Presenting the 'Structured and Annotated Participant-driven Appraisal' technique in Ethnography: Towards the universal realization of Multivocality in Ethnographic studies

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Abstract

This paper begins by tracing the history of Ethnography and Ethnographic studies over the course of the past few centuries, and reviews existing approaches and techniques used in the field of Ethnography with a view to ascertain their salient features, strengths and possible lacunae and limitations. This paper also traces the methods used in the field of Anthropology from the very early days, and reviews the most current and uptodate techniques in the field of Anthropology such as Developmental Anthropology, Advocacy, Action Anthropology, Action Research and Corporate Anthropology and provides a short overview of current debates that dominate the field. The 'Structured and Annotated Participant-driven Appraisal' technique proposed in this paper stems from the weaknesses and limitations of existing approaches, and is in keeping with Twenty-first century realities and a pro-active approach to socio-cultural change. It is also in keeping with the requirements of the 'Globalization of Science', and involves an search for cases and subjects with differing perspectives to ensure that policy formulation is more culture sensitive, and is based on the realities of the ground. This paper also discusses the drawbacks or current Emic approaches and lays out the underlying philosophy, guiding principles and salient features of our approach such as identification of source and target cultures, responses to policy frameworks, capturing unvoiced perceptions, and making annotations.

Definition of Ethnography

The term 'Ethnography' is a combination of two Greek words: ethnos which means folk or peoples and grapho which means to write. [1] Thus, Ethnography is a detailed narrative of communities and their lifestyles with a view of long-term knowledge generation, and is also often described as a detailed and a structured 'portrait of a people'. Ethnography therefore seeks to provide a detailed and an accurate account of or a group, community, society or culture. Ethnography also typically involves a prolonged interaction with different communities, and is a systematic description of a contemporary culture through extensive and intensive fieldwork in a wholly natural rather than in an experimental or an artificial context or setting. Ethnographic studies typically focus or a particular community or group, and specific cultural aspects of that group. The beginnings of Ethnography as a separate discipline can be traced to the pioneer Ethnologist Gerhard Friedrich Muller during the Second Kamchatka expedition of 1733 to 1743.

A standard definition of the term Ethnography is as follows "The term Ethnography refers to a systematic study of different peoples and cultures. It is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally." [2] According to a definition provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), "Ethnography usually involves the Ethnographer participating overtly or covertly in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions through formal and informal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts, in fact, collecting whatever data is available, to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of enquiry." Another key feature of Ethnography is that focuses not only on Participant Observation but also on appropriate relationship building. (Gupta and Ferguson (1997). According to Bernard and Spencer (1996), the word Ethnography has two meanings, Ethnography as product (Ethnographic writings) and Ethnography as process (Participant observation or fieldwork), and the former is derived from the latter. According to a definition provided by Agar (1980:2): "Ethnography is an ambiguous term, representing both a process and a product." Both these definitions underline the importance of the research report in communicating the findings of the study to erudite, semi-erudite and specialized audiences and in the process of knowledge-building.

According to the Macmillan's dictionary of Anthropology (1986), Ethnographic studies combine descriptive and analytical elements but are centred on a specific culture or society and consider theoretical or comparative generalization from the standpoint of the ethnographic example. Generation of the final report and its use in knowledge building has always formed an important part of Ethnography. Wolcott and others have also opined that the intent behind a study and the techniques used, rather than the label itself would differentiate an ethnographic study from a non-ethnographic one. However, this would in no way undermine the processes involved in an Ethnographic study.

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[1] Ethnography John D. Brewer, Oxford University Press, 2000

[2] What is Ethnography? Methodological, Ontological, and Epistemological Attributes, Tony L. Whitehead, Department of Anthropology University of Maryland

The Greek neologism 'ethnographia' was however, first introduced by Johann Friedrich Schopperlin and the German variant was introduced by A F Thilo in 1767. August Ludwig von Schlozer then introduced this term into academia, albeit in a historical context. Thus term stuck, and its usage expanded over the next two centuries as expeditions were launched to different corners of the world. The centrality of Ethnography in Anthropology cannot be discounted. According to Michael Jackson (Things as they are, 1996, page 8), "For Anthropology, Ethnography remains vital, not because Ethnographic methods guarantee certain knowledge of others, but because Ethnographic fieldwork brings us into direct dialogue with others."

Ethnology, on the other hand, examines, interprets and analyzes the results of ethnography, or the results gathered from the study of different societies, examines the meaning and context of a culture's customs and even synthesizes these results with data from other sub-fields of Anthropology such as Archaeology. This is used to compare and contrast different societies to draw inferences and make generalizations about society and culture as a whole. The term ethnology was first used by Adam Franz Kollar in "Historiae ivrisqve pvblici Regni Vngariae amoenitates" published in Vienna in the year 1783. It was defined as "the science of nations and peoples, or, that study of learned men in which they inquire into the origins, languages, customs, and institutions of various nations, and finally into the fatherland and ancient seats, in order to be able better to judge the nations and peoples in their own times." The terms Ethnographer and Ethnologist are used to describe practitioners of Ethnography and Ethnology respectively.

There have been two major schools of Ethnography i.e. the British and the Chicago school of Ethnography. The former was reflective of the emergence of ethnographic tradition in Great Britain and is the older of the two schools. While the British school was indeed rooted in British Social Anthropology and colonialism (The desire to understand cultures of colonies), it has of late shown signs of breaking free from colonial yoke. The Chicago school of Ethnography originated in the endeavours of the University of Chicago, and came of age towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. Its heyday lasted till the 1940's, and is sometimes known as 'Core Chicago ethnographies'. This school was popularized by Robert Park, Ernest Burgess and their doctoral students, and produced vivid pictures of urban life, with a local orientation and an understanding of human behaviour in the context of rapid social change, amelioration or degeneration. [3]

Ethnography has traditionally studied primitive cultures (A R Radcliffe Brown even referred to it as "Descriptive accounts of non-literate peoples" after a meeting of teachers from Oxford and Cambridge), even though it is becoming common to study advanced industrial societies as well, and societies closer to the Ethnographers home territory. Evans Pritchard was supporter of the idea that Ethnography had the study of primitive societies as its subject matter. Thomas Hylland Erikson (1995) also expressed similar views but suggested that small scale societies, non-industrial societies and small and larger issues facing societies could be included as well. John Beattie was of the view that other cultures had to be studied to foster cultural understanding. In recent years, it has also become fashionable to study off-

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[3] What Makes School Ethnography 'Ethnographic'? Frederick Erickson Michigan State University, Erickson, Frederick (1984). Anthropology and Education Quarterly, Vol. 15, 51-66.

beat themes such as street gangs and drug addicts, and the proportion of such studies has increased greatly in recent years.

Even though professionals from various other fields carry out fieldwork, Anthropological fieldwork is unique in many ways. It typically involves an in-depth and a multi-dimensional study involving fieldtrips spread over protracted periods of time and often involving close relationships with the subjects studied. These trips may last upto five years but usually involve breaks and vacations. British Ethnographic studies have tended to be longer than American ones, though from the 1940's, the two have tended to converge. Thus, it is rightly said that the field is the laboratory of the Anthropologist, and just as a scientist who observes phenomena under different experimental conditions, an Anthropologist observes people under different social and cultural settings.

An Ethnographer uses multiple approaches to further his cause, and these may include a combination of several techniques such as Participant observation technique, interviewing, review of literature, study of genealogies, pedigree analysis and deep historical analysis. The use of multiple methods in Ethnography with the intent of cross-verification is referred to as triangulation and may be of multiple types (Data triangulation), multiple investigators (Investigator triangulation), and multiple methodological and theoretical frameworks (Theoretical and Methodological triangulation). An ethnographic study is also characterized by the careful choice of subjects, choice of locations, choice of time, and preparation of schedules besides choice of appropriate methods. The full range of social behaviour within the setting is also usually studied, given the fact that this can never be studied from a distance. Ethnography is also characterized by thorough research and a meaningful analysis of results that will lead to knowledge generation.

Fieldwork is the most important component of any Ethnographic study. Fieldwork may be defined as the study of people and their culture in their natural habitat. It is also characterized by the prolonged residence of the investigator, his scientific and structured observation of the society and his understanding of the inside view of the cultures studied along with their perspectives and worldviews. Thus, fieldwork can not only provide a holistic view of the culture studied, but also provide the Ethnographer with an immensely enriching, fulfilling and life-altering experience. [4 5 6 7 8 9 10]

History of Ethnography

In the days of yore, Anthropologists depended on narratives by traders and travellers. In due course, missionaries and administrators also provided narratives that helped Anthropologists in their study. As Anthropologists then had no other material at their disposal, these provided the material to weave grand theories that were often unrealistic and out of touch with ground realities. Anthropologists also

[4] Ethnography: A way of seeing, Harry F. Woclott, University of Oregon, Altmira Press 2008
[5] Handbook of Ethnography Edited by Paul Atkinson, Amand Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland 2001, Sage Publications Limited
[6] Ethnography: Step by step Third Edition David M. Fettermann Sage Publications, 2010
[7] Ethnographic Methods, Second Edition, Karl O'Reilly, Routledge, 2012
[8] Ethnography: Principles in practice 3rd Edition, Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hammersley Routledge, 2007
[9] Being Ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of Ethnography Raymond Madden Second Edition
[10] Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity Fifteenth Edition Conrad Phillip Kottak McGraw Hill, 2013

did work from the comfort of their libraries given their reluctance to venture into unknown territory. Such Anthropologists were known as Armchair Anthropologists. One such Anthropologist was the Scottish Sociologist James George Frazer whose work on Religion and myth was based only on secondary sources of information. Soon, Anthropologists also began to send questionnaires to collect data from the field. Edward Burnett Tylor wrote about the need to visit sites directly, but never practiced it. Later, towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, Anthropologists started visiting the field directly to collect information firsthand from their subjects of study. The Americans and the British took the lead in early Ethnographic studies, but the Germans and the French also contributed. Verandah Anthropology was another interesting stage where interviews were conducted close to the location of their subjects, but from the comfort of Verandahs to which their subjects were summoned. Verandahs were the appropriate location because the subjects of the study were considered to be too uncouth to be admitted inside the house.

Early Ethnography was also strongly influenced by Unilineal Theories of Evolution which proposed that man evolved from primitive to civilized states, and patterns of evolution were similar across all cultures. E B Tylor, founder of the first department of Anthropology in Cambridge University, proposed the theory of universal unilinear evolution. Henri Maine and Lewis Henry Morgan also supported Unilineal theories of evolution and proposed stages such as savagery, barbarism and civilization. Such ideas were also supported by Rudyard Kipling and others, and led to an interest in the study of "primitive" cultures. In 1871, Lubbock published a book "Origin of Civilization" where he proposed the archaeological stages of stone, copper and iron with economic stages of savagery, barbarism and industrial development.

The famed Ethnologist Father Joseph-Francios Lafitau documented the life of the Mohawks residing in New France in North America over two hundred and fifty years ago. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft collected data on several Indian tribes in the USA between 1852 and 1857, analyzing their history, condition and prospects in detail, and this report even led to affirmative action by the American government. The American Anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing lived for five years between 1880 and 1885 with the Zuni Pueblo of New Mexico, participating in the lives of the people intensively. Franz Boas, one of the pioneering figures in Ethnography lived for a year on Baffin Island with the Intuits in the mid-1880's. One of the earliest well-known Ethnographic expeditions was made to Torres Straits in 1898 by A C Haddon, Seligman, WHR Rivers, William McDougall and Charles Samuel Myers. This came to be known as the Cambridge expedition to the Torres Straits. Franz Boas carried out an expedition to British Columbia in 1886 and also studied American Indians. Bronislaw Malinowski also carried out an important study of the Trobriand Islanders in 1922, and his work, "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" (which also involved the Kula Ring ceremonial exchange) was widely considered to be seminal and path-breaking. According to Malinowski (1922,6), "A Cultural Anthropologist must possess real scientific aims and know the values and criteria of modern Ethnography ... He has to apply a number of special methods of collecting, manipulating and fixing his evidence." A R Radcliffe Brown carried out a study on the Andaman Islanders in India at around the same time and this is considered to be second in importance only to Malinowski's study. E E Evans Pritchard began his study in 1926 with his study of the witchcraft of the Azande, but his most important work is the study of the Nuer (The Nuer, Nuer religion and kinship and marriage among the Nuer). Margaret Mead's contributions to the understanding of Samoan culture are

also noteworthy. An interesting variant came to be known as 'Fieldwork from a distance' or 'Content Analysis Method'. This was pioneered by Ruth Benedict in her study of Japanese Cultures (The Chrysanthemum and the Sword) as access to Japan was highly restricted during the Second World War. Margaret Mead is known for her extensive research of Samoan youth, the results of which were published in 1928, and this research played a major role in the feminist movement. Her later work included the study of the Tschambuli, the Arapesh and the Mundugumor tribes. Another notable work was Napoleon Alphonseau Chagnon's study of the Yanomamo, an Amazonian people, and this is one of the most widely read Anthropological work since its publication in 1967 till date. [11] [12] [13]

In India, Ethnographic surveys on tribes were carried out by Anthropologists such as Francis Buchanan, Herbert Hope Risley, Edward Tuite Dalton, W V Grigson, Edgar Thurston, Verrier Elwin, Furer Hamindorf, N K Bose, D N Majumdar and others both in the colonial era and after, even though few involved extensive fieldwork.

While much of early work involved the study of exotic cultures in remote locations, recent work has centred on urban problems in settings closer to Ethnographer's home territory. Examples of such works have included Elliot Liebow's 'Tally Corner' (1968) which was a response to the culture of poverty, R. Lincoln Keiser's 'The Vice Lords: Warriors of the Streets' (1969) which was a study of street gangs, Lisa Redfield Peattie's 'The view from the Barrio' (1968), and Dennison Nash's 'A Community in Limbo'. 'La Vida' and the 'Children of Sanchez' by Oscar Lewis are studies of urban poverty in slums. The history of Ethnography has also been documented in the History of Anthropology (HOA) series under the leadership of George W. Stocking. [14] [15] [16] [17]

Participant Observation

According to J. Platt, the term "Participant observation" was first coined in 1924 by E C Lindeman and was identified as a fieldwork technique by Clyde Kluckhohn in 1940. Per this approach, the Anthropologist chooses the people, the geography and the cultural area for his study, reviews the literature and details of past Ethnographic work, and begins to learn the basics of the culture such as the

[11] Sylvester Baxter and Frank H. Cushing, *My Adventurers in Zuni: Including Father of The Pueblos & An Aboriginal Pilgrimage*, PMA Online Org Filter Press, LLC, 1999, paperback, 1999, 79 pages, ISBN 0-86541-045-3

[12] Mead, Margaret (1928). Coming of Age in Samoa. William Morrow Paperbacks. pp. 14–39. ISBN 978-0688050337.

[13] *Chagnon, Napoleon A (1968), Yanomamö: The Fierce People*.

[14] Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men (Legacies of Social Thought Series) 2nd Edition by Elliott Liebow, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 1967

[15] Vice Lords: Warriors of the Streets (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology) by Lincoln R. Keiser, 1969

[16] A community in limbo; an anthropological study of an American community abroad Bloomington, Indiana University Press [1970] Nash, Dennison

[17] The View from the Barrio (Ann Arbor Paperbacks) Paperback – March 1, 1968 by Lisa Peattie

language, customs and taboos. He slowly begins to build a rapport with them, making personal acquaintances and relationships with a spectrum of individuals, but only to the extent necessary. Thus, unethical personal relationships are avoided. He also observes their daily chores and rituals with due diligence, while staying alert for unanticipated occurrences or seasonal events that may reveal hitherto unstudied aspects of their culture. Field notes and diaries are systematically maintained. Translators are often used (Powdermaker (1961), as also tape recorders (Lewis (1961)) and the latest recording devices such as laptops, voice recorders etc. Photography and filming is regularly used. Ethnographic filming which was first pioneered by Felix-Louis Regnault in 1895 in a study of the Wolof people, and used during the Torres Straits expedition of 1898, has now evolved into a full-blown art, and is an integral part of Ethnography. Other techniques such as interviewing, questionnaires, projective techniques (Such as Thematic Apperception Test and Rorscharch ink blot tests) are often used. Hypothesis may be developed upfront, or formulated on the ground. Variants of Participant observation include semi-participant observation, hidden observation and indirect observation. [18] [19] [20] [21]

Anthropology sometimes involves a comparative study of cultures and populations, and this stems from the fact that human culture must be studied in its totality. The objective of Comparative studies which were pioneered by EB Tylor, Emile Durkheim and E E Evans Pritchard based on earlier work by Kames (1761) are to find out commonalities and differences between cultures. This involved breaking up cultures into traits and assigning each a developmental sequence so that they could reach the ideals of Western civilizations. This approach was however stridently opposed by Franz Boas who believed that each culture was unique in its own right and could only be understood through a proper historical analysis. The approach proposed by Boas came to be known as Historical Particularism. Boas' ideas were refined by Alfred L. Kroeber, Ruth Benedict, Robert Lowie, Paul Radin and Edward Sapir.

The Ethnographer must take due care to ensure that his work is free from bias and prejudice. However, in most cases, subjectivity creeps into Ethnography, and this is something that can be seldom avoided. (Mishra, 2009) A major concern is that Ethnography is a collaborative effort between the researcher and the people studied, and the nature of work inevitably ensures that the researcher gets the upper hand. In most cases, the ethnographic work is produced to be intelligible to the researcher's peers and not to the community which he is studying. Most Ethnographic work is not primarily conceived to provide a direct or an indirect benefit to the subjects of study. According to Winch, it is not possible to cross the barriers of "fundamental assumptions and interests". According to Strathern (1999:1), "The ideas and narratives which make sense of everyday field experiences have to be rearranged to make sense in the context of arguments and analyses addressed to another audience." Thus, in most cases, Ethnographic reports are designed for the consumption of erudite or lay Western audiences who are culturally far removed from the subjects of study, sharing few if any common concerns or issues.

Another important concept in Ethnography is that of an Emic and Etic perspective. These terms were first introduced in the year 1954 by Kenneth Price in a linguistic context and later used by

[18] Anthropology: Twelfth Edition Carol. R. Ember, Melwin Ember, Peter N. Peregrine Pearson, 2007
[19] Cultural Anthropology Barbara Miller Sixth Edition PHI Learning Private Limited, 2011
[20] Principles of Visual Anthropology, Second Edition, Edited by Paul Hockings Mouton de Gruyter, 2005
[21] From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures edited by Brian Keith Axel, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2002

Anthropologists such as Ward Goodenough and Marvin Harris. An Emic perspective is an insider perspective from within the social group, and according to Conrad Phillip Kottak (Kottak, 2006), an Emic perspective investigates how local people think. On the other hand, an Etic perspective investigates issues from an external perspective. An example of an etic perspective is Realist Ethnography which is a purely external perspective of a situation. (Moranen (1988)) Even though many studies claim to be Emic, they are rarely bias free, and formulating systemic bias-free approaches may become one of the priorities of Twenty-first century Ethnography. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which originally evolved in a linguistic context, can also be applied in the context of Ethnography: it states that everything must be understood from the eyes of the subject. Cultural Relativism is the idea that a person's beliefs and values should be understood in the context of that person's culture, and should not be clouded by a third party's perceptions. Another emerging are is the field of Critical Ethnography which focuses on biases that may arise from Ethnographic studies, and this field applies reflexive inquiry and critical theory as well. Critical Ethnography also provides a subversive worldview and seeks to critique culture and cultural research. It seeks to expose hidden agendas and upturn deep-rooted biases and long-held assumptions. Subaltern studies which evolved in various other contexts such as historiography are used in Ethnography as well. This field of study interfaces subaltern studies and post-colonial studies, including a post-colonial critique of Anthropology.[22] [23] [24]

Several important characteristics of Ethnography emerge from the above:

1. Ethnography is field-based and is conducted in an actual setting, rather than in an artificial setting.
2. Ethnography is personalized, interactive, and involves face to face interactions with subjects over a prolonged period in time.
3. Ethnography is multifactorial and involves the use of two or more data collection and research techniques. This is known as triangulation.
4. Ethnography involves a long-term time horizon stretching from inbetween one year to several years, although studies involving shorter durations are now becoming the norm.
5. Ethnography is inductive and involves nomothetic rule-building. Lessons learnt from a study are often used as a benchmark for other studies.
6. Ethnography involves a holistic approach and seeks to study as many aspects of culture as possible, though emphasis may often be on a few aspects of a culture in a study.
7. The emphasis is on quality and in-depth studies rather than quantity, and an Ethnographer typically studies only a few cases over his entire career.
8. Data analyzed is primarily raw and unconstructed, and it is one of the responsibilities of the Ethnographer to sift through raw data to draw meaningful conclusions.
9. Formulating and testing hypothesis is less important than exploring social phenomena, even though Ethnography follows all the principles of scientific method, and even when hypothesis are formulated, it is through a Grounded studies approach, rather than a hypothetico-deductive approach.

[22] A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research by Michael Genzuk, Centre for Multilingual, Multicultural research, University of Southern California
[23] Can the subaltern speak: Reflections on the history of an idea Edited by Rosalind C. Morris Columbia University Press New York
[24] Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject By Sherry B. Ortner Duke University Press Durham and London, 2006

Positivism and Functionalism

Many early Ethnographies were based on the concept of functionalism which assumed that cultures were bounded, static and homogenous, and that all aspects of a culture were logically interrelated and had a part to play in the maintenance of the whole. This approach was based on the works of functionalists such as Emile Durkheim, A R Radcliffe Brown, Bronislaw Malinowski, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton and others. Therefore all aspects of a culture were typically studied in a great level of detail. However, functionalism was not always borne out in reality and the notion that all aspects of a culture were interrelated causally was a myth and a mirage. According to the premise of positivism in Ethnography, knowledge generated about a society was assumed to be both scientific and logical, and the duty to generate rational narratives lay with the Ethnographer. The doctrine of Positivism developed from the writings of August Comte who saw societies drifting from a theological to a positivistic outlook. Positivism rejects Metaphysics and theism and recognizes only those phenomena which are capable of mathematical or scientific proof. Society, according to him, progressed from the theological stage to the metaphysical stage and then to the scientific stage. Bronislaw Malinowski, A R Radcliffe Brown, Evans Pritchard and Edmund Leach also belonged to the Positivist school. [25] [26]

Interpretive approaches were mastered by Clifford Geertz. Geertz had used the term 'thick description' (invented by Gilbert Ryle in 1949) to go into the minutest details of an event by putting himself in the other parties shoes to determine its significance for the actors and elucidate it for readers. Thus, according to this approach, culture was not an experimental science in search of a law, but an interpretive science in search of meaning. Claude Levi Strauss of France was also more interested in oral and textual traditions than fieldwork. The term 'Phenomenology' is derived from the Greek words 'that which appears' and 'logos' study, and was founded by the German Philosopher Edmund Husserl. It later spread to France and the USA. Phenomenology tries to create avenues for objective study where subjective interpretations rule the roost and states that people can be understood from the norms of the society they live in. Phenomenological approaches are widely used in Ethnography today. Phenomenology is related to Gestalt psychology. This approach studies how people look at the world and perceive real-world objects. Gestalt psychology was developed in Germany by Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler, Max Wertheimer, etc. Ethnomethodology is another method of social analysis which examines how individuals use everyday conversations to construct a commonsense view of the world. This field is also related to discourse analysis or the analysis of oral or written language, and metapragmatics which studies the context and conditions of language use.

We have been championing the cause of proactive approaches to socio-cultural change all along, but one that takes local sensitivities into account. In spite of valiant efforts, Anthropological efforts and calls for planned change have often met with stiff resistance from locals, and such resistance has either been rational or irrational. Success has largely depended on whether target audiences like the planned program or not, and were aware of its benefits. Programs must also not conflict with their cultural

[25] Articulating comprehensive frameworks on socio-cultural change: Perceptions of social and cultural change in contemporary twenty-first century Anthropology from a Neo-centrist perspective Sujay Rao Mandavilli ELK Asia Pacific Journal of Social Studies, 2017

[26] Brian A. Hoey "A simple introduction to the practice of Ethnography and guide to ethnographic fieldnotes Marshall Digital University Scholar, 2014

values and norms. Lack of awareness is a temporary barrier which can be surmounted with careful strategizing. For example, family planning policies have succeeded in some nations, and have failed in some others. The Narmada Bachao Andolan launched by Medha Patkar and others, was an agitation by people living in the Western part of India against a large dam project in their region. When the government of Columbia launched a program of giving free seedlings of orchard trees to farmers to increase fruit production, they evinced little interest. However, interest increased after they were charged a nominal fee. This was seen as reflective of cultural values of Columbian society. Such lessons have increased the demand for Collaborative Applied Anthropology, and the extensive involvement of beneficiaries in the planning process. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to research in communities that emphasizes participation and action. It has played a major role in community development particularly in developing countries. [27] [28] [29]

Only over the past few years, has a trend towards truly collaborative approaches become discernible with the constitution of multi-cultural teams. True multivocality however continues to elude us till date, and the issue may now warrant a grounds-up re-examination to eliminate sub-conscious bias.[30] [31] [32]

Anthropology in Development

Developmental Anthropology is a sub-field of Anthropology that applies Anthropological perspectives to developmental studies. In this subfield, international developmental projects and international aid are taken as the primary focus of attention. Social actions taken by different entities such as states, institutes or businesses which seek to modify cultural, social, technical and economic aspects of a society are studied. Development may be defined as a desirable replacement for underdevelopment or backwardness. According to the economist Gunnar Myrdal, development was a process by which poverty was alleviated, inequality reduced, and opportunities for self-actualization increased. Marxist Economists such as Martin Bronfenbrenner have also stressed on equitable development, and various metrics have been developed to measure inequality. Human Development Indices that measure various aspects such as Health, Education, Gender Empowerment, GDP, Per capita income and GINI co-efficients (based on work by Italian statistician Corrado Gini in 1912 – range of values between 0 and 1 higher numbers representing higher inequality) have also been developed. Other developmental theories have been proposed by Daniel Learner, Max Weber, Everett Hagen and Neil Smelser, and these have also emphasized a change in attitudes from fatalism and conservatism to modernity and acceptance of change, as a natural corollary of developmental processes. Grassroots development seeks to identify whether developmental models are inclusive and bottom-up or not. Sustainable Development,

[27] Re-reading Cultural Anthropology George F. Marcus Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1992
[28] Anthropology and Anthropologists, Adam Kuper 1973, The Penguin Press
[29] Invitation to Social and Cultural Anthropology K N Dash Atlantic Publishers and distributors, 2001

[30] Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An account of native enterprise and adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Malinowski, B. ,1922

[31] The Andaman Islanders; a study in social anthropology. A R Radcliffe Brown, 1922
[32] Hall, E. T. Beyond Culture. New York: Doubleday, 1976

Participatory Development and Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches are new concepts in Developmental Anthropology. Take-off theories have also been proposed by economists like W.W Rostow (Five Stages of Economic Growth i.e. Traditional society, Transitional society, Take-off, Drive to technological maturity, High mass consumption) with an emphasis on capital, technology and governmental policy.

Developmental Anthropology involves a meaningful analysis and constructive criticism of projects that seek to improve the well-being of marginalized and impoverished peoples and societies. Anthropologists play a major role in policy research, and some are appointed as policy advisors. Some Anthropologists also seek to make a distinction between "Anthropology of Development" and "Developmental Anthropology" (Escobar (1997). The term "Anthropology of Development" is a field that studies developmental models from a critical perspective while Developmental Anthropology is less critical of mainstream developmental models. Examples of questions that are sought to be addressed are effects of developmental models on poverty, gaps between planning and culture etc. One of the core assumptions of Developmental Anthropology is the Dependency Theory (As opposed to the Modernization Theory) which states that resources flow from poor to wealthy nations and that wealthy nations are unjustly enriched at the expense of the poor. Arturo Escobar, in his book "Encountering Development: The masking and unmasking of the Third world", argued that international developmental effects were a means for Developed countries to retain their stranglehold over their erstwhile colonies. Similar views were expressed by many other economists, particularly in developing countries. Nonetheless, more recent initiatives have demonstrated a radical departure from colonial era constructs where Anthropological initiatives unashamedly served the needs of colonizers, and Anthropologists often had limited leeway in formulating or changing policy through studies initiated on the ground.[33]

Another criticism of Anthropology has been that many Anthropologists have assumed that humans exhibited behavioural patterns that were culture-neutral in spite of its avowed objectives of cultural sensitivity. During the Second World War, American Anthropologists observed that Japanese prisoners tended to behave in a bizzaire fashion when faced with the prospect of being captured. They tended to indulge in the practice of self-killing even before they were taken to prison. Many Japanese literally considered their Emperor to be God, and often followed his instructions very seriously, obeying his commands to take to war or lay down arms. It was only after a prolonged interaction that American Anthropologists were able to understand and become acquainted with the Japanese way of thinking. Another project which met with much ridicule was Project Camelot which was launched by Special Operations Research Office of the US army in 1964 in South America to counter the spread of communism. This project failed to take into account the pulse of the people, met with stiff governmental resistance in target countries and was eventually aborted. Another ill-fated project was the "Thailand Project" which was launched without taking local sensitivities into account. The Highland tribes of Thailand lived in semi-isolation and eked out a living by selling opium in the domestic market, and were ostracized by the society at large. This project failed to grapple with the complexities of relations between the government, society and highlanders and the findings were largely ignored.

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[33] Encountering Development: The masking and unmasking of the Third World Arturo Escobar, 2001

In spite of the limitations of current praxis, cross-cultural research should not be restricted to travelling to another culture, translating materials into the local language, and replicating a study there. (Heine et al., van de Vijver and Leung, 1997). Researchers must avoid imposing their own viewpoints pertinent to their own culture, or learned from another culture into the culture being studied either consciously or sub-consciously. The latter, needless to say, is more easily said than implemented. They must also be sure that the independent and dependant variables are understood in the same way in different cultures. (Bond, 1988; Lonner & Berry, 1986). This would necessitate a radical, grounds up approach if this is to be achieved consistently.

In spite of the limitations of cross-cultural research, this approach is likely to remain an indispensible component of Ethnographic research into the foreseeable future. Many researchers support the indispensability of the cross-cultural approach. For example, according to the social comparison theory, formulated by Leon Festinger (1954) and refined by others (Buunk and Gibbons, 2007) people learn about themselves by comparing themselves with others, and hence comparison is an essential process of self-discovery.

In spite of many criticisms, Anthropology is now beginning to play a major role in policy making and governance. This became apparent many decades after the colonies of England and France began to get independence in the 1940's. While many colonies initially followed the socialistic pattern of development, they began to be rapidly integrated into the world economy once the process of globalization picked up steam towards the end of the Twentieth Century. "Anthropology in development" which involved the transfer of money and expertise from developed countries to developing countries though Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations and monitored by various funding agencies. This process began after the Second World War, but picked up steam in the 1980's. The World Bank, agencies of the United Nations, OXFAM, CARE, and others now hire Anthropologists in large numbers. Anthropologists also ensure that the benefits go to the needy and the deserving sections of society. This is in keeping with observations made by Murray Wax (1984) and others that Anthropology has been oriented towards ethics and social policy since its emergence as a distinct discipline and Edward B. Tylor (1958 (1871): 539), observations that the science of culture was essentially a reformer's science trying to balance the needs to various parties and provide the best value proposition to less advantaged societies or less advantaged sections of society. Anthropologists have also donned the hats of economists, educators, or agronomists, and have even played important roles in rehabilitation, disaster management and disease prevention and mitigation.

This has raised several moral and ethical questions. To what extent should international agencies effectuate change? Should they be harbingers of change or only act in response to requests for change? What should be their stand on persisting problems like dowry, child marriage, and gender inequality? Should they try to influence policy to bridge income inequality? How should projects be designed to ensure that aid reaches its intended beneficiaries? How is the pulse of the people assessed? How are the feelings and thoughts of people in remote locations captured? To what extent are these thoughts or feelings justified?

Indeed, Developmental Anthropology has had a long and chequered history. The British government established the Rhodes Livingstone Institute in 1937 in order to conduct research in British Central Africa, and this institute comprised Anthropologists like Godfrey Wilson, Max Gluckmann and others. Another influential school was the Manchester School of Anthropology which was founded at the University of Manchester by Max Gluckmann in 1947.   An organization by the name of Colonial Social Science Research was also established, and its members sought to create awareness on social research problems in obscure parts of the world. An association by the name 'Association for Social Anthropology' was also founded in 1946.

E B Tylor referred to Anthropology a "policy science" and argued that it would make human conditions better when consciously applied (Sills 1968). Northcote Thomas also used Anthropology in Nigeria on behalf of the British Administration in 1908 (Foster 1969). Anthropology was also used in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and Anthropologists acted as a link between the government and Native Americans and led to the formation of tribal charters and constitutions.

Daniel G. Brinton first put forward the concept of Applied Anthropology, and this eventually led to developmental policies in the developing world. However, the term "Practical Anthropology" was first used by James Hunt in the 1860's to indicate the pragmatic use of Anthropological techniques. A famous case of Applied Anthropology is Cornell University's Vicos project in Peru where A. Holmberg and his team took up the role of patron in a large estate, carrying out a paternalistic reform plan that was aimed at developing power to the producer. Margaret Mead, Fred Richardson and Eliot Chapple founded the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) in 1941, and founded a journal on Applied Anthropology that was later called 'Human Organization'. After the Second World War, the American government introduced a 'Point Four programme' to advance and evaluate aid to developing countries. Associations like the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) by the American Anthropological Association and groups like the Coalition of Practicing and Applied Anthropology Programs (COPAA) were also launched. Even though Applied Anthropology was used during the Great Depression and the New Deal, the real boom began after the Second World War, and was marred by several vicissitudes such as the American involvement in the Vietnam War. Many Anthropologists also now insist that beneficiaries of aid must be active in all levels of decision making, and this marks an important change in mindset from the Colonial age.

Advocacy is another important issue in Developmental Anthropology, and of late has begun to exert a major influence on public policy. Advocacy may be defined as speaking, acting, writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of disadvantaged groups and striving to protect their interests and uphold their fundamental needs. According to the National Lead for Advocacy, Valuing People Team, 2009, advocacy is "Taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests, and obtain the services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their sides. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice." Thus, advocacy has the ability to take into consideration the needs and sensitivities of marginalised and disenfranchised sections of society in any developmental frameworks, or initiate policy changes suitably. Another interesting development is that of self-advocacy where people come up individually or in groups to speak up for themselves. Self-advocacy has its own fundamental limitations

as most individuals or groups in a vast majority of less-developed societies are in a position to orchestrate their concerns formally, leave alone in a manner that will attract attention or bring about policy change.

Another exciting area is Action Anthropology. The term Action Anthropology was coined by Sol Tax at an American Anthropological Association Meeting in Chicago in 1951 based on his project with Fox Indians. Action Anthropology seeks to actively help a group of people solve a problem or bring about change, often making recommendations, and serving as catalysts for change. Action Anthropologists therefore seek to become a part of the lives of people of another culture, and understands various aspects of that culture proactively with a view to ushering in meaningful change. The three values of Action Anthropologists are:

1. The value of truth: represents the fact and knowledge as expressed by the community.
2. The value of freedom: represents the freedom for communities to choose their ways of life among various alternatives available with minimal interference or goading.
3. The value of principle of operation: this is a law of parsimony which states that questions of values and principles should not be interfered with unless absolutely necessary.

Anthropologists and Ethnographers also seek to transform their knowledge of theory into effective praxis. This is done by means of suitable research techniques such as Action Research which have a practice-oriented and problem-solving emphasis and seek to bring together theory and practice through rigorous research practices and analysis of data. (Costello 2011). According to a model proposed by Denscombe (Denscombe 2007), Action Research includes professional practice, critical reflection, research, strategic planning and action, followed in a cyclic process and accompanied by cogitation and refection. Activism is therefore one of the hallmarks of Twenty-first century Anthropology. We had debated the pros and cons and ethics of activism in an earlier paper.

Globalization and Ethnography

Globalization is a process of economic integration where barriers to trade, business and diplomacy are gradually dissipated. According to the Deep History Theory of Globalization proposed by Andre Gunder Frank, the process of globalization began with trade contacts between Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley in the Third Millennium BC. The modern process of globalization was triggered by the Industrial Revolution and the advent of new technologies such as the steam locomotive, steamships and the telegraph of the Nineteenth century. This process accelerated with the improvement of communication and transportation technology towards the end of the Nineteenth century. However, the term globalization began to be widely used only in the 1990's with the collapse of Communism and the dawn of the internet epoch. Many erstwhile socialist economies began to open the doors, and autarchic economies are now few and far inbetween. Globalization has deeply impacted Ethnography as well; just as colonialism opened the doors to exotic locales around the world, globalization is making multinational, multilocale and multiethnic studies possible. In the modern age, the notion of a bounded site is hard to maintain. This contradicts somewhat with the old idea of indepth localism. Another approach of modern Ethnography is to investigate the "Global Condition" rather than the "Local

Condition". This has arisen from "World Systems Theory" which was influenced by the works of Immanuel Wallerstein who viewed capitalism as being a system beyond boundaries. The idea of Ethnography in the age of globalization and the conflict between local and global forces has been explored by Michael Buraway and others. The idea of Multi-sited Ethnography which follows a research topic across numerous field sites has been proposed by George Marcus (1195:95-117) as a way to examine global forces and the increasing interconnectedness of people as a result of globalization. [34] [35]

New trends in Ethnography

According to Pertti Pelto and Gretel Pelto (1970), the following are the recent trends in Ethnography.

1. Quantification of field observations and "operationalizing of field data" have become common in ethnographic investigations.
2. Ethnographic research is also focussed on urban social systems, complex segments of peasant societies and other types of non-primitive literate populations.
3. The study of social change, modernization, and social processes has taken precedence over the study of static and non-changing societies.
4. Attempt to find out areas for sociocultural amelioration in the societies studied are being made – this has raised a series of ethical concerns.
5. Social research is being carried out for the communities studied, instead of for their peers, funding or governmental agencies. Thus, research results are made available to the people whom they have studied.
6. A specific aspect of culture is often studied in detail instead of the entire culture or society. A known problem often forms the starting point of the study.
7. An ecological orientation is increasingly manifesting itself with a strong focus on physical and biological environment and the ability of man to live in harmony with nature.
8. Techniques of field research are often documented. Autobiographical style of report writing has become a recent trend.
9. Complex ethical and practical questions are being raised about Anthropologists involvements in research shaped by American foreign policy particularly in the Middle East, but the ethics are far from resolved.
10. Global and multisited anthropology is also becoming common as shaped by globalization. This has made geographical barriers largely irrelevant, and has helped study interconnectedness among cultures (Marcus: 1995 (95-117) but has posed fresh challenges for Ethnographers.

Another new trend is Internet Ethnography, e-ethnography or netnography where ethnographic research is primarily done through the medium of the internet. This offers a very rapid approach to Ethnographic studies and is the only viable or economical option in a wide variety of situations, but suffers from the lack of physical contact with the subjects studied.

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[34] World Systems Analysis: An introduction by Immanuel Wallerstein Duke University Press, 2009
[35] Anthropological Research: The structure of Inquiry Pertti J. Pelto and Gretel H. Pelto Cambridge University Press, 1978

Anthropology has begun to study the market and market mechanisms in the backdrop of a free market economy. Anthropology is also widely used in organization and consumer research. It can be used to understand the organizational structure and culture of a multinational corporate business house, the behaviour of customers and consumers for product design enhancement, and the impact of the market on social institutions. Anthropology has also been used to study consumer behaviour and marketing particularly in multinational contexts where understanding of cultural differences is crucial. Anthropologists' help is also solicited in Social Marketing where social causes are promoted as an instrument in social engineering. [36]

Culture and its components

In an earlier paper, we had proposed that an analysis of culture and its components should be carried out as follows, and this would constitute a Cultural Taxonomy much in the manner of Carl Linnaeus' taxonomy of species that is now the norm in Biology [37]:

Each culture comprises of subcultures

We had proposed that Subcultures could be defined on the basis of ethnicity, social classes, occupational hierarchy, religion, geography etc, or on a combination of one or more of such factors. These can be referred to as dimensions of culture.

Each Culture or sub-culture comprises of subcategories or subclasses

We had also proposed that a list of standard subcategories or subclasses could be constructed and could be attempted to be used across cultures. This list of subsystems could then be expanded as more and more cultures are analyzed, and the expanded list can then be used for a restudy of previously assessed cultures. This may eventually and ideally generate a list of standard and universal subclasses.

Examples of subcategories within a culture may include language, symbols, religion, music, art, drama, theater, cinema, folklore, marriage, cuisine, other aspects of tradition etc. Culture may even consist of material items such as cars, trucks which etc. which now form an inalienable part of every culture. While building a taxonomy, all tangible and intangible dimensions of a culture such as values, norms, philosophies, principles, dogmas, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, symbols, traditions, ideologies, and artifacts can also be included.

Each subsystem has components

We had even proposed that subcategories could be further sub-divided into components for the purposes of a meaningful and a structured taxonomical classification. These could be analogous to various classes under each subcategory. For example, we may have a multitude of components under language and language policy such as language policy formulation, language policy implementation,

[36] Doing Critical Ethnography, Jim Thomas, A Sage University Paper

[37] The relevance of Culture and Personality Studies, National Character Studies, Cultural Determinism and Cultural Diffusion in Twenty-first Century Anthropology: An assessment of their compatibility with Symbiotic models of Socio-cultural change ELK Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science Volume 4, Issue 2, 2018 Sujay Rao Mandavilli

teaching methods and pedagogical techniques, teacher training, teacher competence, student evaluation etc. Under cuisine, we may have different factors such as presentation, cooking techniques, focus on health, focus on hygiene, nutritional analysis, preservation techniques etc. Common and ubiquitous material items may include jeeps, locomotives, aero planes, rockets, computers, cars, trucks, tractors, telephones, mobile phones etc. Under kinship, we can have subcategories such as attitudes towards consanguineous marriages, attitudes towards class, caste, clan or village endogamous or exogamous marriages, attitudes towards dowry, attitudes towards pre-marital sex, attitudes towards extended families, attitudes towards child-rearing etc. While identifying components, both comprehensiveness and granularity will need to be taken into consideration. To put it differently, components should be defined in such a way that no further division is required.

Each component consists of attributes

We had proposed that each component would be associated with a set of attributes. Each attribute should be capable of being assessed either on quantitative or qualitative terms, and discrete or continuous quantitative variables or qualitative variables are used for these. Attributes for the requirements of our study, may also be referred to as qualities or characteristics. Attributes can then be adjudged and eventually quantified by means of suitably-designed questionnaires or other evaluation methods such which can even include self-assessment or third-party evaluation. Attributes should be identified at a granular level in such a way that questionnaires can be efficiently generated from them. Attributes can also be rated in absolute or relative terms which may result either in absolute rankings or ratings. Relative methods stem from the concept of cultural relativism. According to this concept, no culture can be taken to be innately or inherently superior or inferior to the other, and ethnocentrism is associated with potential grave errors in judgment. Each culture therefore has its own uniqueness, shaped by its own history or unique cultural setting. Attributes may also include intangible and unquantifiable attributes, and those that cannot be quantified with any degree of precision or certainty.

According to Bodley, culture is made up of three distinct components: what people think, what they do, and the material products they produce. A.L Kroeber categorized aspects of culture into two broad categories i.e. ethos and eidos. Ethos refers to the values of a culture such as aspirations and beliefs, and these must also be included in an analysis. Clyde Kluckhohn also differentiated between the explicit and implicit values of a culture. Explicit values of a culture were those that could be easily perceived, expressed, and identified by sensory organs. However, implicit values included elements such as motivations and impulses. As per our approach, an analysis of attributes can lead to the identification of 'Cultural traits' which are assemblages or aggregations of latent sentiments or manifested actions. Traits can be combined to form patterns, and patterns may be further classified into ideal patterns or actual patterns. The term cultural trait has already been defined. A Culture trait is the simplest basic unit into which a culture may be analyzed. A trait may be diffused freely, or may join with other traits. (Tylor: 540, 1991) [38]

Comparative methods can also be used as such methods have been common in Anthropological studies from the time of Kames in 1761 even though they were refined and practically implemented by E B Tylor

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[38] Ethnography: A way of seeing, Harry F. Wolcott, Altmira Press, 1999

in 1889. The 'Salient features' and unique characteristics associated with each culture can also be identified before carrying out a more detailed exercise as this will have a bearing of the taxonomy arrived at, and will throw hints on what areas to focus on. A high level assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses and constraints of a given culture are also usually carried out as a precursor to a more detailed assessment. Similarly, third-party assessment reports including assessments of previous Ethnographic studies may also be scrutinized and utilized as a stepping stone to a more detailed assessment. Preliminary and unstructured 'gut feel' approaches may also have some utility, but must be subsequently vetted and ratified with empirical data.

Carrying out fieldwork to experience a culture first-hand would be an essential pre-requisite and is an indispensible part of any ethnographic study. This is the foundation upon which the comparative method is based. Fieldwork has been known from the days of Franz Boas and Alfred Cort Haddon who carried out expeditions to British Columbia and Torres straits respectively. Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, A.R Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard also carried out extensive fieldwork. These expeditions were in stark contrast to the works of other Anthropologists such are James Frazer, which were primarily based on secondary sources of information or conjectural history. This is not however, to discount the role of armchair anthropologists who played a role in combining data from multiple sources into cogent and coherent hypotheses that could then be used in other studies. For example, A.C Haddon who was one of the key figures in the expedition to the Torres Straits acknowledged the role and the contributions of both fieldworkers and armchair anthropologists to anthropology. Methods used in fieldwork have varied, but one of the more common techniques is the participant-observation method which was popularized by Bronislow Malinowski.

It is also necessary to identify ideal cultural traits that can be applied as yardsticks across cultures. However, actual behaviour observed on the field may be at variance with expected or ideal behaviour, and it would be necessary to carry out a gap assessment between the two and perform a root cause analysis for the deviations. This would be followed by an action plan for remediation and the course-corrections that will eventually need to be carried out. Some traits can be sub-divided into 'good' and the 'bad', but some cannot, and it would be necessary for any researcher to keep this in mind. Neo-centrist approaches formulated in our earlier can be used to identify the 'desirable' and the 'undesirable', by looking at issues from a long-term perspective, or analyzing the long-term consequences of any proposition or by adopting dialectical approaches.

An analysis may then be carried out of the traits with low ranking, followed by a root cause analysis examining the underlying causes of a low rating or ranking. This analysis could then be understood in conjunction with the 'Enablers' and 'Core drivers' discussed in Symbiotic approach towards Socio-cultural change. An alternative approach may be to assess the attributes at two different points in time to assess the rate of change in the intervening period. Strategies to augment the pace of desirable change can then be put in place.

Researchers have also attempted to break up cultures into traits and assign these developmental sequences, or develop generalized heuristic techniques that could be used in a study of other cultures. Attempts were also made by Emile Durkheim, George Peter Murdock, Claude Levi Strauss, Donald

Brown and others to analyze the universals common across cultures. Murdock also set up the Human Relations Area Files or HRAF in which common categories of cultures were filed together. The objective of this was to collect ethnographic information from all over the world. Murdock and Douglas R. White also introduced the concept of "Standard cross-cultural sample" by analyzing 186 sample cultures from Africa, the Circum-Mediterranean, East Eurasia, the Insular Pacific, North America, South America that could be used as a benchmark for other cultures and analyzing variables such as money, water transport etc. These efforts led to the compilation of the 'World Ethnographic Sample'. Another approach recommends breaking up a culture into trait-complexes, and further into traits. Ruth Benedict believed that culture was made of many patterns which were bound together in a harmonious whole. Such patterns are known as cultural patterns, and bestow upon culture a distinct individuality. In this connection, she famously said "No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking." M.E Opler recommended summative principles in culture called themes. Themes were general motivations responsible for behavioural patterns of members of a society, are similar to, but more elastic than Ruth Benedict's cultural patterns and crucial to an understanding of cultural structure. Claude Levi Strauss broke up words and cultural sections into phonemes, morphemes, etc. in the search for the underlying reality of the human mind. [39] [40] [41]

Fred Eggan proposed a method of controlled comparison where the investigator is familiar or pre-familiarized with the cultural inventory, and only investigates the area of differences. Naroll has proposed another interesting solution. In this approach, historical and functional association are placed on two poles of a continuum. The third association which is inbetween the two is called semi-diffusional and mixed historical functional.

Another interesting idea is that of Memetics which can be used to represent the different units of a culture which can aid in cultural transmission e.g. ways of dressing, cooking etc at a very great level of detail. This idea was proposed and popularized by Richard Dawkins in the 1970's. According to the idea of Memetics, ideas, skills and practices are entities that continuously make copies of themselves and are used to propagate cultural traits, much like genes in evolutionary biology. Memetics involves breaking down of a culture or a sub-culture into discrete and manageable units. This approach, which is also similar to some of the proposals in our paper, can be even used to construct the broad framework and the superstructure of a given culture by breaking it down into logical and inter-related sub-components. [42] [43] [44]

Personality attributes or traits

39 Ember, Melvin, Evolution of the Human Relations Area Files in Cross-Cultural Research, 1997

40 Divale, William, Pre-Coded Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample from World Cultures. Volumes I & II. York College, CUNY, Spring 2000.

[41] Benedict, Ruth (1959). An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict. Edited by Margaret Mead. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
[42] Dawkins, R. (1976), The selfish gene. Oxford University Press
[43] Modernization of the structure of societies, Princeton University Press, 1966
[44] Benedict, R. (1946). *The chrysanthemum and the sword: Patterns of Japanese culture*. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited

In addition, we may also attempt to identify personality attributes or traits in relation to a specific or a given culture. These would represent either the mean or most common i.e. modal values of people in a specific culture. Various types of meaningful analyses are possible including the computation of mean values of attributes of a particular culture, analysis of value distributions, dimensional analyses, computation of metrics such as standard deviations or variances, identification of outliers, and an analysis of changes to modal values and patterns over a period in time. Such an analysis must also capture cultural attitudes and the popular sentiment of a culture, particularly those geared towards cultural adaptation and assimilation of new traits, and express them in relatively tangible terms. The results may be expressed by means of a frequency analysis or other metrics. Analysis across dimensions such as age or gender, either at a point in time or across time, would also constitute another useful analysis, with major downstream benefits. A combination of these two approaches would, in our view, ensure that the Anthropologist has a thorough grip of any particular culture. This is a seemingly innocuous yet powerful multi-pronged strategy that seeks to map a culture completely, though the Ethnographer may consider only modal or more prominent distributions for downstream policy making. For greater efficacy, taxonomies must be constructed correctly and attributes and traits comprehensively laid out.

For this purpose, positive attributes or traits may include:

- Honesty, Sincerity, Truthfulness, Capability for hard-work, Obedience, Optimism, Creativity, dynamism, Future-orientation, Discipline, Methodical approach, Punctuality, Perfectionism
- Affection towards others etc
- <<This is an open list>>

Negative attributes or traits may include

- Jealousy, Ego, Snobbishness, Pessimism, Cynicism, Greed, Past-orientation, Contempt or derision toward others etc
- <<This is an open list>>

In such cases, actual observed values may be recorded using the subjective rating method on either a numerical or numerical basis to pre-empt bias. Cross-cultural values may also be obtained for meaningful analysis, along with prior period data. In some situations, it may be preferred to adopt raking instead of independent rating. Idealized values and realistically attainable values may also be recorded to permit comparisons and to serve as a benchmark and a springboard to action. In any case, these values will not only be impacted by that culture's value systems, but also by mind-orientations, whether individual or modal.

Spatial units

There are no standard norms for classifying spatial units. However, one classification that may be adopted is that of Cultures, Culture areas and culture regions. According to Tylor, a cultural area is a region which has a relatively similar way of living common to its component socio-economic systems and cultures. According to the theory of diffusion, the centre of a cultural area is usually more

homogenous while peripheries are less homogenous and more varied. This concept is particularly relevant for material aspects of a culture. (Tylor: 37, 1991) Cultural complexes, on the other hand, are organically related group of culture traits in a culture area. E.g. Cattle Complex of East African Cultures. (Tylor 125, 1991)

Drawbacks of Current Emic approaches

While Emic approaches have in general proven to be an effective antidote to ethnocentrism and dangerous over-generalizations and over-simplifications, there are several drawbacks and limitations of current Emic and subject-driven or subject-centric perspectives, however well-meaning and well-intentioned these may be:

- Most Emic studies are not executed by insiders, but by outsiders who seek to capture responses of respondents mostly in an adhoc and an unstructured fashion, and there are few formal checks and balances to prevent tampering and improper recording of data.
- Most Emic approaches are generally not accompanied by structured or formal interviews or direct evidence: Emic studies may not always be accompanied by direct oral, written or audio-visual evidence and there is a risk that studies may be clouded by the investigators bias, and that the interests of the populations studied may not always be honoured or followed in letter and spirit.
- Studies not structured and comprehensive: Current studies may not be structured, comprehensive and scientific in that all culture areas and sub-cultures may not be followed. Studies are typically random and adhoc, and a systematic approach is not built into the method itself.
- Responses not annotated: While responses must be maintained separately without modification, naive, immature and uninformed responses must be annotated without overriding the respondent's response. In most emic approaches, only the Ethnographers notes are maintained, and the original responses go unrecorded.
- No target cultures or systematic approach to querying: The respondents' structured view of the outside world including different 'target cultures', and an honest self-introspection is seldom maintained and systematically built into the method itself.
- Differences between individuals in a group, differences across strata and differences across time-frames are also seldom systematically maintained even where such differences may be significant or critical for the purposes of a study.
- Emic responses are overly culture-specific and are not blended with inductive and nomothetic approaches. As such, their scientific utility is limited because no generalizations are drawn.
- Emic approaches are typically not accompanied by a systematic plan for the study of cultures, and the culture and the aspects of the culture to be studied are left to the convenience and the imagination of the ethnographer. This approach does not naturally lend itself to a systematic study and categorization of varying points of view, and was aptly summarized by Clifford Geertz in 1995. (Alternative approaches such as Salvage Ethnography which is focussed on the study of near extinct cultures alone do not serve our purpose)

- Emic accounts are also often discounted due to inconsistency across cultures (Kloos, 1988) and for imbibing misconceptions from insiders (Marano, 1982).

We believe that most of these drawbacks could be remediated though our approach. Our approach, though simple and transparent seeks to capture a gamut of informed and uninformed responses, and modulate and annotate these with the necessary technical and functional expertise to ensure practicability and workability across scenarios and settings.

Areas of Investigation as per our approach

We believe that the following aspects would constitute the primary areas of investigation as per our approach. These would, when properly applied, lead to a wide range of honest and meaningful responses that can be of great use in policy formulation. These are bound to be fairly comprehensive too, and lead to a thorough grip of the cultures being studied, and their varied points of view. These investigations must be carried out at the level of a cultural category and sub-component.

Source: Reflexive

In this category, the interviewee's perceptions about his own culture would be recorded, at a sufficient level or detail and for each cultural categories and sub-component, and for various categories and subcategories with a particular emphasis on the existing state of affairs. Areas of disenchantment about the current state of affairs must also be recorded along with the causes of dissatisfaction, if known. This is a mandatory category and would play a key role in defining policy and formulating policy change wherever required. The approach to be followed is a combination of structured and free form approaches, so that a minimum level of flexibility is maintained while following a set plan. A combination of Interviews (Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured) and questionnaires can be adopted in such a way that a gamut of perceptions and responses can be brought out, and the inherent merits and demerits of each approach has already been documented threadbare. A sampling rather than a census approach is followed, and is structured to take into account a wide variety of responses across age, gender, economic accomplishment and elicit varied perceptions etc.   However, the ethnographer must goad respondents: a fully free-form approach is discouraged as most respondents would lack maturity and knowledge.

Target: Taxonomy of issues

In this category, the taxonomy of issues which may be either at a single level or at a multiple level is to be constructed, and opinions of respondents solicited. Examples of such issues may include Governmental policy or policy of International funding agency. Under governmental policy, we can have afforestation policy or resettlement policy. As this would be a crucial and sensitive issue, responses are expected to be elicited at a fairly great level of detail, and subject to stratified sampling to elicit a gamut of responses and careful annotation without overriding original responses.

Target: General world out there

In this category, respondents would be asked to provide their opinions of the general world out there, and such responses could be encouraged or even mandated if they are conduits for self-improvement or policy change. This would help the planner understand the worldview of the respondents in general. Modal or come common perceptions would be crucial, and this category would be filled in to the extent practicable.

Target: Specific cultures, Cultural area and cultural superstructure

In this category, respondents would be asked to provide their opinions of the specific cultures, usually the cultural area or more influential cultural regions, or those respondents can be expected to have opinions about, and such responses would be subject to the respondents' awareness of specific aspects of such cultures or conditioned by his perceptions of them. Such responses may play a role in identifying the sphere of interactions and formulating policy. For example, cultural attitudes of a culture towards other cultures, and the nature of interactions may be identified, and this could be used to provide a three hundred and sixty degree view of the perceptions of respondents.

Other Perceptions: Past

Respondents may also be asked to provide their perceptions of the past including aspects such as folklore, myth and legends and elaborate on how these impact the present. This would form a part of DPPF or dialogue between past, present and future techniques as elaborated by us in a previous paper. These are particularly relevant in cultures with a rich history. In this connection, the Ethnographer may come prepared with a study of the culture in question so that he may furnish his annotations against the respondents' remarks. He may also scrutinize documents such as true historical documents, legal documents and biographies which may be either primary sources, secondary sources or compilations.

Other Perceptions: Future

Respondents may also be asked to provide their perceptions of the future including their collective aspirations etc and elaborate on how these would be shaped or constrained by the present. Respondents may also be asked to elaborate on perceived conflicts between aspirations and cultural constraints and bottlenecks. This would form a part of DPPF or dialogue between past, present and future techniques as elaborated by us in a previous paper.

Other Perceptions: Perceived ideal state

Respondents are also queried about the perceptions of a utopia, an ideal or an idealized society. However, such visions must typically be within the realm of attainment with respect to the society in question. Such visions may also be associated with a probability factor, wherever there are more than one competing visions available. Roadblocks and impediments along with possible solutions for overcoming them may be identified by respondents themselves wherever practicable. A sampling approach would be followed here, as a wide variation in responses could be expected based on dimension.

Other Perceptions: Areas of disenchantment and areas of self-improvement

Respondents may also be asked to list out their possible areas of disenchantment with the current state of affairs or status quo at a granular level of detail and also list out possible areas of improvement. This would constitute a wholly emic perspective, but may be further annotated with the annotators comments wherever applicable such that a realistic list of issues and a list of areas of improvement that is as practical as possible is presented.

Other perceptions: Queries on specific remedial action or projects

In this section, feedback on specific projects that have already been executed or are in the process of being executed including respondents experiences, peer experiences or group experiences at a fairly great level of detail along with errors of omission and commission are sought as this information can be used for future decision making and help avoid the perils and pitfalls of the past.

Other perceptions: Perceptions on Stakeholders, agencies and individuals

In this section, perceptions of subjects of study about stakeholders, agencies, individuals associated with these agencies or any other individuals may be obtained as this may throw light on the kind of individuals they are comfortable working with and the kind of individuals they are not comfortable working with. This may be used as an input for further decision making, as the right kind of individuals who are culturally sensitive or sympathetic to the needs of the locals may be deployed for further endeavours.

Annotations: Primary, Single or Multiple

Primary Annotations are expected to be maintained at a fairly great level of detail. Primary annotations may be single or multiple, and multiple annotations may be maintained if the subject is fairly complex, and varied responses can be expected. One approach is to differentiate annotations based on the nature of expertise, as this would trigger the need for multiple annotations. There are several important principles to be kept in mind here; the first would be the principle of non-obliteration, and the original response must not be blanked out or overwritten at any cost. The second principle is that all aspects of the respondent's response

must be affirmed or negated with the appropriate justifications for negation. Where annotators differ, the reasons for difference can be highlighted. However, as a large number of responses would be subjective, variations in response may be left to speak for themselves. These must steer clear of the pitfalls of imposed-etic constructs, where constructs are simply exported from the researchers' home environment, (Berry's three stage sequence (Berry, 1990)), but must take respondent's responses as a base, and modulate them. Unlike Berry's approach, our approach starts from an Emic perspective but seeks to modulate them.

Annotators must possess several important qualities. Not only must they possess a grasp of the cultures which can be achieved through an extensive study or process of familiarization, they must also possess a fairly comprehensive worldview on the area or topic of study. Wherever, these requirements cannot be met in a single individual, multiple annotators may be appointed subject to other constraints.

Annotations: Discussions, Review and signoff

Annotations can be reviewed and signed off with the intent that the final narrative presents a cogent and an uncluttered picture to the users of the information. Ideally, reviewers will mark their comments separately without overriding the comments of the annotators. The end result will be a sound and a methodical worldview of the respondent, scarcely marred and clouded by the interviewer's worldviews and perceptions. However, the respondent's irrelevant or fallacious observations may be flagged off, though these can be excluded only after an appropriate justification.

Principles of our approach

The following are the core principles of our approach, and all other principles must be derived from this:

1. Actively seeking out cultures especially those with varying points of view: One core underlying principle of our approach is that cultures must be sought out and studied either in response to an initiative or otherwise. Initiatives such as these are expected to be ahead of the curve, and carried out regardless of other projects or initiatives. They will not only not be tied to them but actually precede them. However, it must also be borne in mind that cultures must be statistically significant and relevant for decision making.
2. Eventual universalization of this approach with a mapping of all cultures: This approach is expected to be universalized, and all cultures under the sun analyzed, subject to cost and time constraints. Needless to say, this is easier said than done, and the funding requirements alone can be mind-boggling; this is why a staggered approach can stand us in good stead.
3. Training and competence of fieldworkers: Training of fieldworkers must be done in right earnest, and the relevant expertise sought. This will include training on Ethnographic method, soft skills as well as culture-specific training.

4. Honesty and truthfulness: Honesty and truthfulness are considered to be the most critical qualities of fieldworkers in this case, and compromising on ethics is likely to put the entire effort in jeopardy and be at odds with the very raison d'etre of this approach.

5. Combination of structured and free-form approaches: While this approach by its very definition and intent is structured, the fieldworker is expected to be flexible and accommodate additional responses of respondents if any. The scope of the work can also be expanded impromptu, and reasonable changes made on the fly if this adds to the value of the study.

6. Cultural Sensitivity: Cultural sensitivity is one of the key requirements for success, and needless to say, this is more easily said than accomplished.

7. Interpretation last: The study must begin with honest recording interrupted only by meaningful clarifications or prodding. Interpretations must run parallel to or follow annotations. Ideally, they would need to be carried out as a downstream effort.

8. Non-masking and non-obliteration of responses: The importance of this principle must always be emphasized. Needless to say, this is very sacrosanct from our perspective.

9. Inductive approach for nomothetic rule building: The approach to be followed here is inductive, and as a result the approach may prove to be laborious.

10. Search for unique aspects of cultures: Nomothetic approaches should not be allowed to interfere with the search for unique attributes of cultures.

11. Historical particularism as required: Historical particularism is an integral, though not a defining feature of this approach. The fieldworker is expected to have some knowledge of the culture's history to assist respondents in tabulating response.

12. Comparative approaches as required: While comparative analysis is expected to be carried out as a downstream activity wherever, some aspects of a comparative approach have been built into this approach particularly with regards to source and target cultures.

13. Complementary to other approaches: This approach expected to run parallel to other approaches, or be nested in a wider ethnographic study, and complement and enrich other aspects of an ethnographic study rather than interfere or hinder them.

14. Capturing a wide variety of possible responses through sampling: Sampling may be done on the basis of meaningful attributes such as age, gender and income bracket. This will ensure that a wide variety of responses are captured. At the same time, the principle of parsimony must be borne in mind, and the report must not be cluttered with superfluous or redundant information. Thus, sampling is always the norm.

15. Tries to analyze the underlying reasons behind a response: The fieldworker makes an attempt wherever possible to analyze the underlying reasons behind a response, and this can by itself constitute a sanity check. Probing may be carried out to override inappropriate responses or confirmism but must be done without exercising undue influence.

16. Collaboration overshadowed by participant response: Prodding and collaboration must not interfere with the respondent's original responses and creativity. They will only be used as a standby when other approaches fail to deliver results.

17. Allowing participants to prioritize their own topics: Participants may be allowed some leeway in deciding the order to be followed or fixing schedules, but this must not interfere with the overall efficacy of the study of impact deadlines and budgets negatively.

18. Interviews and questionnaires would be necessary: a fully free-form approach is to be strongly discouraged.

19. Cultural attributes also to be assessed: Cultural attributes may also be assessed, but this is typically through careful observation ad limited interviewing.

20. Culture grouping is one of the eventual outcomes of this approach: Culture grouping is one of the eventual objectives of this approach, as this will greatly assist in policy making. It is expected the similar cultures will be subject to similar policy making initiatives.

21. Scope for multiple annotations: Multiple annotations accompanied by the necessary expertise can go a long way in ensuring that responses are critically analyzed from all dimensions for further activity.

22. Annotations are thoroughly reviewed by a group of specialists: This forms a part of a process of inbuilt review to ensure that decision making is built on a rocksolid foundation.

23. Investigator triangulation: Investigator triangulation may be carried out to enhance efficiency, even though this is not mandatory.

24. Influence of individuals not exaggerated or blown out of proportion: The importance given to responses made by influential individuals must be guided by their role in possible policy formulation and decision making and must never be blown out of proportion.

25. Emphasis on audio-visual evidence: Audio visual evidence as emphasized by Hortense Powdermaker, (1961) Oscar Lewis, (1960) and others must be maintained by the researcher on the field, and must be cross-verified for internal validity and consistency.

26. Maintenance of time and other attributes: Time attributes must be strictly maintained under all circumstances and this will include date and time of study. Other relevant attributes may also be maintained.

27. Revisiting studies as required: Studies may be revisited at scheduled intervals based on exigencies and requirements, and this may even be built into the plan.

28. Maintenance of planning and other documentation: Planning and other documentation must be always carefully and systematically maintained. This will include field notes and diaries, and must be complemented by the necessary audio-visual aids.

Conclusion

Even though this approach may appear to be cumbersome and time-consuming at the very outset, at least in comparison to existing random and inconsistent approaches, we believe this will be the only systemic bulwark and a guaranteed protection against sub-conscious or pre-meditated bias, and there can be no better time to launch such an exercise than now. While the efforts involved may appear to be stupendous and overwhelming, these may be effected gradually, and in stages such that respectable mosaic and assortment of cultures is covered in a reasonable time span. One approach is to be begin with the more prominent or dominant cultures or those that are likely to be key in decision making, and then proceed to the rest. A representative sample among all class or category of cultures is covered first before proceeding with other cases. Another approach may be to select one culture among a class or category of cultures with the hopes that most observations would largely hold good across that class or category. A third approach may be to take up studies of cases in response to calls for funding or third-

party initiatives. Such studies may also be funded by local governments subject to political will and other exigencies. Other considerations apart, approaches such as this have the potential to redefine Ethnography in the long-term and transform it into a culturally-sensitive discipline.