography," page 64).

Another example of the global reach of ethnography is a study of preschools in China, Japan, and the United States carried out by a team of anthropologists and educators. The aims of the study were to examine preschools comparatively, but also to examine these three different cultures through a focus on their preschools, linking the findings on preschools to larger cultural and social concerns, particularly social change. The study hoped to go beyond statistical measures, such as teacher/child class ratios, and instead elicit the cultural *meanings* embedded in preschools—what they are meant to do and to be (Tobin, Wu, and Davidson 1989). Inspired by methods in visual anthropology, in which the subjects of ethnographic films were asked to comment on the completed film, the researchers in this study used videotapes in their ethnography and then showed the tapes to audiences both from the filmed culture and from the two other cultures. This method thus not only documented the diversity of human cultures, but in good anthropological tradition, used the study of other cultures to achieve insights on one's own culture.

Integrating the "local and the global" into anthropology requires new, often interdisciplinary, methods, theories and subjects, such as sustainable development, world ecology, environmental studies, global interdependence, internationalization, mass international communication, global finance, global popular and mass culture, tourism, and diasporas (Kearney 2004). Anthropologist Melvin Konner, for example, in his new work *Unsettled: An Anthropology of the Jews* (2003) studies the Jewish diaspora from prebiblical days to remote communities in Asia. The word "unsettled" in his title nicely captures the contrast of today's global ethnography with the settled communities that were the subject of earlier ethnographies, because Konner studies a people who have lived in many cultures and yet maintained a far-flung cohesion, with their past and with one another.

Another innovative ethnography, taking a global perspective on a local cultural pattern, is the examination of the transformations of the tango as it diffused from its center of origin. Originally a dance of the working classes of Argentina, the tango was "exported" to Europe, where it was "reclassified" as a more genteel dance shorn of its working class associations. It moved in that form to Japan, while at the same time it was diffused back to Argentina where it was transformed into a national symbol that transcended class boundaries (Savigliano 1995).

Tourism, one of the world's biggest businesses, is largely built on the crossing of cultural boundaries and has become a new field for ethnographic study. So ubiquitous has tourism become throughout the world that Edward Bruner says that "ethnography [today] is not complete unless it takes account of tourists" (2005). Bruner carries out his ethnography both by traveling with tourists and by ethnographically investigating tourist sites, sometimes as a tour guide himself. He views the ethnography of tourism as requiring the essential fieldwork methods of observing, participating, and engaging in informal conversations, and views the tourist group itself as a "culture," with its own practices, ideologies, and patterns of behavior. In his role as ethnographer of tourist sites, Bruner remains in one place of tourist interest for an extended period of time, studying the ways in which these sites—and sights—are constructed for tourist interest, the ways in which cultural performances are organized as "secular rituals," and the ways in which different local groups benefit from the profits of the tourist

trade. We also see the importance of tourism as an audience for cultural validation among the Toraja (see page 80).

Another example of the global perspective in contemporary ethnography is the interest in American militarism (Johnson 2005; Gill 2005). The United States has over 725 military bases in some 132 countries around the world, which, some say, constitutes a new form of empire. Well over half a million Americans are deployed by the military in various capacities—not just soldiers but other capacities ranging from teachers to spies—in addition to contracts with civilian industries, which design and manufacture weapons for the armed services as well as build and maintain these American outposts.

Particularly, because of the secrecy with which much of the military operates, anthropologists have an important role to play in educating the public both about the culture of these military bases and the impact they have on the communities in which they are located.

Anthropologist Catherine Lutz has been studying elements of the U.S. military system for over 10 years. Lutz's newest study is the role of the U.S. military in the Asia-Pacific region, and the responses to U.S. military bases by local and global social movements (Lutz 2002; 2005). Through her initial survey fieldwork in areas such as South Korea, Guam, and Okinawa, where the U.S. has a strong presence, Lutz has been able to uncover the sources of local resistance to these bases and the changes in U.S. basing over the last 60 years. As older bases close down, new bases are built in more varied regions: Ecuador, the Caribbean, Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the south Asian former republics of the Soviet Union, in addition to bases in the Middle East and eastern Europe. Using ethnographic methods such as interviews with local activists, base neighbors, and U.S. military personnel, Lutz demonstrates how the perceptions of these bases differ according to the political views of the different communities involved in them. For U.S. strategic thinkers, foreign military bases are crucial to demonstrating the power of the United States and defending America's allies against attack, while political activists in the areas where the bases are located see these bases as "tangible evidence of the imperial designs of the United States." For Lutz, the global distribution of these bases provides anthropologists with a unique opportunity to apply their comparative and critical methods to a critical contemporary political issue.

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As the world grows more complex, preschool is becoming a widespread educational institution. In a comparative study of preschools in China, Japan, and the United States, the anthropologists found that preschools both reflect and shape major societal values. Chinese preschools under socialism encourage discipline, selflessness, and comradeship–will this change as China becomes a significant player in the free-market global economy?

the aim of focusing on specific theoretical problems, much as Charles Brooks did in his study of the Hare Krishna in India. Some of these field studies may be comparative, studying the same cultural pattern or social institution in several cultures, such as religion, family, or economics. However, these comparative approaches still depend on intensive field studies of particular societies and are well within the definition of the ethnographic method.

An entirely different kind of cross-cultural comparative method is the **cross-cultural survey,** or **controlled cross-cultural comparison.** The goal of the cross-cultural survey is to test generalizations about culture, using statistical correlations of culture traits based on a wide survey of many different cultures. The database for the cross-cultural survey method is the **Human Relations Area File (HRAF).** The HRAF is an extensive filing system containing ethnographic data about hundreds of societies, past and present, from the main ethnographically distinguished areas of the world: Africa, Asia, native North and South America, and Oceania. Combining ethnographic information about these societies from books and articles, the HRAF cross-indexes hundreds of cultural features. Thus, it makes accessible information about specific cultural patterns in a particular society, and it also facilitates inquiry about cultural patterns that are found in association with each other.

Thousands of different kinds of questions can be answered by the cross-cultural survey method (Ember and Ember 1996). For example, in the 1950s, when divorce was becoming more common in the United States and the increasing divorce rate was causing some alarm, anthropologist George Murdock, one of the important pioneers in this methodology, used the HRAF to determine how marriage instability in the United States compared with that of other cultures (1996/1950).

Using a **random sample** of eight societies from each of the five major ethnographic divisions of the world, Murdock ascertained that 39 of the 40 societies in his sample made provision for the termination of marriage through divorce. When Murdock surveyed his sample for the frequency of divorce, he found that 15 societies had more stable marriages than the United States, and 24 societies (60 percent of the sample) had less stable marriages. He also investigated the grounds for divorce and found that the great majority of societies recognized only certain grounds as adequate and few societies condoned divorce for a "mere whim." The most common bases for divorce were incompatibility, adultery, barrenness or sterility, impotence or frigidity, economic incapacity or nonsupport, cruelty, and quarrelsomeness.

Murdock concluded from his cross-cultural survey that the American divorce rate was well within the limits that "human experience has shown that societies can tolerate with safety." He also concluded that most societies, even those with high divorce rates, are not indifferent to family stability and that societies with lower divorce rates usually have social devices such as marriage payments, arranged marriages by parents, and prohibitions against adultery to support marital stability.

Most often, the cross-cultural survey is used to test hypotheses about cultural correlations and causes. For example, anthropologist Donald Horton used this method to test his theory that the primary function of drinking alcohol is to reduce anxiety (D. Horton 1943). One of the many hypotheses he tested as part of his larger theory was that drinking alcohol would be related to the level of anxiety in a society and that a major source of anxiety would be economic insecurity.

To test this hypothesis, Horton first classified societies in the HRAF for which there was information on drinking behavior into those having high, moderate, or low subsistence insecurity. He then classified the same societies into those having high, moderate, or low rates of insobriety. Horton found a significant statistical correlation between high subsistence insecurity and high rates of insobriety. After finding significant statistical correlations for many of the other hypotheses generated from his theory, Horton considered his theory confirmed.

The cross-cultural survey has both advantages and disadvantages. A major advantage of the method is that it encourages formulating hypotheses, which can then be tested by finding statistically significant correlations between two or more cultural traits. A problem, however, is whether the correlations found have explanatory power—that is, whether they indicate causality. For example, although Horton's study found a statistically significant correlation between economic insecurity and high rates of insobriety, his findings cannot confirm that subsistence insecurity *causes* high rates of insobriety. To confirm causality one needs to test the association of many different features and to disprove alternative hypotheses.

Another problem with the cross-cultural survey is ambiguity about what constitutes a particular cultural trait and how to measure it. Because the cross-cultural survey method uses cultural traits taken out of context, it is not always clear that a trait has the same meaning in the different societies in which it is found. Insobriety, for example, would be construed differently in different cultures, and its measurement may be somewhat arbitrary. Still another problem is that for many societies, information on the particular cultural trait the investigator wants to measure may be missing from the ethnographic source. Because most of the ethnographic data in the HRAF were collected without HRAF categories in mind, not all societies have data on all of the same cultural patterns. Anthropologists using the cross-cultural method have tried to overcome these problems in different ways, and many continue to find the method of substantial advantage.

Carol and Melvin Ember, anthropologists prominently associated with the cross-cultural survey method, note that cross-cultural surveys help to prevent generalizing about human nature or making assumptions about cultural correlations based on only a few cultures (Ember and Ember 1996). Although many of these findings support commonsense expectations, it is useful to have the cross-cultural data as evidence. For example, cross-cultural comparative studies of violence confirm that societies that have a lot of violence in one aspect of culture tend to have a lot of violence throughout the culture. Societies that more often engage in warfare, for example, also tend to have a high degree of other forms of violence, such as homicide, assault, wife beating, capital punishment, and male socialization practices that permit or encourage aggression. HRAF studies are important in putting contemporary social problems in cross-cultural perspective, providing new insights into possible solutions.

Undoubtedly, as more anthropologists learn to use the HRAF through the annual Summer Institutes in Comparative Anthropological Research sponsored by the Human Relations Area Files and the National Science Foundation, cross-cultural comparisons will become an increasingly important part of anthropologists' work. The use of cross-cultural surveys and the HRAF database underscores the need for good ethnography. The use of both methods confirms anthropology's status as the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities.

Special Issues in Contemporary Ethnography

The demand for more self-conscious fieldwork means that anthropologists need to be more aware of their own reactions in the field and to see themselves not only as the instrument of observation but also as the subject of observation. They need to reflect critically on their own position as observers and be aware of the moral and political consequences of their work. Insights gained in this fashion make fieldwork an exciting but risky enterprise.

Studying One's Own Society

The emphasis on more reflective fieldwork and ethnography affects all anthropologists but particularly anthropologists studying their own societies, or **native anthropologists.** When anthropologists study a culture different from their own, their main methodological task is to perceive the culture emically (that is, from the point of view of its members). Although training in anthropology is designed to increase awareness of and perhaps ultimately overcome cultural bias, even well-trained anthropologists slip into projecting their own culturally determined feelings and perceptions on other peoples. In studying their own cultures, anthropologists must try to maintain the social distance of the outsider because it is all too easy to take for granted what one knows. In addition, as

cross-cultural survey (also called **controlled cross-cultural comparison)** A research method that uses statistical correlations of traits from many different cultures to test generalizations about culture and human behavior.

Human Relations Area File (HRAF) An ethnographic database including cultural descriptions of more than 300 cultures.

random sample A selection of items from a total set, chosen on a random, or unbiased, basis.

native anthropologist An anthropologist who does fieldwork in his or her own culture.

Anthropology Makes a Difference

Anthropologists Study the Use of Illegal Drugs

Anthropologists have an important contribution to make to our understanding of the use and abuse of controlled substances. In the 1960s and 1970s, the identification of a drug addict "subculture" drew anthropologists into the world of substance abuse and addiction (Schensul 1997). Ethnography was a particularly suitable methodology for studying street drug scenes and their participants.

Most social science models of drug use and distribution treat drug users and sellers as "deviants," separate from the larger population, and indeed focus on "drug addicts" as criminal deviants, operating outside of larger social networks and cultural norms. Psychopharmacological models of drug use, which emphasize intrapsychic and chemical "causes" of substance abuse, also fail to consider the social and cultural contexts of drug-related behavior.

Anthropologists, in keeping with their broader holistic perspective, have introduced structural and cultural models as alternatives to the deviant and psychomedical models. Structural models aim at connecting the individual drug user and seller with the larger, structural features of the society, and particularly its political economy (Hamid 1998/1992/1990; Waterston 1993). Anthropologist Ansley Hamid, for example, demonstrates that patterns of drug-related violence cannot be understood only in terms of an individual's impulsive or economically motivated behavior, but rather vary as a result of the ways in which political decisions and economic processes impact on neighborhoods, families, and kinship networks. Hamid's work goes beyond the view of mainstream America—particularly the media and law enforcement—to show that drug use and distribution are not the work only of the "alienated, the deviant, or the diseased," but are integrated with larger economic and political issues, particularly those affecting the transformation of minority neighborhoods.

This focus on the structures within which drug use and distribution are embedded makes ethnography a particularly valuable methodology, both for examining the links between drug users and sellers and their communities, and for examining the cultural meanings that users and sellers attach to their drug-related behavior (see, for example, T. Williams 1989; Sharff 1997; Bourgois 1989; Maher 1997).

Anthropologist Kojo Dei, in his ethnography of Southside, a lower-class African-American neighborhood in a suburban county bordering a major urban center in the Northeast, found that the residents of this community view drugs in quite a different way from that encoded in the laws and mainstream cultural norms of middle-class America. In this community, smoking marijuana is common. Although in public most adult residents of Southside give lip service to the view that "drugs are a major social problem," in private they express different views. Many Southside residents note that alcohol and nicotine—two legal addictive drugs—do more harm than marijuana. The community's view of a "drug addict" is a person who cannot function because of his or her drug use—a definition different from that of the social service and medical professions, which define ad-

distinguished anthropologist Margaret Mead once noted, remaining objective, or relativist, may be easier when confronting problematic patterns, such as cannibalism or infanticide, in other cultures than when confronting problematic situations such as child neglect, corporate greed, or armed conflict in one's own society.

Some of the problems and the rewards of studying one's own culture are found in the work of Barbara Myerhoff, an American anthropologist. Myerhoff contrasted her earlier work with the Huichol of northern Mexico with her work among elderly Jewish people in an urban ghetto in California (1978). She notes that in the first case, doing anthropology was "an act of imagination, a means for discovering what one is not and will never be." In the second case, fieldwork was a glimpse into her possible future, as she knew that someday she would be a "little old Jewish lady." Her work was a personal way to understand that condition. Because in North American

diction in terms of physical withdrawal symptoms. And, unlike those with law enforcement perspectives, the community's main concerns are the violence and other criminal activities associated with the use and distribution of both illegal drugs and alcohol rather than the use and distribution of illegal drugs as such (Dei 2002).

As Jagna Sharff's (1997) study of a Puerto Rican neighborhood in New York shows, the sale of illegal drugs may even be viewed positively in poor communities, such as Southside, as a way for young men (few women are involved in drug distribution; Maher 1997) to help out their families financially. Indeed, many of the young men who distribute drugs in Southside view selling drugs as "work" and a legitimate, if not legal, path to achieving the American Dream through the capitalist model of entrepreneurship. In addition to appreciating the money, many of these young men prefer selling drugs to "working for the white man." Unlike the inner-city youth in Katherine Newman's (1999b) study, who are willing to work in dead-end jobs in the fast-food sector of the economy in order to get ahead, Dei's consultants in Southside consider these jobs "kid stuff."

Much "drug scene" ethnography by anthropologists has been used in formulating more effective services and risk reduction programs for those using drugs, such as AIDS education and needle exchange programs (Singer 2000). Ethnography also reveals where anti-drug-use programs are ineffective. In Southside, for example, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, run by the school district, is largely ineffective because it is taught by police officers in uniform, whom the black community generally distrusts.

Anthropology, then, through its holistic perspective on the individual, its ethnographic methodology, and its multilevel analysis of culture and society, has much to contribute to the formulation of policy regarding what is considered by many to be a major social problem in the United States.

Courtesy of Kojo A. Dei

Kojo A. Dei (right), an anthropologist from Ghana, does ethnographic fieldwork among African-American youth in a major city in the United States. The focus of Dei's ethnography is on how the cultural meanings of substance use and abuse within inner-city communities both support and diverge from those in the larger society. An essential relationship in Dei's ethnographic fieldwork is with his key consultants, among them Prince Afrika.

culture the lives of the elderly poor are often "invisible," Myerhoff's ethnography of elderly Jewish people who had struggled to overcome and had triumphed in many small ways over the disabilities of being old and poor in North America was, for her, a valuable and rare experience: that of being able to rehearse and contemplate her own future.

In cultures outside the United States, problems also arise for cultural insiders, although they may be different from those that arise in the United States. Although Middle Eastern ethnography has improved substantially through the work of native women anthropologists, their fieldwork accounts suggest that the ethnographer's insider/outsider position still poses special difficulties in cultures where women's public activities are limited and where respectability, honor, and shame are central cultural values (Altorki and Fawzi El-Solh 1988). Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod started her fieldwork among the Bedouin accompanied by her father, a

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Studying one's own society has some advantages and also some special problems. Here Louis Tepardjuk, an Inuit, records the stories of Piugaatuk, an Inuit elder from Igloolik, Nunvut, Canada.

circumstance that first irritated and embarrassed her. But she later concluded that her father's insistence that a "young, unmarried woman traveling alone on uncertain business" would be suspect and "have a hard time persuading people of her respectability" was culturally appropriate. This was all the more true because Abu-Lughod had lived in the West and was subject to the negative stereotypes some Arabs have of the morals of Western women. Abu-Lughod had confidence that she could overcome this suspicion by her own culturally sensitive behavior, but she did not realize until she reflected on her fieldwork that a young woman alone would be seen to have been abandoned or alienated from her family. This would cast doubts on her respectability (1987:9) and hinder her fieldwork, or even make it impossible, among the conservative Egyptian Bedouin whom she was studying.

Another dilemma experienced by many anthropologists, but particularly poignant for native anthropologists, is whether one should be a disinterested researcher or an advocate for the people one studies and whether it is possible to be both. Delmos Jones, an African-American anthropologist in the United States, experienced some of these conflicts in studying the role of voluntary organizations in effecting political and social change in African-American urban communities (1995). An important finding of his research emphasized the contradictory demands on organizational leaders, who often had to compromise their members' expectations in order to remain effective with local power establishments. Leaders sometimes emphasized the importance of these connections with powerful outsiders to stifle dissent within their organizations' staff and membership.

Jones's finding on dissension between the leadership and the membership of these organizations presented him with a dilemma, one that rested partly on his being a native anthropologist. On the one hand, Jones acknowledged that he was given access to the leadership of the community organizations *because* he was African American and because he shared their concern about improving the position of African Americans in the United States. On the other hand, many of the members and staff of the organizations were more suspicious of Jones because they identified him with the leaders (who had given permission for the study) toward whom they were antagonistic. Nor was his finding of dissension between the groups' leadership and their membership palatable to the leadership. Jones asked himself whether he should omit reporting on the socially destructive aspect of the organizations' tension between their leadership and their members in the interest of racial unity or whether he

should describe how racial unity could be used as a slogan by the leadership to silence dissent among the organization members.

Reflecting on his research experience, Delmos Jones concluded that although being a cultural insider offers certain advantages for an anthropologist, such as access to the community, it also poses special dilemmas, particularly when the group being studied has been oppressed by the larger society. Indeed, he noted that the very concept of a native anthropologist is itself problematic. As he and other native anthropologists have pointed out, an individual has many identities, which include those of race and culture but also of gender and social class. Being a native in one identity does not make one a native in all one's identities (Narayan 1993; Cerroni-Long 1995). Furthermore, for all anthropologists who share Delmos Jones's view that the most important goal of research and ethnography is to demonstrate the ways in which social systems may exploit, alienate, and repress human possibilities, both cultural insiders and cultural outsiders face similar dilemmas.

As "exotic" cultures disappear, it becomes much more difficult for Western anthropologists to limit themselves to studying "others," and many more anthropological studies are being carried out in North America and Europe by natives of those cultures. But whether it is Western or non-Western anthropologists studying their own societies, the dimensions of native anthropology will become increasingly important as subjects for reflection.

On this subject, M. N. Srinivas, a distinguished anthropologist from India who has studied his own society, coined the term *thrice born* for what he called the ideal anthropological journey. First, we are born into our original, particular culture. Then, our second birth is to move away from this familiar place to a far place to do our fieldwork. In this experience we are eventually able to understand the rules and meanings of other cultures, and the "exotic" becomes familiar. In our third birth, we again turn toward our native land and find that the familiar has become exotic. We see it with new eyes. Despite our deep emotional attachment to its ways, we are able to see it also with scientific objectivity (quoted in Myerhoff 1978).

Srinivas's ideal anthropological experience is becoming more real for many anthropologists today. It is also an experience completely consistent with one of anthropology's original goals: that of eventually examining our own cultures in the same objective way that we have examined other cultures, and of bringing what we learn back home.

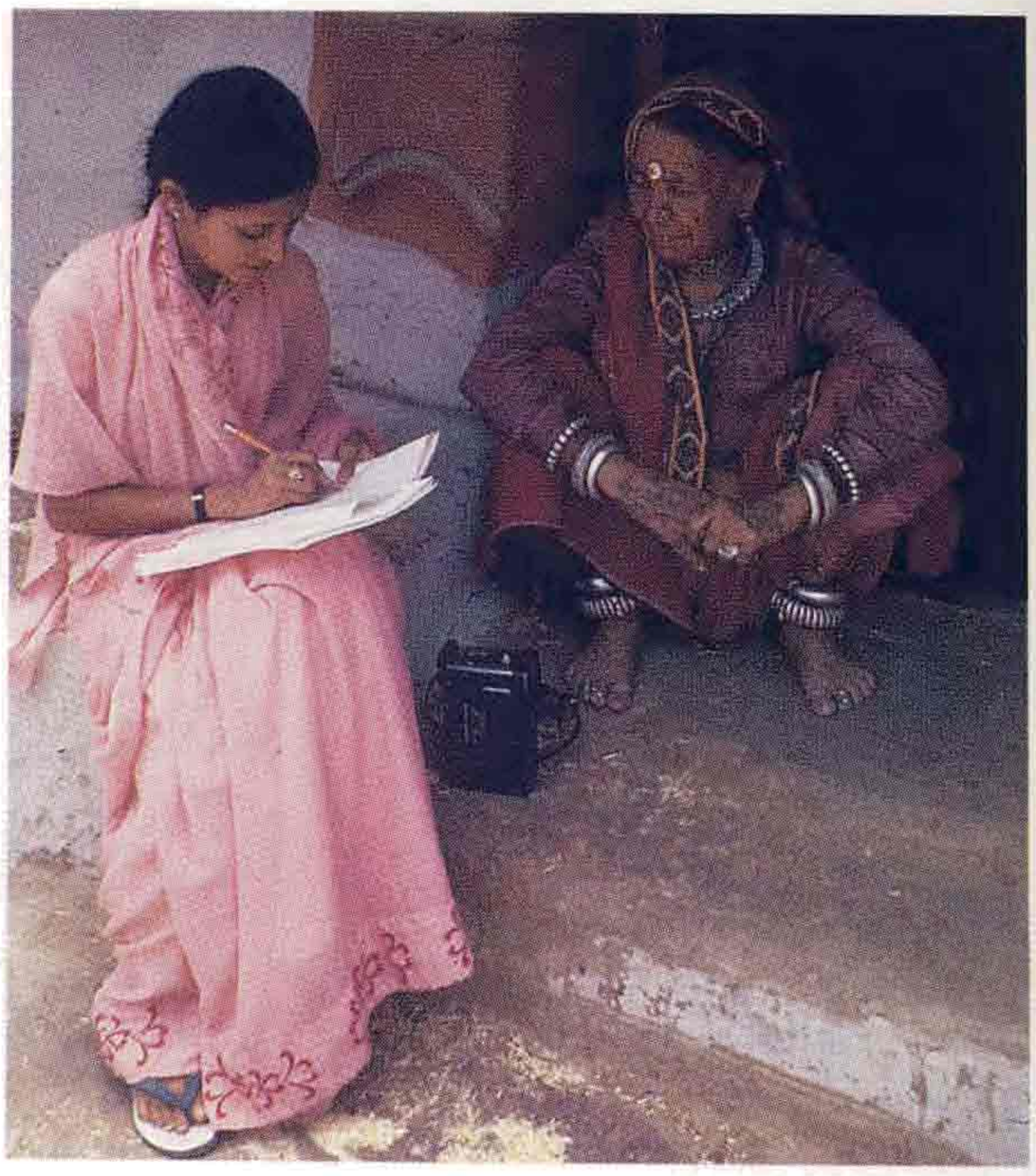
Collaborative Ethnography

One kind of ethnography that reflects some of the concerns just noted is collaborative ethnography (Lassiter 2004). Collaboration is the process of working closely with other people, which is surely the hallmark of all fieldwork, so that **collaborative ethnography** might best be thought of as highlighting, systematizing, and prioritizing the collaborative nature of ethnography both in the field and in writing. Collaborative ethnographers place the ethical responsibility to consultants above everything else, and seek collaborative consultation and direction in shaping the ethnographic text; indeed collaborative ethnography is almost a joint writing process, displacing the anthropologist as the sole author representing the culture of a group. Collaborative ethnography also seeks to be especially sensitive to and honest about the ethical and political circumstances of fieldwork, to more explicitly acknowledge the contributions of cultural consultants, and to provide an ethnography that will hopefully help others understand and help the community. An important contribution to collaborative, engaged anthropology is the work of James Spradley, whose classic ethnography *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* (1988) was aimed at getting the public to understand and help the homeless alcoholics who were the subject of the book.

Erik Lassiter, inspired by Spradley's work, began collaborative ethnography, while still a student, with Narcotics Anonymous, a drug addiction and recovery group. Based on his observations of their meetings, Lassiter worked with his consultants to develop an ethnography focused on the experience of drug addiction and recovery that could be given to drug addicts considering joining the program. In a later project, Lassiter constructed a

collaborative ethnography Ethnography that gives priority to cultural consultants on the topic, methodology, and written results of ethnographic research.

collaborative ethnography with the Kiowa Indians, jointly writing an ethnography of Kiowa song. The Kiowa were particularly interested in this project, and stipulated that the ethnography be written so that it could be read and understood by the Kiowa people themselves, and that they would be acknowledged for their contributions (Lassiter 1998). Lassiter emphasizes that a critical aspect of his collaborative Kiowa ethnography was to give highest priority to representing the Kiowa cultural consultants as they wished to be represented, even if it meant their adding or changing information or disagreeing with his interpretations. Collaborative ethnography, then, is not just eliciting the comments of the cultural consultants; what's even more important, as Lassiter says, is integrating these comments back into the text. Some anthropologists will see this as overly and unnecessarily restrictive; Lassiter emphasizes that collaborative ethnography works best when communities want an ethnographer's help in "telling their story, their way" and may thus not work in some kinds of fieldwork. (For a discussion of engaged ethnography, which is similar to collaborative ethnography, see "Anthropology Make a Difference," Chapter 12.)



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Contemporary anthropologists work with a wide range of communities, using a wide range of methods, including interviewing, surveys, and now more often, fieldwork in their own societies.

Ethical Considerations in Fieldwork

Ethical considerations come up in every fieldwork experience, and anthropologists are always required to reflect on the possible effects of their research on those they study. Three main ethical principles that must guide the fieldworker are obtaining the informed consent of the people to be studied, protecting them from risk, and respecting their privacy and dignity. Ethics in participant-observation is a matter of often agonizing concern and is surrounded by both professional codes and federal regulations (Murphy and Johannsen 1990). Some serious issues raised about ethical considerations, such as in the debate over the impact of anthropological fieldwork among the Yanamamo (Borofsky 2005), have caused soul-searching within the profession. Fieldwork is based on trust, and as anthropologists involve themselves in a continually expanding range of research situations, ethical dilemmas will increase.

New Roles for the Ethnographer

Another important issue affecting fieldwork and ethnography is that, contrary to the situation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropology today is well understood in many of the societies that anthropologists study. People from those societies are attending universities in greater numbers, and some have become anthropologists themselves. In some cases, members of the societies studied resent anthropological representations of themselves; in other cases, ethnographic data are viewed as useful to a society, serving as a basis for the revitalization of traditional cultural elements and the creation of cultural identities that have been nearly effaced by Western impact (Feinberg 1994).

In societies where different versions of a culture are competing for validation as "authentic" in the construction of national identities, both anthropological data and anthropologists may be incorporated as important sources of cultural authority. When Kathleen Adams carried out her fieldwork

A Closer Look

The American Anthropological Association Statement of Ethics

Anthropologists have many ethical obligations: to the standards of their discipline, to their students, to their sponsors, to their own and their host governments, and to the public. Anthropologists' obligations to the public, for example, include a positive responsibility to speak out, both individually and collectively, in order to contribute to an "adequate definition of reality" that may become the basis of public opinion or public policy, or a resource in the politics of culture. Thus, anthropologists must not only carry on fieldwork in a manner that involves working appropriately in collaboration with their consultants but also do ethnography in a way that most accurately represents both the culture and the collaborative dialogues through which cultural description emerges.

But in their research, anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to those they study. According to the American Anthropological Association Statement on Ethics—Principles of Professional Responsibility, "Anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honor the dignity and privacy of those studied." This includes safeguarding the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studied regarding the transferring of information; explaining the aims of the investigation as clearly as possible to the persons involved; respecting anonymity of informants regarding information collected by all of the means of fieldwork, for example, cameras, as well as participant-observation; not exploiting individual informants for personal gain; and giving "fair return" for all services. It also includes the responsibility to communicate the results of the research to the individuals and groups likely to be affected, as well as to the general public.

Control over ethnographic data that may have commercial value also becomes an ethical issue involving anthropologists. In today's global economy, for example, huge multinational pharmaceutical companies continually search for new natural habitats in hopes of finding new miracle drugs. These searches sometimes include interviews with native healers, who are most knowledgeable about medicinally effective plants in their environments, but much of the multinationals' research relies on digging out information from ethnographic publications. Once ethnographic and ethnobotanical data are published, they are in the public domain, and multinational corporations or governments may use the data with no legal obligation to get permission from the societies who are the source of the information or to remunerate the members of those societies financially or in any other way (Greaves 1995). Concern over this issue is part of a larger issue of the rights of indigenous people to protect their own cultural knowledge and cultural products. In many cases, these areas of knowledge and products are associated with secret societies and practices, and their dissemination beyond their original cultural borders violates important religious values. The increasing concerns of indigenous people over the appropriation of their cultural knowledge will undoubtedly affect fieldwork and ethnography, as these peoples exercise greater control over what ethnographers can publish. Recognition of the cultural and intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples and efforts to protect those rights are some of the adaptations ethnography must make in a changing world characterized by a global economy and global communication.

In asking what role anthropologists can play in protecting the intellectual rights of indigenous peoples, A. David Napier suggests that one main role is to call attention to the dilemmas of indigenous people as they try to negotiate over the commercial uses of their knowledge; another is to explain to the public how the power of corporations works in extracting knowledge from indigenous peoples who have very different notions of ownership than those operating in a market economy; and conversely, to explain to indigenous peoples how reciprocity works in the worlds of the anthropologist and corporations (2002).

among the Toraja of Sulawesi, Indonesia, she found her consultants already quite sophisticated about ethnography. On her third day there, one of the Toraja told her, "As an anthropologist, you should write a book about the real Toraja identity and history, both the good and the bad . . . [the] authentic and the true . . . the Toraja without make-up" (Adams 1995).

Toraja society was traditionally based on a ranking of aristocrats, commoners, and slaves. In the last several decades, however, for a variety of reasons, including wage labor outside the region and income from tourism, lower-status people had begun to achieve some wealth. As the aristocrats became more insecure about the relevance of their own royal genealogies, anthropological accounts became an important resource, shoring up their claims to noble status, and elite Toraja competed for anthropological attention. Indeed, Adams became a featured event on tourist itineraries in the region as tour guides led their groups to the home of her host, not only validating his importance in the village but also bolstering the tourists' experience of the Toraja as a group sufficiently remote to be studied by anthropologists.

The manipulation of anthropologists by the local politics of culture is another of the changed conditions reinforcing our recognition that the concept of a bounded, isolated tribal or village culture is no longer a viable basis for ethnography. Whether working in cities, villages, or with tribal groups, almost all ethnographers must take into account the interaction of these local units with larger social structures, economies, and cultures. These may extend from the region to the entire world. Such research may mean following consultants from villages to their workplaces in cities or collecting genealogies that spread over countries or even continents. In addition to expanding the research site, contemporary ethnographers must often use techniques other than participant-observation, such as questionnaires, social surveys, archival material, government documents, and court records. The deep connections among cultures and the global movement of individuals means that we must constantly reevaluate the nature of the cultures we are studying, their geographical spread, their economic and political position, and their relation to each other.

Summary

1. The main method of cultural anthropology is ethnography, or the intensive, firsthand study of a particular society through fieldwork. The major technique in fieldwork is participant-observation. An ethnography is the written account of a culture based on fieldwork.
2. An essential ability in fieldwork is to see another culture from the point of view of members of that culture. Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas were two twentieth-century anthropologists whose meticulous fieldwork set a standard for the profession.
3. Charles Brooks's field experience in India illustrates the steps in doing fieldwork: choosing a research problem, picking a research site, finding key consultants, collecting and recording data, and analyzing and interpreting the data.
4. With the postmodern emphasis on multiple voices in ethnography, anthropological accounts of other cultures increasingly describe the fieldwork experience and raise questions about how anthropologists' status and culture influence their perceptions and representations of other cultures.
5. Contemporary ethnography frequently takes an explicit global perspective, as it explores such topics as tourism, cross cultural comparisons of social institutions such as preschools, the diffusion of culture and entertainment, the diaspora of populations, and the spread of American military bases around the world.
6. In addition to ethnography, anthropologists may also use the rich ethnographic data of the HRAF in cross-cultural surveys to test hypotheses about human behavior and cultural processes.

7. Doing fieldwork in the anthropologist's own culture presents similar and different problems from doing fieldwork in another culture. Although native anthropologists may have advantages of access and rapport in some cases, they also experience special burdens more intensely, such as whether to expose aspects of the culture that may be received unfavorably by outsiders.
8. Anthropological ethics require protecting the dignity, privacy, and anonymity of the people one studies and not putting them at risk in any way. This may require extra caution when the research setting is a site of illegal activity, such as drug use.
9. New roles for ethnographers include collaboration with cultural informants from the subject of the study to the writing up of the material; engaging in the study of one's own culture; validating cultural history among societies that depend mainly on oral traditions; and engaging in research that speaks to contemporary political and social issues.

Key Terms

androcentric bias
collaborative ethnography
consultant
controlled cross-cultural comparison
cross-cultural survey
empirical science
ethnographic method
ethnography
fieldwork
genealogy
Human Relations Area File (HRAF)
consultant
key consultant
native anthropologist
participant-observation
positivism
postmodernism
random sample

Suggested Readings

Angrosino, Michael V. 2002. *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects for Ethnographic Data Collection.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. This excellent, brief book is great for beginning anthropology students and those who want to try the variety of methods useful in cultural anthropology research. In addition to providing an introduction into ethnographic research, it covers such topics as life histories, archival research, using museums as ethnographic resources, designing questionnaires for cross-cultural research, and working with numerical data.

Behar, Ruth, and Deborah A. Gordon (Eds.). 1995. *Women Writing Culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press. This edited volume, which includes articles from many different cultural perspectives and ethnographic sites, illuminates the relationships between women and anthropology through reflective, innovative, and experimental writing.

Bernard, Russell H., and Jesus Salinas Pedraza. 1995. *Native Ethnography: A Mexican Indian Describes His Culture.* Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press. An innovative ethnography based on native-researcher collaboration, in which Salinas's ethnography of his own people, written in his own language, was guided, translated, and annotated by the American anthropologist.

Besteman, Catherine, and Hugh Gusterson (Eds.). 2005. *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back.* Berkeley, CA: University

of California Press. Part of the excellent California Series in Public Anthropology, the articles in this volume critique the inaccurate and misleading generalizations of media "punditry" using an ethnographic and anthropological perspective on such subjects as Middle East politics, the relation of "race" and intelligence, and gender and class politics.

DeVita, Philip R. (Ed.). 2000. *Stumbling Toward Truth: Anthropologists at Work.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. An anthology of original and often amusing articles by anthropologists who have been taught some important lessons by their consultants in the process of doing fieldwork.

di Leonardo, Micaela. 1998. *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, and American Modernity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. A wonderfully insightful, provocative book about ethnography, anthropology, and their impact on American cultural images of the "other," both abroad and at home. The author argues for the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach and a political economy perspective if anthropology is to achieve its historic potential for making the world a better place.

Kidder, Tracy. 2004. *Mountains Beyond Mountains.* New York: Random House. An absorbing portrait of the ultimate engaged anthropologist, Paul Farmer, and his idealistic quest to cure infectious diseases in some of the poorest places on earth, which at the same time illuminates the conditions that contribute to global health problems.

Marcus, Anthony (Ed.). 1996. *Anthropology for a Small Planet: Culture and Community in a Global Environment.* St. James, NY: Brandywine Press. A series of very interesting articles that takes seriously the anthropological admonition to "think globally and act locally."

Salzman, Philip Carl. 1999. *The Anthropology of Real Life: Events in Human Experience.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. Interspersing reflection on the concepts of culture and ethnography with the kind of ethnographic detail that anthropologists classically provide, the author expands our understanding of anthropological theory and method, as this provides a framework for his understandings of the Yaramadzhai, a pastoral nomadic society in Baluchistan.