CHAPTER

2

METHOD AND THEORY IN APPLIED CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

Most readers of this book will already be familiar with three different kinds of "tools" commonly used by academically oriented cultural anthropologists. The first is a body of seminal ideas (usually referred to as anthropological "theories") that guide cultural anthropological research and analysis. The culture concept is a primary example of an anthropological "theory." Second, cultural anthropologists make use of a number of different philosophical approaches or viewpoints, each offering a different perspective on anthropological data; structural-functionalism and postmodernism are two well-known examples. Finally, cultural anthropologists have developed a body of methods that they routinely use for collecting, analyzing, and comparing data; participant observation is undoubtedly the best-known example. These familiar ideas and techniques are briefly reviewed in Appendix 2.

Applied cultural anthropologists, like their academic counterparts, make frequent use of these now-standard "theories," approaches, and techniques. Indeed, some of them were developed, during the infancy of cultural anthropology, specifically for applied purposes. Participant observation, for example, emanated from the requirement of nineteenth-century governments for information on which to base their administration of indigenous peoples.[1] Even as they make use of standard cultural anthropological tools, however, applied cultural anthropologists call upon additional ideas and techniques specifically relevant to the search for practical solutions to real-world problems.

This chapter first compares the basic research strategy used in applied cultural anthropology with classic or traditional cultural anthropological research. Next, it describes two principles fundamental to contemporary applied cultural anthropology: community participation and sustainability. These principles are largely irrelevant to traditional academic cultural anthropology because it lacks the explicit social change orientation of applied work; directed social change has historically been considered neither necessary nor even desirable in purely academic research. The chapter then describes a number of data-gathering and data-analysis methods commonly (if not exclusively) used by applied cultural anthropologists. Some of these methods were formulated within the specific context of applied cultural anthropology; some were borrowed from other disciplines, with or without being altered to suit applied anthropologists' goals. Finally, the chapter describes applied cultural anthropology's theoretical contributions to their parent discipline and discusses the two-way relationship between theory and actual practice in applied cultural anthropology.

A BASIC STRATEGY FOR APPLIED RESEARCH

For the traditional, scientifically inclined, academic cultural anthropologist, the study of the behavior of human beings as members of social groups is motivated primarily by the desire to contribute to anthropological theory and ideally involves four activities.

1. The anthropologist, typically working alone rather than as part of a larger group, devises a hypothesis to explain some aspect of human social behavior.
2. He or she tests the validity of the hypothesis during a protracted period of ethnographic fieldwork.
3. The resulting data are analyzed, and the original hypothesis is revised and retested (if necessary) in the light of what has been learned.
4. The anthropologist compares what he or she has learned with data from other societies, in order to contribute to a wider understanding of the existence, development, appearance, behavior, and beliefs of human beings.

Today, although the scientific approach is still considered an important model for scholarly work in cultural anthropology, this traditional scenario may be more ideal than real. Theoretical research in cultural anthropology changed considerably

oriented, cultural anthropologists may be far less rigid, terpretive than that of their earlier counterparts. In any goal is still to learn something about human behavior f (or sometimes in addition to) achieving some practical c

In contrast, applied research is primarily motivate specific social problem, not by the desire to build theory sentatives of other disciplines; the anthropologist rarely being more or less fixed and sequential, the applied cult ties are apt to vary: policy research requires certain step quires others, direct intervention requires still others, an able for each depends on the specific project at hand. Th in cultural anthropology is characterized, like classic the well-defined activities, they are not the same activities cultural anthropology.

In the ideal (albeit not universally representative) directed social change project is the identification of a spe amenable to solution. This step is unlikely to be underta pologist himself or herself. Much more commonly, an org an aid organization, or a charitable foundation—decides (More rarely, this step may be undertaken by a communit efit from directed change.)

Organizations sponsoring directed social change pr mote specific policy and/or action agendas, but rather th menting projects themselves, they may call upon applied c plied anthropologist may be asked, for example, to do a praisal of what is needed in a specific context; see p. 39), o cific policy or intervention will prove culturally accep intended to benefit from it. Once a project has been deci tural anthropologist may be called on to undertake a social termination of the potential effects of a new policy or inte tion intended to benefit from it (see p. 39; social impact ass in Chapter 4, in the context of the ethical considerations t policies, and agency regulations that mandate it).

After identifying a problem to which a solution may applied cultural anthropologist conducts research—docum both—to learn as much as possible about the problem, the what may already have been done or tried, in terms of both vention, to ameliorate the situation. This research phase nee time; employers typically hire applied cultural anthropologis iar with the theoretical and ethnographic context in which (Wilson 1998:45–46). Additionally, when ethnographic field thropologist often employs specialized techniques that spee Ethnographic Assessment," p. 37). Depending on the proble

FOR APPLIED RESEARCH

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(or sometimes in addition to) achieving some practical end.

In contrast, applied research is primarily motivated by the desire to address a specific social problem, not by the desire to build theory. It is likely to involve representatives of other disciplines; the anthropologist rarely works alone. Rather than being more or less fixed and sequential, the applied cultural anthropologist's activities are apt to vary: policy research requires certain steps, intervention research requires others, direct intervention requires still others, and the amount of time available for each depends on the specific project at hand. Thus, although applied work in cultural anthropology is characterized, like classic theoretical work, by a series of well-defined activities, they are not the same activities that typify most academic cultural anthropology.

In the ideal (albeit not universally representative) scenario, the first step in a directed social change project is the identification of a specific problem that appears amenable to solution. This step is unlikely to be undertaken by an applied anthropologist himself or herself. Much more commonly, an organization—a government, an aid organization, or a charitable foundation—decides on a social change project. (More rarely, this step may be undertaken by a community of people hoping to benefit from directed change.)

Organizations sponsoring directed social change projects often wish to promote specific policy and/or action agendas, but rather than designing and implementing projects themselves, they may call upon applied cultural anthropologists to help them develop projects that are realistic for particular cultural contexts. An applied anthropologist may be asked, for example, to do a needs assessment (an appraisal of what is needed in a specific context; see p. 39), or to assess whether a specific policy or intervention will prove culturally acceptable to those who are intended to benefit from it. Once a project has been decided upon, an applied cultural anthropologist may be called on to undertake a social impact assessment: a determination of the potential effects of a new policy or intervention on the population intended to benefit from it (see p. 39; social impact assessment is also discussed in Chapter 4, in the context of the ethical considerations behind the national laws, policies, and agency regulations that mandate it).

After identifying a problem to which a solution may realistically be found, the applied cultural anthropologist conducts research—documentary, ethnographic, or both—to learn as much as possible about the problem, the setting, the actors, and what may already have been done or tried, in terms of both policy and direct intervention, to ameliorate the situation. This research phase need not take a great deal of time; employers typically hire applied cultural anthropologists who are already familiar with the theoretical and ethnographic context in which a given problem exists (Wilson 1998:45–46). Additionally, when ethnographic fieldwork is required, the anthropologist often employs specialized techniques that speed the process (see "Rapid Ethnographic Assessment," p. 37). Depending on the problem, the research may provide the background for policy recommendations (which may in turn result in future intervention), the development and implementation of a specific plan for positive change, or both (see Shore and Wright 1997; Hackenberg and Hackenberg 1999).

The third step in a directed change effort depends on what kind of change is intended. If the end goal is policy formulation, the third step is usually undertaken collectively by the applied cultural anthropologist, other project employees, the agency that is funding the project, and representatives of the agency or organization responsible for implementing policy reforms. The collected data are analyzed, sometimes over a considerable period of time, and policies are developed and formalized. If, on the other hand, the end goal is to take some direct action, the third step consists of development of a concrete plan, including a timetable, budget, and personnel roster, for addressing the problem. Again, this step is usually undertaken collectively by the applied cultural anthropologist, other project employees, and representatives of the agency that is funding the project.

The heart of many applied projects is intervention, defined in Chapter 1, in which specific action is taken to address a problem or problems identified in the project's first phase. Ideally, the applied cultural anthropologist as "intervener" (Dudley 1993) works in concert with members of the community of people whom the project is intended to benefit. In reality, it may be difficult or impossible to obtain the full participation of those who are meant to benefit from a directed change effort. (The ethics of this problem are discussed in Chapter 4.) No matter what the extent to which beneficiaries are actively involved, the anthropologist is likely to work during this stage with others who have professional expertise in fields related to the problem—for example (depending on the project), businesspeople, economists, or medical professionals—and with representatives of the funding agency. A project involving direct intervention was described in Chapter 1, pp. 19–21. Chapters 5–12 of this book contain many additional examples of interventions.

Finally, applied cultural anthropologists are frequently called upon to determine the success of a project. An **evaluation** is a formal assessment to determine whether or not a problem is currently being addressed appropriately or—if the project or program has been completed—has been solved satisfactorily (Rossi and Freeman 1989; Chelimsky and Sadish 1997). Typically, the evaluator is charged with judging the problem-solving efforts of others, although a relatively new form of evaluation, self-evaluation, undertaken by project stakeholders, is sometimes used. Evaluation is a mandatory part of many applied projects, since the organizations and agencies that fund applied research and intervention, whether public, private, or charitable, understandably want to know whether or not their money and other resources have been deployed effectively.

Of the several different kinds of evaluation, process evaluation and summative evaluation are probably the most frequently encountered. **Process evaluation** (alternatively termed **formative evaluation** when used early in an intervention to increase its potential for success) is carried out while an intervention is underway, in order to determine whether progress toward specific goals is being made in a timely and efficient fashion. Frequently this kind of intervention is ongoing throughout the life of a project. **Summative evaluation** (also called **outcome evaluation**) is carried out at the end of an intervention, in order to determine whether previously specified goals have been met.

In either type of evaluation, the evaluator is responsible for devising measurable

A BASIC STRATEGY FOR APPLIED RESEARCH

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The government of a southern US state funded a fiv... completed program to discourage preteens from smoking. S... selected as an outside consultant to undertake a summ... this project. Identify three ways in which the intervene... might be measured.

◇ **TABLE 2.1   Comparison of Basic Strategies: Theoretical and Appli...**

	Classic Theoretical Research	Applie...
1. Primary motivation	Desire to contribute to anthropological theory	Desire t... problem
2. Collaboration with others	Usually no	Usually
3. Steps taken	More or less fixed and sequential	Variable, ...
4. Most common research methods	Participant observation	Specializ... rapid et... and focu...
5. Typical activities	■ Devise hypothesis ■ Test validity of hypothesis through ethnographic fieldwork ■ Analyze data collected ■ Revise and retest hypothesis (if necessary) ■ Compare data with data from other societies	■ Identif... to solu... ■ Rapidl... interv... ■ Analyz... interv... ■ Formu... interv... ■ Evalua...

tions involve the collection of similar data from a control group that has not partici-
pated in the intervention, and the comparison of these data with data from the inter-
vention group. The data collected may be either qualitative or quantitative. In some
specialized cases, highly mathematical techniques such as meta-analysis, a set of pro-
cedures for quantifying intervention results, are used (Cooper and Lindsay 1998). A
voluminous literature describes these and other evaluation methodologies.[2]

FOOD FOR THOUGHT The government of a southern U.S. state funded a five-year project, now
completed, to discourage pre-teens from smoking. Suppose you have been
selected as an outside consultant to undertake a summative evaluation of
this project. Identify three ways in which the degree of success of the project
might be measured.

This idealized script is of course subject to all the exigencies of venue, time,
and varying social, economic, and political agendas, but its individual steps—prob-
lem identification, research, policy formulation or project planning, intervention,
and evaluation—do, in some combination, typify much applied cultural anthropo-
logical work.[3] Again, the overarching *raison d'être* behind these steps, whether or
not they are all taken or taken sequentially, is social betterment via directed change.
Table 2.1 compares the research strategies used most typically in theoretical and ap-
plied work in cultural anthropology.

◊ **TABLE 2.1   Comparison of Basic Strategies: Theoretical and Applied**

	Classic Theoretical Research	**Applied Research**
1. Primary motivation	Desire to contribute to anthropological theory	Desire to address a specific social problem
2. Collaboration with others	Usually no	Usually yes
3. Steps taken	More or less fixed and sequential	Variable, depending on project
4. Most common research methods	Participant observation	Specialized techniques, such as rapid ethnographic assessment and focus groups
5. Typical activities	■ Devise hypothesis ■ Test validity of hypothesis through ethnographic fieldwork ■ Analyze data collected ■ Revise and retest hypothesis (if necessary) ■ Compare data with data from other societies	■ Identify a problem amenable to solution ■ Rapidly conduct policy or intervention research ■ Analyze research data ■ Formulate policy *or* implement intervention ■ Evaluate project
6. Time frame	Long term (often a year or more)	Short term (often a few weeks or months)

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF APPLIED RESEARCH

Two fundamental principles underlie applied research: community part and sustainability. These principles are perhaps most strongly associated wi national development (see Chapter 5), but apply equally to any social chan international or domestic.

Community Participation

The successful accomplishment of applied cultural anthropology's primar directed social change requires a great deal more than well-meaning atte the part of outsiders to promote various socially beneficial ideas. It also requ the desires, needs, and capabilities of those with whom, and on whose be plied cultural anthropologists attempt to encourage beneficial change are ta account. The term **community participation** refers to the active involve the intended beneficiaries in every step of the change process, from plann search to implementation to evaluation.

The idea of community participation dates to the 1920s and 1930s few enlightened colonial administrators began to argue for greater involven self-direction on the part of indigenous populations (Dudley 1993:159). If expressed in the "action anthropology" of Sol Tax in the 1950s, subsequent "participatory action research" (see p. 36). Today, community participation sidered crucial to projects whose goal is directed social change (see, for e Ryan and Robinson 1996; Gardner and Lewis 1996:110ff.). Ensuring effecti munity participation virtually mandates anthropological expertise, since its rests heavily on ethnographic research to determine what local people th want (Pottier 1993:1).

In the absence of community participation, attempts to promote social ficial goals are sometimes imposed on aid recipients by outsiders—individua ganizations who are undoubtedly well-meaning but who may be ignorant of target population's actual requirements and preferences. Whether in the ideas, money, facilities, equipment, or technical assistance, such aid, term **down assistance,**[4] is often inadequate and ineffectual. Not surprisingly, based on the top-down approach often fail because the "help" provided d match the actual wants, needs, or capabilities of those who are meant to from it.

A simple example comes from the small Eastern Caribbean island natio Lucia. In the late 1980s, the St. Lucian national hospital, where patient recor written by hand on filing cards, was given a state-of-the art computer by a aid agency. Unfortunately, however, no one at the hospital knew how to computer, and after a few months of disuse in the humid Caribbean climate, began to stick, making it completely useless (see Trisolini et al. 1992). Had t staff—the intended beneficiaries in this case—had appropriate input into the by which the computer was chosen as a donation, they would obviousl

informed the aid agency that the computer would be useful only if hospital staff were trained to use, maintain, and repair it.

Ideally, when community participation is appropriately implemented, aid recipients identify their own problems and needs, initiate requests for assistance, and participate fully in the preparation of research proposals and the implementation and evaluation of funded projects. These project steps may appear relatively straightforward and easily accomplished, but they incorporate a number of potential problems. Perhaps the knottiest is that communities are never homogeneous, but rather fragmented and often stratified as well, by sex, age, caste, ethnicity, and so on. In some cultures, for example, women's involvement in extra-domestic affairs is either frowned upon or taboo. The existence of local social distinctions and hierarchies means that community members are never equal; instead, "aspirations towards participation, however genuine, take place in the context of existing relations of power and hierarchy" (Crewe and Harrison 1998:184). All participation, by definition, subtly embodies these power differentials. Thus, for example, when local people identify their own needs, the opinions of the more powerful among them may prevail.

There are other complicating issues as well. A change that improves the lives of members of one group may actually be deleterious to the members of another. Nor is it always clear who could or should participate in a social change project. Defining what kind of participation is expected may be difficult; often the roles that participants could or should play in project design, implementation, and evaluation are far from obvious (Cernea 1985:357). Defining the extent of participants' involvement, while also taking into account that those meant to benefit from applied research always have other demands on their time and energy, can also be challenging (Uphoff 1985). In some cases, local people may resist community participation, since "true participation is a threat to powerful vested interests" (Dudley 1993:7). Sometimes participation means "little more than consultation within a predetermined paradigm" (Crewe and Harrison 1998:112). Finally, there is always a power differential between helper and beneficiary (see, for example, ibid.:1; see also "Power and Authority," Chapter 4, p. 85).

> **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** As an applied cultural anthropologist working for an international aid agency, you learn that a lack of electric power is a major factor contributing to conditions of extreme poverty, malnutrition, and ill health in a rural region of Bangladesh. However, neither the local people nor local government officials have requested assistance from any aid agency. What, if anything, do you do? Would suggesting help constitute top-down assistance?

Despite these problems, however, community participation, successfully implemented, not only helps ensure that social change projects achieve their intended results, but also empowers individuals and communities, and bonds their members together. Today, based on lessons from the recent past, the concept goes even further, including the notion of comprehensive indigenous participation and

empowerment as well as several even broader ideas. One of these is that development workers should seek to learn from community members, not just teach them. Another is that community participation should explicitly promote seeking solutions and raising consciousness, "helping people to understand their circumstances" (Dudley 1993:163). Finally, assistance projects should include representatives of all potential stakeholders, not just the immediate "target" beneficiaries of a project.

Today, the idea of community participation incorporates a strong human rights perspective. As a matter of human rights, the intended beneficiaries of projects have the right either to accept or to reject innovations, and ultimately to determine the pace and direction of change within their communities. For an example of community participation at work, see the description of the Kenya Water for Health Organization on page 37.

Sustainability

Broadly speaking, **sustainability** is the idea that the results or effects of projects intended to promote beneficial change should be able to be carried forward, by their beneficiaries, into the indefinite future—after outside assistance has ended. Although the basic idea is both simple and sensible, there has been considerable debate in recent years about how best to ensure sustainability.

The idea of sustainability arose after the beneficial effects of numerous development projects, implemented prior to and during the 1980s, evaporated after the funding for these projects came to an end. In particular, a major rural development program, inaugurated in 1970 by the World Bank and implemented in many different countries with little input from local people, ultimately proved to be a "gigantic failure"; in 1987, the Bank acknowledged that many of the projects undertaken under this program had proven unsustainable (Keare 2001:160). In some cases, the intended beneficiaries of these and similar projects were ultimately left worse off than they had been before (see, for example, Johnson 1994).

A project in the early 1980s, in the small Philippine village of Casiguran, provides an example. Some of the farmers in this village of coconut, corn, and cassava growers were producing enough food to be considered well off, but others—many of them tenant farmers—literally did not have enough to eat. In 1984, the Philippine government, concerned about poverty and economic inequality in much of the nation, asked the United States Agency for International Development for help with an agricultural reform project intended to help low-income farmers increase their productivity (Clatts 1991). A pilot project, intended to foster economic development by introducing new agricultural technologies to poor tenant farmers, was developed, and Casiguran was chosen as the site where it would be implemented. The project's planners—Filipino government officials and USAID employees—believed that teaching the poorest farmers to raise new and different crops, such as coffee and pineapples, would earn them much-needed income, and also reduce the economic disparities between the poor farmers and the rest of the community. Casiguran's poor farmers were provided with the necessary seeds and agricultural technologies.

After only two years, it had become obvious that the intended benefits of the project were unsustainable. In the long run, most of the tenant farmers had not seen any significant increase in either agricultural production or household income and had reverted to their old crops and agricultural methods. In this as in similar instances, the reasons for the project's failure were complex and included the planners' failure to take into account the low demand for the new crops in the local market, the farmers' inability to commit sufficient additional time to the new labor-intensive farming technologies, and the important role of local women—who were not taught the new technologies—in farming. In the end, the project actually intensified the economic inequalities it was intended to reduce.

In the late 1980s, the idea of sustainability was thoroughly discussed, dissected, and reconstituted by applied cultural anthropologists and others involved in the promotion of beneficial social change. As a result, what had originally been a rather simple idea has taken on more complex meanings. Today, sustainability refers very specifically to several different aspects of directed change projects: the social, the technological, and the environmental.

Socially, the term *sustainability* not only implies the broad but ill-defined goal of a continuation of benefits in the absence of outside help, but it also explicitly mandates the continued involvement of local people, based on the realization that "to a great extent, acceptance of new methods by local people depends on the degree of their involvement in problem identification and solving" (Bragg and Schultz 1991:110). And project beneficiaries should not merely stay involved; they are also responsible for ensuring that whatever social structures, relationships, and policies are needed for long-term management of project benefits are in place. For example, the matter of rights to access a new village well must be determined equitably and permanently at the local level.

Technologically, the material benefits of development should be locally maintainable. If, for example, a hospital in a developing country is given a computer through a development project, hospital personnel should be instructed in how to operate it, how to train others to use it, how to secure supplies and replacement parts for it, and how to repair it. If a donor organization provides poor Pakistani farmers with a new variety of rice, capable of doubling the yield of traditional varieties, the farmers must be able to afford to buy more seed, plus any fertilizers or irrigation equipment or harvesting equipment necessary to ensure a good crop, after the donor organization has left (Smillie 1991:99–100). If the technology is a small-scale hydroelectric plant intended to supply lighting for a local school in Papua New Guinea, replacement parts must be available in New Guinea so they do not have to be imported, at high cost, from elsewhere (Arata 1979:397).

Environmentally, sustainability incorporates the broad dictum that nonrenewable natural resources should be conserved throughout the development process. Any technological changes must explicitly rely on renewable natural resources (such as solar or water power) and conserve nonrenewable natural resources (such as oil and naturally fertile soil). If, for example, an agricultural intensification project successfully increases crop yields, the increase should not ultimately result in soil depletion.

METHODS

Applied cultural anthropologists frequently call upon a set of techniques that are li'
tle used in academic research. Some of these are adaptations of standard anthropc
logical data-gathering and data-analysis methods, tailored for greater suitability fc
applied purposes. Others have been borrowed from other disciplines (see Denzi
and Lincoln 2000).

Why Are Specialized Techniques Required?

Applied cultural anthropologists' use of specialized techniques is necessitated t
three factors. First, the goals of applied work differ from those of purely academ
work. Research in applied cultural anthropology frequently focuses on a particul
problem or action undertaken in a specific cultural context, rather than a broa·
based assessment of a cultural milieu. Thus applied cultural anthropologists' goa
are often more narrowly defined than those of their academic colleagues. Secon
due both to funding limitations and the urgency of needed reforms, applied researe
is often done under time constraints, necessitating methods that permit the colle
tion of the greatest amount of data in the shortest amount of time. Third, respon:
ble applied cultural anthropology often requires its practitioners to develop trac
tional interviewer–informant relationships into something more resemblir
working partnerships with those whose problems are the focus of research or wl
are intended to benefit from intervention.

Cultural anthropology incorporates a number of highly useful perspectives,
such as cultural relativism and the emic point of view (see Appendix 2).
These perspectives are as important to applied cultural anthropologists as
they are to academic researchers. However—unlike many of the methods
applied researchers use—these perspectives have not required alteration
to make them appropriate for applied work. Why not?

The Collaborative Nature of Applied Work

In the field, applied cultural anthropologists work with and collect data from i
formants, just as academic anthropologists do. But they also work closely with tv
other groups of people. The first group consists of other professionals, often hired ·
a consulting basis, whose particular expertise is required to accomplish the goals
the program or project at hand. In addition to these experts, this group may also i
clude one or more representatives of the agency, organization, or institution that :
the agenda and/or provided the funding for the work. These individuals may repr
sent several or many different disciplines (Erickson and Stull 1998:5) but are u
likely to be other cultural anthropologists. The second group consists of represent
tives of the intended beneficiaries of the program or project. Applied cultu
anthropologists' greater number of more varied working relationships represent:

...g and data-analysis methods, tailored for greater suitability for ...thers have been borrowed from other disciplines (see Denzin
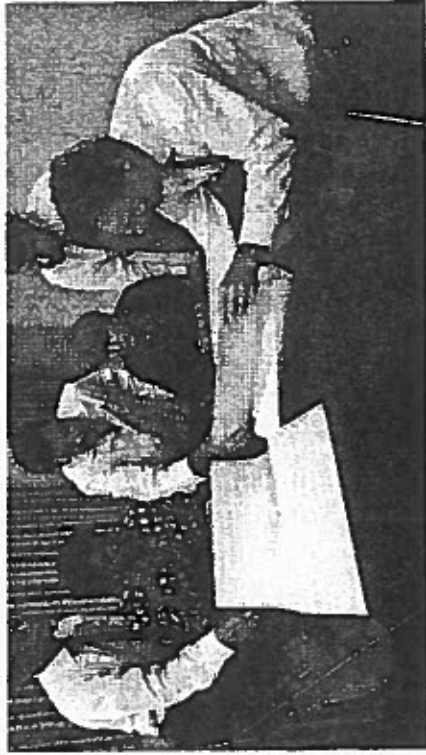
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◇ *Applied cultural anthropology usually involves collaborative research and action, in which professionals representing several or many different disciplines—not just cultural anthropology—participate.*

...logy incorporates a number of highly useful perspectives, ...lativism and the emic point of view (see Appendix 2). ...s are as important to applied cultural anthropologists as ...ld researchers. However—unlike many of the methods ...s use—these perspectives have not required alteration ...ropriate for applied work. Why not?

Nature of Applied Work

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significant departure from academic cultural anthropology, in which researchers are much more apt to work with their informants alone, on research agendas of their own choosing.

An applied research project undertaken recently in the Eastern Caribbean island nation of Dominica provides an example. The project, sponsored by a U.S.-based charitable foundation, was intended to provide the government of Dominica with policy options for the reorganization of its public health system for greater efficiency (Zschock et al. 1991).

The applied cultural anthropologist who participated in this project gathered valuable data from local informants, in much the same manner as in academic field-work. The informants were ordinary citizens of Dominica, who were interviewed in their homes or at health care facilities for their knowledge and opinions about traditional medicine, Western-style biomedicine, or both. In addition to these informants, however, the applied anthropologist also worked closely with two different teams of professional colleagues. During the project's planning phase, these colleagues included experts in several health-related fields: an American health economist, a Jamaican medical doctor, a health insurance specialist, and a representative of the Pan American Health Organization, a regional branch of the World Health Organization.

Later, in Dominica during the research phase of the project, the applied anthropologist worked closely with the chief medical officer, permanent secretary, and principal nursing officer of the Dominican Ministry of Health. The Dominican project participants were chosen not only for their broad cultural expertise (as are many of the informants from whom academic anthropologists get their data) but for several other reasons as well: their specific knowledge about local health-related matters (such as the adequacy of public versus private ambulatory care facilities in Dominica); their placement within social networks advantageous to the goals of the project; and

their potential to benefit—as citizens of Dominica, representatives of the existing health system, and potential stakeholders in health system reform—from the project.

Although the members of both of these groups were experts in their respective fields, none of them had had any training in cultural anthropology. Not surprisingly, the fieldworker's relationships with them were fundamentally different from traditional anthropologist-informant interactions. In part for this reason, applied cultural anthropologists frequently substitute the terms *collaborators, counterparts,* or *partners* for the term *informants,* still commonly used in academic field research.

Some Useful Field Methods

This section briefly describes the best known and most frequently used of the techniques employed by applied cultural anthropologists to gather and analyze data in the field. It does not attempt to synthesize, much less to substitute for, the vast literature on applied methods, but rather to convey a general idea of the types of specialized techniques used in applied research.[5]

Surveys. Surveying a group of people to discover their ideas, values, beliefs, opinions, or needs is a technique historically associated more strongly with sociological than with anthropological research, but it can provide applied cultural anthropologists with large amounts of broad-ranging and relatively quickly acquired data. The technique relies on quantitative instruments such as pre-prepared questionnaires. Surveys are particularly appropriate in complex communities, in which there is no single "native" point of view, because they facilitate the collection of a breadth of ideas and opinions (Finan and van Willigen 2002:63). Researchers using this technique must often make difficult trade-offs between resource investment and results; a longer-term effort, involving more survey respondents, will produce more information; a shorter-term effort will cost less. A major advantage of the technique is that when certain standardized sampling procedures are followed, the research results may carry the added weight of statistical significance.

In an example of this technique, one applied cultural anthropologist used surveys to assist the Ministries of Health of several Eastern Caribbean countries to resolve some of their health care financing problems. In each country, adult consumers of health services, selected so as to reflect the population both demographically and socioeconomically, responded to pre-prepared questionnaires that first covered basic demographic information and then solicited respondents' opinions, values, and expectations regarding the quality of public and private health services, the availability and affordability of health insurance; respondents' willingness to pay for improved health services under a social insurance plan, and related issues (Zschock et al. 1991:119–123). The data were used to inform subsequent policy decisions about health care financing.

Participatory Action Research. Some applied cultural anthropologists (along with others in the so-called helping professions), while acknowledging the inevitable power differential between change agent and beneficiary referred to above

(PAR) is a behavioral change strategy in which membe ate, carry out, and assume complete and permanent tended to result in locally beneficial social change (see Gleason 1992; Ryan and Robinson 1996; Perez 1997; F and Levin 1998; Trotter and Schensul 1998:73–74; Br plied cultural anthropologist's role is usually confined direct involvement is precluded.

The strategy originated in Sol Tax's human devel with Native Americans during the 1950s (when it wa sec Tax 1958; Bennett 1996) and was further elabora popular education in Latin America (Freire 1970). PAR sustained behavioral change is unlikely to occur unle: lief that they can exert control over their own lives an tory action research is conducted not from the top down pologists or others, but from the bottom up, by its poten to educate each other and to develop a joint plan of acti

Members of grass-roots organizations are the most beneficiaries of, participatory action research. In Africa Water for Health Organization (KWAHO) has been highly help over a million mostly rural Kenyans gain access t 1995). When communities needing water projects approa tion supplies anthropological consultants and other train courages community representatives to "set specific goal tify resources, collect funds, and select a specific technolo Once a water pump has been installed in a village, commu tain it. The process is empowering: "a *harambee* ("pull toge often leads to . . . wider health and education efforts" (ibid. observes, "When the potential beneficiaries of a water sup selves involved in running and maintaining the scheme, fore the pump itself breaks down . . . ownership is crucial"

Rapid Ethnographic Assessment. An important w tural anthropologists have tailored classic anthropological

> **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**
>
> Imagine that you are an applied cultural anthropolo large, multiethnic urban school district. Part of you that what children learn in school is relevant to the the public educational system as an advocate, if you search; whom would you choose as your collaborato How would you go about implementing a PAR?

onships with them were fundamentally different from traditional informant interactions. In part for this reason, applied cultural anthropologists frequently substitute the terms *collaborators, counterparts,* or *informants,* still commonly used in academic field research.

Methods

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...earch. Some applied cultural anthropologists (along ...helping professions), while acknowledging the in-... ...tween change agent and beneficiary referred to above, this differential as an immutable fact of their practice, ...to lessen its effects. **Participatory action research**

Gleason 1992; Ryan and Robinson 1996; Perez 1997; Bernard 1998:69; Greenwood and Levin 1998; Trotter and Schensul 1998:73–74; Ervin 2000:199–210). The applied cultural anthropologist's role is usually confined to facilation and guidance; direct involvement is precluded.

The strategy originated in Sol Tax's human development and advocacy work with Native Americans during the 1950s (when it was termed *action anthropology;* see Tax 1958; Bennett 1996) and was further elaborated in Paolo Freire's work in popular education in Latin America (Freire 1970). PAR is based on the premise that sustained behavioral change is unlikely to occur unless those who would benefit from it develop a sense of self-determination and empowerment, as well as the belief that they can exert control over their own lives and destinies. Thus, participatory action research is conducted not from the top down, by applied cultural anthropologists or others, but from the bottom up, by its potential beneficiaries. They help to educate each other and to develop a joint plan of action.[6]

Imagine that you are an applied cultural anthropologist employed by a large, multiethnic urban school district. Part of your job is to help ensure that what children learn in schools is relevant to the wider culture beyond the public educational system. As an advocate of participatory action research, whom would you choose as your collaborators in this project? How would you go about implementing PAR?

Members of grass-roots organizations are the most likely participants in, and beneficiaries of, participatory action research. In Africa, for example, the Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO) has been highly successful in using PAR to help over a million mostly rural Kenyans gain access to clean water (Mwangola 1995). When communities needing water projects approach KWAHO, the organization supplies anthropological consultants and other trained facilitators but also encourages community representatives to "set specific goals, form committees, identify resources, collect funds, and select a specific technology" (Mwangola 1995:86). Once a water pump has been installed in a village, community members must maintain it. The process is empowering: "a *harambee* ("pull together") spirit develops, and often leads to ... wider health and education efforts" (ibid.). As the head of KWAHO observes, "When the potential beneficiaries of a water supply project are not themselves involved in running and maintaining the scheme, it is likely to end long before the pump itself breaks down . . . ownership is crucial" (ibid.:87).[7]

Rapid Ethnographic Assessment. An important way in which applied cultural anthropologists have tailored classic anthropological techniques to their own requirements is by making certain changes to the traditional fieldwork process. These changes are both necessitated and permitted by the fact that the steps ideally involved ir applied cultural anthropology—problem identification, research, planning,

intervention, and evaluation—do not always require total immersion in a culture. Applied cultural anthropologists have therefore adapted some ethnographic techniques used in more theoretical studies to suit their own needs. These techniques include participant observation, the use of both key and casual informants, and others, together comprising a new kind of fieldwork called **rapid ethnographic assessment**, or REA. This method (alternatively termed *rapid assessment procedures*, or RAP) is better suited to applied cultural anthropologists' specific goals (Scrimshaw and Gleason 1992; Beebe 1995, 2001; Trotter and Schensul 1998:717–718; Handwerker 2001).

Rapid ethnographic assessment requires much less time than traditional anthropological fieldwork. The anthropologist is already well versed in the literature on both problem and venue (Wilson 1998:46), often speaks the local language, and has had prior field experience in the region. The method involves interviewing relatively few but carefully chosen collaborators in the field, eliminating the wideranging "fishing expedition" field interview technique in favor of addressing only the specific problem under study, and sometimes making use of sampling techniques, focus groups (see below), and pre-prepared and easily quantifiable survey instruments such as questionnaires.

Anthropologist Margaret Casey (Casey 1993) used this technique in Indonesia, where the government (with support from the British foreign aid agency and the European Economic Community) was implementing a project to improve agricultural production, and farmers' lives, by drilling wells, constructing irrigation systems, and forming water management associations (Casey 1993:110). Brought in to evaluate the project as it neared completion, Casey spent only four weeks in Indonesia, one in each of four villages. Interviews with women in these villages

❖ Rapid ethnographic assessment often involves the use of narrowly-focused, pre-prepared survey instruments. In New Delhi, India, residents of a poor neighborhood respond to specific questions, the answers to which are readily quantifiable.

revealed that although women were important players in consultation and decision making, they had been neglected by the project. The data Casey collected on interpersonal relations, gender, and local politics may result in future project modification and short-term success and long-term sustainability.

Not all applied cultural anthropologists feel that rapid assessment is a viable data-collection method. It has been criticized for conducting "quick-and-dirty assessments" and for "neglecting the collection of long... 1995:348).[8]

Needs Assessment. A standard component of public program design (Kozaitis 2000:58), **needs assessment** is required to alleviate one or more specific problems in a spe... referred to—sometimes termed "perceived" or "felt" ne... them from supposed needs attributed to a group based on ues—are apt to be basic requirements in areas such as h... tion, the fulfillment of which would improve the qualit... needy group. Several different methods for determining (McKillip 1998).

Ideally, applied cultural anthropologists undertake collaboration with those who are intended to benefit from... can most accurately identify their own wants and require... begins in the planning stage but may continue throug... project, is more complex than merely asking people what... ing factor is the fact that people are not always aware of w... ample, if sexually active teenagers do not feel they are... AIDS, they will not perceive that they need AIDS educ... same perceived needs sometimes call for different solutio... lations. A third is that even the most pressing needs,... groups, may have to be prioritized due to funding or ti... the complexity of the issues involved, some applied cult... become specialists in needs assessment.[9]

Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Social Impact a... of the potential effects, on individuals, communities, or... research or a proposed intervention. This can be determin... systematic way (Goldman 2000; see also van Willigen 199...

Most often used in a context of large-scale governm... velopment projects, whether or not applied cultural an... SIA derives from (and is in some cases mandated by) vari... and agency regulations. In the United States, these inclu... mental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA 1969), which requires c... of proposed development or change on the social as wel... and the "social soundness guidelines" developed by the Un...

revealed that although women were important players in local agricultural production and decision making, they had been neglected by the project's implementers. The data Casey collected on interpersonal relations, gender roles, authority figures, and local politics may result in future project modifications and help ensure both short-term success and long-term sustainability.

Not all applied cultural anthropologists feel that rapid ethnographic assessment is a viable data-collection method. It has been criticized for generating "sloppy assessments" and for "neglecting the collection of long time-series data" (Cernea 1995:348).[8]

Needs Assessment.   A standard component of public policy research and program design (Kozaitis 2000:58), **needs assessment** is an appraisal of what is required to alleviate one or more specific problems in a specific context. The "needs" referred to—sometimes termed "perceived" or "felt" needs in order to distinguish them from supposed needs attributed to a group based on others' perceptions or values—are apt to be basic requirements in areas such as health, sanitation, or education, the fulfillment of which would improve the quality of life of members of a needy group. Several different methods for determining needs have been developed (McKillip 1998).

Ideally, applied cultural anthropologists undertake needs assessments in close collaboration with those who are intended to benefit from some change, since they can most accurately identify their own wants and requirements. The process, which begins in the planning stage but may continue throughout the life of an applied project, is more complex than merely asking people what they lack. One complicating factor is the fact that people are not always aware of what their needs are; for example, if sexually active teenagers do not feel they are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, they will not perceive that they need AIDS education. Another is that the same perceived needs sometimes call for different solutions for two different populations. A third is that even the most pressing needs, among extremely needy groups, may have to be prioritized due to funding or time constraints. Because of the complexity of the issues involved, some applied cultural anthropologists have become specialists in needs assessment.[9]

Social Impact Assessment (SIA).   **Social impact assessment** is an appraisal of the potential effects, on individuals, communities, or even nations, of proposed research or a proposed intervention. This can be determined beforehand in a formal, systematic way (Goldman 2000; see also van Willigen 1993:171; Kozaitis 2000:58).

Most often used in a context of large-scale governmental or international development projects, whether or not applied cultural anthropologists are involved, SIA derives from (and is in some cases mandated by) various national laws, policies, and agency regulations. In the United States, these include the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA 1969), which requires consideration of the impact of proposed development or change on the social as well as natural environment, and the "social soundness guidelines" developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1975 to guide its international development work.

There is no single set of agreed-upon steps or standards to guide an SIA (van Willigen 1993:177). One authority lists ten separate steps (Wolf 1983). Preister (1987:50) simplifies the process by describing only the most fundamental steps:

- Develop an understanding of the status quo in the social environment in which a project may be implemented.
- Identify the target group's current concerns relating to the project.
- Collect social and economic data relating to the project, and analyses of the social and economic effects of various project alternatives.
- Promote ample and effective communication among all stakeholders.
- Resolve any conflicts existing among those concerned.

The participation of applied cultural anthropologists is not a requirement of SIAs, and many SIAs are undertaken without them, but their participation greatly facilitates the process because of their ability to "enter into a community, understand cultural dynamics, and translate cultural understanding to decision-makers" (Preister 1987:50).[10]

Focus Group Research.   Focus group research, another field technique more frequently used by applied than academic cultural anthropologists, will already be familiar to many readers because of its widespread use in contexts such as public opinion polling and commercial marketing. A **focus group** is a small group (6–8 persons) convened, under a leader, to focus on and discuss, and thereby to illuminate, a particular topic. The subject might be what homeless people like or dislike about public shelters, what motivates parents to purchase particular toys for their children, or how people feel about increased medical insurance premiums in return for greater benefits.

Whatever the subject, it is usually not addressed directly. The focus group leader may steer the conversation toward the subject but is at pains not to influence the discussion, either in direction or content. The reason is that by letting the conversation and the interaction among participants "float," information that may not have been anticipated beforehand as being relevant may be revealed (Bryant and Bailey 1991:5). This interaction among the participants, and especially the ideas they stimulate in each other, are considered more important than the opinion of any individual participant. Various props to stimulate thought and discussion are often used, and sessions are typically taped and analyzed at length later on, since not only the participants' choice of specific words, but also their actions, may reveal their attitudes toward the subject. Ideally, at the end of a focus group session, whoever assembled the group has a more thorough understanding of people's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about the subject at hand.

As an example of the use of focus groups, applied medical anthropologist Merrill Singer and his colleagues conducted a series of focus groups with people living with AIDS (PWAs) as part of a needs assessment to define the kinds of resources and support PWAs require. In some of the focus groups, involving clients of social services agencies that provided specific services to PWAs, the participants were unknown to each other. Other focus groups consisted of PWAs who already knew each

Focus group sessions are sometimes more revealing of people's ideas, attitudes, and feelings than one-on-one interviews. At right, members of a focus group discuss the packaging of a new product.

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other as members of support groups; for these participants, talking about AIDS was already part of their "natural social world." Interestingly, the two kinds of focus groups provided the researchers with different kinds of information, "the former being more 'task oriented' and the latter being more freewheeling" (Singer 2002: 91).

The use of focus groups for applied research is somewhat controversial. They have been criticized as unproductive and faddish, and by no means all applied cultural anthropologists use them. For those who do, however, focus groups have two major advantages over more traditional one-on-one interviewing. First, they can save considerable time, since the ethnographer is able to elicit ideas and information from a number of people at once. Second, the interaction of group members may produce insights that one-on-one discussion cannot.[11]

Social Network Analysis. Social structure, consisting of all the ways in which people both divide themselves into groups and bind themselves together as members of groups, holds enormous interest for cultural anthropologists for the light it sheds on how societies are constituted and maintained, and how they change. **Social network analysis**, used by sociologists as well as cultural anthropologists, is a way of gathering and organizing information about social structure by focusing on individuals or small groups and their relationships with others. The goal of social network analysis is to establish patterns of association among people, to assess the effects of such patterns on social organization, and ultimately to further our understanding of human motivation and behavior (Mitchell 1984; Marsden 1990; Trotter and Schensul 1998; Scott 2000).

Social networks may be of three kinds. Probably the least useful to applied cultural anthropologists are the broadest and most inclusive, **set-centered networks**, which assume the existence, in any society, of groups ("sets") of individuals—ranging from cliques of friends to kin groups to common-interest groups—with contacts

or links with one another. Participant observation has long been considered the best way to get information on set-centered networks. However, this method is too time-consuming to be commonly used by applied cultural anthropologists, whose research goals and intervention activities are usually much more narrowly focused. (A previously existing set-centered network analysis of a particular community would, of course, be of great benefit to an applied cultural anthropologist interested in researching one or more specific sets of people within that community.)

Ego-centered networks focus on a particular individual ("ego") and include all the links between this person and other individuals in a community under investigation. Data are typically gathered in individual interviews. Ego-centered network analysis is useful to applied cultural anthropologists since it sheds light on the kinds of influences exerted on given individuals and suggests what social support systems exist for them. This information can then be used to create effective interventions (Trotter and Schensul 1998:71). For example, researchers working on an AIDS-prevention project in Denver used ego-centered networks to trace patterns of exposure to AIDS by linking specific crack-addicted women to their sexual partners. Some of the women's partners were gang members who sold drugs. The research led to the expansion of the prevention program to target both crack users and gang members (Singer 2002:97).

Specialized networks are networks of individuals who share particular interests or sets of beliefs, or engage in particular behaviors (for example, a network of individuals linked by their use of a particular drug). Exploring specialized networks has proven especially useful to applied cultural anthropologists developing health-related interventions (see Needle et al. 1995), since most people's health-related beliefs and behaviors are forged in informal contexts such as families, groups of friends, or common-interest associations.[12] One applied anthropologist, for example, was able to bring homeless teenagers into a storefront clinic in New York for medical examinations and counseling by drawing upon the teenagers' informal networks based on friendship and drug use (M. Clatts, pers. comm.).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT The "environmental justice movement" brings environmentalists, educators, applied cultural anthropologists, and local people together to identify and rectify environmental rights abuses. As the applied anthropologist on a project to determine the extent of such abuses in your state, which of the techniques described above—surveys, participatory action research, rapid ethnographic assessment, needs assessment, social impact assessment, focus group research, and social-network analysis—would you use? Why?

"The Toolkit of a Good Professional Anthropologist"

Recently, the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, recognizing that the ideas, techniques, and knowledge base required for responsible applied cultural anthropology had never been formally defined, established a "Toolkit Committee"

to identify the specific tools—perspectives, methods, skills, and so on—needed for responsible applied work (García Ruiz 2000). According to former NAPA president and Toolkit Committee member Niel Tashima, "Professional anthropologists must have the ability to be clear about the value our methods bring to the study of current societal problems" (García Ruiz 2000:45).

The committee developed "The Toolkit of a Good Professional Anthropologist" (see Table 2.2) only after much discussion and outside review. Committee members stress that it should be considered a work in progress, which will undoubtedly be refined in the future. In its present form, the chart sums up and augments the material presented in this section on methods and provides additional food for thought.[13]

A WORD ABOUT THE "NEW ETHNOGRAPHY"

The "new ethnography," a set of field techniques designed to produce an understanding of cultural categories and distinctions meaningful to the members of a given society and to yield very accurate, language-based, numerically quantifiable field data (see Appendix 2), has found adherents among some applied cultural anthropologists. The great value of this and other cognitive field methods is that they help cultural anthropologists to reduce, if not eliminate, their own cultural biases. The anthropologist invites his or her interviewees to construct their own cultural categories, rather than making presuppositions about the ways in which they categorize their world. The free listing technique (see Appendix 2), for example, helps the anthropologist avoid the cultural bias that would inevitably be projected with direct questions, which—no matter how carefully formulated—are often tantamount to "leading the witness." Cognitive methods can greatly help in the development of an emic perspective on a specific topic, although they cannot substitute for other, more traditional, methods.

The techniques of the new ethnography, including the use of explanatory models and various taxonomic methods (see Appendix 2), are appealing to applied cultural anthropologists for two reasons. First, they produce large amounts of quantifiable data, which are readily accepted as relevant by the other kinds of scientists with whom applied cultural anthropologists often work on their projects. And second, they save fieldwork time by going directly to the heart of a specific problem in a quick and efficient manner. Thus, they are compatible with the aims of REA.[14]

THEORY DEVELOPMENT IN THE COURSE OF PRACTICE

The Relationship Between Theory and Practice

Chapter 1 noted that academic anthropology is primarily a theoretical discipline, and contributing to human knowledge is the primary motivation behind the work of most academic anthropologists. No matter what their particular field of anthro-

◇ TABLE 2.2   The Toolkit of a Good Professional Anthropologist

PERSPECTIVE (Our Core Approach)	METHODS (What We Own/ Use—Italicized If We Own It)	SKILLS (How We Do It)	ANTHROPOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES (Informs Use of Methods)	PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES (Needed To Be Effective)	EXAMPLES OF APPLICATIONS (What We Do)	CHALLENGES (To Enhance Our Professionalism)
Holistic	Ethnography	Finding themes and patterns	Ability to work in teams as collaborators	Ability to work in product-oriented work teams as collaborators	Time-limited, focused, disengagement	Engagement and disengagement
Systemic	Interactive, systematic participation in observing	Cultural brokering*	Adaptability	Can-do orientation	Advocacy research	Social skills
Integrative	Structured, systematic observation	Translating	Advocacy orientation	Entrepreneurial	Analyst	Good work habits
Contextual	Analysis	Teaching	Approachability	Multidisciplinary orientation	Administration	Public relations
Comparative	Focus groups	Interpreting and presenting others' views	Multiple lenses	Understanding of quantitative methods	Policy making	Positive professional presentation of selves
Cross-cultural	Rapid assessments	Speaking and writing clearly	Flexibility	Business skills	Planning	Borders with other disciplines
People-oriented	Interviewing	Building trust	Risk-taker	Technology skills	Training	Lines/boundaries of our work
Relativistic	Evaluation	Storytelling	Good work habits		Program services and research design	Fieldwork experience in all professional training
Emic and Etic valuation	Testing analysis with informants	Narrating	Participatory		Service provision	Disseminating our methods and outcomes
Recognition of complexity	Qualitative and Quantitative research	Facilitating	Listening skills		Therapy	Developing support networks
Focus on process	Iterative approach to research	Integrating disparate parts into a whole	Respectful		Product R&D	
Collaborative	Secondary and archival research	Systematizing/using complex information	Learner		Program evaluation	
We ask what the questions are before we ask for answers	Research design	Inductive and deductive reasoning	Curious, inquisitive		Sales and Marketing	
Theoretically informed	Data collection	Marketing ideas or projects	Nonjudgmental		Teaching	
	Data management				Mediation	

*Defined in Chapter 6.

pology, the professional lives of academic anthropologists are very largely spent collecting information and developing ideas about human beings of the past or present; using this information and these ideas to devise premises that might help explain the existence, development, appearance, behavior, and beliefs of human beings; and then testing and revising their premises in the light of what they have found.

It is a common academic conceit that important ideas in any field are formulated and tested by theoreticians working in academic contexts; these ideas are subsequently dispersed into nonacademic contexts, where they are put to use (Ferguson 1997:150). This intellectual transfer has often occurred in applied cultural anthropology, but so has the opposite: applied work has also contributed to theory (Kozaitis 2000:55). Nevertheless, applied cultural anthropology has been criticized both for the extent to which its theoretical basis is not its own and for its failure to generate theories of practice.

Part of the reason for this criticism is that applied cultural anthropologists have neglected to emphasize their theoretical contributions—so much so that "anthropologists who are not engaged in applied research have been known to comment that the place of theory in applied anthropology is modest, if not absent" (Wilson 1998:46). Yet it is important to remember that academic anthropology has generated few, if any, hard-and-fast theories, and also that contributions to theory can include "theoretical products" such as "concepts, propositions, methodologies for purposeful action, hypotheses, models, etc." (Cernea 1995:348).

As an example of how theoretical work can contribute to the accomplishment of practical goals beyond the production of knowledge, cultural anthropologist James Peacock describes how his academic fieldwork in Indonesia later influenced a specific political outcome (Peacock 2000:104ff.). During his study of an Indonesian Muslim political movement, Peacock became acquainted with a supporter of the movement, with whom he continued to correspond and exchange views through the years. The acquaintance eventually became the movement's leader and was recently instrumental in removing the Indonesian president from office. Peacock points out that most cultural anthropologists can similarly trace the influence of their theoretical work on specific people and events (Peacock 2000:105).

On the opposite side of the coin, when anthropological concepts are applied "across the grain of practical experience" (Anglin 1997:33), contributions to theory can result. In fact, "the research objects of applied anthropology generally have no less intrinsic potential to generate theory than the research objects of academic anthropology" (Cernea 1995:348). As an example, applied business anthropologist Tomoko Hamada (see Chapter 9) recently reexamined the "multiple and vague" meanings associated with the culture concept as part of a study of a Japanese multinational corporation (Hamada 2000:79ff.). Calling into question the utility of several models of culture currently being used in the analysis of businesses, Hamada argues that rapid global change demands new ideas about the culture of business organizations. She devised the notion of "quality culture," which embraces earlier models in which culture is viewed as dynamic rather than static, but allows greater possibility for individual human agency (Hamada 2000:95). Hamada argues that business anthropology is "an immensely fertile ground for anthropological theory building" (Hamada 2000:99–100).

Another example of how applied cultural anthropology has contributed to anthropological theory is the influence of applied work on anthropological ideas about

◇ **TABLE 2.3   Some Anthropological Theories of Practice**

Theory	Basic Idea
Linear theory	The idea that the value of applied anthropology derives from basic anthropological theory
Feedback theory	The idea that practice and theory have an "exchange relationship," with each contributing to the development of the other
Policy theory	The idea that feedback also exists between practice and policy, and that application should contribute to the betterment of humanity by informing policy
Praxis theory	The idea that there is a "way of knowing" termed *praxis* (defined not merely as practice, but as "a commitment to action") that is superior to theory and demands the "pursuit of value-laden goals"

Source: Baba 2000:22–28.

CONCLUSION

Although the different goals and time frames of acade\[m\] anthropologists may necessitate the use of somewhat diffe\[rent\] plementation of different principles, fundamental simila\[r\] kinds of cultural anthropology. Both academic and appl\[ied\] are trained to probe for the emic perspective; both appr\[oach\] people in societies or groups other than their own fro\[m\] are committed to the comparative method; both cons\[ider\] cept of cultural relativism in order to reach objective an\[d\] sions. Finally, both academic and applied cultural anthr\[opologists\] cross-cultural translation: they are experts at making se\[nse\] group of people and explaining it in terms that can be u\[nderstood\] of other groups.

◇ ◇ ◇

K E Y   T E R M S

community participation   the active involvement of the \[di\]rected change in every step of the change process

ego-centered network   a social network centering on a p\[erson,\] cluding all the links between this person and others in his or h\[er\]

CONCLUSION

Although the different goals and time frames of academic and applied cultural anthropologists may necessitate the use of somewhat different techniques and the implementation of different principles, fundamental similarities exist between the two kinds of cultural anthropology. Both academic and applied cultural anthropologists are trained to probe for the emic perspective; both approach their understanding of people in societies or groups other than their own from a holistic viewpoint; both are committed to the comparative method; both conscientiously employ the concept of cultural relativism in order to reach objective and non-ethnocentric conclusions. Finally, both academic and applied cultural anthropologists are specialists in cross-cultural translation; they are experts at making sense of the culture of a given group of people and explaining it in terms that can be understood by the members of other groups.

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KEY TERMS

community participation   the active involvement of the intended beneficiaries of directed change in every step of the change process

ego-centered network   a social network centering on a particular individual and including all the links between this person and others in his or her community