



Woodcutter, Fisherman, Clown

Participant Observation as
Reciprocity and Belonging Realized
Imperfectly

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Acknowledgement and Disclaimer



- Indirect Dissertation Funding Through 9/11 GI Bill
- This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
- The contents of this presentation do not represent the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.

Acknowledgments



- Dissertation Committee
 - USF Anthropology: David Himmelgreen (Advisor), Heide Castañeda, Rebecca Zarger
 - USF College of Public Health: Ran Nisbett, Rita Debate
 - UMass Amherst: Thomas Leatherman
- CINDRR: James A. Haley Veterans Hospital
Colleagues: Gail Powel-Cope, Karen Besterman-Dahan, Latricia Allen, Vanessa Panaite, Margaeux Chavez



Agenda

- Contextual Orientation
- Participant Observation as Science and Reciprocity
- In the Field: Data Collection, Rapport, Belonging
- Doing One's Bit
- Farmer Brown
- Woodcutter
- Woodcutter
- Fisherman
- Clown
- Balancing: Belonging, Beneficence, and Limitations
- What's Next
- Questions and Contact Information

Contextual Orientation



- Dissertation fieldwork on Roatán, Islas de La Bahia (Bay Islands, Honduras)
- Research Objective: Global Financial Crisis in Local Context
 - Livelihoods
 - Food Access
 - Dietary Diversity and Adequacy
 - Food Security
- Participant Observation as Contextualizing Quantitative Results

Participant Observation as Science and Engagement



- Signature method of cultural anthropology
- Objective science and distance from community
- Current Synthesis of Science and Voice
- Balancing Ethical Principles with Scientific Rigor
- Principal of beneficence (do no harm)

In the Field: Data, Rapport, Belonging



- Participant observation as a process
- Taking time to build rapport
- Professional distance
- Situational distance
- Shared experiences and degrees of belonging
- Dissertation and future VA research



Doing One's Bit: Small Chores at a Dive Shop



- West End Tourism and Scuba Diving
- Participant Observation as Hanging Out and Helping Out
- Light Work
- Open Water Course
- Rapport Building



Farmer Brown: Periodic Episodes of Labor and Conversation



- 'Plantation' Labor as Livelihood Data Collection
- As Reciprocity for Information
- As Rapport Building
- Tradition Honored in the Breach





Woodcutter: Helping a Champa Take Shape

- Helping with Champa as a Favor
- Champa Chores as Participant Observation
- Seeing Development Trajectory over Time
- Sweat, Aches, Data, and Relationships



Fisherman: Distance Reduced by Shared Experience



- Participant observation as shared experience
- Stuck in the tourist zone
- Tropical Storm and Social Readjustment
- Co-participant, Co-survivor



Clown: Comic Ineptitude and the Practice of Ethnographic Field-work



- Anthropologist as Comically Inept Learner
 - Coconut Preparation and Fear of Amputation
 - The Non-arboreal Primate
 - Scuba tank maintenance, certification, and safety
- Limits to Participation in Participant Observation
- Remediation, Rapport Building
- Sharing vulnerability and humanity as belonging



Courtesy of
<http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2016-03-10-1457636591-9827957-coconuts.jpg>

Balancing: Limitations and the Principle of Beneficence



- Lean in or Step Back
- Limits of One's Beneficence
- Reciprocity and Undue Influence
- Mutuality and Engagement
- Fine-grained Narrative and Rigor

What's Next: Participant Observation and VA Research



- Participant observation in trans-disciplinary team research
- Participant observation with limited time and funds
- Government regulations and mores
- Adapting and maintaining reciprocity

Questions and Contact Information



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