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ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD RESEARCH METHODS:

MUSLIM NORTH AFRICA

CONSIDERED

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Ethnography is an important endeavor that serves as a tool for understanding diverse forms of living and experiencing the world. Ethnographic data collected is beneficial for meeting the cultural demands and needs of others. Ethnographic research tools, such as participant observation and questionnaires, have been developed for studying other cultures. However, greater emphasis and reflexivity needs to be given to the role of the anthropologist in the field. The ethnographer is not a one-way street. How s/he is perceived by the local community is imperative to the access of cultural data and the quality of data gathered. The ethnographer's training should focus on abiding by a code of ethics that emphasizes concern for the well being of the subjects studied.

Ethnographic research methods are herein presented along with characteristics (evidential and non-evidential 'identities') of an anthropologist that may affect his/her access to information and the quality of data collected. Several examples of field researchers' experiences are presented. Muslim North Africa is considered as a region demanding attention to its specific cultural realities. These examples address cultural factors in determining appropriate research processes for access to and quality of data. A greater focus on the ethnographer as a research tool and the emphasis on abiding by ethnographic ethical standards would continue to improve the quality of ethnographic data, and the value of its applications. In training anthropologists on research tools, equal emphasis needs to be given to reflexivity and our responsibilities as ethnographers to the people studied.

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Preface

A goal of this thesis is to give an overview of what ethnographic research is, how it is conducted, and why the quality of the data collected is important. However, the main goals have been to present diverse variables that may affect an ethnographer's access to critical cultural information in the field, establish reflection as an essential process during the research stage of choosing a topic and community for fieldwork, and the ethical considerations demanded as an overriding stipulation to fulfilling an ethnographer's responsibility to those studied.

It is imperative for anthropologists to know that while having a toolbox full of methods for conducting fieldwork and an unsurpassed enthusiasm for learning about another culture may make us feel fully equipped, there are two crucial aspects to conducting ethnographic fieldwork that should never be overlooked. The first is that being equipped with data-gathering tools is not enough; all cultures will place differing demands and challenges on the ethnographer and will require special consideration when planning the research approach. Secondly, the ethnographer, as the most important research tool and owning internal and external identities, should always be self-consciously reflective on his/her own inherent subjectivity.

Research methodology in the social sciences is a double-edged sword. While we approach the field as 'scientific', systematizing the way data is gathered, we also must realize the complexity of human nature, its subjectivity, and the need to tailor the measures to address the specific social group. Formulating the 'perfect' measure, addressing exactly what one seeks to uncover, and applying the measure to a series of subjects gives the impression that the range of answers will pointedly, and objectively,

answer our inquiry. However, therein lays the ambiguity of our human existence: the measure may not address the piece of information being sought or it may be misinterpreted according to the subject's culture. While the analysis of research data in all types of research allows for a certain degree of 'noise', or disturbance in quality of data, the scientist's aim should always be to minimize such disturbances. These disturbances are constituted by the reality that as naturally subjective beings, our knowledge is limited, and errors in data collection are bound to occur.

The subject of research methods is of utmost importance and foundational as it functions as the cornerstone to all conclusions one derives. If its structure (i.e. the research methods) is weak, the rest is unreliable and questionable. How we know what we know (epistemology) is an issue one needs to be most concerned with as one decides to learn about another culture, especially if anthropological field research is the goal.

Students hoping to become anthropologists are taught research methods for gathering fieldwork data: participant observation, questionnaire development, and interviews as the most popular approaches taught. However, specific needs for studying different cultures and suggested approaches are rarely, if ever, addressed. As an undergraduate anthropology student, I innocently embraced the assumption that general research and data gathering methods alone equip a student to study any culture in the world. However, I soon learned via personal experience, and through the experience of others, that cultural demands, biases and other variables require addressing, especially if one is to become a reliable anthropologist. The entry of a researcher into the research field is not a 'one-way street'. Identity by gender, class and nationality are some of the 'baggage' linked to the researcher, and are important, influential, and highly related to the

information one seeks to gather and what one ultimately gathers. In fact, what the researcher brings with him- or herself is just as important, if not more, to the accessibility and quality of the data as is the data gathering methods utilized. For example, having the proper measure in hand may be of no use if a younger anthropologist attempts to research an area off-limits to youths, but in other areas his youth may encourage natives to 'educate' him. However, the research may also bear a marginal identity that permits crossing such divide.

It is my conviction that as anthropologists, the data gathered and disseminated about another culture should be as precise and accurate as possible. Ethically, it is the least one can do for a culture and people who have opened the doors into their life and who have given us permission to be their voice to the world. Our first debt is to be as objective as possible, avoiding at all cost the risk of spreading lies and deceitful information, while also being self-consciously reflective on our own inherent subjectivity.

Decisions that may more directly affect the people in question, such as governmental and foreign policies, are made based upon the information we make public. It is our responsibility to strive for the utmost reflection of social reality and focus on trying to faithfully educate the world and ourselves on cultural diversity, promoting understanding, communication, and tolerance.

Note on terminology usage:

Because ethnography is a cultural study, the terms *ethnography* and *cultural anthropology* will be used interchangeably. *Ethnographic field researcher,*

ethnographer, cultural anthropologist, anthropologist and *researcher* will also be terms used interchangeably when referring to the individual or group who is compiling data in the field for the purpose of ethnographies.

The term *data* is herein used to refer not only to numerical values used for statistical calculations and 'facts', but to information gathered through any of the methods used while conducting ethnographies.

Acknowledgements

Chapter I. Introduction

While virtually non-existent at its onset, the methodology anthropologists utilize for gathering data while doing field research among different societies and cultures was eventually formalized. These research methods continue to include and use most popularly participant observation in addition to structured questionnaires. These methodologies, however, have not proven to meet all the demands of conducting field research. While the tools and structures one utilizes to gather and organize the data is necessary, so is the person who is utilizing these in the presence of the 'other'. The human dimensions the anthropologist brings to the field provide as much limitation or accessibility as asking the 'right' or 'wrong' questions would. An anthropologist could be as equipped with the right tools as one can be, but if the information one seeks is beyond our physical or social realities and limitations (i.e. age, sex, race) we will not have access to that information unless we think of a different approach, or 'method'. Thus, reflexive anthropology comes to the fore.

Although the field of anthropology has, to an extent, addressed the issue of perception of the anthropologist by the society or culture s/he seeks to enter and study, little work, if any at all, has been done on the different methodological issues and needs s/he faces among different cultures. A gendered aspect that may be helpful in gaining accessibility to certain information among one group of people (i.e. being female) could be restrictive elsewhere.

Even as some aspects of our identity may ease our entry into the research site, they may also hinder it elsewhere. Field research is not a one-way mirror or street where

the anthropologist is the only one doing the evaluating, observing and questioning. The individuals composing the research site play an interactive and important role as to what information we have access to, whether we are trusted enough to have what is usually personal information confided to us or not, and whether it is deceit or not.

Anthropology is an important field, especially in our current times, when as citizens of the world we are required to communicate with individuals from diverse communities and cultures. Very few of us live in isolation without relating to others who are products of a differing culture or sub-culture with its own set of values, forms of expressions, and understanding. While other fields, such as economics and psychology, attend to a portion of a culture, anthropology, on the other hand, seeks to understand or capture the whole culture. Anthropological knowledge via ethnography in many ways becomes a requirement for those of us who seek to have successful communication and to live peacefully with our diverse communities.

Ethnography is the study of a culture or community by a person or team who preferably spends long periods of time among the party of interest to gain insight and understanding of their culture. Through his/her presence, the ethnographer is able to witness and seek to make sense of his/her surroundings, giving priority to and accepting as "truth" the explanations provided by the inhabitants and the confirmation of such by the context or environment. Ethnography is not limited to a particular section of a culture and does not require the study of all parts of the culture, yet it does demand having a holistic approach towards understanding any of its subjects. No portions of a culture are considered isolated from each other or from the greater picture. Each part of a culture has

an active role in contributing to the whole reality and in helping the ethnographer understand the specifics of a culture.

Ethnography plays a role in every part of our existence, from our rearing as a newborn introduced to family life, to the acculturation when adapting to our first teaching institution, to securing a new job. It is not limited to the study of distant cultures or the communities made exotic. Ethnography is also not limited to the field of anthropology. Instead, ethnographic studies are being carried out locally and internationally in a variety of fields, including medicine, business, education, and the fine arts[1]. Data captured through ethnographic research is being collected for the purpose of addressing social concerns and composing international relief efforts (Naylor 1996). It also continues to be used for furthering our understanding about social relations and human behavior.

As an enterprise, ethnography did not emerge until the late 19th century with individuals such as Franz Boas who functioned as a pioneer and later Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski (20th century) who advanced the field of anthropology. Both Mead and Malinowski spent much time in fieldwork, living among the cultures they studied. However, the interest in understanding other regions and groups of people through periods of extended living and participation among them was encouraged by colonial rule and expansion. Merchant travelers and missionaries also played an important role in evolving the interest in the study of cultures. Unfortunately, many of these have laid a negative groundwork that is still being challenged through the erroneous presentations of cultures and people encountered as being 'savages', 'heathens',

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[1] See Moore (1999) for an ethnographic study of Mediterranean and Mesoamerican folk art and architecture through photography, as an example.

'backwards' and 'uncivilized'. Cultural interest and historical involvements in other countries and communities have been motivated by interests to over-impose financial, political and religious interests on a subjugated population.

Included among the precedents to the advent of anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork were other travelers who simply wanted to write about all the novelties they encountered and experienced. To a great extent, a similar kind of popular travel-based writing continues to exist today. However, ethnography's approach and goal for cultural studies has become ever more distinct from that genre. The definition and role of ethnography has evolved with the heightened attention given to ethical concerns and the attempts to make the field more scientific.

The active role ethnographic data plays in our daily living through social and international interaction demands that attention be aimed at the quality of ethnographic research performed and the data derived from it. Major stereotypes have emerged from the products of earlier cultural studies, and have long remained. The spread of misconstrued information from such studies has penetrated deep into our societies and directed the course of history. Several international and national conflicts can be traced to the promulgation of egocentric conclusions made about a community.

Ethnography functions as a voice for others that would otherwise not have one. Instead of promoting understanding and valuing our diverse cultural beliefs, wrong data whether negative or not, results in wounding a culture and making it less accessible. Wrong data initiates stereotypes. It is hard to believe there are any unknown cultures in

the world, but due to wrong data our knowledge of some cultures may be an illusion and having an illusion is worse than not knowing anything about the culture.

If information on which developmental and medical programs are applied is imprecise, the most generous of national or international efforts may be wasted. Solutions will only yield positive results if they address the cause of the problem and the culturally-accepted and functional vehicle. An example of such a problem is the AIDS pandemic throughout the continent of Africa and tuberculosis in Haiti and other impoverished countries. Without knowledge of the culture, including local perceptions of the 'problem' or 'issue' seeking to be addressed, communication and practice will result in a disconnect. While literature abounds on the subject of anthropology and its subspecialties (such as linguistic anthropology and archeology), it is of utmost importance to often revisit the subject of epistemology as it relates to that which is accessible and deduced from anthropological research, as in ethnography.

Orientalist scholarship serves as an example of biased cultural studies with longstanding negative consequences, including the Western misunderstanding of the Middle East, the promulgation of such perspectives, and the resulting tension in international relations. At its advent, such scholarship was interested only in the European's perspective of the 'Orient' and its inhabitants and not on the explanations available through the people themselves. This is witnessed through the overimposing of governmental systems and borders without acknowledgement of local forms of governments (i.e. tribal associations), as well as by the pejorative explanations of cultural expressions observed. In other words, the Orientalist scholar's approach towards

understanding North Africans did not include a local perspective, but simply made conclusions about its inhabitants based on one-way observation and interpretation (Asad 1973a). As a result, the final outcome of Orientalist scholarship was a compilation of inaccurate ethnographic research given their approach and data gathered was far from being methodologically sound and lacking the interest of capturing the "truth" about the region. Their agenda sought to manipulate, through literature and the visual arts, the presentation of North Africans as backwards and uncivilized, needing European administration to advance the region. This great divide between "truth" and hearsay stands in the way of our current gap in understanding North Africans. The United States' involvement in Iraq is a painful example of intercultural misunderstandings exacerbating the inability to arrive at a peace agreement.

It is imperative that any ethnography or cultural study performed is accurate and that the information obtained be reflective of reality. To that end, we should always concern ourselves with improving the quality of ethnographic research methods and on addressing the challenges to data accuracy faced in the field. Ethnographies are a great source of information for the improvement of our world, so long as they are used with the right intentions. In the wrong hands, ethnographies could be conducted for the wrong reasons or used for the wrong purposes, such as manipulation and control by a government. Writing inaccurate ethnographies, however, could be very detrimental to the people being studied. In doing ethnographic fieldwork and in publishing data, the ethnographer needs to be extremely careful.

Chapter II. Field Research Methods

The systemic study of the social sciences, and in particular anthropology, is relatively new. "The scientific method is barely 400 years old and its systematic application to human thought and behavior just 150" (Bernard 1995:4). Its origins can be traced back to French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857), founder of the positivist tradition. As a positivist, he held that true knowledge is based only on the positive affirmation of theories through strict scientific methods. Its origins are also traced back to the creation of the field of sociology (ibid.10-11), from which the field of anthropology formally emerged. Most notably, it was the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1858 that provided a model for scientifically studying and explaining humanity and cultural differences, an event that marked a significant change in focus and approach in fields such as anthropology (Moore 1997). "Between 1860 and 1900, anthropology changed from a loose collection of shared interests into a formally defined science of humankind" (ibid: 16).

It was the British Association for the Advancement of Science (B.A.A.S.), founded in 1883, which published the first documents to address anthropological methodology specifically. It published a series of documents titled *Notes and Queries*, which were first written by Edward B. Tylor and subsequently by other anthropologists. It was essentially a guidebook to doing anthropology and with the exception of this, not much was written on methods until 1970s (De Munck and Sobo 1998: 253-254).

The field of anthropology, in its institutionalized form, emerged out of this 19th century evolution in the approach to studying social sciences. However, the written

record of the quest to answer the same questions anthropology addresses today, such as the why of cultural differences, dates back at least 2500 years with figures such as Aristotle, Ibn Khaldun, Giovanni Vico, Herodotus, Garcilaso de la Vega, and Joseph Lafitau (Moore 1997: 15). Anthropology as a discipline was first formally founded in the early 20th century related to the colonial administration of non-Western peoples, as well as by pioneers such as American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan (1818-1881), British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917), and German-born, American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942). Since its onset, the methodology used has varied from anecdotal to observational with methodology such as structured questionnaires being the most popularly accessed for fieldwork. Examples of early qualitative field research include anthropologist Margaret Mead and her study among the youth in Samoa, as well as Bronislaw Malinowski and his studies in Trobriand Islands.

As a more recent social science, anthropology has relied on borrowing methodology previously used by its neighboring disciplines, such as sociology and psychology. In addition, although anthropology did not initially create its own set of research methods, participant observation as a method was embraced as it's own and soon evolved into its preferred structure for undertaking long-term fieldwork. It was not until the late 20th Century when the publication of anthropological research methods really gained some speed,

> The early 1980s saw the publication of several important 'how-to' ethnographic manuals, most of which relate to particular techniques that can be practiced in the context of participant observation or ethnographic interviews and other larger research efforts (De Munck and Sobo 1998: 254).

Examples of such research efforts include Michael Agar's *The Professional Stranger* (1980), as well as James Spradley's *The Ethnographic Interview* (1979) and *Participant Observation* (1980). "More recently, H. Russell Bernard published what has become the 1990s classic, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (1994) (ibid). It was sentiments similar to Nader's (1981), Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, that led to the realization of a need for greater focus on systematized anthropological research methodology: "We were taught to be self-reliant and self-taught in using methods, in developing theoretical perspectives and in formulating problems" (169).

In reviewing the related literature, one finds that the field of anthropology (especially within the United States) eventually concerned itself and placed much emphasis on the evolution, creation, development and training of more structured and scientific approaches to studying cultures. Several organizations, such as the Ford Foundation, starting in the 1950's provided financial assistance towards such endeavors (Beteille 1976). While this has been predominantly perceived as a positive move, it has also met some opposition. In the United States, Paul Radin (and other humanist individuals like himself) feared that it drew attention away from the uniqueness of individuals (Bernard 1995). Beteille, an anthropologist in India, has remarked as follows,

> At least in appearance there is something universal and neutral about research methodology, which makes its transfer from one intellectual milieu to another an attractive possibility. […] In reality, however, preoccupation with the niceties of methodology tends to become an end in itself, and hence a source of distraction (Beteille 1976:196-7).

In his article, Beteille also shares that "…the best results [to research] were achieved in the past <u>before</u> the new methodology came into vogue [and that] the results that followed from its application have so far been very meager indeed" (ibid: 197, emphasis added). Beteille is referring to 'American' research methods as the 'new methodology', as India was introduced to these through the financial assistance and support of organizations such as the previously mentioned Ford Foundation. This 'American' or 'new methodology' was characterized by "… being concrete and task-oriented […with] a emphasis on research methodology […as well as] the standardization of rules and procedures" (ibid: 196).

While respecting the point of views of others, it is also necessary to affirm that if anthropology is to consider itself a 'science' (bearing the title of 'social science'), its research methods should be as scientific as possible (while retaining its most important human dimensions). Yet, Beteille shares a valid concern in the new type and surge of research methodology. While it provided with more 'tools', these did not address the importance of individual cultural demands. The focus of research methodology need be not merely on the tools used to gather information (i.e. questionnaires and interviews) but in assuring that these measures are culturally sensitive, and other factors that should equally be considered as part of research methodology (i.e. physical appearance of researcher) are addressed.

Without proper research methodology (including all actively involved portions of research), data acquired may serve well independently, yet not be reliable enough or apt for systemic comparison with other collected cultural data. In the words of respected anthropology researcher Michael H. Agar, "[i]n the history of the field, problems in

cross-cultural comparison, and the differences between ethnographers studying the same group, both point the damning finger at our failure to be explicit about what it is we do when we do fieldwork" (Agar 1996:61). While most of the research done in anthropology has been qualitative in approach (focusing on the individual; humanistic), it has applied the positivist tradition of visually confirming the existence of something, thereby applying a scientific direct observation, meriting the scientific validity and aura that is attached to a quantitative approach.

Participant observation as a method represents the convergence of ethics and introspection, as well as the "insider/outsider" stance balanced with scientific objectivity and culturally sensitive subjectivity. Working in other parts of the world was novel enough and as a result, focusing on the methods used to derive the data gathered was delayed, taking a secondary place of importance, and remaining unreflective until more recent decades. It was not until the 1970s when a noticeable interest in reflecting on fieldwork was made evident through an increased number of reports on fieldwork experiences (Goward 1984).

Ethnographic Fieldwork

Ethnography is the study and "systematic description of a single contemporary culture, often through ethnographic fieldwork" (Barfield, 2005). It is a term that has emerged along with 'ethnology' and have both been used interchangeably. However, these two terms have come to differ from each other in that ethnology focuses on comparing different cultures, while ethnography focuses on describing a culture in detail.

The earliest presences of these words have been traced to the late 18th century in the works of German historian and linguist August Ludwin Schlözer, who, alongside other German scholars, was recruited by the Russian government "to report on the peoples of the newly explored eastern territories". In his *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte* (1771) Schlözer used the words to refer to the "descriptive and historical study of peoples and nations". The Oxford dictionary did not introduce them in its collection until 1834 and 1842 although the terms ethnography and ethnology had by then widely spread and were being used throughout Europe (ibid).

The term ethnography has evolved in its focus and usage. The interests that eventually led to the development of the field initially focused on the compilation of missionary accounts, tales of expeditions, and geographic descriptions, which often were considered anthropologically official enough to be published by anthropological institutions by the late 19th century (Urry 1984; Sperber 1985). Of these, it has been said that missionary accounts were the best precursory ethnographies that were done, as missionaries were interested in learning in detail the culture and language in order to successfully translate the Bible and proselytize. An example of such missionary is Andreas Riss in the former Gold Coast (current Ghana) "who studied local customs and languages for the purpose of converting Africans to Christianity" (Coe, 2001: 392).

The mid-19th century advent of Darwin's theory of evolution and the prevalent subject of race affected ethnography's interest in the evolution of humans, and the differences among human beings. While it was mostly armchair speculation that took place, Darwin's theory of evolution encouraged anthropology's quest, as a whole, to understand the nature of humanity. With such a great interest placed on evolutionary

questions in the educated community, the need for more accurate and systematic data became evident.

Ethnography, referring to "cultural description …" (Spradley 1979:10) or "… a culture-studying culture" (ibid: 9), most commonly employs either observations or interviews as its research method: participant, direct/reactive, and unobtrusive observation; unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews.

Participant observation: "involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives" (Bernard 1995:136). "This method can include natural conversations, interviews, questionnaires, and other methods" (ibid: 137).

Direct/Reactive observation: "people know that you are watching them and may play to their audience" (ibid: 310).

Unobtrusive observation: "includes all methods for studying behaviour where informants don't know that they're being studied […it includes] behavior trace studies, archival research, content analysis, disguised observation, and naturalistic field experiments [… all which] pose serious ethical problems…" (ibid: 332).

Unstructured interviews: "you sit down with an informant and hold an interview […these] are based on a clear plan that you keep constantly in mind, but are also characterized by a minimum of control over the informant's responses" (ibid.:209) " […it] is the most widely used method of data collection in cultural anthropology"(ibid:208).

Semi-structured interviews: "is based on the use of an interview *guide*. This is a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order" (ibid: 209).

Structured interviews: involves using "a series of questions to which the anthropologist requires specific answers" (Crane and Angrosino 1992:58) and "exposing every informant in a sample to the same stimuli" i.e. questions, names, photographs, etc (Bernard 1995:237).

Bernard is thorough in his classifications of the different types of interviews and observations, while other authors of guides on anthropological research methodology,

such as Crane and Angrosino, are much more general and brief. Similar differences, as well as differences in terminology, exist among other guides on research methodology.

Quantifying Qualitative Data

Although these ethnographic research methods are not quantitative in nature, the quantitative approach can be applied to analyzing data obtained from structured interviews by conducting comparative cultural studies at a wider scale. For instance, larger-scale responses can be tallied or interviews coded with an indexing device such as the *Outline of Cultural Materials* (see Bernard 1995), or OCM. The OCM is made up of 710 universal codes each representing a different cultural subject.

> The 710 categories are grouped into seventy-nine major subject divisions, each assigned a three-digit code ranging from 100 (Orientation) to 880 (Adolescence, Adulthood, and Old Age). Within each major subject division, up to nine more specific categories are defined. For example, the 590 (Family) division is subdivided into seven more specific subject categories as follows: 591 (Residence), 592 (Household), 593 (Family Relationships), 594 (Nuclear Family), 595 (Polygamy), 596 (Extended Families), and 597 (Adoption) (Ember and Ember).

OCM is the backbone for the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), a system of organizing cultural information that began as the Cross-Cultural Survey at Yale University in 1937. HRAF was founded in 1949 by Professor George P. Murdock from Yale's Institute of Human Relations. Such a system developed from a growing interest in comparative cultural research for understanding topics such as human behavior and relations. Currently HRAF is the largest ethnographic database. It "contains over

800,000 pages of indexed information on over 370 different cultural, ethnic, religious, and national groups around the world" (ibid.), both from published and unpublished ethnographic materials. The five steps in doing an HRAF study are as follows:

1. State a hypothesis that requires cross-cultural data.
2. Draw a representative sample of the world's cultures from the 350 in the files.
3. Look for the appropriate OCM codes in the sample.
4. Code the variables according to whatever conceptual scheme you've developed in forming your hypothesis.
5. Run the appropriate statistical tests and examine the outcome to see if your hypothesis is confirmed (Bernard 1995:334).

From its onset, HRAF has been questioned for its value as a research tool, its research approach, and its ethics. The ethical concern associated with HRAF has entailed the ethnographer's right to over-impose labels on the behaviors witnessed in another culture based on one's own labeling system and culture. An example of this is calling something 'chauvinism', 'feminism' or 'social support', whose definitions are likely to emerge from the ethnographer's culture.

> The crucial ethical question…concerns the manner in which institutions, culture complexes, behavioral patterns, and material traits are classified and how they are communicated to the audience. Western anthropologists have characteristically used in their work a set of terms never used in the description of their own behavior (Chilungu 1976: 462).

Because the nature of HRAF entails taking portions of ethnography, isolating it from the rest of the text, and grouping them with similarly coded sections, anthropologists Boas, Benedict and Mead were adamantly against it. They believed cultures could not be parted into segments and compared to each other without considering the culture as a whole. They claim that a brief description of behavior, cut out from the rest of the ethnography, does not allow adequate understanding of the causes behind such behavior.

They held that each culture is a product of its own historical and environmental context and that the reality of a culture is not comparable to the experience of a different one, even if they seem to present similar characteristics. Humanistic anthropologists, in general, did not like the 'artlessness' and the Frankenstein effect (pieces of data from different sites and times selected and isolated from the full text and grouped together) of the new approach for comparing cultures (Tobin 1990).

Since HRAF started in microfiche, a format that did not allow the level of interactivity currently available in Windows-based computer programs, many opposed not having the name of the ethnographer for each section easily accessible. Not knowing or having the ethnographer's name directly attached to the selection describing the culture did not allow for the evaluation of the data (i.e. credibility) based on aspects such as the reputation of the ethnographer, they argued. They also opposed the impersonal feel of its technology. The evolution of microfiche HRAF into electronically accessible information via the World Wide Web (WWW) and CD-ROMs, and the increased level of comfort with computer systems have now ameliorated both of these issues. In addition, the beginnings of the HRAF were tightly associated with the military, receiving money from it in return for cultural files. In 1970, HRAF's director at the time describes HRAF's association with the military as follows:

> It seemed evident that the government could scarcely afford not to support an organization that could supply it with accurate, critically evaluated, usefully organized, basic information on peoples of the world….In the early 1950s HRAF was receiving support from the government at the level of $250,000 a year. The Navy, the Army, the Air Force, and the Central Intelligence Agency each contributed $50,000 a year to support research on four major areas: Southeast Asia, Europe, Northeast Asia, and the

Near and Middle East.   The arrangement was helpful from
HRAF's viewpoint (Ford; see Tobin 1990:476).

Two additional arguments against HRAF have been the inconsistency of its coding (i.e. family violence coded as 593 'family relationships', 578 'in-group antagonisms', or 684 'personal communication'), and problematic quality controlling. HRAF equally values ethnographies without questioning the ethics of the ethnographer, including the quality of data and research methods (Bernard 1995:345-6).

HRAF provides an attractive and less time consuming way for conducting comparative research, as well as a means for analyzing qualitative data with a quantitative approach. Nevertheless, while it does so, we should be aware of the possible delusions of objectivity and consistency it evokes. The pros of using it as a research method should be evaluated in light of the risks of forfeiting important cultural information. HRAF is a useful application for comparing ethnographic information so long as the information therein contained is reliable (passing the strictest of tests in quality controlling data). If cultural information contained within the system is not submitted to undergo such tests, HRAF merely gives the illusion of a scientifically reliable process that in reality further detriments factual cultural studies and knowledge.

Epistemology

When we do research, we seek to learn the "truth" of things. We have questions to which we seek 'accurate' answers. Accuracy is based on what is "truth", but what is "truth"? Perhaps we take it for granted that "truth" may mean different things to different people, and that there is no universal consensus of what it means for something or

someone to 'be' true. The idea of gaining and having 'knowledge' is based on what we

determine is "truth" and what we consider reflects 'reality'. Lack of "truth" is otherwise

considered misinformation, or a false consciousness. In speaking about 'accuracy' in the

social sciences or when conducting fieldwork, one must first determine what is it that we

consider knowledge, or "truth". Is "truth" only that which is observable and measurable,

as in laboratory test tubes? Alternatively, does it encompass less tangible and measurable

things? How does the researcher know what s/he knows, and what remains to be known,

about a culture?

The study of what is "truth" and what is 'knowledge', (or 'how do we know what

we know') is referred to as 'epistemology'. The term epistemology comes from the Greek

word *epistēmē* meaning "knowledge" and refers to "[t]he branch of philosophy that

studies the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions, and foundations, and its extent and

validity" (*The American College Dictionary,* 1993). According to the Oxford English

Dictionary (1978), epistemology also means "the theory or science of the method or

grounds of knowledge". In Webster's (1997) words, the term refers to, "a branch of

philosophy that investigates the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human

knowledge". It is the last portion of Webster's definition (*methods and limits of human

knowledge*) that define the use and focus of the term throughout this paper.

While the topics it addresses were previously referred to by philosophers, such as

Aristotle, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant and John Locke, the actual

word *epistemology* was coined by Scottish philosopher James Frederick Ferrier (1808-

1864). The word made a first appearance in his 1854 book *Institutes of Metaphysics: The*

Theory of Knowing and Being in which he addresses the nature and meaning of knowledge.

The importance of epistemology for the social sciences lies on its address of our quest for what is "truth", the discovery of what is factual, and our interpretations of reality. Through research, we seek to uncover and understand the reality of things. This is true not only for the natural sciences, but also for the social sciences. The hunt for what *is*, and especially what is the "*truth*" about humanity is what propels anthropology and ethnographic research. However, there is no consensus of what is indeed 'real' as it very much depends on how reality is defined and approached. Reflecting its lack in consensus, philosophy has devoted much of its attention to reasoning and birthing theories on what is "truth" and beyond subjectivity.

What is "truth"? Whilst "truth" has been argued to be merely relative to the perceiver, contemporary philosopher Karl R. Popper (1972), in his book "Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach", declares his conviction that while the theory of human knowledge since its philosophical birth has been largely subjective and based on commonsense, human knowledge is capable of objectivity should the correct principles be applied (see also Kirk and Miller 1986). Popper suggests a "critical method" wherewith "a method of trial and the elimination of errors, of proposing theories [interpretations] and submitting them to the severest tests we can design" (1972:16). For him, commonsense theory of knowledge refers to "the mistaken theory that we acquire knowledge about the world by opening our eyes and looking at it, or, more generally by observation" (ibid: 34). He also states that, in terms of arriving at what is 'real', "our great instrument for progress is criticism" (ibid: 34).

Behind our every conclusion of what is "truth" lies an understanding and interpretation (theory) of the world. What we present as "truth" reflects what we think is "truth", whether it is that we buy into the idea that this world is solely material, spiritual, or the combination of both; that reality lies in what we observe versus what is not observed. Thus, reality has multiple theories, yet as it applies to the study of the human condition, our approaches have significantly launched from an idealist (rationalism), materialist (empiricism) or dualist point of view.

Idealists argue that it is our ideas that shape our reality. The world around us is limited by what we think and how we perceive things. This is what defines our human existence (for example, religion is our reality). Materialists, on the other hand, believe that the reality of human nature lies in the sensory experience of our environment, thus the external affects who we are and what we see as "truth". Furthermore, materialists believe that "people learn their values and that values are therefore relative" (Bernard 1995: 3). Yet in a third category, dualism, an idea rooted in Western thought and traced back to ancient Greek philosopher Plato, looks at human nature as one composed and affected equally by the interplay of our mind and our sensory experience (matter). Dualists such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), for the most part, believe that the way we experience our environment and physical reality depends on how our mind works perceiving and interpreting these (Bernard 1995:2-3).

While most social sciences tend to think, using a materialist approach assuming, like idealists, that there is an overriding and deciding essence to 'human nature', others prefer a non-essential holistic approach to the study of humanity. Even though this all-inclusive approach includes a dualist philosophy, it also includes the idea that

"individuals and society, and individuals and the environment interpenetrate and even define one another" (Schultz and Lavenda 2005:21). Individuals are also seen as a result of outside forces including cultural traditions (ibid: 21-22).

Epistemologically, our basis for knowledge and understanding is derived implicitly or explicitly, as well as by inductive or deductive reasoning. Implicitly, information is inferred and understood though not directly expressed, as in the case of narratives. These are things heard and believed to be factual, assuming other people's words are correct and representative of reality. Explicitly, assumptions are made from observable things, such as in hypothesis testing, where information is fully and clearly expressed.

In practice, inductive reasoning is very similar to an explicit approach in that both heavily rely on the observable for making conclusions. Inductive reasoning is achieved when we use "direct observation to confirm our ideas and the linking together of observed facts to form theories or explanations of how natural phenomena work" (Bernard 1995:6). Deductive reasoning, on the other hand, is where ideas are derived from what is observed as opposed to creating ideas before verification by observation as in inductive reasoning. In many instances, both inductive and deductive reasoning end up working together in what is called 'abduction', where theories are created from what is observed (deductive), then being tested for validity (inductive). The marriage of these gives the social scientist the ability to use both logic and intuition, testing these for validity, when seeking to more accurately understand cultures.

The value of a combined usage of all these approaches to discovering what is "truth" has the potential of keeping at bay the risk of making conclusions based on 'false

consciousness'. False consciousness is arrived at when what is perceived or felt is not representative of what is accurate and reflective of reality. For instance, while to the uninformed, Muslim women wearing veils represent oppression of women, the reality is much different in countries such as Egypt, where the wearing of a veil is not mandatory, but instead voluntary and welcomed as a way to reaffirm their cultural heritage.

Chapter III. Anthropologist as a Research Tool

The most important role of an anthropologist is of studying and understanding diverse societies (research, analysis and conclusion), thereby becoming a 'bridge' and communicator between different cultural 'realities'.   "The goal is not to claim a privileged view of others but to form a bridge between the rationalities of the researcher and those of others" (Ivanitz 1999: 47). Yet, to properly fulfill his/her role as not only an interpreter and communicator between cultures, but as the most important research tool and determinant of access to data in the field, s/he needs to reflect on and address various aspects of his/her persona when determining the methodology and subject matter of his/her research.

There are many struggles the ethnographer faces, including always maintaining the stance of an outsider for proper research. All the self-reflection that the anthropologist needs to confront is a challenge. There is the temptation of 'going native', and feeling so much embrace by another culture that one feels like a native from that otherwise foreign land. Once one feels native, however, it is much harder to be critical of what is experienced, becoming desensitized. The hope is that the ethnographer understands so much about the studied culture that s/he could fully cohabitate with the rest as if a native, but becoming no more than a 'marginal' or quasi native.

To function properly as an anthropologist, it is important that s/he always looks from the outside and make sense of things from a wider lens. This is a self-critical perspective that natives may not have, and if they do, they are already likened to cultural schizophrenia. The anthropologist is required to constantly keep boundaries separating

him/her from the other culture so that s/he may be objective. S/he needs to maintain an 'insider/outsider' stance being able to see issues from an insider's perspective, as well as from an outsider's. Such a stance allows the ethnographer to see events and people with a sharp critical eye. The mind of an ethnographer must be malleable/ flexible and adaptable, while remaining clear of one's role as the observing researcher/ethnographer.

As a research tool, the anthropologist is responsible for objectively scrutinizing him-/herself, both internally (non-evidential) and externally (evidential). Internally, the anthropologist must consider what assumptions s/he has embodied and what stereotypes need dismantling prior to penetrating the field. A certain amount of subjectivity is ingrained in us as human beings, yet the imperative key is for us to become mindful of anything that may distort our study and understanding of the 'other'. It is best to have no preconceptions, than risking having a form of blinders that limit the richness of the culture from which we are seeking to learn. Among much more, sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is known for arguing that social facts exist and that the study of social life should be made scientific. And how do we get there? Tonkiss (1998) suggests "Durkheim's first principle: abandon all preconceptions" (254).

On the surface, the anthropologist must consider his physical impression and how this may affect access to, and quality of, data. Important and influential physical impressions, or 'identity', include age, sex, gender, race, and composition. It serves any anthropologist well to educate himself on the host culture's experience and relationship with foreigners and previous researchers as a means of preliminarily accessing the impact of one's physical identity. "The newly arrived fieldworker has an advantage if he or she

comes equipped with knowledge of who the previous strangers were, even had they been other anthropologists" (Dwyer-Shick 1992:253).

When planning to conduct ethnographic research the anthropologist must objectively determine whether s/he has the ability and means to efficaciously approach the subject of interest, and to select and apply, per the specific demands, from the different methods available to his disposal. Most importantly, the anthropologist's internal and external identities are the most important variables to consider when conducting ethnographic research and in filling the role as the most important research tool. As De Munck and Sobo (1998) confirm, "postmodernism teaches us that the phenotypical, psychological, and cultural attributes of the researcher and of the participants do matter" (21). On the importance of identity and access to information, Walsh (1998) says that "observation, inquiry and data collection depend upon the observer gaining access to the appropriate field and establishing good working relations wit the people on it…the identity that the observer assumes determines the success of this (221). Anderson (2000) who conducted fieldwork in Siberia shares that "one's identity opens doors and people's hearts as much as it engenders suspicion or envy" (130).

Non-Evidential Variables

"Ethnographers … by definition work between cultures, translating the field of one culture into texts for another culture" (Barsegian; see De Soto and Dudwick 2000:71).

"It is a wise person indeed who is fully aware of his own bias and a fool who thinks he has none" (Orans 1996: 16)

While the role of an anthropologist is to 'translate' the information of one culture into another, such objectivity is highly idealistic and delusional (Bernard 1995:3).

Anthropologists, as are all other individuals, usually raised in a specific culture and environment, limited and with a finite range of values and perceptions, and thus subjective in nature. Just as they would with the data gathering methods and questions, anthropologists are to equally see and prepare themselves as interactive research tools. They are to determine their own adequacy for the society one aims at researching as they would with methodology. Because of the impact their presence and person has on the research, anthropologist are, indeed, the most important research tool to be carefully considered prior to studying a culture or society.

The obligation of an anthropologist prior to entering the research field is to become aware of his/her own perceptions, values, stereotypes, assumptions, and disposition, in other words, bias, and evaluate as objectively as it is possible how these many aspects of his/her persona (may) affect the "lenses" from which the host culture will be understood. Any of these composites has the ability to taint the data gathered, and its analysis. Because the nature of the field of anthropology oftentimes involves personally penetrating and interacting with a different culture, it is nearly impossible to avoid one's persona from influencing the quality of information gathered and interpretation of the data.

Unfortunately, the process of becoming self-aware, and the depth to which it should be done, does not often seem to take place among anthropologists. The seriousness of such a subject is that conclusions the ethnographer reaches about a culture may in fact represent more the ethnographer's understanding and interpretation about the culture, than the reality of the culture itself. Weber (see Silverman 1998) calls this 'contamination' by the researcher indicating that "all research is contaminated to some

extent by the values of the researcher" and further stressing that the conclusions and implications to be drawn from a study are "large grounded in the moral and political beliefs of the researcher" (91).

Using psychoanalysis as comparison, Agar points to how underdeveloped such self-evaluation is in anthropology:

> Before psychoanalysts are considered competent to analyze others, they must first go through analysis themselves. If they do not understand their own personalities, the argument goes, they will not be able to understand others. … Ethnographers, on the other hand, are allowed to go into a situation with no awareness of the biases they bring to it from their own cultures and personalities (Agar 1996:92).

Furthermore, he states that "this simply does not make good sense," and admits that he "is not sure how to correct it". Part of his uncertainly lies on the reflection of the complexities behind "what constitutes the ethnographer's 'culture" and the inability to "disentangle the many parts" (ibid: 92) that comprise their biases.

This kind of reflection is absolutely necessary if we are to conduct ethnographic field research that is representative of another culture's reality. However, these reflections must also include the ethnographer's ethical responsibility to those we study. Reflections should be focused on the ethical implications that our fieldwork and quality of resulting data will have on the people being studied. The ethnographer's code of ethics must be moved by a genuine interest to look out first and foremost for the safety and interest of those studied, and as such, information gathered during fieldwork will avoid the negative immediate and longstanding results of cultural studies in the likes of those emergent of the Orientalist tradition.

Though a far cry from the intentions of an ethical anthropologist, Orientalism provides a good example of very poor cultural study. The origin of the term stems from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and refers to the study of the 'Orient', which literally means the 'East' of a particular point of reference, in this case Europe, and most specifically, France. Although "… India, China, Japan, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Holy Land" (Said 1997:13) were the original 'East', "Islam was [also] seen, for better or for worse, as part of the East, sharing in its mystery, exoticism, corruption, and latent power" (ibid: 13). In addition, while the term 'Orientalism' includes other geographical and cultural areas, it has evolved to function as a synonym to the Arab/Muslim world.

France, a colonial power actively present in North Africa during the birth of Orientalism, 'studied' the region and spread their 'findings' in Europe. France, to no surprise, became world leader in the discipline. These 'findings' were their understandings and interpretation of what they perceived, mixed in with their conscious efforts of depicting the region in unflattering ways, proving the region worthy of being under colonial rule. Writings and pictures abound representing these colonial 'interpretations' or 'Orientalist' views.

> For most Europeans the Oriental city was a barbaric, hysterical and violent place. Virtually every European traveler who has written about the Arab world has included picturesque and usually condescending, descriptions of towns and cities in a permanent state of Dantesque pandemonium (Heffernan 1993: 82)

> Putrefaction and decay were recurring literary themes in such descriptions and provided a contemporary affirmation of the historical discourse about moral and environmental retrogression …. Most of these accounts –and many others could be quoted- were imaginatively embellished and often simply invented to astonish, shock and amuse European audience. … Scenes of disorder confirmed the popular impression of a society and an urban environment in desperate need of European order and civilization.

> Colonial administrators were often happy to encourage an impression of urban chaos in anticipation that this would generate extra capital investment which would allow them to re-structure the urban environment as fitting memorials to their regime (ibid:83).

The views created by these 'scholars', the antecedents to formalized ethnography, were not all negative. Yet even the 'positive' ones did not accurately depict North Africans, and served only selfish aims,

> The more 'positive' European images of the Oriental city also had a direct influence … The more sensational accounts were written, the more European tourists flocked to Casablanca, Algiers and Cairo in search of pleasure and indulgence (ibid.:93).

Furthermore, while the 'Orientalist' scholarship was composed mainly of 'research' and information far from accuracy and reality, in its most honest of attempts, it also reflected the personality and biases of those doing the observing. "Needless to say, European descriptions of Oriental cities will inevitably reveal as much about fears and desires of the observers as about the conditions they purported to observe"(ibid.:79).

Anthropology, in general, has emerged out of Europe's colonial expansion, and for obvious reasons. Studying and learning about the subjugated population provided Imperialists with an upper political hand in their control of the land and its people (Naylor 1996). As such, it is imperative to note the fact that anthropology, and ethnographic fieldwork, has been a highly Western field, and as such, has imbedded highly Westernized perspectives on cultural theories. Without an international and multicultural impact and critique, the field has launched and flourished from a European bias. Such unquestioned ethnocentrism has largely gone unchallenged and given the "West" monopoly to the literature, but thankfully, the involvement of a larger international community and greater communication in recent decades is addressing the

issues. Critical feedback and introspection is essential to avoid ethnocentric scholarships,

similar to Orientalism, and to dismantle the deep-rooted residue of such.

> Ethnology, like any science, is manifested in the element of discourse. And it is first of all a European science, utilizing, even when reluctant to do so, the concepts of tradition. Consequently, whether the ethnologist wants to or not, and irrespective of what he decides, he introduces the premises of ethnocentrism in his discourse even while he denounces them … We are dealing with a critical relationship with the language of the human sciences and dealing with the need to explicitly and systematically present the problem of the status of a discourse that borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for the deconstruction of that very heritage (Derrida; see Khatibi 1985: 15).

Even an Arab researcher's product is questionable when his/her ideas are highly

influenced and dictate by the knowledge available to him/her,

> …The Arab researcher who is locked in Western knowledge always risks the possibility of not having an inkling of what place he speaks about or where the problems that torture him come from…The Arab researcher essentially becomes a translator…of a body of thoughts and of sciences that was formed elsewhere and whose archeological questions, most of the time, he hardly doubts (Khatibi 1985: 17)

An ethnographer's personal view of the world is capable of allowing for, emphasizing,

and stressing certain aspects of a culture, such as hostility, greed and jealousy. This

would otherwise not be the case if the researcher were a different person (Agar 1996:93).

Such theorizing further implores the need for anthropologists to become aware of their

psychology or internal identity.

A less considered aspect of an anthropologist's 'internal identity' is their

language. The function of language in this particular case is not only whether or not the

ethnographer is able to communicate in the host cultures' language, which is of great

importance, but also the finite range of thoughts and understanding that specific

languages enable us to have. According to the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* (named after "the

two most influential figures in development of linguistic anthropology …"(Bonvillain 2000:49), "… some elements of language, for example, in vocabulary or grammatical systems, influence speakers' perceptions and can affect their attitudes and behavior"(ibid.:51). In Sapir's own words,

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group (see Bonvillain 2000:52).

In the loosest of sense, the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* indicates that language is culture-or what reality is to us, and culture is language. While we may learn about a different culture, this we learn through the filters of our language, and hence limited understanding. Even as one speaks a foreign language, one must be fully versed in that particular language before appreciating the richness of culture it carries, as well as the wider spectrum of possibilities it enables. "…What we are after in studying primitive peoples is, to a large extent, to get their scheme of classification. This scheme must be more or less reflected in their own language" (Sapir; see Urry 1984: 56).

The ability of the ethnographer to communicate in a foreign language with informants in the field (when applicable), either through one's own language proficiency, or through a translator's, is major. The significance for this seems obvious: seeking to learn from those in the field and be a participant observant, the ethnographer must be able to communicate his/her inquiry and understand the responses given. However, "Anthropologists take it for granted that they must speak and understand the language of the peoples they study if their research results are to meet the exacting canons of

excellence of contemporary fieldwork" (Foster 1969: 66). Indeed, speaking the informant's language has been a recognizable required characteristic of ethnographers. In developing his/her foreign language skills, however, the ethnographer must also prepare for the localized form of the language (i.e. vernacular). Agar exemplifies the importance of preparing for such issues in the following anecdote:

> … An African anthropologist recently published a discussion of some previous ethnographic research. … He argued that some of the classic studies displayed fundamental misunderstandings of the group under study by the ethnographer. Among other reasons for this, he mentioned the colonial context, the loose methodology, and the tendency to rely on a few key informants. But the mainstay of his critique is the inability of the ethnographer to understand and communicate in the vernacular. Because of all these various background factors, the descriptions of African society reviews are, at best, oversimplifications, and at worst, flat wrong (Owusu; see Agar 1996:94).

In response to this information, Agar states humorously, yet frighteningly realistically, that "after reading all this material, I get the dizzy feeling that an ethnographer (or any social science researcher) is like a drunk pretending to walk a straight line in a dark room with a gale-force wind blowing through it"(ibid.:94). Bernard (1998) reinforces Agar's point of view when he suggests that "more methodological training is needed, not only for graduate students but for experienced field anthropologists as well" (7). Fortunately, an increased realization of this reality, a growing attention to this matter, and measures being taken such as constructive criticism of other's scholarships and ethnographers developing greater sensitivity to these issues, allows for much hope other than the glum and hopelessness in Agar's comments.

Another important aspect of internal workings and influences on the ethnographer's altered conclusions is the translation language, experience, and thought

undergoes. The following is an example of such occurrence. In the field, an anthropologist perceives and experiences a different culture. To further understand the culture, the anthropologist asks questions. Those being asked the questions will self reflect in order to provide him/her with an answer, which usually means interpreting their own culture. The ethnographer is provided with an answer, which is an expression of the culture. The ethnographer then interprets the information that s/he is provided and later re-communicates this to others, usually in the form of scholarly material. As may be evident by this example, each step of the process naturally requires information to be altered pulling it farther from 'reality':

-A culture is <u>perceived</u> (example: anthropologist sees teenagers getting many tattoos).

-The anthropologist <u>filters</u> this information by the unconscious (example: the process of witnessing the event and peaking the interest).

-A curiosity is <u>transferred</u> into language and communicated (a question) (example: anthropologist words his curiosity and asks the teenagers why they are getting so many tattoos).

-The receiver <u>registers</u> the question through his own personal unconscious filters (example: teenager thinks, 'anthropologist is wondering why we are getting tattoos when this is so natural for us').

-An answer is sought by <u>interpreting</u> their reality (example: teenager thinks of how to answer the question as s/he understands it; s/he notes getting these tattoos make him feel different; s/he decides this different feeling means it makes him feel good).

-This reality is <u>expressed</u> in language and communicated to the ethnographer (example: teenager gives the first reason that occurs to him; s/he answers with why s/he really believes is the reason behind him getting the tattoos; 'it is just something I do; I like the colors'; does not analyze the psychological reasoning behind it and the societal influences).

-The ethnographer receives this information <u>filtered</u> by his unconscious (example: there is no reason to doing this; teenager just likes it).

-The ethnographer uses language to communicate to others (example: teenagers get tattoos for no reason other than liking to display colors on their body).

-Others <u>receive</u> *and* <u>alter</u> *through their different realities and unconscious filters* (example: teenager, not having been asked the question previously, now with a concretized reasoning, and made aware of his motivation, has placed a label on his experience; no societal reasons, or feeding other psychological needs through the action of tattoos; kids just like it; it is art).

V.N. Volosinov, a Soviet linguist, expresses a more succinct and authoritative description of the process:

> There are two elements in expression: that inner something which is *expressible*, and its *outward objectification* for others (or possibly for oneself)….By becoming external, by expressing itself outwardly, the inner element does undergo alteration. After all, it must gain control of outer material that possesses a validity of its own apart from the inner element. In this process of gaining control, of mastering outer material and making it over into a compliant medium of expression, the experiential, expressible element itself undergoes alteration and is forced to make a certain compromise…. There is no such thing as experience outside of embodiment in signs…. It is not experience that organizes expression, but the other way around –*expression organizes experience* [emphasis in original]. Expression is what first gives experience its form and specificity of direction. It is a matter not so much of expression accommodating itself to our inner world but rather of our inner world accommodating itself to the potentialities of our expression, its possible routes and directions (Volosinov; see Bonvillain 2000:52-53).

This process of interpretation and limitation of the experience to the expressible via language becomes more evident when the words used have a difference of meaning, albeit small, for the anthropologists and cultural representative. It is tempting to hear someone use the word 'happy' and assume we agree on the meaning of the word. When in doubt, using a dictionary (although these have their own built-in biases) to clarify one's interpretation of the word's meaning is helpful only if both the anthropologist and other individual agree on the same definition. Yet, there is no guarantee that another

person's definition of a common word agrees with our own or other's. Perhaps we decide that the other individual is truly 'happy' because s/he is laughing and exhibiting other behaviors that are consistent with what we understand the word to mean, which may or not necessarily be the case. The process requires the same steps we undergo when learning a different language, and understanding culture in general: observation, conclusion, hypothesis testing, and reevaluation, followed by restarting the same process until the hypothesis holds.

In *Beyond Culture* (1989) Edward T. Hall resonates with the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* suggesting that we pay attention to what the culture allows us to, "in its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore". He further suggests that "this screening function provides structure for the world and protects the nervous system from 'information overload'" (85)[2] and that "an event is usually infinitely more complex and rich than the language used to describe it" (87). In a later book, Hall concludes that culture is communication, and while the information we are seeking may not be communicated in a way that the observer may understand, culture is being communicated, nevertheless. Culture is being communicated not only by language, but also through non-verbal communication, including the usage of space, the omission of words, and by how an individual or community chooses to express himself (1990).

Alas, analysis of this kind may help to clarify our understanding, but when it prevents us from making any conclusions, we must stop and simply trust our understanding. Future research will hopefully support or correct our initial conclusions.

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[2] Hall uses 'information overload' to refer to the amount of information that in this case the human brain is asked to process, but in exceeding its capacity it is not able to do so.

Other important 'internal' aspects the ethnographer should become aware of, and is able to more tangibly control, is patience and receptiveness. The concept of time changes from culture to culture, and regardless of what the ethnographer's concept is, s/he is to tailor his/her interpretations to the culture where s/he undergoes fieldwork. The ethnographer must be patient with and receptive to the culture and the people s/he is studying. As a culture or subject new to the ethnographer, s/he must allow the culture and people to make sense, "the translation of cultures requires one to try to understand other forms of life in their own terms" (Rosaldo 1989: 26). To a certain extent, this is what Zanca (2000) resolved while doing fieldwork in Uzbekistan when stating "…I learned that much fieldwork is simply about mastering oneself, since it seemed that I was going to remain controlled and manipulated to some extent by those whom I had decided to study" (166). Without practicing patience, and being receptive to new information, the ethnographer threatens the objectivity and validity of his research and conclusion of the culture, as well as access to information. Zanca suggests 'patient deference' as one of the best solutions for getting information from the informants (158).

All of the self-reflection an anthropologist must undergo before doing research could understandably feel overwhelming. It is tempting to offer training in psychology to supplement ethnography in understanding other cultures and subcultures. Yet, not all cultures follow the same set of psychological theories, which tend to be culturally based (i.e. child is aggressive because s/he is no longer the youngest child in his family), and it may allow greater subjectivity to enter the fieldwork. A culture is not the psychological process of an individual, but the interplay of these individuals with their environment.

In *The Silent Language* (1990), Edward T. Hall examines cultural variables that affect the kind of data culture bearing and culturally nurtured individuals (including anthropologists) are able to perceive, including our biased accepted forms of communications. The idea that something needs to be said in order to be of importance or "truth" is a misconception and a cultural construct. "Those of us of European heritage live in a 'word world' which we think is real, but just because we talk doesn't mean the rest of what we communicate with our behavior is not equally important" (vii). Furthermore, he points out that "formal training in language, history, government, and customs is only a first step. Of equal importance is an introduction to the nonverbal language of a country" (ix). Duvignaud's (1970) research in North Africa serves as an example of such a reality when one of the locals said "there are things that are said and things that remain unspoken" (167).

There is also the added risk of forcing another culture to fit one's definitions instead of allowing it the opportunity to define itself. As ways to ameliorate the influence of the ethnographer's bias, Agar suggests an emphasis on methodology, forcing yourself to look at the same material in a completely different light, have bias-awareness programmed into ethnographic training, require someone to study the ethnographer as s/he studies someone else, and finally, to use more than one ethnographer (ibid.:98-9).

Levi-Strauss demonstrated considerable concern for the challenge the ethnographer faces in overcoming one's self,

> Levi-Strauss (1973) posits that our base inability to relate or even attempt to relate and comprehend alternative cultures, lifestyles, values, sentiments, motivations, habits, opinions, and attitudes poses real and considerable problems for many field workers (Rowe and Wolch; see Rowley 1993: 154).

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According to De Munck and Sobo (1998), "postmodernists argue that all knowledge is subjective and therefore ethnographers can't portray other people's knowledge independent of both their own biases and the informant's or participant's reactions to the researchers" (21). The 'disarming' of one's own bias and perceptions is 'painful' and takes a long time (De Soto and Dudwick 2000), but as previously noted, Durkheim believed such limitation could be overcome.

In addition, an imperative system of quality control in the ethnographer's final product is through the help of the host culture and key informants themselves. By way of repeating one's developing conclusions to the studied party, the ethnographer seizes the opportunity to be corrected or confirmed. Duvignaud's approach when studying a North African village serves as an example of letting the culture define itself and quality controlling data gathered,

> First we gathered the greatest possible amount of information on all aspects of the daily life of the village, by observing them continually over a five-year period and keeping detailed notes. … This was then corrected in the course of discussions in which our investigators analyzed and criticized their own conclusions in order to eliminate any traces of personal interpretation. … But what my team and I tried hardest to do year after year, was to hold undirected conversations with the village people, in which they were free to 'palaver' in accord with their own often hesitant ways of thinking until they found, on their own, the way to reach us with words. … Our questionnaires and interrogations were, of course, to some extent planned in advance, but we soon discovered that it was better merely to stake out their general direction, since the course they actually followed came more and more to be set by the people we talked to (1970:296-7).

While this strategy may not be sufficient in certifying sub-conscious behaviors, it certainly provides with an added source for crosschecking the quality of the data and

interpretations. Moreover, although is not necessarily the ethnographer's fault, per se, to have biases, the blame is theirs if, at the bear minimum, an attempt is not made towards becoming aware of these issues and addressing them accordingly. Most importantly, while anthropologists may be unable to be completely objective, they are to strive for excellence by being as close to it as possible.

An area of much (personal) conflict, and equally conscious and unconscious, is the moral values the anthropologists holds as a caring human being. While as anthropologists we are willing and mostly able to penetrate another culture, understanding its values relative to itself, the arena of personal moral values is harder to part from. In our witnessing something, especially if it is something highly disagreed with on a personal level, like perceiving what is believed to be an obvious violation of human rights. If we let such emotions get in the way, evidently these may affect the kind of data we get (as in inability to be receptive in the midst of things thought so highly against, i.e. bride burning, rape, murder, slavery, other punishments). While in an ideal world the role of an anthropologist is to record precisely what is happening within a culture, and to understand it, there is also the question of being 'too relativistic' and determining where the anthropologist has a say, or where s/he should take a stand. This topic will be further explored when discussing some of the ethical challenges and the responsibilities of an anthropologist.

Evidential Variables

While the researcher's 'internal identity' affects how s/he interprets information, it is not necessarily evident to an outsider nor does it necessarily influence our access to

information. The researcher's 'external identity', on the other hand, is for the most part evident to the 'other' and may affect one's access to information. Some of the factors that formulate the researcher's identity and that may affect one's access to information for research are: age, sex, gender, race, composition, and as Bernard has nicely put it when referring to this, "Even height may make a difference" (1995:155).

Age: Where age matters, your age can either ease entry into some cultural realms, or prevent you from it. In certain societies, for instance, being elderly is very concrete admitting into their social circle only other elders. If the anthropologist is younger and is interested in studying an aspect of elder society and participatory observe, s/he may confront a roadblock unless s/he is aware of the issue and addresses it before entering the field. "Being old or young lets you into certain things and shuts you out of others" (ibid: 155). Growing up in the countryside in the Dominican Republic I clearly recall the times when those of us who were teenagers and in their early twenties were hushed out of 'adult conversations'. These conversations were based on financial hardships, problems in our community, and sexual education. Such a dismissal did not depend on whether or not we were family member, although some who were married were allowed 'entry'. The issue of age could be addressed by recruiting the help of an assistant who is an elder functioning as the eyes and ears of the ethnographer, or altering research topic.

The ethnographer faces a similar predicament if the group s/he wishes to study requires him to be younger, such as studying teenagers. S/he now faces similar options of recruiting an assistant more appropriate in age that would gain admittance, or alter research topics. To a milder degree, I was able to experience this negation of membership when attempting to join in conversation with a group of teenagers, peers of

my nephew, at a basketball game and gathering at school. My nephew, as the 'insider', confirmed my suspicion of his peer's altered behavior and speech because I was 'older' and was able to provide me with information I was interested in learning about his friends.

Nevertheless, an advantage at times to being a scholar, and especially a foreign scholar, is that "… it is literally one's identity as a foreign scholar which serves as a passport to the next desk, kitchen table, or campfire" (De Soto and Dudwick 2000:6). In other words, other aspects of your identity may enable fluid access to otherwise inaccessible areas.

Sex: in gender-segregated societies, such as the Muslim world, what sex the researcher is really defines what information s/he will have access to, and what are off reach. Suppose that an anthropologist wants to study public baths in the Muslim world. If the ethnographer is male, s/he will only have access to the male baths. On the other hand, if the ethnographer is female, she will have access only to the female baths. How then can the ethnographer do research on public baths without limiting part of its reality? The field assistant of the opposite sex would be very helpful in situations like these, allowing for both sides of the story. If, however, a field assistant is not available, one may be tempted to ask the opposite sex questions on what happens on the other baths. Yet, given that it is a segregated society, this is not allowed. When it is allowed, one must be weary of the responses one is given since there is much ground for deceit. Perhaps the ethnographer would be satisfied with publishing his findings on only one side of the story. S/he must be careful to clearly identify his findings are limited, and not generalize.

Studying Moroccan culture and language while living with a host family provided me (a female) with many advantages, including the fortune of having a 'host' brother who knowledgeable about his culture, but also educated in Europe, felt open and comfortable enough to disclose information about what happens in the male side of town. In asking him about what happens at night in some nearby bars and clubs, where women would otherwise not be 'allowed'[3] to get in, my host brother not only gave me detailed descriptions of it (including the topics of conversations men usually discussed), but also an explanation of the cultural reason behind women's restricted presence in these locales.

Segregation in gender-segregated societies affects and defines almost every aspect of the culture. This emphasizes the importance of the ethnographer becoming fully aware of the topic s/he wishes to explore, and the access s/he will or will not have. Institutions, such as the markets, are also very gender-segregated, and unless accounted, for the ethnographer will either not have access to this information, or will have inaccurate information provided to him. Anthropologist David Hart while conducting research on markets in Morocco, for instance, experienced that since all males (except children up to a certain age) were excluded under penalty from female-dominated markets. He could only rely on the male view of the institution for information (Hart 1976:88).

Although Hart's research in Morocco was among Berbers more than a quarter century ago, his reflections ring true with my experience with markets throughout the

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[3] There were no clear markers that women were prohibited from certain areas, but it was culturally given that honest women were not allowed in such circles. This fact was emphasized by my host family, as well as by other locals. Those women who were seen in these places would be assumed to be there for other 'businesses', unless they were obvious 'foreigners' (i.e. blond hair, blue eyes). These 'foreigners' were assumed not be ignorant and insensitive to this knowledge, but also generally thought to be 'loose'. Often assumed to be a local because of my phenotype and language skills, I was expected to abide by these norms.

country, including within its capital, Rabat. While shopping in the *medinas* was exercised alike by men, women, and child of all ages, after a certain time of day (usually when the sun began to set) the presence was predominated by men. It was often not safe for me, as a women but especially one thought to be Moroccan, to be out in the evening. It was less safe for me to be out alone in what became the male's sphere. Otherwise violating that signaled an identity of someone I was not intending to be. It was here, also, that my host family came to my rescue with cultural insights.

One must be weary of taking someone else's word on what is taking place in a different part of the society, especially if they themselves do not have access to area. It is better to not gather any cultural information at all, than to gather inaccurate information and make conclusions about the culture based on these. The difference does exist, however, if the ethnographer is solely interested in studying perceptions about different cultural domains, and not necessarily the facts of it. "Men do not know what may go on in a women's markets, but they usually fear the worst …" (ibid: 87). Since men and women's markets are exclusively segregated"(ibid) a female anthropologist interested in studying the male markets will too be denied entry, unless she meets certain requirements, "… the men's markets [are…] attended only by old women, widows and single girls who are not of good family or who are poor and of little account"(ibid).

Societies that practice gender segregation will limit one's access not only to people and their social gatherings, but also confine the ethnographer to a physical space. While in the following statement by Hart, he is referring to a specific time (1970's), a specific place (mountains of Morocco), and to a specific people (the Aith, Berbers) the

anthropologist must be prepared to confront similar situations, depending on where
fieldwork will be done,

> The sexual division of labor and the daily routine are both sharp economic
> indications of the dichotomy between the man's world-open, public, and
> in the fields-and the woman's world-private, secret, and in the house. The
> same dichotomy extents to religion, the domain of men, as opposed to
> sorcery and magic, the domain of women (ibid: 48).

Societies do not have to be segregated for gender, and similarly evidential attributes, to
make a difference in access to information. Referring to Sobo's research in 1995, Sobo
and De Munck (1998) reflect that "research experiences with inner-city African-
American women who shared information about their sexual practices would have been
very different had she been male, darker skinned, or substantially older" (21). Being
taken for a Moroccan, at least of Arabic heritage in North Africa, or of a non-Western
culture granted me much more access to traditional cultural practices than it did to my
fellow students from the United States whose phenotype was coincidently predominantly
different from those with whom we interacted in the field.

　　Gender: it is commonly accepted knowledge in academia that gender and sex are
two different things, although closely related. While a person may be biologically a male
or female, these do not define how one is to carry one's self within a culture. While a
culture may say a female is to act and behave a certain way (not speak with men, for
instance), another culture may define a female's role and acceptable behavior differently.

　　As an ethnographer entering, for the most part, a culture different from our own,
we must be aware of the gender definitions the culture has assigned to our sex. "… it is
the social situation that defines gender, for gender is visible as a sum of qualities,

including mannerism, way of speaking, dress, choice of topics in conversation, and so on"(Dwyer-Shick 1992:261). To be trusted by the 'other' one must abide by their 'rules'. Perhaps it is acceptable for a woman to wear jeans in the United States, but it is not always, for instance, acceptable elsewhere. Assuming wearing jeans in culture X means one is a prostitute, based on this interpretation, information will be limited to us by those who do not want to associate with a 'prostitute'. Equally, in my experience as a student in Morocco, there was no questioning why other females in my group, while wearing tight fitting jeans and tops, were bumped into 'accidentally' and whispered compliments much more often than me, who, wanting to pass by inconspicuously made it a point to abide by cultural notions of moral, integrating these in my dress code the more I was made aware of them. I soon realized a pattern whereby the greater the distance in my clothing from the locally defined 'conservative wear', the greater the number of 'accidental' bumps, compliments, and even unscrupulous offers I received. I preferred the comfort of walking freely down the streets and in the markets to the attention that would result in distancing the sources of information I was interested in.

During her research with women in Taiwan and China, Norma Diamond experienced a lack of trust and distance (inaccessibility) by women of her same age who feared creating dissention if seen together with her because of her contrast to Chinese tradition, represented by her being American (Diamond 1970:128). However, Diamond also admits that her status as a 'female scholar', due to "the high esteem in which scholarship is held in China …" (ibid: 127), allowed her to be accepted into some situations where females could not normally be present, thus surpassing certain gender-related limitations. She adds, "… there were leading members of the community who

thought it important that I be present if I were to understand local ways of doing things. My sex role then became neuter" (ibid: 127).

Unaware of these cultural aspects, particularly gender-related, the ethnographer may interpret such society as hostile, distant, or if approached by an 'interested' party, immoral and sexually harassing. As ethnographers, we are to become aware of such cultural definitions, and behave accordingly if we are to gain proximity with its people.

The idea that one's gender limits the ethnographer's access to information has been actively discussed for nearly a century. Margaret Mead pointed out its importance as a variable in data collection as early as 1930s (Bernard 1995:154). Others, such as Bernard, have the following to say,

> In all cultures, you can't ask people certain questions because you're a [woman] [man]. You can't go into certain areas and situations because you're a [woman] [man]. You can't watch this or report on that because you're a [woman][man]....What you can and can't do if you are a man or a woman is more fixed in some cultures than in others, and in all cultures there is lots of individual variation in gender roles (ibid.:154-155).

Race and Autochthony: while there is no such thing as 'race', biologically speaking, it is an important aspect of our physical appearance and the response we may receive. Most importantly, as ethnographer, our physical appearance oftentimes carries a lot more meaning than just skin color, hair texture, and facial features. For a culture who has had significant conflictive encounters with 'white' Europeans (such as colonial powers), they may become weary of trusting, and even expressing hostility towards anyone who presents similar physical characteristics. Some cultures will evidently have had more exposure to people from different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. Yet, for others, a particular 'race' may still be a difficult subject.

The ethnographer's race could also be welcomed, or neutral. The sight of a 'white' European may indicate, for instance, economic advancement. The warning in such situation is whether something undeliverable, is expected of the ethnographer. Additionally, assuming the anthropologist is a bearer of goods and services, one must consider whether the information one is being provided has been tailored solely to secure such goal.

Precisely because of the impact of race, (as well as the level of understanding an ethnographer may express) has there been much discussion on the pros and cons of native versus non-native ethnographers. On the pro side, a native may be spared suspicion and the informants would respond without a hidden agenda of getting something from the anthropologist, or in Silverman's (2000) particular case, America. Hart (1976) as an outsider (American) experienced distrust while doing research in Morocco among the Aith (Berbers), who are "always suspicious of outsiders" (xix).

Advantageous to being a native is that of not being seen as a "potential broker or useful advocate from the powerful West" (De Soto and Dudwick 2000:12). Diamond (1970) resonates with Anderson (2000) in her experience when she writes that some problems with being an American anthropologist includes having doubts of who one works for and being taken as answering to America as its representative (128-132). The host culture may question if the fieldwork is done for political or ideological ends. Such are concerns present in communities (such as post socialist Soviet Union; see De Soto and Dudwick 2000), when in the societal transformations being experienced and in trying to build their new community, a feeling of vulnerability leads to doubting intentions. "People with whom we work with in the field distinguish between insider and outsider

fieldworkers, tending to associate these different positions with different systems of power, fears, and hopes" (De Soto and Dudwick 2000: 151).

As a foreign anthropologist, the local community may also expect economic favors. "A degree of advocacy appears to be one of the unspoken conditions" of fieldwork (Dudwick 2000: 15). Dudwick describes this as "the Faustian bargain", in that "in return for being studied, for offering food and drink, information, friendship, and moral support, our informants expect us to serve them until they release us" (ibid).

There are also cons to being a native ethnographer, one of which is being seen as 'washing one's clothes in public'. "Sometimes it is dangerous to be accused of 'washing one's clothes (or other people's) in public" (Barsegian 2000:127). Dudwick also makes the following points against being a native anthropologist,

> Native anthropologists do not always have a better grasp of events…They may sometimes feel uncomfortably like voyeurs when they observe their society with a detachment of which their 'subjects' remain innocently unaware. [Situations of hostility, such as war] clearly entail more serious consequences for the native or near native anthropologist. He or she may be able to establish relationships of trusts more easily but may have more to lose by appearing to be a traitor (2000:26).

A non-native ethnographer, on the other hand, has as an advantage because s/he can admit to not understanding a situation instead of being expected to know it (ibid: 50-51). In the words of Duvignaud's native field assistant and referring to experiences with native researchers, "they asked us just as many questions as if they too had come from far away and didn't know about the simplest things of our everyday life. We thought they must be making fun of us" (250). This has been my experience in collecting cultural data in the Dominican Republic, versus other parts of the world (including other countries in Latin America) where due to my self-identification as a compatriot some questions have

been received as insults (however mild) than an honest inquiry. Asking questions that are considered to be obvious to others from the same culture could not only be received as insults, but also result in distancing informants.

There is also more trust allotted to a non-native/impartial anthropologist. Once the findings have been published, "readers will place greater trust in foreign anthropologists, who are able to write without this emotional burden …" (ibid: 26). Such anthropologists, however, risk losing credibility if they "come across as too partisan" (ibid). Nevertheless,

> …Foreign anthropologists have a freedom and latitude, as well as a distance (in both a positive and negative sense), that are not possible for native ethnographers close to the field and its realities … for the native ethnographer … options are often reduced to just one –to join his or her people (ibid.:123).

In a situation such as that quoted above, the native will be pressured to take sides. Refusing to do so, such "diplomatic distance can… be perceived as being arrogant or permissive" (Anderson 2000: 140). As a result, s/he risks becoming an 'outsider' and a stranger to his own roots, an often hefty price to pay. However, native or not, the anthropologist is likely to face the internal struggle of remaining loyal to what have already become friends in the field, or maintain an academic honesty (De Soto and Dudwick 2000).

In instances where an ethnographer's physical attributes and historical context has been accounted for, there remains the fact that to be 'observed', whether by natives or non-natives, is rebuked, for to be observed may have "… the connotation of being laughed at" (Duvignaud 1970:165). For foreign ethnographers, however, an official seal

by the government or king can also open doors and legitimize his/her presence and trust (Hitchock 1987: 177).

Regardless if someone is a native or non-native to the field, there remains the status of a 'stranger', inasmuch as coming from the same country, yet from the city labels him as such (Duvignaud 1970:164). Furthermore, being a 'native' (i.e. autochthonous to a location) clearly does not mean that an individual is from the same 'race' as the rest, as it is evident that countries are composed of different races. In Morocco, for instance, while the Berbers and Saharawies (from the South of the country) are considered to be of different 'races' than the rest of the country, they are inarguably also 'natives'. The main idea is of being seen as an 'insider' versus 'outsider' because of how the ethnographer is being perceived by the host culture. In general, however, the ethnographer must be aware of the culture's history and relation with his/her 'race', becoming aware of any stereotypes (De Soto and Dudwick 2000:5). The anthropologist should also keep Fortier's (1998) words in mind,

> While it may be recognized that there are practical advantages to do with being brought up in the same 'ethnic' culture (familiarity with language, rituals, rules of behaviours, etiquette and so on), the view that such studies ought to be done in this way is indicative of a persisting assumption that ethnicity is the primary ground of cultural identity formation and the basis of human relations and solidarity. It obscures a number of social differences of class, sexuality, gender, even ethnicity, that exist within 'ethnic groups' (emphasis in original text) (53).

Composition/Status: Composition is not only referring to the amount of people who are joining the ethnographer during fieldwork, but also by the relationship among them. An ethnographer can either do fieldwork as a team (more than two people),

assisted by another ethnographer (or other fieldwork assistant), individually, with a spouse, with children, or with a family.

In the United States, social sciences, including anthropology, have been distinct in its use of teams during fieldwork (Beteille 1976:196), and this should come as no surprise. Doing fieldwork as a team proves beneficial in various aspects. Working in teams is beneficial in that it not only eases the burden of fieldwork by dividing up tasks, but also minimizes the effects of bias.

Team members could divide their work depending on individual expertise, and the amount of time available to each. Its applied functionality is as simple as a team member taking notes, while the other interviews, allowing for an undisturbed flow of conversation between the inquirer and the informant. While one of the team members is conducting research, the others may be analyzing data. Teamwork also provides with some relief from the general burden of doing research by one's self. "… It is tiresome for single researchers on their own" (Ariens and Strijp 1989:26). By representing their individual expertise, team fieldwork members are able to cross-reference cultural information and attain a wider spectrum of the research subject. They are also able to minimize the effects of bias on data gathered by providing diverging points of views.

The presence of a team also enables the existence and availability of different identities. These different identities, as it has been mentioned, would enable greater access to information. The presence of a female, a male, a widow, a younger individual, and an elder would allow for access to researching male public baths, female public baths, elderly gatherings, teenage socialization, male segregated markets, general public life, and female's private space, all at the same time! The presence of several individuals

in a team helps minimize the bias that would otherwise be present if only one individual was conducting the research.

A researcher's presence with an assistant during fieldwork allows for several of the advantages available to a researcher working with a team. Although the many identities that would otherwise be available will be reduced, there remains the ability for more than one researcher's identity to provide access and admission to various social groups. While the following quotation relates to gender-segregation and age related activities, it also exemplifies the usefulness of a field assistant, particularly when the field assistant is of the opposite sex,

> … I presented problems for definition and acceptance. Being a young woman closed off from me certain kinds of information and experiences. I could never, for example, be a sit-in participant at everyday informal gatherings where community matters were being discussed, gossip exchanged, and commentary made on events at large. Such gatherings, which usually took place in the evenings, were simply not attended by women. They stayed close to home after dark. The only possible compromise was to send my male field assistant to sit around the village shops in the evenings and act as my eyes and ears (Diamond 1970:126).

The presence of a female in his research team would have allowed Hart (1976) access to areas off-reach for him as a man when he witnessed that among those he studied "the sexual division of labor is rigid; not only are the sexes physically segregated in their work, but men's tasks are men's only and women's tasks are women's only…" (47). Similarly, my host brother in Morocco allowed me to gain insights into areas that were off-reach to me as a woman.

A field assistant may also allow for a minimized sense of burden on the community and its informants, as well as greater enveloping into the community. It may be easier for a researcher and his assistant to be invited to more personal, private spaces

(such as a meal at an informant's home, a wedding ceremony, or other) if presented as a

couple of individuals, as opposed to a crew. The presence of fewer fieldworkers may also

enable a welcomed sense of informality and comfort, as opposed to the formality and

discomfort that the presence of a team of individuals may present.

An ethnographer's 'composition' made up by either a spouse, children, or both (a

family) has been written about in terms of its fieldwork advantages. As in a team or with

a field assistant, the presence of a husband and a wife allows for division of labor, where

one works in an aspect or part of the research, while the other does so in a different one.

Louise and George D. Spindler state the following example with respect to the subject of

role division,

> For instance, Louise Spindler works with women respondents and in
> women's gatherings, especially where George Spindler would not be
> allowed, or would be suspected if he attempted interaction, though her
> work is not necessarily confined to women, or his to men. Perhaps this
> role division has called to our attention more sharply than is usually the
> case that males and females belong to different sociocultural and
> psychological universes, at least in the cultural systems in which we have
> worked (Spindler and Spindler 1970:299).

The Spindlers add to this their observation that "… not enough is made of this in most

ethnographies or other forms of field reports" (299) acknowledging the importance of

such a subject.   While being a female did not 'dissolve the distance' between herself and

the other females, the presence of a husband would have certainly made Fortier's

experience as a single female among Italian women more positive and accessible,

> I was regarded as a young single heterosexual woman and perceived
> somewhat as an oddity because of my unmarried and 'unspoken for' status
> … I was not yet an accomplished woman, and my single, student status
> became intelligible to many Italian women I related to only if they treated
> me like a child (Fortier 1998:54).

In pursuing their own fieldwork, Becom and Aberg "are always careful to appear as a couple because in both the Mediterranean and Mesoamerican traditional realms [where they conduct research], families are very important" (Moore 1999: 76). They both report to contributing something different to the work as a woman and a man. As a woman, Aberg is able to "more easily establish a relationship with the women and children" (ibidem).

The presence of a spouse, therefore, enables a 'family' compound to speak of, and addresses much of the gender-segregated dilemma confronted while doing research. "… The rigid division between men's and women's worlds makes the sexual division of labour practically indispensable for ethnographers, a problem for which working as a couple offers a simple solutions" (Ariens and Strijp 1989:26). Fieldwork with a spouse also provides greater social acceptance. Whereas a single man can be seen as a possible threat to the honor and reputation of the women in Middle Eastern societies, thus distrusting ("The strict observances of the laws of Islam and customs related to women's decency imply that a single man is a potential danger" (ibid: 26)), a single woman may be seen as loose, and distrusted.

Children in the Field: However, the presence of a couple without children may also present challenges with being socially accepted and believed. Berdahl (2000) recounts her experience in Eastern Germany, "like many childless couples in the field, John and I had been the object of some curiosity and village gossip because of our decision to postpone childbearing" (180). During their first years of fieldwork in Egypt and the Sudan, Carolyn and Richard Lobban also had difficulty being accepted as a

childless married couple, especially after two years of being married. Soon enough they realized that marriage, if no kids, is questioned as being true (Fluehr-Lobban and Lobban 1987:237).

Entering the research field with spouse and children (family) proves to be very beneficial to the researcher's social acceptance and access to information, primarily when working in family-oriented societies. The Middle East is one such society where acceptance and value is placed on married couples and their children.

> … Our social status in an Islamic setting was undoubtedly enhanced by being together as a family. Carolyn's acceptability as a female researcher was certainly improved and legitimized by the fact that she was in the Sudan, and later Egypt, with her husband and children (ibid.: 254).

The Lobbans also share the following about their experience doing research as a family, "… having a child with us opened up new areas of Sudanese reality" (ibid: 246). These 'new areas of Sudanese reality' included discussing differences in childbearing practices, and the pros and cons of having children. Furthermore, the Lobbans' presence as a family allowed them to be welcomed and involved in diverse social occasions that "led to increased knowledge …" (ibid.254-255). This 'increased knowledge' is certainly a result of the diverse social settings now accessible, but also because children in the field emphasize aspects of the field (or culture) that the anthropologist might otherwise ignore (Cassell 1987:267), such as children's perception and understanding of culture, and their relationship with other children. Other benefits researchers have reaped from having children in the field includes: children as subjects of conversation, source of entertainment, and reflectors of "unexamined, cultural biases and assumptions" (ibid: 260). Children may also assist in the field as "ice-breakers".

Mark and Mimi Nichter, while doing research in Asia, benefited in many ways from having their children with them as did the Lobbans. Some of these benefits included: making it easier for informants to relate to a family unit; children easing conversation and in general, through their presence as a family, the researchers were more welcomed (ibid: 260). Doing research with children and spouse, in general, makes conducting research more equalitarian where the relationship between informants and researchers is "less interrogative, more dialogic"(ibid.: 259).

Working with more than one person while conducting fieldwork has its pros and cons. Being away from home for an extended time (which is a reality researchers need to confront when pursuing most field work), may increase the researcher's sense of emotional stress. Having other members along serves as psychological support for the researcher by providing the researcher with an outlet, a greater sense of stability and emotional support, avoiding possible research-related internal aspects (such as depression, bitterness, etc) from emerging and affecting the research outcome. It provides its members with moral support and companionship while away from 'home'. As a sole researcher, the ethnographer looses much of what a multitude of identities, expertise, and bodies could attain in the field. The presence of a more than one person may also provide with a greater sense of legitimacy as a purely scholarly endeavor as opposed to possibly being seen as a governmental spy.

Access to our comfort zone as researchers from a particular culture and setting may supply us with quick psychological and emotional satisfaction, but it may also hamper our opportunity to immerse ourselves in our culture and subject of interest. With cultural immersion as the preferred form of fieldwork, the presence of a team or relatives

may tempt the researcher to remain in a comfort zone, thereby forfeiting fieldwork growth and cultural penetration. While not necessarily participating in ethnographic research, it has become clear through my group traveling experiences to varied parts of the world that, regardless of the purpose of travel, instead of feeling compelled to associate with the local community and learn the local form of communication (mostly because of the need to 'survive' in another culture), group members have a tendency to remain in their comfort zone or fall pray of relying in it. Much energy is needed to distance one's self from such a temptation. An ethnographer doing research as an individual has the advantage of being more surrounded and saturated by only the culture s/he is trying to understand, as opposed to having the ability to retrieve to his/her own culture among other researchers and other fieldwork assistants. While some cultures may be more suspicious of an ethnographer's agenda if seen solo (spy), other cultures may see the presence of several individuals as a threatening 'agency'.

Marginal Identities: a marginal identity is one which enables the ethnographer to cross over borders and gain admission into groups that would otherwise not be accessible due to the presence of other identities. Whereas bearing a particular external identity automatically determines admission into different groups, other times these markers do not have the final say. As mentioned in a previous example, Diamond, as a female researcher, was not being allowed in certain social areas in Taiwan and China to conduct research. However, her "… role as outsider-observer overrode [her] sex role in gathering certain other kinds of information" (Diamond 1970:127). Furthermore, because she was seen more as an educated individual and a student than a female in a culture where education is valued above all else, she was granted admission.

> There were occasions when my status as a *nu-shih* ("female scholar") or "student of Taiwanese culture" proved strong enough to override my sex-ascribed activities. … I was accepted into some situations where females could not normally be present (ibid).

Other examples of marginal identities include a North American gaining admission into an otherwise hostile environment thanks to a well accepted/ perceived sponsor (i.e. an embracing local). It is the combination of identities the researcher bears and is sometimes able to choose, or a greater weigh given to one of these identities by the host culture, that determine whether we have just the right combination to allow us entry in to a research space. Such an identity may not always be evident until defined by the host culture "… the reasons each group recognized and, therefore, the data able to be collected, would depend on which of my ascribed statuses I was perceived to be occupying at any particular time" (ibid.: 261). On the identity (-ies) the ethnographer has a say on, "The disclosure of what we think, believe in, how we live, has to be negotiated and thought about on a daily basis" (Fortier 1998: 55). Alas, "the ethnographic encounter is always a complex negotiation in which the parties to the encounter acquiesce to a certain reality" (Crapanzano; see Kuehnast 2000: 100).

With time, the researcher will most likely be known, trusted and accepted in the research site. The reputation and network of advisors can be a critical point in entering the fieldwork situation. Above all, as an ethnographer, there is nothing more valuable and cherished than being welcomed, trusted, and allowed access to one's field of interest.

Unfamiliar Grounds

How does the ethnographer account for what is unknown in the field? When entering the field there are clearly things that are unknown which lead the ethnographer to pursue research. The question becomes, how does the researcher know whether his/her identities are conducive to the data sought after? For one, the ethnographer would have had reviewed the related literature and discussed the research topic with individuals knowledgeable on the field. Ideally, the ethnographer would have also visited the intended site to evaluate the research potential and crystallize a plan for conducting fieldwork. Yet, even when all preliminary measures for field research have been taken there is no guarantee the ethnographer will not be challenged by the unexpected. Such was the case with Coe (2001) who, while doing field research in Akuapem, Ghana "struggled with local genres of knowledge transmission" (393). This experience was not anticipated and thus not prepared for.

Although Coe was a native of Ghana, had access to necessary sources of information, and spoke the local language, she was not prepared for the challenge in communication she eventually faced and with which she had to grapple in the initial stages of fieldwork. As the title of her article suggests ("Learning how to find out: theories of knowledge and learning in the field research"), she had to learn how to find out "through experimentation, observation, and imitation" (Coe 2001: 409). Coe's interests rested on the production of national culture in schools in Ghana, where the governments were intending to cultivate heritage in the nation's youth. In framing her questions, the key informants misunderstood her due to her lack of awareness of local terminology. Even though she used a local term to refer to 'culture', she used it to refer to cultural knowledge. For residents of Akuapem, however, "the teaching of culture in

schools was not considered knowledge in their sense" (ibid: 402). Instead of obtaining the type of information she was seeking, as she recorded her interview the key informant (a former language teacher), for instance, read from his textbook on claywork and detailed his family history, taking great care for historical accuracy. Through trial and error, she was eventually able to capture the intended information.

Informed Audience

As a social scientist, it is the ethnographer's responsibility to state clearly and in detail aspects and limitations of the research that may have affected the access to and quality of data collected. The importance in establishing such a framework lies in allowing for the evaluation of quality and reliability of data presented throughout the ethnography. Informing the reader, including future researchers and those reading cultural studies about themselves (see Brettel 1993), of the methods used to attain the information will provide future guidance, enable the duplication of similar researches and quality control of information gathered, and allow for comparative research. It would also serve to indicate where further work in the field is necessary. Sobo and De Munck (1998) note the importance of informing the audience specifically on measures used (as opposed to all other factors that affect ethnographic research data and access),

> … for a study to have practical application or theoretical validity, and for it to be useful in making comparisons, it's essential that its methods be systematic and explicit. When the researcher explains which methods were selected and how they were used, then the latter requirement of explicitness is satisfied. Furthermore, systematic and explicit methodologies (or studies of methods, or explanations for methods choices) are a means to communicate to readers and to other researchers what you did, why you did it, and why your analyses and ethnographic descriptions should be believed and accepted over someone else's. Your

> descriptions and conclusions should never appear like those of the sorcerer- as if magically spun out of thin air (20).

The publication of information could give the false impression of data being unquestionably trustworthy and accurate. Yet, without background information, there will be no way of verifying the validity of the information provided, especially if the account is the reporting of only one person. When publishing ethnographies or field research the anthropologist must contextualize for the audience all aspects of the researcher and fieldwork. Some of the context the researcher must provide his/her include: what methods were used, why they were chosen over others, did the researcher have knowledge of the local language or needed a translator, how many people formed the team, length of time in the field, ethnicity and age of researcher, and similar items that would affect the quality of the data provided.

Unfortunately, not all ethnographers inform readers of measures used during the fieldwork, and most fail to inform the audience of both evident and non-evidential variables, both of which have the power to impact data gathered as much as research methodologies.

Chapter IV. Ethnography and Ethical Concerns

While the approaches to data gathering and quality of data collected is of great importance to an ethnographer's successful fieldwork, the desire to accomplish such should not be so fixed and narrowly focused that it disregards subjects of greater importance, as are matters of ethical concerns. Matters of ethical concerns within the field of anthropology are of grave significance in that their attention is on the effect anthropology in practice has on the community being studied. Although there is immense value in collecting reliable cultural data, there is superior worth in assuring that data is being gathered through meeting ethical standards. By meeting these ethical standards, the rights of those being studied are guarded while also intending to protect against harm that may result from the information gathered and from the uses of such information.

The anthropologist's primary responsibility is to those being studied. As such, anthropologists are required by ethical standards to protect their 'human subjects' above all other interests. The intentions with which fieldwork information is gathered, the uses of data collected, the impact made on the host culture by conducting fieldwork, the ethnographer's roles, limitations, and obligations as a fieldworker, and those to whom the anthropologist chooses to be indebted and responsible by means of accepting research funding, are all imperative when considering ethical values important to those being studied. If the ethnographer's ethical responsibilities to those being studied are in focus, the fruit of field research would result in positive data of benefit to those being studied, those doing the studying, and the world at large.

Of beauty to this equation is that in meeting ethical standards, gathering quality research data becomes less of an issue in view of the fact that in placing other's rights

above all else encourages a greater trust and probability of sharing uninhibitedly personal life stories. Honorable actions have the tendency of breeding positive results. If as proper ethnographers ethical standards are met, ethnographic fieldwork would result in what it ideologically intended to be: an aim to deepen cross-cultural understandings approached with a selfless attitude and an honest interest in learning about other's believes and values.

The primary responsibility of the ethnographer is to the people studied. As established by the Society of Applied Anthropology (1940s; revised in 1974) his/her main focus should be the subject's safety (Naylor 1996:209). S/he is not to engage in anything that means causing harm to the host community. According to the American Anthropological Associations' Statements on Ethics[4] (Rynkiewich and Spradley 1981) and other similar codes of conduct[5], not only is the anthropologist's main responsibility and obligation to the community and individuals being researched, but also "[t]he anthropologist must do everything within his power to protect their physical, social and psychological welfare and to honor their dignity and privacy" (183). Saddening, it was not until recent (since mid-1950s, and especially since 1965's Project Camelot) that a palpable attention was given to the ethics of conducting ethnographic research, (Akeroyd 1984: 133) and as of yet no final consensus has been reached on what is the proper code of ethics (ibid: 134). However, the ethical guidelines currently in place provides with directions adequate for conducting ethnographic fieldwork.

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[4] "Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility Adopted by the Council of the American Anthropological Association May 1971".

[5] Other organizations who have created codes of conduct for fieldwork include The Society for Applied Anthropology (1963, 1974), British Sociological Association (1973) and the Canadian Sociological and Anthropological Association (1979); see Akeroyd 1984 for other sources.

Informed Informants

> To the people we study we owe disclosure of our research goals, methods and sponsorship. The participation of people in our research activities shall be only on a voluntary and informed basis (Society for Applied Anthropology; see Fluehr-Lobban 2003a: 174).

A basic and foundational ethical standard in ethnographic fieldwork involves obtaining informed consent from those the ethnographer is interested in recruiting as facilitators of cultural knowledge. The principal value of an informed consent rests in honoring the informant's right to privacy. From the onset, the practice of acquiring informed consent for conducting fieldwork sets the stage for and nurtures a positive, open, relationship between the informant and the researcher. This is achieved through the later openly affirming an interest in being allowed entry into the field and in stating the reliance upon the host community for gaining cultural understanding. The information provided in an informed consent should include what subjects are to be studied, for what purposes, how does the research process and result may affect those being studied, what information will be made public, and how participating in the research would benefit the informants. This process allows the ethnographer to show a genuine interest in having the informants fully understand his/her research goals and in obtaining voluntary participation for information that will eventually be entrusted. The process also demonstrates the ethnographer's willingness to involve the informants in every step of the research process and in respecting their personal choices.

Informed consent is a fairly new concept emerging out of biomedical court cases in the mid 20th century demanding improved ethics in the work with humans (Fluehr-Lobban 2003a). It has been defined as,

> [T]he knowing consent of an individual, or a legally authorized representative, able to exercise free power of choice without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or other form of constraint or coercion (Protection of Human Subjects; see Fluehr-Lobban 2003a:167).

In practice, the process of obtaining informed consent has faced objections by some anthropologists in that consenting has been thought to be required in writing (as in signing consent forms) from populations that may be illiterate, and that actually obtaining "knowledgeable and voluntary (let alone written) consent from everyone in the field" is difficult to do (Akeroyd 1984). However, written consents or forms are not the only way of getting informed consent from informants, and all observations (i.e. social versus participant observations) do not require the consenting of every single individual in the field (Fluehr-Lobban 2003a). Literacy is not a requirement for obtaining an informed consent and most ethnographies these days are being practiced among literate societies. Additionally, if informants are deemed to be dependable sources of information, they should also be trusted as having the capability of understanding the informed consent process, and in making the decision of whether or not to become volunteers. Lastly, public social observations (as in people-watching in a café) do not require that each individual being noticed be consented.

Other objections that have been voiced against informed consents include the belief, and the fear, that the process disturbs the "naturalness" of the ethnographer's principal data collection method, participant observation, and by doing so data captured

will be tainted, and different from what would otherwise be collected, by the informant's knowledge of what is being sought after and observed. However, psychology has shown that there is not much valid ground to this objection (Fluehr-Lobban 2003a). If and when an individual becomes self-aware and changes the way s/he is behaving or responding to the disclosed research goal, the way s/he alters his/her behavior or response also provides insight into the culture or community of interest. Such insight includes observing what is understood and believed to be sought by the ethnographer, as well as what is thought to be a preferred answer. Coe's (2001) previously mentioned fieldwork experience in Ghana serves as an example of valuable cultural knowledge gained through a similar predicament whereby the way others were responding to her disclosed observations and questions reflected much more about a culture than initially anticipated. Alas, "most often, once access is established people tend to forget the intentions of the observers and let down their guard" (Gans; see Fortier 1998: 53).

In seeking to obtain informed consents for conducting fieldwork the ethnographer must be aware that to inform does not automatically mean to consent. After the ethnographer makes sure that the *potential* informant fully understands the information being provided on the fieldwork process and goal through allowing questions to be asked and questions to be answered ("informed"), the ethnographer must then ask the *potential* informant whether or not s/he agrees to participate in the research given the previously disclosed information. If the *potential* informant agrees to do so ("informed consent") fieldwork could proceed with the individual. However, if the *potential* informant does not agree to do so, informed consent has not been obtained and thus, ethically, the ethnographer should not count this individual as an informant.

Lastly, the ethnographer must abstain from over-imposing a Western perspective on informed consent solely being a matter on an individual basis. While it may be the case that most informed consents will be obtained on a one-to-one basis, such may be the contrary among community members that believe informed consent should be the undertaking by a group (i.e. a tribe or a family) (Fluehr-Lobban 2003b).

Hidden Agendas

Worse than not providing an informed consent is undertaking research under false pretenses. All the more unacceptable is an ethnographer's undertaking of fieldwork with egocentric intentions that result in the detriment of those being studied. Covert fieldwork and deception is not ethically justified within the field of anthropology.

The purposes for conducting anthropological research and ethnographies in other countries (or what was otherwise referred to as 'people studies') have varied from its onset. However, these seem to have been overwhelmingly propelled by ulterior motives for political reasons. Because social scientists, such as ethnographers, dedicate their lives to studying people and seek to understand the intricacies that define them, there is a clear connection between those who wish to influence people, such as governments, and the knowledge derived from cultural studies (Rose 1976). Nevertheless, given that this is not the role of anthropology, ethnographers wishing to undertake fieldwork for political purposes must change their titles to politicians or agents of espionage in order to do so (ibid).

As represented by the 'Orientalist' tradition, the compilation of cultural knowledge has served to support expansion of colonial rule and dominion, as well as the

manipulation of people. While not as prevalent as in the past, and certainly not as obvious as it had once been (Walsh 1998), cultural studies have continued to be propelled by a similar desire to gain and maintain control over others. Indeed, many pioneering anthropologists started out by receiving funding for research (usually for their doctorate dissertations) by governments intending to use the information for maintaining political advantage over other countries.

The U.S. government serves as an example of one who has funded cultural studies for political reasons, via institutions such as the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) (Price 2003), and educational programs as the National Security Education Program (NSEP). In the case of the United State's Project Camelot (1964) anthropologists were involved in contracts for secret research useful to the U.S. military in reacting to what was deemed as radical revolutions in other countries (Horowitz; see Rynkiewich and Spradley 1981: v-vi). Secret research of this kind in Latin America, initiated in response to General Fidel Castro's regime, and to then current political situation in South East Asia (Akeroyd 1984), including the Vietnam War, serves as examples of anthropologist dispatched solely for the purpose of gathering information for the use of a political aim.

> … the enthusiasm of the social scientist involved is easily understood. The opportunity existed for a massive, richly supported, highly detailed study into the conditions for social change in general as well as into the more specific subject of revolution. The study of modernization as well as of comparative societies has become of increasing academic concern in the past decade; indeed, there is probably more solid theorizing and competent fieldwork going into these problem areas than into any others in the social sciences (Silvert 1967: 83-84).

Such involvements between the U.S. Government and anthropologists led Franz Boas, one of the pioneers of American Anthropology, to write a letter to *The Nation* protesting

its use of anthropology as a cover for espionage (Stocking; *The Nation,* 1919, vol.109; see Rynkiewich 1981: v).   Fortunately, his letter has served as an igniting force for reevaluating and establishing the ethical role of anthropology in the face of political interests.

Funding Source

The funding source used to perform anthropological fieldwork also begs reflection on its ethical implications. In accepting the research funding provided by a source, the ethnographer establishes an affiliation with the source thereby becoming a representative of the source, as well as becoming indebted to its terms and conditions. The ethnographer assumes certain responsibilities to the source that is granting the research opportunity and the information collected, once shared with the sponsor, is made accessible to be freely used by the sponsor.   The most important ethical implication emerging from the relationship between the ethnographer and the sponsor entails the purpose for which the collected data will be used, and how this may result in negatively impacting the culture studied.

As previously noted, anthropologists have accepted funds from sources that have been considered ethically questionable due to its political associations.   However, funding provided by a particular source could be considered both ethically appropriate and not, depending on what is the focus.   Such has been the case with particular governmental funding used to support African Studies.

In a study carried out among faculty members from various U.S. colleges and universities on their view of what is considered acceptable sources of language training

and research funding for African Studies, Bowman and Cohen (2002) report a contrasting support of government funding dependent on the agency involved. While the majority (76 percent) of faculty members sampled in Bowman and Cohen's study agreed with the idea of African studies scholars working in collaboration with the U.S. State Department or the Agency for International Development, a majority also (57 percent) disagreed on working with the U.S. Department of Defense or U.S. intelligence agencies (Bowman and Cohen 2002).

Regarding the National Security Education Program (NSEP), through whom, since 1958, the U.S. government has been actively involved in funding African language and cultural studies they report,

> Because the money for the NSEP comes from the Department of Defense, whether or not to support and accept student fellowships or institutional grants has been highly controversial within African studies. Both the ASA [African Studies Association] and the AASP [Association of African Studies Programs] are formally on record as opposing the acceptance of such grants (Bowman and Cohen 2002: 7).

Controversy with the NSEP stems from the awardees' agreement to use the skills and information acquired to teach members of the Department of Defense, consequently the social scientist functioning as a member of the Department instead of an anthropologist (or the respective field). This information may not have been disclosed to the community being studied during fieldwork, hence not included in the informed consent process prior to collecting cultural data. Additionally, with history teaching potential informants that the Department's application of the data collected can have grave consequences to those being studied, the decision to disclose this information may be restricted by the knowledge that permission to conduct research would be more likely denied.

Those in favor of accepting financial support from the government through agencies in the likes of the Agency of International Development, as exemplified by the above study, do so in the spirit of gathering cultural knowledge and learning to speak the local language for the benefit of those being studied. Those who do so, also, feel the need to bridge the divide between academics and U.S. policymakers and its hindrance in making headway in addressing African needs through "informed" and improved public policies siding with African developmental needs (Morrison and Cooke; see Bowman and Cohen 2002).

In general, the sources of funding an anthropologist accepts for conducting fieldwork must be carefully considered and questioned in various ethical and methodological levels. It should be considered in terms of what accepting it may mean in pursuing work that is ethical, how the association with the funding source would affect the identity an ethnographer brings into the field, the limitations that s/he may face in accessing particular cultural information, the effects that such an association would have on the quality of data gathered, and most importantly, how the information collected may be used by the funding source and what consequences may the studied culture suffer as a result of the reported data.

Affecting the 'Other'

> The cross-pressures of modern fieldwork are severe, and they can easily induce an investigator to treat the host people as "subjects," rather than as fellow human beings whose autonomy must be respected… we may neglect to consider other factors in the situation or the consequences our actions will have for others (Cassell and Jacobs)

The level of influence the anthropologist has on the culture studied by virtue of being in the field, by the questions s/he asks, and by the publication of the information collected, all have ethical implications that must be considered when conducting fieldwork.

Submitting to a culture's right to cultural privacy is important, even if researchers and academia at large believe that the current global trends signify that even 'isolated' cultures will eventually be 'discovered' and affected. If it were not so, informed consent and voluntary participation would not be imperative to conducting ethical fieldwork. Given that cultural knowledge is a source of "power, resource and property" (Akeroyd 1984:136-7) that can both "harm and …benefit those studied" (134), communities being studied understandably should have the right to a say on their preferences of whether to be studied or not (ibid). For instance, in his fieldwork experience, Duvignaud (1970) found that to the native population "to look" was "to steal", thus clearly expressing a sense of violation of privacy (228).

Duvignaud's research experience also exemplifies an equally important ethical concern in conducting fieldwork: the extent to which an ethnographer exerts influence in the field. His research experience demonstrates how his presence and questions affected locals with whom he worked, "'now we talk', said young Ali [a local assistant], 'we talk, among ourselves, about everything. Your questions shook us up…" (Ibid: 250)[6].

> 'Change at Shebika' …reveals its full capacity not merely to study men, but also to change them. Under the probings of Duvignaud's group the villagers of Shebika slowly awoke to a new perception of their own values, and of their need for a reassertion of their collective life within the framework of the new Tunisia (Hourani; see Duvignaud 1970: xi).

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[6] See author's appendix for a discussion on the 'awareness' and 'westernization' his local research assistants underwent by being part of Duvignaud's fieldwork.

In addition to being aware of how his/her mere presence and the questions asked may affect the culture studied, the ethnographer must also be careful to consider what type of information is being made public and how it may affect those being written about, especially given that most negative effects are bound to arise after the data is published (Akeroyd 1984). The ethnographer ought to be aware that his/her words "can have real and grave consequences for the people they study" (Dudwick 2000: 23) and as such, it is the anthropologist's duty to evaluate the risk of exposing information about a culture especially when it involves going into war (De Soto and Dudwick 2000). As a whole, the impact of ethnography on a society and risk of appropriation and manipulation by factions inside and out of the community must be considered, and even consider withholding information in situations were populations may get hurt given their political contexts. In other instances, ethnographers should refrain from studying populations altogether, given that even if pseudonyms and other ways of disguising informants are used, these could still be recognized (Brettell 1993).

The concern of the resulting effects of information publicized entails data landing in the 'wrong hands' and being used for purposes that would negatively affect the community presented. Examples of information landing in the 'wrong hands' include the C.I.A.'s political involvement in Latin America[7], Orientalism portrayals of the Middle East, and government-sided economic developments in Brazil's Amazon[8]. Chagnon's controversial ethnography of the Yanomami in Brazil serves as a further example of ethnographic work affecting people negatively-and even lethally, as in the massacre of

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[7] See Paul Farmer's *The Uses of Haiti* (1994) for excellent examples. See also literature on the political involvement of U.S. in Dominican Republic and Chile.
[8] See Brazilian government's campaigning for building roads and the likes in Amazon region.

1993- via its flayed representation of the people studied. Chagnon's published fieldwork information and negative views of the Yanomami as one possessing a "violent and homicidal nature" pejoratively affected those studied through its media circulation among neighboring Brazilians and Venezuelans, and at large internationally. Chagnon's fieldwork also had a negative effect on the Yanomami who now see foreigners precariously as an entity that "destroys their way of way" as a result of their contracted measles epidemic (Albert 2001; Fluehr-Lobban 2003b: 103; Martins 2001; Ferguson 1995).

There are certain cultural information that are myths but as such have served an important sustaining function. Dismantling such 'myths' and exposing the "truths" of these can potentially affect a community, and is thus a risk for the culture and a cause for ethical concern. If the 'myth' functioned as the glue keeping a family together, for instance, disclosing the "truth" about that may be a problem. When asking, for instance, questions regarding a particular myth that exists in a society and is integral to their culture, if the "truth" that dismantles such myth is revealed, all that was based on that myth (and depending on the influence it had on the culture) might affect a culture. As an example, if a family really believes that the father passed away in a far away place, but in reality the father had left for unscrupulous reasons, the extended family may be unglued.

> When we deconstruct deeply held beliefs about ethnic or national superiority that are an essential part of how people think about their community, or when we question the sacred narratives of historical suffering used to justify aggression, our informants may perceive us as betraying them by rejecting their vision of the world after accepting the benefits of the Faustian bargain (Dudwick 2000: 15).

In addition to being careful about the influences s/he may have by way of conducting fieldwork, and the impact the data collected will have on those studied, the ethnographer also faces the challenge of guarding against taking sides. Sounding like s/he is supporting or opposing issues in the field could serve to fuel tension among informants, but it could also present moral and physical dangers. Because of the degree to which ethnography is politically charged, there is the very present problem of what the state (or host community) expects the anthropologist to write and the added care that that adds to the topic the ethnographer chooses to research and its write up. (De Soto and Dudwick 2000).

> The confidences I have received thus raise acute issues of friendship, trust and betrayal. If I use this information in my work, am I violating my part of the research bargain from the viewpoint of those I studies, who depend on me to guard this dangerous private knowledge from potentially hostile audiences (Dudwick 2000: 25).

Do ethnographers have the right to influence a culture in such a way? Even if changes were bound to occur on the studied community, do we have the right to be the ones to initiate the change? At what point does fieldwork resemble imperialism by the degree to which influence is exerted? None of these questions have a final answer, but the ethnographer needs to be conscientious of them, realizing that there are some serious impacts that can take place by merely conducting fieldwork, and that need to be factored into the equation when we attempt to be ethnographers authentically interested in meeting ethical standards.

Cultural Relativism and the Ethnographer

> Making judgments about values, norms, and practices of a society goes against the principle of relativism most anthropologists defend…The fact

that anthropologists have refrained from making judgments about the correctness of values, behaviors, and ideas, has been one of anthropology's major strengths (Naylor 1996:211).

While in the field, attempting to make sense of another culture through the explanations provided by members of the community and the confirmation of what is observed, the ethnographer will normally need to accept in a detached manner what is witnessed as being culturally valid, or culturally relativistic. There are other questionable instances, however, where the ethnographer should decide if what is witnessed should be simply accepted as culturally relative, or if it meets the criteria for requiring the ethnographer's or international community's involvement. These instances, often matters that are felt to be moral violations of basic human rights to different degrees, are difficult to resolve. Depending on the degree of the violation, questions that may arise are: Who decides what are violations requiring outside involvement? Does an outside entity have the right to dictate the conduct of another culture? Being present in the field, what is the ethnographer's responsibility? Is s/he to flee from the field at the onset of such a perception, or continue pursuing research to both record and validate what is suspected?

The United Nations has established a list of what its constituents have considered to be international human rights violations. While several nations are involved representing its people, the topic of selection made by the few (the respective representatives) may not necessarily reflect the democratic view of those s/he is representing. Such universal agreement and representation has not been reached, yet, as exemplified by the number of human rights violations continuing to occur today (Naydor 1996:211). Important to mention is the United Nation's support for international human rights, yet while maintaining affiliation with a monetary fund (The World Bank) who has

been known to fund "large-scale development programs" such as "hydroelectric development in India and the Philippines, transmigration in Indonesia, and agricultural development, colonization, and highway construction in Brazil" which have pushed indigenous populations away from their territories resulting in what would be considered human rights violations through predicaments that have led to many deaths of said population (Bodley 1999:179).

Degree of perceived violation is clearly very important. Actions, such as murder and certain physical abuses, may be considered easier to tag as a clear-cut human rights violation. Yet, there is a wide range of behaviors witnessed in cultures around the world that are more difficult to identify as violations, and on which the international community is allowed to interfere. Cultural values, to a great extent, define what is or is not acceptable conduct. Although as trained anthropologists the field researcher understands and accepts that s/he will experience cultural beliefs different from his/her own, this sense will be challenged when facing personally morally challenging behaviors in another culture. Examples of such include: keeping an individual from leaving their own home, and not permitting another person to become educated. It also includes: female genital mutilation, scarification of a child's body to indicate belonging tribe, burning a wife for committing adultery, severing an individual's body part as penalty for violating a law, burying a person alive alongside deceased mate, physical pain used to punish a disobedient child, et cetera.

Is the ethnographer simply to let such things happen and do nothing about it? Or does s/he have the obligation to advocate for the innocent and the often-oppressed women and child? Concerns of this type are very real and the ethnographer needs to be

prepared with the knowledge of what is considered ethically appropriate within the field of anthropology, and whether or not s/he is able to live within its limitations. S/he must reflect on whether or not s/he prefers to take a more active role than what the field allows, addressing through social activism, social commentaries, governmental policies, and the likes, what is considered a societal concern. Fortunately, the international community, including ethnographers, have guidelines in place that although lacking in breadth provide with guidance for our conduct in matters that are deemed ethically improper in the field and on which we have the responsibility and right to act.

Chapter V. Research in Muslim North Africa:

North Africa has been studied for centuries. Its proximity to Europe and its function as a bridge between the rest of Africa and the Western world has made North Africa an area of great magnetism and attention, as well as a meeting ground of the West and non-West. World traveler Ibn Batuta of the 14th century could be said to have been one of the first anthropological field researchers in North Africa (Hamdun & King 1998). His notes on the people he met and the places he visited serve as beautifully educational ethnography, even until this date. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun (14th century) was of great importance in cultural studies of the Muslim World. Other less positive or more applied research has been done by the expanding colonial rule that, interested in extending its borders, sent individuals to study the area and develop tactics to control its inhabitants.

Common are also the instances of Europe's purposefully negative depiction of North Africans to gain support in, and justification for, colonizing and 'modernizing' the 'backward' land and inhabitants. Whether used as a cover up or truthfully motivated by a sense of compassion, European perspectives on the region have also represented a sense of moral and intellectual responsibility;

> The conviction that the European presence was morally and intellectually necessary to halt the under-development of North Africa and the Middle East retained much of its power, as did the firm belief in the region's former fertility and future potential (Heffernan 1993: 82).

Heffernan quotes Comte de Volney (1757-1820) as a voice of such perspective "the happiness of the people…should certainly dictate the wish of seeing that country [Egypt] under the government of another nation…such a revolution would… be very desirable" (ibid: 80).

These 'Orientalist' representations were vocalized and made present not only in writing, but in paintings of the time. In fact, we continue to have 'Orientalist' perspectives disseminated via our diverse media (television, internet, magazines) where inaccurate information is spread about North Africans and accepted as fact. Such a perspective sustains mythologies about the Arab world (Said 1978) and hinders inter-cultural understanding and communication.

Irrespective of the part of the world, when conducting anthropological field research it is important to prepare by learning about the area, including it's religion, politics, history, education, economy, and foreign relations. Such a preparation would enable the researcher to be better equipped methodologically. These are often interrelated subjects, and depending on what region one studies, some will be greater determinants of the researcher's limitations to data than others. The ethnographer's internal (non-evidential) reality will also have an impact on data gathered depending on the region (i.e. how "foreign" is the setting). Even for the weathered anthropologist, there will be methodological challenges and limitations to data based on the relationship between our evidential and non-evidential realities and the specific host culture. North Africa is no exception to limitations a researcher will face depending on his identity and the response to it by its inhabitants.

Background

North Africa, composed of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, represents a wide geographic and demographic proportion of the African continent. Its close proximity to Europe and other Mediterranean cultures adds a more 'Western'

characteristic than is the case with other Arab countries. Its physical distance from the rest of the Arab world and relative isolation from the continent south of the Sahara Desert sets the stage for greater sharing among and throughout these northernmost African countries. Included among these are historical traditions of predominantly French occupation, proximate dates of independence from colonial powers, and similar economies based on agriculture and maritime goods. These countries also share much in their religious beliefs which directly affects all their cultural aspects and their relationship with the rest of the world.

North Africa is predominantly Muslim. While most of its inhabitants are Sunni Muslims, accounting for 94% to 99% (Spencer 1996) of its total population, a very influential minority is Shiite. These two groups make up the major split in Islam and represent deep-rooted rivalry (Sunnis claim 85% of Muslim populations worldwide, while Shiite represents the remaining 15%) (Gulevich 2004). A difference of opinion on who was worthy to become the political leader of the Muslim community after Muhammad's death is responsible for the split.

In addition to the Arab Muslims (Shiites and Sunnis) two major ethnic groups are the Berbers mostly residing in the Atlas Mountains and the *Saharawies* mostly residing in the Sahara Desert. Because of the relative isolation of these two groups, Muslim Arabs are most likely to be encountered in conducting ethnographic research. On the other hand, the Berbers and the *Saharawies* have a lot of similarities in their religious beliefs and cultural customs. However, this is not meant to minimize the significance of the internal power struggles and religious and ethnic tensions equally present in the region.

A third important ethnic and religious group are the Sufis. While not representing a sect or unified school of thought (as they could either be Sunnis or Shiites), represent a highly influential force in North African religious practices. Even as Sunnis, Shiites and Sufis follow the Quran as their main authority, Sufis also believe in an added mystical dimension concerned with experiencing God through a series of exercises. The Sufis are also most interested in worshipping and conducting pilgrimages of local saints[9]. One of the best-known Sufi orders (through which its teachings are imparted) is the Mevlevi Order, or what are otherwise popularly known as the "Whirling Dervishes." Other Sufi orders include the *Tiganiya Quedriya*, and the *Shazliya*.

North Africa's proximity to Europe has provided countries like Morocco with closer relationships with the 'West' and more politically amicable relationships than other Arab countries. Morocco, for one, has maintained the longest unbroken peace treaty with the United States, Treaty of Peace and Friendship (negotiated in 1777, renegotiated in 1836) (*U.S. Department of State*), reflects much about its overall positive relationship with the 'West'. This, however, should not be exaggerated as the North African countries also view the United States and other 'Western' countries as challenges to their cultural values. These feelings are more predominant amongst the more conservative parts of North Africa, but the closer an area is to Europe the more liberal. For example, the city of Tangier in northern Morocco is separated from Spain only 9 nautical miles is one of the most westernized metropolis in North Africa.

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[9] Note that the use of the term 'saint' here does not denote the meaning given by the Roman Catholic Church where a saint is officially proclaimed so by a higher religious authority. In Islam, believers decide for themselves who they feel is holy enough to be considered a saint.

Islam and the Significance of Gender Roles

Given the populous observation of Islam, Quranic principles and practices understandably dominate North African culture. For anyone attempting to study any aspect of North African culture and its sub-cultures, knowledge about its religious composition, beliefs and the role it plays in the society is imperative. For an untrained observer or a novice ethnographer (in particular those without previous knowledge on the region) a great methodological challenge is overcoming false consciousness or the temptation to interpret through our own cultural glasses.

In practice, Islam places great value on family honor (*sharaf*) directly impacted by the behavior and actions of females. Much disgrace and shame (*'ayb*) is experienced by families whose females reproduce out of wedlock, and in general do not abide by culturally acceptable practices.   It is not surprising that gender segregation is such an integral aspect of North African culture. Certain areas are even designated as 'female' and 'male' realms. While the home is for 'females', the public space is for 'males'. Little acceptable interaction occurs in public between males and females. As a source of protection from this 'foreign' male realm, women shield themselves with *hijabs*, or head coverings, while venturing through the city. On the other hand, men have restricted access to domestic female areas.

Just as men have their own public baths, so do women. Moreover, while the men spend the time outside of the home, females have courtyards for their personal and private disposal. With areas so strictly labeled as 'female' and 'male', it is reasonable that issues and concerns would arise regarding methodology and approaches to studying subjects in a society segregated by gender.

Thus, in conducting field research in North Africa, the gender of the researcher in relation to what one aims to research, is of utter importance primarily due to the society's gender segregation. When proposing a research topic and preparing the data gathering methods, one should be constantly aware of the gender-construction in areas one would have access to as a female, or as a male. With this relevant and imperative issue in mind at the onset of the fieldwork, the researcher could better address the research subject and/or the methods to be utilized. If a female researcher is interested in studying the male public arena (i.e. cafes) she must be prepared to recruit male assistant help, or the female researcher may simply not have access to the information of interest in that area. Should a male assistant not be available, the research subject should either be modified, or the female researcher must be aware, and make the public reading her final work aware, of the limitations faced, biases encountered, and general roadblocks.

The female researcher may indeed approach the setting she is interested in, start asking questions to the male present and/or observe the activities occurring around her without acknowledging the possible insincerity of her subject's response. She may also not acknowledge the unnatural behavior and actions of the population who are made uneasy by the presence of a woman, and the misunderstandings that would naturally arise as she enters a gender-forbidden field. Alternatives could include bi-gendered team research.

Sustained research has been done in North Africa on gender roles and the different aspects of society controlled by the male or female gender. Richard A. Lobban, Jr., Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Fatima Mernissi, Dale F. Eikelman, Elizabeth W. Fernea, Robert A. Fernea, Susan Ossman, Dirk Vanderwalle, David M. Hart, and Jean Duvignaud

are but a few who have pursued gender-based research in North Africa. They have faced limitations in their research subject as reflected by their research product; the females have focused on the 'female' segregated subjects and areas of society, while the male have mainly focused on the 'male' ones. Those who have attempted to cross the divide have acknowledged their cultural inability or limitations to gather any and/or accurate information.

David M. Hart, for instance, in his study of the Aith Waryaghar in Morocco, states regarding his fieldwork that "[s]ince all males, except for boys up to ten years old … were and are rigidly excluded under penalty of heavy fine and imprisonment, a male anthropologist can only record the male view of the institution"(Hart 1976:88). Even upon his reliance on the male view of the particular institution, he acknowledges that "[m]en do not know what may go on in the women's markets [gender segregated], but they usually fear the worst …" (ibid: 87). The inaccurate information the researcher may gather, and the possible deceiving conclusions, is herein evident.

While a 'Western' woman is considered 'marginal' to the male Muslim world, she may have greater access to the 'male' realm than the native females themselves (and even to the male's access to its counterpart), but the limitations remain. Certainly, females are not allowed to enter and observe male public baths, and hence must rely on someone else's account. In addition, should the 'Western' female researcher decide to approach the male realms accessible to her as a 'marginal' individual, she risks the trust and accessibility to other woman.

A single woman in North Africa, whether foreign or not, may be seen as sexually loose and untrustworthy. Modest clothing is a necessity. Because the definition of what

is 'modest' differs in North Africa from that elsewhere, the anthropologist acknowledging the impact of that perception and wanting to be seen more favorably must abide not by her own interpretation of the word, but instead by the host culture's. While wearing attire that bears the shoulders gives no reason for criticism in most U.S. circles, in North Africa the individual risks being considered *'arian.* *'Arian*, an Arabic term translated as 'naked' or 'nude', is applied to a person who has 'too much skin showing'. Though it does not exactly mean the same as a truly 'naked' person as understood in the West, being seen as such reinforces an impression of being 'loose' and 'untrustworthy'.

As a major limitation to the access of information, other women may not be willing to, or be allowed to be with her simply because as her reputation (*sama'a*) is questioned, so could the reputation of those that would be seen with her (thus producing a negative or reverse "halo effect"). Other pertinent issues that apply to accessibility limitations include the possibility of a single man being seen as a threat to the honor and reputation of the women and hence his inability to approach women and ask questions. "The strict observance of the laws of Islam and customs related to women's decency imply that a single man is a potential danger" (Ariens & Strijp 1989:26).

It is because of this limitation of resources due to gender segregation that the best access to a diversity of subjects and perspectives is through the presence of both males and females conducting variant forms of field research. Elizabeth W. Fernea and Robert A. Fernea, as well as Richard A. Lobban, Jr and Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban are examples of such an approach. While paired in their respective collective fieldwork, information inaccessible to one due to gender was approached and researched by the other. The result

is complimentary information, which provides with a more holistic view and mutual conclusions.

Among the many joint field studies Robert A. Fernea and Elizabeth W. Fernea have undertaken in the Middle East, one of them took place in the southern Shi'ite part of Iraq. And while Iraq is geographically distant from North Africa, the following account equally applies to Arabic speaking Islamic North Africa as expressed in their research on Morocco (Fernea 1975). Upon arrival, they quickly realized that:

> [G]ender relations were governed by one simple, almost totally inflexible rule: you could be seen with, you could talk to, and could visit members of your own sex only […Robert] immediately understood he could not talk with other local women except at risk of being thrown out of the community- or worse. Women belonged to men, or so it seemed. No trespassing. … We would risk disgrace [… Elizabeth] would be regarded as a loose woman … (Ariens & Strijp 1989:37).

Elizabeth and Robert Fernea understood that they were only able to get information about the opposite gender group only through the sharing of information.

> And more and more we did become involved with the lives of people of our own gender, amazed sometimes to find out as we visited together over our supper that we knew both halves of the same married couple … So did we begin to get some sense of the social ties of the tribal community"(ibid.: 38) "… We could balance our views by putting together people or events we knew about individually. … Together we struggled to understand (ibid: 42).

Richard A. Lobban, Jr. and Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban's fieldwork in the Sudan and in Egypt also serves as a good example for demonstrating the efficiency of studying the Middle East as a couple. They both understood their "need for assistance in working with the opposite sex in the field situation …" (ibid: 47).

> Within a sexually segregated society Richard used Carolyn's observations on women … while Carolyn used Richard's sanctioning or legitimizing presence at many of their first meetings with judges(ibid.: 47-48).

Lobban's and Fluehr-Lobban's participation in the segregated groups thus allowed the connections across the segregated groups.

> Access to female research subjects was substantially enhanced for Richard when Carolyn was present as this would relieve some of the anxieties about a male stranger's penetration of a society demarcated by sexual segregation. Carolyn's research was likewise enhanced by the 'legitimizing' presence of a husband in the parallel context (ibid: 48).

Awareness of what gender differences entail in North Africa and the methodological importance of the presence of both male and female researcher lies not only in the access to information the researcher seeks to obtain but also in obtaining the 'bigger' picture of any subject or issue. While it is true that access to a women's circle is imperative when the subject is female matters, it is also true that the perspective and input of the other half of the population (namely, males) is data just as important to the understanding of the culture. The impression the counterpart sex has is incredibly important as it directly influences the society, relationships, and decisions it may make affecting the other sex.

While the impression of what men in David M. Hart's study of the Berber Aith Waryaghar in Morocco believe happens in the female markets may be very different from reality, this perception reflects a cultural lack of understanding within itself and a promulgation of a stereotype. Epistemologically, what a population knows and why it is known, is revealing and integral to the understanding of a culture and more specifically to the context of any research topic one approaches. The research of male public baths by a male researcher, for instance, may be supplemented by a female research that gathers information from women of what they believe occurs there for making analytical comparisons.

The self-conscious gender of the ethnographer, hence, is important not only to the access of the data the researcher seeks to gather, but also to understanding this multi-faceted reality of gender and arriving at conclusions derived from a holistic fieldwork approach.

It is evident that there may be gender limitations presented by the ethnographers themselves, thus there is methodological usefulness, bordering on necessity, for the presence of both genders for the purpose of a comparison and capturing a holistic view of any gendered social relations. The example of married couples in the field, such as Elizabeth W. Fernea and Robert A. Fernea is methodologically conducive to their research topic not only for the presence of both genders, but also for their status as a married couple.

The Importance of Family Composition

In Muslim North African society, where families are central and of great value, being married and with the presence of both the husband and wife can serve to legitimize the researcher and reduce assumptions of "espionage" and general mistrust that may exist among those being studied. A married researcher can have access to not only their gender-segregated arenas, but also to those reserved for married individuals. Entering North Africa as a married couple may also provide insight to any challenges faced by others indigenous to the region and in similar positions. Would one's marital status present social requirements different from those of a single person? This is something the researcher could experience and explore.

The presence of children, in addition to being married, enables the researchers' even greater acceptance in a culture that values children as a fulfillment and completion to being married. Children also provide with a differing point of view that may not be accessible to adults: what happens in school, interaction with other children, *et cetera,* could also be of great insight and complete the greater perspective on the culture. The children could participate in settings, such as school, where adults no longer have direct access and membership. In writing about her and her husband's fieldwork experience in the Sudan with their two-and-a-half year old daughter, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (1981) shares the following:

> There is no question that her [daughter Josina's] observations sharpened our own, and as we taught her what we knew of Sudanese culture, we learned from her. She opened up for us the world of Sudanese children, exploding in the process some of our long cherished but incorrect views derived from past brief encounters with children. She saw flowers that we had never seen before and forced us, with her questions, to look at things we had turned our head from before (279).

Alternative Perspectives

Alternative perspectives on different matters, not only from one's child, husband, or wife while in the field, but also from the informants, could be invaluable to seeing a holistic picture, and answer, to the social questions the researcher seeks to answer. While possibly not accurate, opinions affect behaviors, responses, and the realities of a population. For instance, in studying family life, only part of the picture would be provided by the female, while either the male and/or the children in the family could provide the other part. Choosing to ignore an integral member of a family would hamper

the research's final analysis. Hence, much truth remains in the following quote: "Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men: they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth" (De Beauvoir; see Messick 1987:210).

In more conservative parts of North Africa a great challenge remains in obtaining a female's perspective on things, not only due to the presence of a male anthropologists, but even with female anthropologist due to language and opinions being considered primarily a male 'realm'.

Information on women, hence, is provided by men who to a certain degree exemplify an 'Orientalist' perspective, in the sense of a relationship of male dominance and female subordination (ibid: 221). These are limitations to accessing data that researchers must keep in mind when proposing a research topic, and when doing fieldwork in the area.

> Anthropologists interested in gender have been concerned with the dangers of convergence between the forms of articulateness of fieldworkers (male and female) and male informants …. Due to this convergence, it has usually been relatively easy to learn *about* women from men, whereas learning directly from women has proven problematic. …. It must be emphasized that what is at issue goes beyond the problem of male supervision of what is said, and beyond that of the presence of male ethnographers, and is centered instead on the fundamental conditions of speaking-in a male structured idiom and articulate world (ibid.: 216, emphasis in original text).

Education and Language

A researcher's awareness of the informant's level of education is very important and closely tied to gender differences. The level of education a person has may affect the

vocabulary one is to use, for after all, the researcher's aim is to be understood, and to understand the 'other'. Speaking in a formalized and educated (i.e. classical Arabic, or *Fusha*) version of a language may be of hindrance to the researcher if s/he is not going to be understood. If planning to utilize researcher methods such as self-administered questionnaires, anticipated knowledge of whether the informant is literate or not is also very important.

In North Africa, particularly in countries like Morocco, where women's literacy rate and education is much lower than men's, the types of questions one asks, the subject matters one dwells in, and the language one uses is directly impacted by this reality. Although literacy rate in Morocco, for instance, has increased from 4 % of its women in 1960, to 32% in 1994 (Courbage 1994) and to 38.3% in 2002 (UNESCO; see *The Middle East and North Africa 2007*), the numbers remain lower than that of men's. In Morocco, there are 69 girls in school under the age of 16 for every 100 boys (Courbage 1994). These differences become more prevalent when comparing Morocco's countryside versus its cities: "In Moroccan cities, as opposed to the countryside, all or almost all children of both sexes must go to school …" (ibid: 22). As of approximately 1975, the rest of North Africa's female literacy and secondary education paints the following chart (Marshall 1984:503):

	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio to Male	Education rate	Sex ratio to Males
Tunisia	24.8%	48.5%	13.0%	48.1%
Egypt	29.0%	51.1%	28.0%	54.9%
Libya	7.0%	18.9%	28.0%	45.9%
Algeria	12.6%	30.1%	11.0%	50.0%

Although these literacy rates have increased dramatically since 1975 (i.e. Tunisia up to 83.4% for males and 65.3% for females), the researcher must be prepared to possibly use a different language with women versus men (i.e. colloquial, or *Darija* versus classical Arabic, or *Fusha*), children versus adults, and those employed in the different sectors of a society. S/he should use a different set of vocabulary that is more readily understood by those one seeks to learn from, particularly if one aims to do work in the countryside versus the city. The informant's profession is not to be overlooked when considering language usage, for while women in the labor force tend to occupy agricultural positions very few participate neither in the nonagricultural labor forcer nor in professional occupations (Marshall: 505)[10]. Awareness and preparation are the two best tools a research could pack when doing fieldwork.

Awareness of the difference in language and terminologies used is important when studying North African culture. Arabic's rich vocabulary and that available through a different language is something the ethnographer must account for when trying to accurately translate and understand the culture. Those entering North Africa from a different culture, society, or language, may not be aware of the richness of vocabulary, and the nuances of its words. For instance, what is translated to English as a city may really have differing connotations as would the word to express a city in Europe, US, or elsewhere. There are assumptions that need to be dismantled. As the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis indicates, language reflects culture, and culture language. The usage of words

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[10] Average percentage of female in the labor force within the nonagricultural labor force in North Africa is 12.7%, while those in professional occupations is 20.4%.

and their diversity should serve as an indication of the reflected culture and thereby learn about the culture in question.

Although the majority of the population in the region speaks Arabic and accounting for its different regional dialects and different levels of communication is imperative to consider, other languages must also be taken in to account depending on where one goes. If going to the Atlas Mountains to conduct fieldwork with the Berbers knowledge of Berber languages, as is Tamazight, should be addressed. Similarly, if working among the Saharawies knowledge of their language (also called by its name) should be taken into account. Other languages to consider throughout North Africa include French, Spanish, as well as English as these are widely spoken in the area, Spanish being more spoken as the geography approximates to Spain as in Northern Morocco where most people speak Spanish.

The Implications of Age

The researcher's age is also of methodological importance. While in female groups the required presence is of being a female, in groups of elders, the required presence will be of being an elder. Similarly, among youth, i.e. teenagers, the requirement for greater acceptance may be of being the same age. So, being married provides access to areas otherwise not accessible to a single person, however, married life and its related social dimensions can also exclude couples from the lives of single people. A researcher may be cast aside or excluded from a "single's" realm because of the status of being married. This is definitely something the researcher should keep in mind. The researcher should think self-consciously and group-consciously about the identity that

would be most methodologically productive to the study of the targeted subject or interest in order to meet the least resistance. Awareness of all cultural factors of North African societies and one's identify should be present when deciding what methodology is to be incorporated into the research.

Trustworthiness

Of great importance is also how well the researcher is acquainted with the informants and their community. Is this the first time the researcher enters the field, or has s/he been there before? Having been in the area previously gives a person benefits that would otherwise not be available to a newcomer. In addition, the connections made prior to entering the country are also important sources of motivating a sense of trustworthiness of the ethnographer. Having the connection with a local who could side with the ethnographer for being given entry to the culture are also important. As mentioned in other parts of this thesis, being present for a longer period of time helps with developing trustworthiness among the locals, especially if there is suspicion against the political or ethnic identities with which the researcher is associated.   The organization funding the ethnographer, and the disclosed role and purpose to be in the country would also affect trustworthiness.

Reflections on the Field

My sojourn to Morocco in 1999 as a study abroad student, and in subsequent years as a visitor, gave me the opportunity to experience several ethnographic insights on the region. Although I had yet to participate in official ethnographic fieldwork, the

insights I gained through participating in Moroccan communities and in conducting independent studies made me aware of the degree to which varying cultural factors could affect one's successful admission into a field of interest.

As a young Dominican woman with physical features that resembled those of the local population, my opportunities to experience Morocco's culture were unique compared to my study abroad peers. Blessed with a host family willing to educate me and introduce me to different socials settings, and my increasing ability to speak the local language, were causal factors behind my particular cultural experiences.

Resembling a local and self-identifying as something other than a North American (Dominican) eased my entry in several traditional and conservative sectors. My phenotypical characteristics protected me from attracting unwanted attention and instead permitted me to participate uninterruptedly in what would be the local's normal daily activities, including hopping on a public bus, walking down the road, and mingling with other Moroccans without the immediate label of being a tourist or clear foreigner. My peers, unfortunately, did not have the same luck. Most of them were the stereotypical Caucasian with blond hair and blue eyes, often speaking English in public, keeping to themselves and to the rest of the group, and wearing glaring western clothing (jeans and sneakers) while carrying the iconic backpack and water bottle.

Placement with a host family, whose members were longstanding local participants and trusted among fellow community members, unquestionably eased my access into the community and fostered the trust I was granted from all the locals I encountered. Being part of my new "family" allowed me into many places I would not

otherwise has been allowed without such a connection. For example, I was able to witness and participate in a traditional wedding among family members.

My host family's previous experience with foreign students allowed them to anticipate the cultural challenges I would experience as a newcomer and effectively bridge the cultural gap to allow my success in a new environment. Their frequent corrections on my developing language skills also enhanced my knowledge and learning considerably , as well as direct application in daily activities, like shopping and other social encounters.

Being repeatedly perceived as a local gave me many advantages. However, being mistaken as a local also backfired at times. There were some areas of the society where access was denied to locals. As a "local" I was held by local standards of practice. For instance, although Morocco is dually conservative and liberal in its major cities, failing to wear a head covering (*hijab*) where locals were required to wear it communicated to the public the same about me that it would about the local women, and vice versa. As an American my peers were easily able to enter certain cafes and hangout with other male openly, while I was at times given a look of disdain as if I knew better.

Traveling north and south through the country, including spending time in a Berber village, also exposed me to the diversity in culture that existed in the country and the widespread concern for honor present in every part visited. The longer my stays were in the different parts of the country, the more I noticed people opening up to me and serving as cultural informants. My excursions also exposed me to the differences in language usage, where in the Northern part people spoke mostly Spanish and Arabic with

words in either language infiltrating the other, creating a type of 'Arabish'[11]. The same phenomenon was noticeable in the central region where Arabic and French were highly spoken ('Arabench'), in the Atlas Mountains (Arabic and Berber, 'Araber'), and southern Morocco with Arabic and some *Saharawies*. The language differences were truly significant at times.

Additional observations made on the benefits of looking like a female native was the power to bargain for goods and not being automatically overpriced for my obvious 'foreignness'. However, as a woman I did experience the limitations of not having the freedom of being in certain areas. The markets past sun-set was not recommended for women to be in. The few times I was still there I noticed almost no women present and evermore eerie characters.

There are varying epistemological implications that I drew from my experiences. Among these were that if I were doing fieldwork, as compared to my peers, I would have been granted access into the mostly traditional sectors they would otherwise not have been, considering my physical appearances did not grab attention. Conversely, as a Moroccan-looking woman, nightclubs and cafes would have been much more difficult for me to penetrate than it was for my peers. Having a local (i.e. host family) to serve as a cultural liaison, introduce you to a new culture, give insight into the whys of certain cultural observations, and facilitate the entry into the different sectors would have equally been beneficial for me as a fieldworker. Having a field assistant, as metaphorically my host brother worked to be, also gave me a vantage into areas that I, as a woman, would

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[11] These are terms that while in Morocco I, along with my peers, host siblings, and local friends, developed to name these phenomenons in the likeness of the well-known term, "Spanglish".

have not otherwise been able to access. Finally, not being associated with the "West",
but instead as a local or a Dominican, eased the possible tensions that could have existed
in areas against Westernization and in specific the U.S. (although their relations are
mostly positive with the later).

Overall, my experiences in Morocco planted the seed. I began recognizing the
different cultural aspects that must be considered when conducting field research, chief
among these, the qualities the ethnographer brings in with him/herself. Such
characteristics could either hinder or grant ones access to cultural information. It always
helped that I was honestly interested in the culture and showed compassion for local
matters of concerns. Through my interactions with those in the field I demonstrated, not
only a desire to learn about them, but also a respect for who they were, taking into
account   above   and   beyond   their   preferences   for   cultural   privacy.

Chapter VI. Conclusion

Anthropology is a relatively new field and thus its tools continue to be evaluated. However, even as a new field, the beginnings of cultural studies have resulted in negative consequences that continue to affect us today. Misconceptions and misunderstandings of other ethnicities (such as Middle Easterners by the West) are traceable to faulty cultural studies moved by either the intent to hurt others through subjugation, or a degree of ignorance that fails to acknowledge cultural diversity and differing viewpoints on what it means to be human. The Orientalist tradition serves as an example of biased cultural information with negative consequences still felt today.

Although research methods available to an ethnographer involve the tools for data acquisition (questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation), major determinants of access to field data include the ethnographer's identities (evidential and non-evidential) that can determine whether access to particular informants and settings will be allowed. Fieldwork is not a one-way street, and as such how the ethnographer is perceived needs consideration as one of the most important fieldwork tools.

Qualities of an ethnographer's identity that have the potential of affecting access to data include stereotypes, sense of time, patience, knowledge of local language, race, ethnicity (foreign or local), age, sex/gender, composition or status (single or married; with children, an assistant, or group). The country of origin and the kinds of cognitive limitations set by one's native language could either allow for or disregard particular cultural characteristics. Coming into the field with biases would also limit the kind of knowledge that one would gather from the field. Lack of receptivity and patience is also a limiting factor.

There are advantages and disadvantages to an ethnographer's evidential characteristics (those that are evident to the informant) in certain places over others. If the ethnographer is to study a gendered space, his/her ethnicity will make a difference. Depending on what communities one attempts to enter and study, one's age could also limit the kind of access one could have. In cultures that value families, entering as a single person may hinder access to otherwise family-oriented and valued circles. Coming in as a lone ethnographer may give the impression s/he is there to spy, while going with a group could provide legitimacy. It could also provide a more efficient division of labor. However, it could burden the community when attempts to study and could be an escape to a comfort zone for the ethnographer. Being a local versus a non-local is also a factor that affects the kind of entry given. A local may be more trusted because of the same origin.

Subjects may trust a foreign anthropologist more because they perceive them as more qualified. They may also be willing to give more information because the foreigner is not expected to know everything that is happening. On the other hand, distrusting the anthropologist is also possible, depending on his/her nationality.

In any of these cases, the length of time spent in the field would allow for a greater trust to develop, which is one of the reasons why fieldworkers should in the field longer. Having a marginal identity can help; while one identity could limit the ethnographer, such as being female, in combination with other identities it could be they to entry. For example in a place where being a female keeps you out, being an educated female could provide access.

Ethnographic data collected correctly could help others to genuinely embrace another culture's way of living and seeing. Just as ethnography could be pursued for fruitful ends they could also be used for selfish aims. For example, ethnographic fieldwork has been used for implementing relief programs on the one hand and on the other hand it has been used for political reasons. An ethnographer should never allow themselves to conduct research that they know is intended for selfish political reasons. Doing so makes one an unethical ethnographer; even a spy.

Ethnography can also be misleading depending upon the quality of the data. Quality data provides a more accurate perspective of reality. Incorrect data can lead to lifelong consequences. We owe it to those that allow us to study them, to be vigilant to the quality of data collected. The quality of data depends on the collection tools, but the most important tool is the ethnographer. While collecting accurate data is of immense importance, the most important concern for an anthropologist is the responsibility to those being studied. Conducting ethically appropriate research with a focus on the people being studied goes above and beyond all else. Our responsibility is to those are being studied. The kinds of ethical concerns the ethnographer should give great thought to include: whom are we siding with? What does the funding we are accepting mean in terms of the identity that is pegged to us? What will be done with the knowledge collected by our sponsors? What may happen to hurt the community in question by publishing that kind of information? What are our intentions in producing cultural studies? Is it to be used for political purposes? Most importantly, are we conducting research in an area with the informed consent of the informants? They have the right to cultural privacy.

Ethics in anthropology is closely tied to research methods. Without proper methods data collected may be erroneous, but without ethical standards data could be correct but one forfeits the main reason that should have driven one's pursuit: the honest endeavor to get to know a different community and way of life. Without the input, verification, and approval of those in the field, cultural study will be nothing more than a collection of one-sided perspectives. Without the perspectives and input of those in the field, the endeavor is nothing more than a paternalistic view of the culture. Proper ethics tied to proper methods, as well as continual reflection by the anthropologist on his role in the field - morally/ethically, as a research tool, and as a cultural bridge - would define the most accurate form of data collected. .

The goal for this thesis has been to present diverse variables that may affect an ethnographer's access to reliable cultural information and to address the need for self-reflection by the ethnographer on his/her role and responsibility while conducting fieldwork. A set of tools does not guarantee access to quality fieldwork data if the specific cultural demands are not addressed. Neither does the product represent accurate information and ethical standards if the ethnographer has failed to reflect on his/her limitations, human subjectivity, research intentions, and the resulting impact of fieldwork on those being studied. Imperative to continued improvements in ethnographic research methods is the desire to acquire more accurate cultural data, greater self-reflection, and a code of ethics that gives precedence to respecting and protecting the cultures and individuals we seek to better understand.

The nature of ethnography entails an unavoidable degree of disturbance in acquiring objective data. Epistemology, the way by which we know, and what is

believed to represent the "truth", are longstanding and philosophically charged subjects that have not been resolved and are bound to continue being discussed in the future. Nonetheless, the great need for ethnographic knowledge demands that the approaches affecting fieldwork data acquisition be perpetually sharpened.

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