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ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE WORK PLACE

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Anthropology and the Workplace was a session organized for the 17th Annual Conference of the Canadian Anthropology Society/ Societe Canadienne d'anthropologie held in Calgary, Alberta from May 2 to 5, 1990. At the time, our work experience with social service agencies brought us to the conclusion that our anthropological backgrounds had proved to be an asset. But we came to this conclusion, quite separately, not having met before the conference and with our experience gained in two different areas of the country (Peterborough, Ontario and Calgary, Alberta).

In organizing our session, over the telephone and by FAX, we wondered about the possible applicability of anthropological theory and method in work-related environments other than those of our own. We thought that with the growing number of anthropology graduates practicing their craft in vocations other than academia, there must be numerous examples available. We wondered, therefore, what the face of this so-called 'anthropology in the workplace' would be.

We anticipated presenters from a wide range of work-related settings, highlighting the diversity of roles occupied by anthropology graduates, and as well, an audience keen on learning from their experience. Not surprising, the session enjoyed a large attendance perhaps underscoring the value of anthropological praxis. In addition to our own papers on the subject, then, four other papers were presented in the session, two of which appear in the present volume. These are the papers by Linda Havers on "Asian Street Gangs" and by Michael Rouse on "Folk Technology in a High Tech Industry".

In preparing this volume, we decided to arrange the papers according to a number of themes. One of these, addressed by Adlam's paper on community-based research, deals with the relationship between a social anthropologist and client group. In reviewing his involvement with a Children's Services Group, he seeks to make three points about the nature of this relationship. First, that it is a joint venture where the research process is at the direction of the client group with the social anthropologist providing a range of expertise from proposal design and implementation through to training. Secondly, that in so far as the social anthropologist and client group work together to create a base of knowledge, the anthropologist's role is more that of guide or perhaps facilitator. And finally, that as a result of this involvement, there are opportunities to gain deeper insights into the nature of human interaction, in particular around questions of vested interest, power relations, and the like.

The papers by McClelland and Havers further illustrate this theme but focus our attention on issues of particular concern to their respective agencies. In McClelland's case, this takes us from the way in which we conceptualize 'developmental disability'

to a question of its links with poverty and finally his call for a cross-cultural perspective. McClelland's agency is particularly concerned with issues concerning the closure of a number of residential treatment facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their subsequent and often sudden introduction into the larger community. How do they react to this integration and how does the community response become important items for study? McClelland explores these questions and identifies various factors likely to affect their outcome.

In Havers' case, she proceeds from the media and popular attention given to 'Vietnamese gangs' to asking whether 'gang membership' is a result of a group's ethno-cultural characterisitics or a response to barriers encountered in the larger society. From her work on a pilot project working with Vietnamese youth 'at risk', Havers' conclusion is not only that we must re-examine the ways in which we perceive these ethno-cultural groups but that there must be greater responsibility assumed by the larger society to eliminate the barriers faced by individuals trying to access opportunities.

Finally, Rouse's paper investigates the way in which cultural objects are fashioned from common workplace materials found in a British Columbia coal mine. His analysis of this constructive process leads him to consider the communicative value of these objects as symbols of resistance to management authority.

In many respects, anthropology in the workplace has the potential to revitalize our appreciation of the discipline as a synthetic field concerned with human experience in its many dimensions. In the workplace, the anthropological difference is important. Anthropology graduates design programmes that work because they are culturally appropriate; they correct interventions that are underway but which are economically unfeasible because of community opposition; and they conduct evaluations with indicators best reflecting a programme's results. Further, such individuals provide the unique skills necessary for intra- and inter-cultural brokering; they collect primary and emic data necessary for planning and formulating policy; and they project and assess the social and cultural effects of interventions.

As mentioned earlier, the number of anthropology graduates working outside academia has grown considerably. It almost goes without saying that more of these individuals will be seeking answers to questions about successful practice.

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COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH AND THE SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

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Abstract

Research projects initiated by community-based organizations hold considerable potential for anthropologists willing to take up the challenge. Unlike more conventional research tasks, though, project design and methodology may need to be 'negotiated'. As well, control over the research process and decisions as to the dissemination of research results may rest with the organization. This paper describes a research project undertaken with a community-based organization responsible for the co-ordination of services for children and their families. Central to this task is the development of a survey instrument which is then distributed to the community at large. As well, all aspects of the project are screened by a Task Force which ultimately determines the course of the research process. In so far as the Task Force embodies competing interests and must ultimately formulate a set of recommendations, the stage is set for some hard negotiating.

Introduction

In 1978, while in the initial throws of fieldwork among a northern Athapaskan group (Adlam, 1985), the question which continually surfaced within the community was one of 'what practical value my work would serve'(Adlam, 1994). The task at hand was 'fieldwork' for which I had some rough approximation as to how to proceed. Somehow, though, the link or bridge between this task and research that might have practical implications for the community, such as economic benefit, eluded me. Simply stated, there seemed no connection.

In large part, this 'lack of connectedness' stems from the nature of fieldwork itself. Guided by a research proposal developed well away from the intended study area, the objective is to collect and analyze data relevant to problems of concern within the discipline. Once in the field, implementation proceeds by trying to locate 'informants' willing to furnish the necessary information. This done, what follows is a 'constructive' process between researcher and informant where the informant, through self-reflection, strives to objectify aspects of his world. As Rabinow explains:

"The informant is asked in innumerable ways to think about particular aspects of his own world, and he must then learn to construct ways to present this newly focused-on-object to someone who is outside his culture, who shares few of his assumptions, and whose purpose and procedures are opaque (1977: 152-153)."

The process is particular in nature, in that it represents the constructions of certain people, and it is time as well as place specific. In part, at least, this explains the reaction of someone like John Cove's Tsimshian informant, who, while recognizing that anthropology, as a discipline, 'knew' more about his particular culture than he did, found the ethnographic accounts to be devoid or empty of meaning. These accounts could tell him nothing about what it 'meant' to be Tsimshian (1987:4). Here the informant sees the contribution of anthropology as the preservation of his cultural heritage, through the production of its ethnographic materials, what Richer refers to as the 'commodification of culture'. Yet it is a process, which in Richer's words,:

".... alienates the cultural other from his or her own culture and inevitably from the anthropologist who is the agent of the alienation process (1988: 412-413)."

Clearly fieldwork, in this sense, has served anthropology better than it has its informants. Yet interestingly it is precisely as a result of this kind of fieldwork experience that many anthropologists then have assumed roles as consultants, mediators, and advocates to work on behalf of their informant groups. Somehow the researcher is able to use the insights and knowledge acquired from his encounter with the 'other' to cross the cultural boundary between the informant group and his own society to then be able to act on the informant's behalf. Or can he?

The transition from fieldwork to the 'practice' of anthropology in its applied sense is not an easy one. There are no guidelines either for when one should elect such involvement or as to the role one should assume once the transition has been made. Additionally, it may be that the anthropologist is poorly equipped for such work. Yet as Hedican suggests, perhaps:

"Today's anthropologist can ... be excused for feeling confused and disoriented when confronted with a non-traditional and stressful role-set at odds with the fieldworker's traditional stance (1986: 547)."

Three points about the 'practice' of social anthropology seem evident. The first is that anthropology must be viewed as a joint venture between the social anthropologist and client group. As such this may take the social anthropologist through a number of different roles. In a research capacity, for instance, this may involve not only proposal development in consultation with the

client group, but actual training of members of the client group in the matter of proposal design and implementation. In this way, the client group develops knowledge about the research process and can work as a valuable contributor. Here we are reminded of the work of Paulo Friere (1970) and other contributors on the theme of 'participatory research' (Hall et al, 1982; Kassam and Mustafa, 1982; Society for Participatory Research in Asia, 1983).

But this brings us to a second point about the nature of our 'practice' in its applied sense. Contrary to Chambers (1987: xiii) who considers the task to be one concerned with the standards and criteria that govern the uses of anthropological knowledge and insight, I would suggest that the process is far more dynamic than this, one in which the anthropologist and client group work together to create a base of knowledge with the anthropologist more as guide or facilitator. In this way the client group is an active rather than passive participant with a clear interest in the outcome.

Our third point, then, is that for social anthropologists involved in this process there would seem to be increased opportunities for deeper insights into the nature of human interaction. In this sense anthropology stands to gain greater relevancy for those who have been its traditional subjects of investigation and perhaps its concepts and theoretical approaches will more accurately reflect the nature of human existence for social anthropologist and client group alike.

In the discussion of the project which follows, the social anthropologist is quite clearly at the direction of the client group which in this case is a Task Force set up by a Children's Services Group. The client group is not unfamiliar with research methods, yet some convincing is needed as to the merits of ethnographic techniques. The group seems conscious of the fact that my role as researcher in the context of their project may involve yet a further role as a participant-observer of them. I am after all a social anthropologist.

Problem and Client

In November, 1987 I was hired by a Children's Services Group (hereafter CSG) to work with a Task Force looking into the adequacy of assessment activity within a County in southern Ontario. This was to entail looking at assessment activity, or how agencies determined the needs of their clients for the purpose of service delivery, as a system's phenomenon. As such the task was not how individual agencies assessed their clients but rather what assessments were being performed across the system and how well clients were being served by such assessments.

The need for this review followed from two considerations. One a recognition that the expansion of services for children and

their families through the 1970's had been uneven, creating in its wake a disorganized, fragmented and at times unmanageable system. While examples of interagency co-operation could be found, cases of human tragedy also pointed to gaps in service and a lack of co-ordination. Secondly, there was growing concern with children and their families who had special needs and whether these needs were adequately being met through the unco-ordinated and unsystematized network of government agencies.

In response the Ontario government had moved, in the late 1970's, to establish a Children's Services Division and local level Children's Services Groups. The objective being:

> "to bring together all programs for children with special needs into one organizational unit within the provincial government. For the first time the services for this group could be brought into focus and dealt with as a whole. The intention in moving toward local committees was to ensure the provision of an equivalent focal point at the community level, to increase the responsiveness of children's services to the local community and to increase involvement of the community in the provision of service (Children's Services Advisory Group, 1983: 5)."

With this came three important changes:

1) a focus on client needs rather than on programmes or legislative categories of programmes,

2) a broadened mandate to include not just those in need but also those who might develop special needs, and

3) a strengthened role for the Division in being able to speak out for children and families in government policy-making processes Children's Services Advisory Group, 1983: 5).

The development of local level Children's Services Groups was the result of the provincial government's effort to decentralize children's services and involve municipal governments in the planning and co-ordination of children's services. This was to better meet the needs of children and their families. A question which arose out of this process, however, was whether planning and co-ordination occurred at the point of addressing a client's needs (service) or at the point of determining what a client's needs were (assessment). While it perhaps seems obvious that it should occur at both points, attention principally focused on service delivery, to the exclusion of assessment. This, then, was what the CSG and its Task Force hoped to remedy and what it expressed in the terms of reference for the project at hand. Briefly, the terms of reference were:

1) To investigate the characteristics and adequacy of the present assessment function of the children's service system;

2) To identify problems and issues in the provision of assessment services which might interfere with the delivery of care, treatment, and support services; and

3) To recommend strategies for improving the assessment capacity of the children's service system (Adlam, 1988: 3).

Process and Players

The Task Force consisted of eight members drawn from the areas of social services, health, corrections and education. It was to be a focal point for discussions on how the research would proceed, and ultimately, this group would need to produce a written report summarizing its findings and outlining a set of recommendations. As for my part, at its first meeting, the Task Force decided that I should proceed with a series of interviews, begin a review of pertinent literature, and work towards drafting a survey questionnaire. The interviews would begin with members of the Task Force itself and proceed from there to other individuals they might suggest. The interviews would focus on the types of assessment used, and specifically, the time involved, the number undertaken and the appropriateness of the request to the agency's mandate. Further, we wanted to establish a good working definition of assessment and elicit suggestions as to survey questions along with who should be approached with such a questionnaire.

In terms of my own approach to the task at hand, the interviews were crucial, in fact in my initial discussions with the CSG's Head, I had emphasized their importance. I suppose as a social anthropologist there was some comfort to be drawn from their use but also not knowing any of the Task Force members it provided an opportunity to develop some background knowledge and greater understanding of the issues. As might be expected it also meant discovering just how far apart Task Force members were on not only the conceptualization of assessment but what they believed was wrong with the system and how it should be fixed. In an interim report to the Task Force I captured some of the flavour of these interviews. It confirmed in large part what the chairman of the Task Force and Head of the CSG already suspected. But clearly their objective was in building consensus.

The task of assessment involves two aspects -- one, an initial screening process, and the other, a set of more specialized techniques designed to probe specific problem areas. While all agencies follow some procedure involving the first, performance in the second is sporadic. Basically agencies utilize certain specialized assessments for the purpose of service delivery within

their mandated area. The interviews, for instance, pointed to the fact that a 'social history' was one of the key forms of assessment, followed usually with assessments specific to an agency's area of expertise. Although in the course of conducting these assessments, an agency may become aware of additional problems a client may possess, interagency referral is chancy. One difficulty is getting another agency to look at a client, given that there may be a long waiting list; another as in keeping track of clients on their way to and from these agencies, particularly in the instance of hard-to-serve cases, where a number of agencies may be involved. While this led, of course, to suggestions by interviewees as to how this situation might be rectified little agreement could be found among their proposed solutions. These ranged from 'more information and better use of existing resources' to the creation of a 'multi-disciplinary team' to undertake comprehensive assessments. Yet even the proponents of this last suggestion had to admit that it was ambitious in an already dollar-strapped system and there were questions as to how many actually needed such a 'cadillac' service. This in a way seemed to bring the issue back to a more efficient use of existing resources.

One of the problems clearly evident from the interviews was that some agencies simply had more requests for service than others. This placed them in the position of not just having to deal with a greater volume of clients but of the likelihood that a certain percentage of the requests would be inappropriate. Yet nothing from the interviews seemed to suggest that this was a problem for the agencies involved. Instead the problem clearly seemed to be a client-based one working to impede an effective match to service. In short, it was the client who was misinformed about the agency's services and who stood to be poorly served through his own folly.

Oddly enough, though, when this issue was raised at one of the early meetings of the Task Force, it was decided that 'clients' in this sense would not be part of the process. The concern had to do with client confidentiality and the difficulty of trying to decide who should be approached. As an alternative it was suggested, that in so far as agencies often use the services of other agencies, that when they do so they be regarded as 'clients' or 'service users'. As such, it was thought that agencies could speak from the vantage point of both 'service users' and 'service providers'.

Progress towards a working definition of assessment in the course of the interviews was slow. One suggestion was that it focused on the identification of problems in a child's development; another that it was the determination of an individual's strengths and weaknesses in the context of behaviourial relationships. When the Task Force convened then to consider the parameters of the assessment function the discussion was lively. In the end, however, the assessment function was considered to involve two major aspects: 1) a basic, comprehensive identification of needs,

and 2) a full range of specialized, clinical and rehabilitative procedures with which to further define problems for treatment (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1979: 9-11). This only left the matter of possible questions for a survey and who should be approached. An interesting contrast emerged, however, as to the nature of questions presented by interviewees. On the one hand were questions such as:

> Why do people come for service?
> What kinds of problems do they say they have?
> Who do they say is having the problem?
> Why did they choose this agency?

On the other hand were questions such as:

> What types of assessment do you do in your agency?
> What kinds of expertise do you have inside your agency?
> What do you use assessments for?
> What percentage of your agency's budget is earmarked for assessment?

In the first case, questions reflected a client focus while in the second an agency focus. Perhaps not surprising, given the client focus decided on above, it was this latter set of questions which would serve as the basis for the community survey.

While the interviews were rich in what could be considered qualitative data, or what some Task Force members regarded as 'anecdotal', what was needed was some indication of how representative these features were for the system as a whole. This, of course, led to the design of a questionnaire.

Two months into the research task a draft questionnaire was ready for consideration by the Task Force. The questionnaire was arranged in four sections. The first of these dealt with identification and information on caseload. The second posed questions about the assessment procedure followed, and more specifically, the types of assessments performed and what percentage these represented of total assessment activity. The third section asked about assessments obtained from other agencies, what percentage these represented of total assessment activity and whether they were satisfied with such assessments. Finally, the fourth section enquired as to difficulties encountered in obtaining assessments from other agencies. Here we presented four possible reasons as well as space for an alternative. The reasons presented included: not available, not adequate, not in time, and too costly. We also asked respondents to indicate the five most difficult assessments to obtain. Two concluding questions, then, asked respondents to express an opinion as to: first, what was needed to improve the assessment component in the children's delivery system, and second, what they considered to be the major problems/barriers in matching children to a sure and effective link to

service/treatment.

We distributed the questionnaire to fifty-three (53) agencies, ninety (90) physicians and fifteen (15) group-home operators. In a covering letter we explained the purpose of the survey and emphasized the importance to the study of receiving a response. As well, we conducted a follow-up telephone call to ensure a receipt of the questionnaire and to provide an opportunity for questions.

Overall, thirty-six (36) agencies, twenty-one (21) physicians and six (6) group-home operators responded to the questionnaire, that is, only forty percent (40%) of the target sample. Of these, sixty-five percent (65%) completed all parts of the questionnaire while the remaining thirty-five (35%) only partially completed the questionnaire.

Results and Evaluation

The results from the survey pointed to a number of interesting features about the assessment process. Just over half of our sample (52%) provided some form of assessment with their service package. A further ten percent provided only assessments while almost a quarter of the sample (23%) provided no assessment what so ever. As to assessments obtained from other agencies sixty-three precent reported a generally high level of satisfaction. In a way, however, this was rather surprising given what they indicated as the waiting time for such assessments. In the social services sector, for instance, it took an average of 9 weeks just to get the assessment and a further 9 weeks for the report. As might be expected, then, the factor of 'not in time' was the most frequently cited reason for the difficulty in obtaining an assessment. In asking respondents to identify the five most difficult assessments to obtain they listed by frequency of mention: education, speech/language, psychological, psychiatric and family functioning. As to ways, then, in which to remedy this situation three major suggestions emerged: (1) quicker and more readily available assessments, (2) greater accessibility to a range of assessment services and (3) co-ordination around the assessment function as well as the continuum of care for children. Barriers or problems identified in matching children to service also could be narrowed to three areas: (1) the resistance or reluctance of families (2) the waiting time and (3) the resource problem of insufficient staff or programming. Here while it seemed that the last two could be linked what was curious was the first problem involving the reluctance or resistance of families. But this 'client' group had been eliminated from the study process right from the start. It was curious somehow that it should enter at the end.

Our review of pertinent literature and discussions with experts in the field as well as with other children's services agencies pointed to a possible solution. Generally speaking, the category of assessment tends to reflect either consideration of

specific assessment techniques, such as family functioning, or the assessment of programmes or aspects of these programmes. There is little information on the matter of the assessment function as a system's phenomenon. Indeed much of what we find in the area of assessment reinforces many of the points made in the document Clinical Assessment in Children's Services (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1979), namely, that the assessment process gathers information about all aspects of the child's functioning -- strengths as well as weaknesses; that as a process, it is systematic; that it is a joint investigation between assessors and parents, mindful of the rights of children and their families to supportive services (Bartlett and Schlesinger, 1976; Fisher, 1973; Goffin, 1983); and that it recognizes the element of voluntary participation. Along with this comes the idea that assessment better serves if it is interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in its approach. This recognizes that the problems experienced by children are often 'multicausal' and consequently are not likely to be solved by a single 'key' solution (Bartlett and Schlesinger, 1976). Indeed the vehicle for this type of assessment activity is seen as being a multidisciplinary team (Galasso, 1987; Paradio, 1987, Sonis and Bracken, 1964). It combines or ensures access to professionals with expertise ranging from psychiatry and psychology through to social work, education and physiotherapy. In this way it ensures a thorough identification of needs for an appropriate match to service.

Yet the multidisciplinary team concept is not without its apparent flaws. As Pettifor points out,

> "experiences are still divergent in terms of service effectiveness and cooperation within and between teams (1986)."

Also, territorial rivalries still exist with questions over which professions are,

> "best qualified to diagnose, treat, supervise, provide consultation and teach (Pettifor, 1986)."

And it even seems that whichever discipline is viewed as dominant is likely to be subject to criticism.

Despite these apparent drawbacks, though, virtually all of the service providers we contacted both by way of other Children's Services groups as well as in the context of our community-wide survey, spoke of the merits of a multidisciplinary team approach. Thus in the recently completed <u>Study of Children's Mental Health Services in Halton</u> (Sherk and Davies, 1986), a major component of the proposed model from that study was a multidisciplinary team -- and also considered the "basis for both service delivery and future planning". Similarly, a discussion paper reporting on a role review of the Niagara Developmental Assessment Service (Niagara

Children's Services Committee, 1986) not only spoke of the important role of an interdisciplinary assessment team but provided considerable detail around its functioning. And finally, as was concluded in a local submission to our Task Force:

> "...a centralized, mobile, inclusive (as to disciplines represented on assessment team) assessment service is essential. This service should have an immediate response capability, the ability to do its assessments on-site, and have a quick turn-around time (under two week to one month). This centralized assessment should serve as the primary intake document and basis for treatment planning for all agencies involved."

However constituted, in the absence of such assessment, parents will be left to seek out an array of different professionals, available resources may be misused and children poorly served.

While an interdisciplinary approach is presumably more efficient, cost-effective and of greater benefit in the delivery of services to children who need them, achieving this service may be hampered by problems of access to the required range of assessment services in the community or the services may be in place but not in a way so as to make a co-ordinated, team approach possible (Bartlett and Schlesinger, 1976). Fragmentation, as in this latter case, may mean that the service provider must take each case and assemble the necessary assessment pieces to then be able to help the child. Or it may be, where some service providers regard themselves as assessors and yet others as intervenors, that parents must bridge the two and arrange the necessary support services. As Goffin maintains, this is particulary difficult for families,

> "who have multiple problems which require a variety of simultaneous, well-organized services (1983)."

Indeed this will be compounded in the instance of families where such problems are of sufficient severity and duration to require re-assessment on an on-going basis. There may even be a certain number of such children and families who will be 'hard-to-serve' for any one of a number of reasons.

Finally, there is also the matter of who initially finds the child with difficulties. These may be individuals such as: teachers, nurses, physicians and parents who may discover difficulties of children not presently hooked into the system. This ofcourse raises the question of how such children and their families become connected (Offord, 1986).

The Challenge for Social Anthropology

At the outset of this paper I outlined three points with respect to the 'practice' of social anthropology. The first of these suggests that our practice must be undertaken as a joint venture between social anthropologist and client group. Indeed the project just outlined seems to me a very good example of such an initiative. The research process is clearly at the direction of the client group, with the social anthropologist providing expertise around ways in which the research might be carried out, yet leaving ownership of the process and its product with the client group. This is not to say, however, that our interpretation must necessarily coincide. I would still have preferred a more broadly based sampling procedure involving children and their families -- a case for which I would say is borne out by the results from the concluding question of the survey. And despite my best efforts to have this included, it simply was unacceptable to the client group, perhaps for reasons of time and money.

This bring us, in a way, back to the nature of the client group. While it is true this eight (8) member Task Force was drawn from the sectors of health, social services, corrections and education -- organizationally speaking they were middle level employees. That is to say, they were neither front-line workers nor agency heads. Added to this was the fact that the Task Force was reporting to a Committee on Systems Services Planning and Development which itself reported to a Board of Directors comprised of agency heads. This had the effect of placing task force members in the rather awkward position between front-line workers, on the one hand, and heads of agencies, on the other. It added a whole power dimension to the proceedings further aggravated by the fact that some of the agencies represented at the table where more heavily in demand and consequently 'resource poor' in relation to others deemed 'resource rich' in view of their more selective clientele. Quite apart from the formal features of the research project, then, was this other dimension in which a struggle was being waged to achieve a more equitable system of resource distribution. Somehow the focus seemed to shift away from the rather academic question of what assessment was and how it was being practiced across the system to one of who performed which kinds of assessments and how could other agencies acquire access to these services. In hindsight, this really seemed to be the objective of the research project, demonstrating my second point about joint venturing, namely, the role of the client group in trying to achieve particular outcomes. It takes us well beyond the task of simply creating a knowledge base and introduces such matters as vested interest, power relations, and the like.

Finally, for the social anthropologist involved in such projects, there is the opportunity to gain greater understanding of human interaction. It pivots, though, on matters just mentioned, namely, questions of vested interest -- what is at stake, what is

to be gained or lost, for whom; and from the vantage point of power relations -- who is better positioned to determine particular outcomes and with what consequences for everyone else.

As well, it brings us back to the queston of 'practical value' raised by my Athapaskan native informants at the very outset of this paper. Indeed it focuses our attention on what exactly is meant by terms such as 'practical value' -- value for whom? for everyone, equally? and who determines likely outcomes? It leaves us still with some pretty tough questions about the nature of our practice.

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BEYOND THE MASK OF CONCEALMENT: ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

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Abstract

Although mental disability is largely a socio-cultural phenomenon, anthropological interest in this field has been slow to develop. In recent years, anthropological concepts and methods have been used in the study of community adaptation of persons with developmental disabilities and of societal reactions to them (Edgerton, 1984a). While this method is expensive and time consuming, it has the advantage of allowing investigators to learn how people actually behave in a variety of contexts and to grasp the meaning these activities have for them.

As an illustration, research developments at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary are discussed. Research questions include the links between poverty, ethnicity, family characteristics and mental disability, as well as the nature of intelligence and adaptation.

Introduction

It is only within the last 25 years that anthropology has stated any interest in the area of rehabilitation and developmental disability. This inattention is surprising in light of the substantial prevalence of mental disability (probably around 3%) in the population, and the fact that scientists from many disciplines agree that, like mental illness which has long captured the interest of anthropologists, mental disability is a complex of conditions involving interactions between bio-genetic and socio-cultural variables. In the discussion that follows, I shall first briefly indicate why the majority of developmental disability is social and cultural, then discuss a line of research pursued at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary, Alberta, and conclude by identifying some of the major challenges to anthropology that developmental disability poses.

The Diverse Nature of Developmental Disability

Little instruction is provided with respect to developmental disability in most departments of anthropology. Even at those universities and colleges where graduate courses on the subject are offered, and where anthropology graduate students and post-doctoral fellows participate in various research programs on the topic, the

diverse nature of the population officially designated as "mentally retarded" is seldom fully comprehended (see Grossman et al., 1983). Every conceivable kind and degree of cognitive impairment occurs among these people. Some persons have such "profound" and "severe" disabilities that they must live stagnant lives under constant medical supervision; others have such "mild" impairments that they appear indistinguishable until required to perform tasks such as reading or mathematical calculations.

Without a clear and universally accepted definition of developmental disability, efforts to understand its nature and to enhance the quality of life for persons with such disabilities is seriously compromised. Nowhere is the definitional void felt more earnestly than in attempts to estimate the prevalence of mental disability, whether domestically or internationally (Zigler et al., 1987; Zigler & Hodapp, 1987). In Canada, developmental disability is defined as:

> "...significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning (an "intelligence quotient" of 70 or below on an individually administered standard "intelligence test"); concurrent deficiency or impairments in adaptive behaviour (taking the person's age into account); and onset before the age of 18 years..." (Grossman et al., 1983; Lindsey, 1989).

Intelligence quotient, or IQ, is the essential diagnostic criterion of mental disability. That IQ performance has been, and remains, largely a function of cultural experience is no longer disputed in social science. Poor adaptive behaviour - the other diagnostic criterion - is based on cultural judgement (and subcultural values) to such an extent that, when it is applied to any but the most severe disabilities, it is as purely cultural as any diagnostic criterion could be (Edgerton, 1984a; Uzgiris, 1970).

For those persons with more "severe" mental disabilities these cultural issues of diagnosis are of little significance, although how society reacts to these individuals is very much defined by cultural beliefs and values. Such persons are often diagnosed early in life, perhaps at birth, and in those instances the etiology of their disability is organic and can be traced to a known chromosomal, metabolic or physiological anomaly. It is children such as these who are commonly perceived by the general public as typifying the population with developmental disabilities. In reality, however, no more than 20% to 25% of all persons with mental disabilities display these characteristics, and many of these, such as persons with Down's Syndrome, are capable of considerable social competence (Edgerton, 1984). The remainder - at least 75% - are considered to have "mild" disabilities. Indeed, many of these people look and act very much like anyone else. How such persons will come to be diagnosed and how well they will do in school or later in life largely depend, therefore, on environmental conditions. Indeed, the etiology of this kind of developmental

disability is considered to be largely social and cultural.

This is not to say that everything that might lead to mental disability is cultural in the strict sense of beliefs or values that influence a child's motivation or style of learning. Naturally, birth injuries, maternal infections, poor nutrition and injury and disease, among other hazards, may interact with a host of social and cultural factors to increase the likelihood of a child having a developmental disability. What a society may do to decrease the human suffering and social cost of developmental disability would, however, appear to be an issue which should receive anthropological attention.

Western Reactions to Developmental Disability

Western reactions to people with mental disabilities have often been quite harsh. Lycurgus ordered Spartans to kill such individuals while wealthy Romans, like Seneca, kept these people to entertain his guests, a practice that subsequently became common in the courts of European royalty. Later, attitudes were sometimes tempered with compassion and, as a glance at the images developed in European literature from Shakespeare to Dostoevsky to Conrad will attest, people with developmental disabilities have been viewed with sympathy and pity as well as honour and contempt. This same ambivalence was repeated in Western attempts to provide institutional treatment and training. Beginning in the 19th century in Europe and North America, institutions were developed to protect persons with mental disabilities from social victimization, but others were intended to shelter society from the moral depravity and eugenic menace that such persons were thought to pose (Edgerton, 1984a; Simmons, 1982). This latter view came to predominate, especially in North America where persons with developmental disabilities were seen not simply as an unwanted surplus, but as dangerous and defiling (Gajria & Hughes, 1988; Goddard, 1973).

The reasons for this quite dismal view of such people are fairly complex (Hobbs, 1975). Two of the more predominant beliefs at the time were that the immigrants crowding into ever-expanding cities were both dangerous and mentally unfit. The other was the ethos of "Social Darwinism" which was quite influential within the scientific community. Eugenics programs flourished and it became common for either provincial law or hospital regulations to require involuntary surgical sterilization as a prerequisite for release from an institution (Simmons, 1982; Wolfensberger, 1975).

The institutions in which persons with mental disabilities were detained were often crowded and dreary. In many instances they were penal, essentially imprisoning persons with mild disabilities indefinitely while they laboured long hours to pay for their keep even though they had committed no crime. As time passed, more and more reports accumulated describing the inhumane,

overcrowded, unsanitary conditions in the large governmental institutions, calling these places "warehouses" where surplus humans were stored out of the public eye and coerced and drugged into compliance (Biklen, 1979; Scheerenberger, 1976; Vitello, 1977). Appalled investigators wrote about marked, faeces-soiled patients who lay untended on cold floors, or tied to benches, or beaten for minor infractions of facility rules.

Morally indignant cries combined with the increasing concern with civil rights legislation and growing evidence that persons with mental disabilities developed optimally in their own home-like settings than in institutions, led to the development of a national policy of deinstitutionalization in the late 1960s.

Non-western Perspectives

Aside from an occasional note (Horsefel, 1940) or a brief discussion (Masland, Sarason and Gladwin, 1958), little information regarding non-Western societies has found its way into the literature on developmental disability. Hence, the general assumption by the public is that life in non-Western small-scale societies is less complex so that people we would regard as having "mild" disabilities would be unexceptional members of their societies; only those with "severe" disabilities would pose a problem and they would be killed early in life. The small amount of cross-cultural evidence indicates a more complex reality (Edgerton, 1970).

Although it appears to be the case that even very "mild" mental disabilities are recognized everywhere, the treatment of said people varies greatly. Some societies have inflicted casual cruelties and physical torture, others have offered such persons protected and even favoured roles. But it appears that no patterns have emerged that link attitudes toward developmental disability with any apparent demographic, techno-economic or social structural variables. Even so, if the ethnographic record offered little that could guide research on mental disability in contemporary societies, ethnographic methods have a great deal to offer (Edgerton & Langness, 1978).

Ethnographic Approaches to the Lives of Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Before Goffman's (1961) influential work on institutions, a few sociologists and anthropologists (for example, Belknap, 1956 and Caudill, 1958, respectively) had utilized ethnographic methods to conduct studies in psychiatric hospitals. When these methods were first used at Pacific State Hospital in California (Tarjan et al., 1973) something of the complexity of patient life became clear as did the unhappiness of institutional confinement. At this particular facility, the isolated lives of men with "severe" disabilities who were limited to a ward and a play yard (MacAndrew

& Edgerton, 1964) stood in marked contrast to the friendships that sometimes developed between men with "moderate" disabilities (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1966). Others led more varied lives on the large hospital campus where they engaged in some entrepreneurial activities (Edgerton, Tarjan & Dingman, 1961), formed themselves into elite groupings (Edgerton, 1963), conducted dating activities with decorum and self-control (Edgerton & Dingman, 1964), and troubled about who they were and why they were forced to stay in the hospital (Edgerton & Sabagh, 1962).

These initial excursions into the ethnography of hospital life produced few revelations, but they did document the complex life activities that the patients created for themselves. They also recorded the values, beliefs and hopes of these people who had previously not been encouraged - or even allowed - to express themselves freely. Later, other persons with mental disabilities would offer similar viewpoints (Bogdan & Taylor, 1976; Braginsky & Braginsky, 1971; Edgerton, 1967), and others would record far more tragic and horrifying hospital conditions (Blatt, 1976; Rivera, 1972).

Times change and, as intimated, recent investigations have commonly concluded that the majority of persons with "mild" mental disabilities are able to successfully adapt to a life outside of an institution. Despite a few dissenting voices (Begab, 1978; Heber & Dever, 1970; MacMillan, 1977), this point of view has become an integral part of the conventional wisdom that informs such concepts as "deinstitutionalization", "normalization", and "community integration". Yet it is widely recognized that remarkably little is known about what constitutes successful adaptation or why some persons succeed while others do not (Zetlin & Murtaugh, 1990).

There are several reasons why the adaptive successes or failures of such individuals attempting to live more normalized lives in community settings are significant. Most obvious is the practical issue of determining what kinds of services and supports are necessary to optimize these persons' chances. Another reason is the elucidation of "normal" social adaptation by comparison with the adaptive processes of persons with developmental disabilities (Edgerton, 1984a). And finally, there is the important unresolved epidemiological question. Even though it is assumed that the prevalence of mental disability is 3%, this estimate has been challenged by scientists who note the tendency of many persons with developmental disabilities to "disappear" into the wider population after they leave school (Gruenberg, 1964; Luckin, 1986; MacMillan, 1977; Mercer, 1973; Zetlin & Murtaugh, 1990).

Anthropological Research at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary, Alberta

The majority of work conducted by the Research Unit at the VRRI has focused on the everyday lives of adults with developmental

disabilities. Our primary goal is to chart the course of these individuals' lives in their attempts for successful community integration. An important practical concern is to discern what might be accomplished to facilitate both integration and adaptation. How do individuals cope with the routines of everyday life? What are their wants and needs? Their plans and goals? Do they need help from others? What kind? Who is best able to provide it? These are all some of the questions we ask.

As an anthropologist, my basic approach to research is to employ ethnographic techniques including long-term participant observation, informal discussion and other qualitative methods (McClelland, 1989b). This methodology provides the best results in my attempt to discover what persons with developmental disabilities do in all the domains of their lives, especially their encounters and social interactions, and moreover, what they think and feel about themselves and their lives in all of the contradictory and complex ways that people think and feel.

Some General Findings

The most fundamental finding about adults with "mild" developmental disabilities living in the community is that, in general, their lives are complex, partly concealed from investigation and highly changeable. Some individuals live quite simple, regimented lives largely confined to one room and a television set. Even these persons are remarkably complex in their adaptive uses of fantasy, including dreams, imaginary roles and friends, and innovative ideational systems (Turner, 1983; Turner, Kernan & Gelphman, 1984; Graffam & Turner, 1984; Peters, 1983).

But increasing numbers of persons with developmental disabilities live more independently and have a greater range of activities. Their lives are complex by any standards. They work, at least some of the time, they have friends and engage in many types of recreation, they marry and some have children. Many of these persons are also quite adept at masking information about themselves. This concealment often involves withholding discrediting information or presenting a more desirable self (Edgerton, 1967, 1984). Not everyone succeeds in these deceptions, but most prevail well enough such that it takes a considerable amount of fairly intensive fieldwork before even minimally accurate baseline data about a person can be assembled.

That this degree of concealment and complexity exists is an important cautionary note for anyone who would reach conclusions about these people too rapidly. So is that of another fundamental and ubiquitous pattern - change. Only a minority of these persons - those who live in restricted and secluded settings - present a stable, unchanging pattern of life. The majority are anything but static. Their lives can often change abruptly, dramatically and unpredictably. A multitude of crises occur in these peoples lives

just as they do for everyone else, but persons with mental disabilities seldom have resources that can quickly stabilize an undesirable situation. Agencies are slow to react, supporters are unreliable, and credit cards, bank accounts, insurance policies and union memberships are typically absent altogether. As a result, it is entirely possible that a person who has lived a routine, stable and pleasant life may be plunged into despair and homelessness overnight.

The pattern of adaptation is, therefore, anything but stable or linear; it fluctuates, sometimes rapidly and dramatically and often with as many ups as downs. It is only after considerable time - according to Edgerton (1984b), often a decade or more - that the pattern tends to smooth out with fewer and less dramatic changes in level of adaptation. Perhaps this is due to a kind of delayed social maturation, but more likely it is a reflection that these individuals have far less experience in social living than most nondisabled people their age, have undergone counter-productive socialization experiences that increase dependency and decrease competence, and lack many of the resources that others may call upon in times of crisis.

There are also some substantial and largely unrecognized barriers that adults with developmental disabilities must overcome before they can lead more normalized lives in their communities. Some potential barriers are rather easily surmounted. For example, despite mistakes and difficulties, many of the routine demands for everyday competence are met fairly well by most (Levine & Langness, 1983 quoted by Edgerton, 1984a; Sabsay & Kernan, 1983). Life is not always trouble-free however. Quite a few people are victimized; they are cheated, robbed, mugged, raped, deceived and exploited. Some suffer psychiatric disturbances and others, a minority, offend community standards or commit crimes (Edgerton, 1982). Finding a job and holding it can also present a difficulty. Many of the adults I work with encounter considerable frustration in competition for jobs and, as economic conditions have worsened, these difficulties have increased. If it were not for the availability of A.I.S.H. (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped), most could not maintain themselves in a community living situation.

There can be no doubt that the stigma of developmental disability can be shattering, but the emphasis on labelling as an event followed by more or less inevitable deleterious consequences has deflected attention away from the mechanisms that accompany labelling and may actually bring about not just stigma, but incompetence as well (Edgerton, Bollinger & Herr, 1984). Being labelled as "mentally retarded" or, for that matter, "developmentally disabled", is not simply a clinical or administrative event, it is a process of socialization (see Lea, 1984; St. Claire, 1989). The complex of observed expectations and practices that appears to typify much of the socialization of

children with developmental disabilities often begins at home with the placement of various restrictions that deny access to experiences that would be commonplace for nondisabled children (Zetlin & Turner, 1984). All too often participation is hampered because the circumstances are perceived as "too dangerous" or, more commonly, "too difficult". Not all parents restrict experience in the same ways of course, but in one way or another many parents deny their child with a mental disability the opportunity to have experiences that they would allow or even encourage in their nondisabled children. Subtle joking, teasing and cooperative problem-solving based on nuances of language and shared knowledge are often replaced by strategies or direct intervention in which the parent steps in and completes "difficult" tasks for their child. There may also be overt restrictions that avoid risk and limit responsibility in normative activities like rough-and-tumble play, sports, bicycle riding, choice of playmates, caring for pets, chores and household responsibilities, or simply the use of tools or kitchen knives (Edgerton, 1983).

It can be hypothesized that these kinds of restrictions, arguably reasonable for some individuals, actively reduce the social capability (or "competence") of the child with the developmental disability. Indeed many parents both realize and understand how their socialization practices may have been unwise now that their children are adults.

When adults with developmental disabilities leave their parents' homes to live in a community residential setting (including group and family home care facilities, as well as semi-independent or independent situations), their access to everyday experience often continues to be prescribed. Certain circumstances are still viewed as too dangerous or difficult. Now however, it is the support workers and caregivers who are typically under great pressure to, in one worker's words, "manage and control" large caseloads with limited time, energy and funding. Yet, just as often, they may create barriers of their own, partly by requirements for eligibility, partly by their inaccessibility, but all too often by the common practice of judging the lives of their "clients" by unyielding middle-class values. There are a number of culturally acceptable styles of life in our society that diverge considerably from middle-class ones. Nevertheless, there is still a strong tendency among persons who plan for and measure the community adaptation of people with developmental disabilities to act as if there were but one culture - a middle-class one - and that "normalization" and success in community living should be judged by middle-class standards of speech, dress, hygiene, nutrition and even recreation (Edgerton, 1981).

The results, therefore, can be predictable and have been stated elsewhere (Edgerton, 1975; McClelland, 1989a). In many instances, integrated conditions are fairly similar to what they would be in the large institutional environments (Bercovici, 1983).

For example, individuals with developmental disabilities are often isolated from nondisabled persons and from many ordinary experiences. Even their time is planned and structured. Residents are typically compelled to eat, work, and even participate in recreational activities together. Moreover, it is common for some persons to be denied or given limited access to such everyday experiences as using the telephone, determining household duties, using money, making new friends or planning their future.

In many instances, the regimentation and restricted autonomy of community residential and vocational settings are reinforced by the use of subtle practices such as equating persons with mental disabilities with children (see Khan, 1985). Indeed, one vocational worker once related to me that "the wages are pretty good considering I'm babysitting". More coercive tactics are sometimes employed such that an independent-minded person may be subject to threats, including transfer to a large congregate care facility, loss of a desired job or friend, or the termination of provincial support. Persons with developmental disabilities are easily cowed by threats such as these because they overestimate the legal authority and fear the personal power of specific individuals to control their lives. When other means of assuring compliance fail, caregivers sometimes employ such practices as over-medication, restriction to a room or confined area, and sadly, even physical abuse. Often the person with the developmental disability feels that there is no one in the "outside world" to whom he or she can appeal. This being the case, compliance is usually the only alternative. Socialization for compliant dependency and incompetence, then, can continue throughout life regardless of program philosophy. It is imperative that these types of occurrences are illuminated and ethnographic description is particularly well-suited for this purpose.

Nevertheless, it is clear that, for many of the individuals with developmental disabilities I work with, there may be advantages in accepting dependency and restriction as a way of life. For example, there is no need to climb out of bed early each day however ill or tired one might feel, to cope with the demands and tedium of the workplace, to solve vexing practical problems of money management, bill-paying and the like, or to save for tomorrow, groom oneself well, plan ahead and adjust to the demands or requests of strangers in a complex and competitive world (see also Kaufman, 1984). For many people, a set routine, few demands, television and fantasy can amount to a preferred way of life, especially when the alternatives are so difficult and when one's entire life has been spent in roles based on dependency and restricted freedom.

While it appears that the quality of adapting behaviour improves over time, this should not be taken as proof that most people with mental disabilities "disappear" by becoming unexceptional members of an average community. Some people do

display such social competence that they readily become indistinguishable from the nondisabled people around them, but most fall short of this. The majority whom I have worked with continue to receive aid as "mentally retarded persons" and to depend for their adaptive success on the occasional or regular assistance of others. Even those who are not receiving such aid often live in highly distressed conditions of isolation, poverty and poor health (Edgerton, 1983).

Research Challenges for Anthropology

As mentioned earlier, anthropology has only recently become involved in the field of developmental disability. I would like to conclude by suggesting that there are research issues in rehabilitation that are far more than opportunities for anthropologists to practice their craft. Significant intellectual and social problems that clearly call for the application of anthropological techniques need to be addressed. This disciplinary plea, however, should not be misconstrued. Other social science disciplines can and do use most of the methods and concepts that constitute anthropology's armamentarium; still, anthropologists are more likely than other social researchers to utilize a cross-cultural perspective that includes the range of human cultural forms and to employ participant observation methods for sufficient periods of time to enable the people whose lives are of interest to speak for themselves (Edgerton, 1984a).

Even if not admitted, there can be little argument about the obvious need to make better use of data from all societies to illuminate the circumstances that lead to varying definitions of developmental disability and reactions toward it among the peoples of the world. Unfortunately, new data are slow in coming (Briggs, 1979; Dentan, 1967; Gaylord-Ross, 1987; Peters, 1979), and the concentrated application of cross-cultural data to contemporary problems still lies in the future.

One of the greatest challenges to anthropology is the undeniable and tragic link between developmental disability and poverty. Indeed, most developmental disability has its beginnings in poverty (see Crain, 1980; Willer & Intagliata, 1981). The study of people in poverty is part of anthropology's tradition, but large-scale multi-disciplinary research is not, and that is the rub. If anthropologists were to study social competence among the very poor, as Rena Gazaway (1969) did in the mountains of eastern Kentucky, they could surely be helpful, but until they collaborate with other researchers, their efforts will yield less than they might. Poverty is a complex that requires the attention of sociologists, developmental psychologists, pediatricians, epidemiologists, pharmacologists and others if its constituent parts are to be separated and understood.

Gazaway's study adequately serves as an example. Poverty was

truly a fact of life for the 238 inhabitants of the Appalachian hollow of Duddie's Branch. These people were malnourished, diseased and impoverished in almost every imaginable way (Gazaway, 1969, chapters 1 & 2). They were isolated from the outside world and from one another, having few groups or occasions that brought them together as a people (Gazaway, 1969, p. 60-61). Perhaps as a result, they could not read, tell time, make change or cope with any of the other demands of the "outside world" of modern North America (Luckin, 1986). Did all of these people have a mental disability, or was their culture simply different, but adaptive? The answers are yet to come.

That leaves us with the most basic question. What are intelligence, competence and adaptive behaviour? The notion of intelligence as a reified entity, measurable on a linear continuum and inherited, is losing ground rapidly. In its place has arisen a multidimensional conception that includes many attributes of experience, motivation, attitudes and the like that were once "outside" intelligence (Haywood & Wachs, 1981). How intelligence rises and is utilized by different people remains an open question. But if there is to be an answer to this question, anthropologists must assist in providing it.

Finally, there is an emerging consensus about developmental disability. This is that the environment, however mysterious the workings of its many influences, has a great effect upon intellectual development. These influences, however, must always operate upon organisms that may well suffer as yet undeterminable central nervous system dysfunction (Edgerton, 1984a). The research problem then, is one of environment-organism interaction, and as such, it is not likely to be solved, nor even very much advanced, by any one discipline. On the contrary, many disciplines must cooperate if marked progress is to result. It is no longer the case - if indeed it ever was - that any single discipline can solve a complex problem of human behaviour (Mead, 1976). Until the many behaviourial and biomedical scientists learn to collaborate effectively, the puzzles of developmental disability, like those in many other fields, will remain unsolved.

2. At the time of writing, McClelland was the Research Project Co-ordinator at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) in Calgary, Alberta. Appreciation is extended to Alberta Social Services for their support of the research.

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VIETNAMESE STREET GANGS: FOREIGN IMPORT OR DOMESTIC PRODUCT?

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Abstract

Considerable media attention has recently been devoted to the increase in criminal activity conducted by the Asian community in Canada. While the spectre of "Asian crime" varies across Canadian urban centres, the city of Calgary has increasingly expressed concern about the enlargement of Vietnamese youth, or street, gang activity. Indeed, the "drive-by" murder of a young Southeast Asian man in February of 1989 prompted a series of journalistic reporting simply attributing the incident as "gang related".

How much of any minority groups' current social conditions depends upon their own culture and how much upon the way they are treated by the larger society around them? While there are ways of puzzling this out, current group characteristics reported in the press and voiced by members of the majority depict the Vietnamese as products of their past culture and tend to explain Asian gangs within this context.

From observations and interviews collected during the pilot project of a program for Vietnamese youth "at risk" in a Calgary community, it is argued that environmental explanations of group behaviour can yield fresh insight into the social arrangements of the host society that contribute to discrimination, violence and the formation of Asian youth gangs.

Introduction

Applied anthropological research in Canada, as elsewhere, appears to be strongly influenced by the degree to which any particular phenomenon is perceived as being troublesome. This has certainly been true for Canada's Vietnamese population who have, as a whole, tended to attract little academic attention. Indeed, there has been a dearth of research undertaken on any aspect of the second and largest wave of Vietnamese settlement in Canada through the period 1979 to 1981. Obviously, little effort has been expended on the study of Vietnamese adolescents in this country. That is, until recently.

Over the past few years it has become apparent that the so-called Vietnamese "boat people", fretted over at the beginning of the 1980s, have not faded into the larger Canadian mosaic as many

thought they would. Nevertheless, the group that has drawn the media glare, and with it the attention of social scientists, is the small criminal element of the Vietnamese community. While this segment of the population constitutes but a fraction its activities are rather conspicuous; the stuff of headlines.

This paper attempts to explore the various environmental and cultural factors that affect or limit the choices of some Vietnamese youth with respect to involvement in criminal, or gang, activity. The research in particular derived from a series of interviews conducted with a selection of 30 youths from a total of approximately 125 identified by the Calgary Police Service and social workers as gang members. The youth in question, however, deny the assignation "gang member" while admitting that their activities have brought them into conflict with the law.

The Vietnamese Criminal Element

The first group of Vietnamese refugees arrived in Canada just after the fall of Saigon in 1975. The majority had been upper- and middle-class supporters and functionaries of the South Vietnamese regime. Also within this group were a significant number of former military officers of the defunct Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN). Most were virulently anti-Communist. The next wave of Vietnamese immigration were the poorer "boat people", a mix of urban and rural residents escaping political repression in post-war Vietnam. The last group (many of whom are now being turned away or repatriated from Asian countries like Hong Kong and Malaysia) were economic refugees, including many residents from the north of the country fleeing their country's poverty.

It is not uncommon for various segments of the immigrant population to form close-knit groupings, some of which take the form of street gangs. Indeed, there are many such gangs currently operating across Canada and they encompass all ethnic groups, not simply those from East or Southeast Asia. For many, membership in a gang furnishes an identity while providing an important sense of empowerment. While members of the highly structured and ritualized Chinese triad societies (such as the Big Circle Boys or the Kung Lok) are the most successful of the Asian criminal organizations, Vietnamese gangs (like the Young Dragons, Born to Kill and Devil Boys) are unquestionably the fiercest and most violent.

The reason for this culture of violence among certain sectors of the Vietnamese community undoubtedly lies within their recent history in which wars, refugee camps, broken families and brutalization at a young age have all figured prominently. Exacerbating this are deep ethnic, class and ideological divisions within the Vietnamese-Canadian community itself. In addition to these class and ideological divisions, the Vietnamese community is also split along ethnic lines. The aforementioned "boat people" included many ethnic Chinese, who fled persecution in Vietnam after

the regime split with the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the mid-1970s. Vietnamese gangs tend to follow along these same divisions. For example, Calgary's Young Dragons are exclusively ethnic Vietnamese while Vancouver's Viet Ching are solely ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam.

Law enforcement services differentiate between three levels of Vietnamese criminal gang activity. At the lowest level are youth gangs, groups composed of young offenders between the ages of 12 and 18. Due to their composition, many of these groups are not well organized. Their inspiration tends to come from violent action films and any older street gang members they may know. Their crimes tend to be the unsophisticated home and auto thefts.

Next up the scale are the older, more sophisticated street gangs. This is the group of most concern to police services. Members ages range from 16 to 30 and they display more organization than the aforementioned youth gangs. These street gangs are particularly violent, often using handguns in the pursuit of their criminal activities. Their crimes include extortion, assault, gambling, drug trafficking and homicide.

The final level - full-scale organized crime - is usually reserved for sophisticated, internationally connected crime syndicates like the triad societies. Few Vietnamese gangs have reached this level although groups like the Born to Kill display many of the typical characteristics.

One of the more frightening aspects of the Vietnamese gang phenomenon is the existence of the so-called "nomadic" or "hasty gangs". Car loads of up to 10 gang members will travel from city to city robbing jewellery stores, committing home invasion robberies, or raiding rival gangs' illegal gambling houses. They are particularly ruthless and their mobility makes them difficult to track and apprehend. A Vietnamese gang may rob a jewellery store in Toronto, drive to Montreal and commit another robbery and then fly to Calgary where they are hidden from the authorities. These nomadic gangs have contacts in cities across North America who will identify good targets in their particular area for a percentage of the take. They also provide refuge for gang members on the run.

Vietnamese gangs prey almost exclusively upon members of the East and Southeast Asian community. Many Vietnamese gang members began their careers when Chinese triads hired them as armed guards to protect their illicit gambling houses. This association ended, however, when the Vietnamese started to use their position to steal from their employers. They are usually heavily armed and do not hesitate to use their weapons. Their mobility, ruthlessness, and isolation from both their community and mainstream society have earned them a reputation for being extremely dangerous.

The Project - Working with Vietnamese Youth

The impetus for this research with Vietnamese youth was a pilot project financed by the Government of Canada who employed a Calgary-area social service organization, known as Cambyr Agencies, to implement the project. Essentially, the project involved formulating a program by which to encourage Vietnamese high school-leavers - drop-outs in the vernacular - to return to school and continue with their education. I was the project manager.

The number of the group of study was initially 10 and all were referred to the project by the Calgary Board of Education. The Vietnamese youth were all between 16 and 19 years of age and resided in a predominantly low-income quadrant of Calgary. High school teachers in this quadrant typically express concerns about the low level of basic mathematical and literacy skills of some of their Vietnamese students. Although the Calgary Board of Education does not keep statistics on the number of Vietnamese drop-outs (or, for that matter, on drop-outs from any other ethnic or immigrant populations) both youth and immigrant settlement services believed the Vietnamese student drop-out rate to be significantly high as to warrant their targeting as a special needs group. While 10 individuals was considered adequate for the program, I sought out others, many of whom lounged in establishment's such as pool halls and video arcades, to raise the total in the project to 30.

The objectives of the program were to provide work experience, literacy and life skills instruction for the Vietnamese youth. Many people visited the program - journalists, social workers, the vice squad - and it was interesting to hear their comments and ensuing debates as to how much of the current conditions of the Vietnamese could be explained by culture or by the challenges of adapting to a new society.

In addition to my formal training in anthropology, I brought to the project an extensive background in the social services industry in Calgary. Some of these experiences included working with various immigrant serving agencies especially in those areas specifically developed to aid immigrant women. I also had significant experiences in working with youth with various behavioral difficulties.

The priority in working with the Cambyr Agencies in general and with the Vietnamese youth in particular, however, was not the opportunity to work in a setting of any anthropological significance. Rather, it was simply that, not unlike many anthropologists upon completion of their studies, I was in need of employment. Any job would have done but it just so happened that the one I secured was one in which I could utilize both my background in anthropology in addition to previous practical experiences with immigrants and troubled youth.

The project did offer me the opportunity to utilize, on a practical level, the formal training I received in anthropology and, as such, the methods of fieldwork and research were clearly within the parameters of anthropological study. That is, I tended to use more qualitative procedures such as participant observation in association with a number of unstructured interviews. A qualitative approach was undoubtedly a better method than the traditional quantitative questionnaires in that it let the Vietnamese youth talk about what they wanted which invariably meant discussing things that were important to them. This strategy proved to be preferable to the youth themselves. Another aspect of my work was actually a given when "doing anthropology" and that was becoming acquainted and well-versed with both Vietnamese culture and "street society".

Theoretical Constructs and Gangs

Before elaborating more on my work with Vietnamese youth two issues or questions need be addressed. The first relates to the question of whether these groups of Vietnamese young people form gangs. The second concerns the question of whether organized crime is a foreign import or if it is nurtured on North American soil. I raise these questions because of the widespread disagreement as to what exactly constitutes a "gang" and because of the apparent ease with which certain ethnic groups are labelled as being a criminal element. Indeed, the Vietnamese youth in my work maintained that the Calgary Police Service had designated them as "gang members" simply because they were Oriental.

Most theoretical constructs on gangs commences with the assumption that gangs themselves are defined sociological groups. These theories are misconceived but owe much of their strength to the traditional and widespread images of gangs held by the general public. These popular misconceptions have been fuelled by both inaccurate media reporting and stereotyped Hollywood depictions. One of the first priorities of my work, therefore, was to conduct some sort of systematic study to sort out the disparities between popular reports and the street reality with respect to gangs and gang behaviour.

The Community Response Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) Unit of the Calgary Police Service is mandated to deter the formation and criminal action of gangs and help to develop proactive community strategies which can be employed in conjunction with various community activities. The CRASH Unit's definition of a gang is "a group of people who consort together for the purpose of financial gain or power and their criminal activity is confirmed." The Calgary Herald, in addition to a number of other media reporting, follows upon this definition by describing these "loosely organized gangs, as having their hands in an assortment of criminal activity such as drug trafficking, selling steroids, prostitution, car prowling and extortion". For their part, academic works have

tended to characterize the gang as "an amorphous coalition of cliques with loose internal ties with limited cohesion exhibiting an existence of disagreements among participants regarding who is and who is not a member and who is in control" (Cohen & Short, 1958).

The failure of gangs to conform to any preconception of "group" was noted by the aforementioned observers of my project. In 1959, Lewis Yablonsky, whose ideas are particularly relevant to this research, made use of the term "near group" to deal with the results of a study of 30 New York City gangs. Whether or not we accept this term, it is evident that it is an attempt to delineate the loose associational form that others have noted. As characteristics of the "near groups" engaging in conflict activities, Yablonsky lists the following: diffuse role definitions, limited cohesion, impermanence, minimal consensus on norms, shifting membership, disturbed leadership, and limited definitions of membership expectations. Because of their failure to appreciate these factors, Yablonsky claimed that community and social services and journalists enter the field with certain distortions. The primary distortion is that the gang has a measurable number of members, that the roles of these members are specified, that there is a consensus of gang norms understood among all gang members, and that gang leadership is clear and entails a flow of authority and direction of action.

Loose associational forms such as "punks", "deadheads", "yuppies", and in this case, "Asian street gangs" appear to have in common a fluidity of membership with ill-defined roles and no unity of purpose. These forms, however, need not become fully organized. The observation that loose associational forms lack classic group attributes should not blind us to the social and cultural regularities that can be found:

1. The participants share a common set of values (disregard for authority, ability to "con" people, etc.) and activities (car prowling, drinking alcohol, etc.) but these enactments can be performed individually or in groupings.

2. There are at least implicit criteria for evaluating whether the values are expressed appropriately and the activities carried out well or badly. Non-cooperation with the police and social workers, for example, constitute those activities considered good or appropriate. Getting caught by the police and being out of control are examples of criteria that would indicate that activities were not being carried out well.

3. Activities are often accompanied by stylistic embellishments enabling those "in the know" to determine whether participants are "square" or "hip". Designer clothing is one indication.

In the case of the Vietnamese youth gangs, membership boundaries are vague but interaction regularities can be identified, thus I prefer the concept of "network" rather than "gang". Networks are not groups and individuals within any given network (which is formed out of a multiple of units of two to three people) may often not know each other. Individuals within a network, however, can establish strong allegiances among "members" exposed to the same vicissitudes.

Ethnic Minorities and Illegal Enterprise

A large and often polemical literature has developed around the putative connection of ethnic groups and syndicated or organized crime. The debate long revolved around the issue of whether organized crime was, and continues to be, a foreign import or a product of the socio-economic conditions found in North America. Of these polarities, the import theory is the older and more popular, and regards syndicated crime as the transplantation of secret societies or organizations. This is a convenient vehicle for xenophobia and chauvinism.

In reaction to the import theory, Landesco (1968) and subsequent sociologists have minimized any ethnic contribution to syndicated crimes, claiming that social conditions made criminals out of oppressed slum dwellers. The theory of ethnic succession provides a second prop for the assertion that illegal enterprise is domestic in origin rather than imported. For example, Ianni (1974) concluded that Black- and Spanish-speaking minorities were replacing Italians in some sectors of organized crime in the United States. Albini (1971:153) also emphasizes the spectrum of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States who have engaged in syndicated crime at one time or another.

It appears clear, that in the majority of cases, the ethnic diversity of criminals indicates that organized crime is a structurally engendered response to disadvantage rather than a cultural proclivity. The barrier of legitimate avenues to social mobility provides a structural condition which engenders syndicated crime as one deviant response. However, Ianni's observation of Italo-American criminal families led him to emphasize the importance of extended family and kinship in its business operations. He concluded that the origins of this familialism is Italian and not American.

Ianni's conclusions, however, swings him into what is appears to be the general consensus nowadays. That is, that criminal syndicates are complex fusions of ethnic heritages and North American society. Socio-cultural characteristics of subgroups affect the manner, or perhaps style, in which they conduct illegal enterprise. Indeed, the Italian/East or Southeast Asian contrast in vice always reflects ethnic differences. Similarly, Ivan Light (1974) made the observation that the syndication of crime in

Chinatowns prevented petty robberies and unregulated conflicts among individuals, but encouraged collective struggles for business advantages. On the other hand, Light claims, free market organizations of vice in Black enclaves permitted individualistic killings and petty crime. This is not to question the notion that certain ethnic groups were channelled into illegal enterprise (at least in the past) through poor socio-economic standing, labour restrictions and discrimination.

Some General Findings - Vietnamese Youth in the Project

With the exception of two youths who have been in Canada less than five years, the Vietnamese youth involved with this project first arrived in Canada between 1979 and 1981. The majority are now between 16 and 19 years of age. As mentioned earlier, they were referred to the program by the Calgary Board of Education but many were additionally referred through youth probation and the Calgary Police Services.

All of the youth had left school within the year previous to the program's start-up date. Of the 30 youths interviewed, 18 did not have an intact family here. They were often the oldest male in their families and the majority were sponsored in Canada by a relative (usually an uncle). The expectation they had placed upon them was to do well enough here so as to be able to sponsor other family members. The remaining 12 arrived here with their nuclear family members. Twenty-two of the youth did not live with any family member. This latter point is important as it places them in a high risk category with respect to crime because they have little supervision or support, require money to live on their own and often have difficulty finding work.

Most of the Vietnamese youth in the project were ethnic Chinese. Indeed, 65% of all Vietnamese in Canada are ethnic Chinese. Only a handful of these youth, however, can still speak Cantonese. Many, however, speak it with a Vietnamese accent and, as a result, stand out in Calgary's Chinatown and are easily identified as Vietnamese.

These youth have not opted for the typical "tough look" of gang members. They are often attired in stylish, expensive designer suits and baggy leather jackets - a lot of middle class symbols of success and good taste. In fact, trendy up-market clothing stores tend to be targeted and robbed by a group of Vietnamese youth who proceed to divide the stolen articles among themselves.

Consistent with Yablonsky's characteristics of "near groups", the Vietnamese youth of the project are all members of gangs or networks that, at this point in time, exhibit no firm leadership. In addition, these networks are not well-focused. They are, rather, very loose organizations with no geographical or criminal

activity under their control. They are not necessarily engaged in a common purpose or cause. For example, they may circulate handguns for individual heists and not to make money for the network.

Law enforcement authorities, however, remain concerned as to how out of control these youths have become. Both the Calgary Police Service and the CRASH Unit believe that Calgary's Vietnamese gangs are affiliated with similar gangs in Toronto and Ottawa. They are not sure though if this affiliation is really any more than individuals related as kin or as ties to other individuals in networks based on ethnicity. All organizations have street level people, however, who know little about the entire organization, or even know they're working for one. Both the Young Dragons and the Devil Boys contain white Canadian youth yet are described by the media as typical Vietnamese gangs. Indeed, the Young Dragons may have a 50% white-Canadian membership.

Over time, and through the process of acculturation, Vietnamese youth tend to take on and absorb the values and norms of North American culture. Individualistic values become more apparent than the cardinal social values related to family and group membership (particularly where there are few rituals and procedures to enhance solidarity). A small number of individuals, pairs, and threesomes may perform an criminal act, such as stealing a car stereo, but they will likely keep the money they get out of it. This "gang" acts as a network of individuals, a resource base of individuals who are accessible and willing to assist in a money-making scheme, albeit criminal. These networks do not appear to have group goals. They do, however, seek each other out for partnership in crime, a place to stay and for friendship. These bonds are not evidence of Vietnamese culture but result from a series of difficult and demanding external pressures.

Conclusion

The youth in this project all share a common problem - lack of acceptable employment opportunities. When this is combined with opportunity for, and general acceptance of criminal activity they may choose involvement unless restrained by conventional bonds (such as a spouse, parents, a good job or school plan). Serious offenders, according to criminologists, lack these conventional restraints although most who engage in crime acquire these commitments later in adult life and cease the criminal activity. Unemployment is often a factor related to a number of social problems and to individual intrapsychic or stress-related responses. Statistics Canada, 1986, reports a 21.5% unemployment rate for Vietnamese males between the ages of 15-24.

Poor literacy and language skills often force these adolescents to leave school without employment preparation or job search skills. Nancy Copeland, in her 1984 study of Vietnamese

adolescents, noted that 57% of youth that had been in Canada for five years reported that they found it difficult to understand mainstream Canadians when they spoke. Copeland also discusses downward occupational mobility and cites a national survey of those Vietnamese with professional, technical, and managerial backgrounds. Only 4% were employed in such occupations in Canada. For some immigrants, when their socio-economic livelihood does not improve as quickly as initially anticipated, a transference of aspirations onto the young to achieve the goals that parents fail to obtain can occur. This in turn places undue pressure on the young person. Parental lag in acculturation, where parents must focus on supporting the family with little or no time for learning or understanding the new culture, adds additional pressure. This circumstance has, in fact, prompted one immigrant serving agency in Calgary to offer courses to immigrant parents with emphasis on parenting in Canadian society.

When youth cannot meet the expectations of parents or teachers, a delinquent subculture provides a criteria of status which these youths can meet. For Vietnamese males that hold lowly jobs, the "gang" is a way to achieve "face" within a segment of their ethnic community in a way that is understandable and unchallenged. Fighting and seeking revenge is face-saving. While this concept of "face" is often associated with Asian cultures the kinds of social conditions that bring an individual into face-saving actions are, in these instances, poor education, functional illiteracy and lack of suitable employment. Seeking higher status within a "lower class" context, they face the acute problem of finding a means to reach their goals.

The individual who formerly felt exposed and vulnerable is likely to find that membership in such a group gives a measure of reassurance in the outer world. Though that person may continue to live and work in that world, he no longer depends on it in the same way. He is able to withdraw from it and to find the confidence on which the existence of "gangs" depends. This new sense of fellowship may create such powerful bonds that the member feels invulnerable to the outside world.

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FOLK TECHNOLOGY IN A HIGH-TECH. INDUSTRY: CULTURAL OBJECTS IN A BRITISH COLUMBIA COAL MINE5*

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Abstract

Operators of heavy equipment in a British Columbia coal mine create "cultural objects" through the process of "folk technology" by extending and transforming the use and significance of common workplace materials. Analysis of these objects - within the context of their construction and use - provides valuable insight into workplace culture and grounded industrial relations processes by revealing the creativity of workers in organizing personal space, symbol communication and resisting management authority. It is also argued that theoretical insights into the extra-institutional, transformative capacity of workers as social actors can be gained through an examination of these "cultural objects".

Introduction

Industrial relations (IR) research usually focuses on workplace and IR transformations that obtain as a result of institutional practices such as collective bargaining, IR legislation or market forces. In contrast, participant observation research conducted in a British Columbia coal mine demonstrates the transformative capacity of workers, as social agents, to affect changes in their working environment and to attempt to change IR practices, i.e. to resist management authority, outside of the formal IR structure.

Workers demonstrate that they exercise some control over their work-a-day lives by creatively utilizing available resources to construct "cultural objects" using materials and techniques that I have labelled "folk technology". It is not necessarily the objects themselves that are of intrinsic interest. Rather it is the context of object construction and use that highlights workers' extra-institutional control of the workplace.

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Folk Technology and Cultural Objects

In this paper "folk technology" refers to common workplace materials (such as paper towel or foam hearing protectors), designed for specific uses, which are employed to construct items for purposes different from those originally intended. In doing so, these materials are transformed into local "cultural objects". Anthony Giddens defines:

> "cultural objects" as artifacts which...are distinct from objects generally in so far as they incorporate 'extended' forms of significance (Giddens 1987:215-16)."

In terms of Giddens' definition, cultural objects could include the heavy equipment used in mining; pickup trucks, buildings, miners' clothing, etc. Folk technology, I propose, is a type or category of cultural object in that folk technology refers only to those artifacts created on-the-job (from materials at hand) which, like cultural objects generally, are endowed with extended significance and use.

In structuration theory, Giddens (1984) predicts the "transformative capacity" of social actors. Folk technology, I propose, is one of the mechanisms through which actors transform their working environment (in non-sanctioned ways) by utilizing available resources creatively. The control of resources implies power. Giddens uses the term "allocative resources" to refer to "capabilities - or, more accurately, to forms of transformative capacity - generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena (1984:33)". This analysis of folk technology suggests that workers, through their use of allocative resources, exert a degree of control and therefore have some power over their personal space; their working environment.

Workers also demonstrate, via folk technology, their capacity to transform their interactive environment by using folk technology for symbolic communication. Analysis demonstrates how industrial relations conflicts find expression in folk technology. These cultural objects become, therefore, power resources or, in Giddens' terminology, "authoritative resources" in that they "derive from the co-ordination of the activity of human agents (1984:xxxi)" including symbolic communication.

Methodology

The data and analysis presented here is part of a larger research project which was carried out in 1989 and spring 1990. The dominant methodology for this project was participant observation, but included structured and unstructured interviews.

In order to "get at" the transformative capacities of human actors through resource utilization, I adopted Appadurai's (1986)

methodology of exploring the "social life of things"; that is, by tracing the creation, use and eventual disuse of folk technology underpinned by the ontological premise that social actors are knowledgeable.

Just as museum artifacts, "...acquire emotional heat and symbolic force," (Tiger 1987:1&34), so, too, do these cultural objects. I propose that the analysis of folk technology leads to a partial understanding of what it is to be a coal miner - "[objects] help define who we are" (Tiger 1987:34). Further, folk technology, I argue, is revealed as one mechanism used by miners to organize personal space, communicate, resist and rebel against management authority in a specific industrial relations setting.

The Context: Industrial Setting and Industrial Relations

Elk Valley Coal Co.[3] operates an open-cast or strip mine in the East Kootenay Region in the south-east corner of British Columbia.Strip coal mining involves removing overburden or waste rock to expose coal. Coal is hauled to a processing plant where it is cleaned and stockpiled for shipment to Robert's Bank on the west coast of B.C. awaiting transportation to Pacific Rim steel producers.

Mining in mountainous areas, such as the Rockies, entails special engineering problems related to geology, altitude, climate and economics of scale required for competitive advantage in a global market. The mine is a multi-million dollar operation relying on the state of the art in high tech. heavy equipment and methods. For example, electric shovels, which are used to load out the waste rock, have 30 cubic yard buckets. The shovels are "plugged" into power cables carrying 4160 volts. Trucks that transport the waste rock to dumping areas are 170 Tonne haulage vehicles, two stories high and about 12 meters wide, with six 3 meter tall, 56-ply tires (costing $15,000 each)[3]. They are powered by V-16, 3,000 horsepower diesel engines. Other heavy equipment used at the mine includes graders, scrapers, dozers, drills, rubber tired dozers and loaders. The processing plant and loadout facilities could be considered heavy industry in their own right. Computers are used extensively in, for example, accounting, inventory control, and production planning which is facilitated by computer generated projections.

The mine operates 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Over the next thirty years (until 2020) Elk Valley Coal Co. will produce 180 million metric tons of clean coal moving 1.2 billion cubic meters of waste rock in the process. Elk Valley Coal is, quite literally, moving mountains.

In the early 1980s the sudden plummeting of coal markets internationally prompted a number of coping strategies by Elk Valley Coal Co. One of the strategies was a program of "forced

attrition" to reduce the workforce. Forced attrition was an effective program of reducing the workforce selectively rather than through layoff based on seniority. This entailed taking a hardline approach to discipline at the mine site which took the form of an unusually strict disciplinary regime. Major discipline was charged against workers for behaviour usually regarded as petty.

According to union officials and workers, the discipline program also took the form of dossier building. Once targeted, an employee was effectively placed on a disciplinary "train" (from which he was unable to step off) which carried the employee from initial discipline to dismissal. Workers report that "forced attrition", within the prevailing economic climate of few mining jobs in B.C. at the time, produced an atmosphere of fear and oppression at the mine. From Sept. 30, 1983 until October 16, 1986, there were 522 grievances filed by workers. The majority of these were for "unjust discipline". This strict disciplinary regime was part of the industrial relations context that both management and workers characterize as conflictual and, occasionally, crisis-charged. It is in the context of this industrial relations environment that folk technology was used to create cultural objects for symbolic communication and as part of workers' resistance to management authority.

Folk Technology: Modifying the Workplace

Folk technology is evident in all areas of the mine's operation; however, I have chosen to confine the description and analysis to those objects produced by the largest group of semi-skilled workers; the operators of the giant haulage trucks.

Truck drivers' folk technology can be broadly categorized into; (1) allocative resources; those that physically modify the workplace (for reasons of health, comfort, safety and/or convenience), and (2) authoritative resources; those that are related to symbolic communication and industrial relations processes. The significance of these objects can only be understood, however, within the situated context of their construction and use.

All equipment operators, including and specifically truck drivers, work on a shift schedule called the "4&4". Workers are scheduled for four days of work followed by four days off. Shifts are twelve hours long starting at 7:00 a.m. for dayshift and 7:00 p.m. for nightshift or graveyards as they are called. Graveyards are regarded by the majority of drivers as the most difficult shifts. During a twelve-hour shift operators receive two 20-minute lunch breaks. There are no lunch room facilities; operators usually eat their lunches in the cabs of their trucks.

Driving a truck at the mine is hard work. It is hard on drivers physically because of the constant vibration of the cab and

from the jostling and jolting operators take from rough roads and from being loaded by shovels which dump upwards of 60 Tonnes of rock per bucket. It is dangerous work as evidenced by "lost-time accidents" at the site that are in excess of the British Columbia average and as evidenced by the number of fatal accidents for coal mining historically including a fatal accident at one of the Elk Valley mines in early summer 1990. The work is also difficult psychologically because of the boring repetition and long hours with few breaks. Coal mining is dirty work. In the cab of a truck, it is extremely hot and dusty in the summer and often very cold in winter.

The noise level associated with operating heavy equipment, such as haulage trucks, requires hearing protection to prevent chronic hearing loss. The company supplies foal earplugs which are inserted into the ear after having been compressed by rolling the plus between thumb and first finger. Once in the ear the plugs expand to their original size, shutting out most of the noise. It is not uncommon to see workers at the beginning of the shift taking a handful of packages of foam earplugs. The reason they take so many is that earplugs have other uses. For example, they are used to plug holes in the dash, doors, walls and ceiling of a truck. Workers compress an earplug and insert it in a hole where instruments were attached, the foam expands and seals the hole; this helps control dust entering the cab. Similarly, earplugs are used as foam wedges between frame and glass to stop windows from rattling and to press the pane to its rubber seal; again in an effort to exclude coal or rock dust from the cab.

Time cards have a similar use. A time card is a cream coloured, printed card (about 8 by 18 centimetres) on which drivers are required to record information about their productivity for the day. Pieces of time card can be found in most vehicles, folded and crammed between windows and frames to control dust. Time cards are used for bookmarks. Over 90% of drivers read while being loaded or at lunch break.

Time cards are used for lampshades. Trucks have a single overhead interior light; a bare bulb. Drivers insert the edge of a time card between the fixture and the ceiling and then fold the card in just the right spot to cast light on their book while shielding their eyes from the bulb's glare. The dash of the truck has indicator lights which, for night driving, are too bright. A time card torn in half and folded to 75% of its original width is the perfect size to wedge between the tachometer and air pressure gauge, covering the brake indicator light.

All of the gauges on the dashboard are lighted for night driving. The intensity of illumination for the gauges can usually be controlled with a rheostat so that panel lights can be dimmed at night. They cannot be turned off completely because it is essential (from the company's point of view) that divers be aware, at all

times, of the engine oil pressure, air pressures, etc. When the rheostat does not work or is non-existent and gauges cannot be dimmed, drivers on graveyards use a piece of time card which covers them entirely.

Not only are the instruments illuminated, the dashboards of the trucks have light cast on them from cylindrical black metal light fixtures about 4 cms. in diameter and approximately 10 cms. in length. At night these dash lights enable the operators to find switches which control heaters, headlights, emergency steering, front wheel brake pressure, etc. Many drivers cover their dash lights with orange-red surveyor's ribbon. Surveyor's ribbon is supposed to be used by the surveyors for marking digging limits and roads, and by supervisors for marking sections of dangerous road, or misfired holes after a blast. Quantities of surveyor's ribbon are stored near the fuelling stations to supply sheds. Truck drivers help themselves and use the ribbon - wrapped around dash lights - to cast a reddish glow over their dashboards which is considerably easier on the eyes at night. Survey ribbon is also strung from the top right hand side of truck box so that operators can tell with a glance when their box is in the down position after dumping without craning their necks.

Unlike the green garbage bags which line residential streets one or two days per week, garbage bags at the coal mine are transparent. The "see-through" bags are used for security reasons so that contents can be checked without opening the bag. In storage rooms in the Dry[4] can always be found cases of these clear plastic garbage bags; and drivers have a use for them. Books read in a coal mine become absolutely filthy in a short time. Coal blackened paperbacks pass from driver to driver. In order to read a book that one does not want covered in coal dust, operators utilize the clear garbage bags. A book is placed in the bag with a pencil; the bag is sealed with a twist tie from a sandwich bag; then the pointed end of the pencil is stuck through the bag from the inside to the outside and is used, eraser side in, to turn the pages. The plastic book protects the book which can easily be read through the clear plastic bag that simultaneously acts as a bookmark. In this way even library books are read on the job.

One of the most common raw materials utilized in folk technology at the mine is paper towel. The paper towel supplied by the company is particularly strong. It is thick compared with household paper towel and has thread woven into the paper. It is supplied for use in cleaning windows and mopping up grease and oil spills. Drivers use paper towel for stuffing around doors and windows to control dust. They twist it and tie it around their waist to hold their pants up. Paper towel is braided to make an extremely strong and surprisingly long-lasting rope which is tied to water jugs and lunch buckets so that they can be more easily carried up the ladder to the cab of the truck. Drivers use paper towel to attach a soft drink to a railing outside the cab where it

can be cooled.

Inside the cab operators use paper towel to tie a can of food to the heater. They then envelop the heat vent with paper towel so that when the temperature is turned to maximum and the fan is switched to high, the paper towel billows like a small sail forming a small convection oven which, after a couple of hours, heats the food enabling the driver to have a hot meal.

The above examples demonstrate the creativity involved in folk technology as workers attempt to control portions of the physical working environment. Workers use readily available materials to improve comfort and convenience which functions to improve the quality of their working day and, in some cases, such as controlling lighting levels for better night vision, folk technology improves job performance and safety. Clearly, workers have some degree of power over their personal space, their working environment.

Folk Technology: Industrial Relations

It is not an uncommon occurrence at the mine to find that a truck is operating only because the driver has utilized folk technology to perform a temporary "fix" using paper towel or some other "raw material" at hand. In fact it is common practice for drivers to "save up" repairs to their haulage trucks (utilizing folk technology if necessary) so that they have some power and control over precisely when the equipment is shut down for repairs. Often the timing of an equipment shutdown is a politically-based form of communication related to the industrial relations climate at the mine. Folk technology, in such cases, becomes part of workers' attempts to transform their interactive environment outside of the formal industrial relations structure.

A folk technology "repair" to equipment can communicate resistance by the timeliness of its removal. For example, one operator (I will call him Joe) had an electrical problem with his truck preventing it from moving (even though the box was in the down position) unless the hoist override switch was activated. (The hoist override switch ensures that the truck remains stationary until the truck box is in the down position unless the switch - which has to be manually held in the "on" position - is activated.) Joe had a piece of plastic bag wrapped several times around the hoist override switch and the heater control knob, keeping the hoist override in the "on" position. Joe explained, "This way I can keep runnin' til I want a break or 'til some boss hassles me, then off comes the plastic bag and this baby [his truck] is down [for repairs]." It is fairly common practice for workers to "save" repairs until needed as a relatively "safe" form of resistance to management authority.

A more obvious form of communication using folk technology

involves the use of company supplied work gloves. During a "slow-down", as part of a work-to-rule campaign, I witnessed several trucks with work gloves on their radio antennae. The glove was placed so that the antenna held the middle "finger" of the glove erect while the other "fingers" hung limply over the palm, recreating a well known and particularly obscene gesture. This symbolism clearly communicated workers' feelings without risking discipline for insubordination.

Hard hats when analyzed as cultural objects are revealing. All operators are required to wear company supplied hard hats. They are all the same colour, blue. Workers use stickers to differentiate themselves from their fellows. Hard hats are, for the most part, covered with stickers. The stranger or more uncommon the sticker the better. Stickers range from small labels found on fresh fruit of all kinds to safety award stickers, "Smurf" stickers, tire company stickers, sticky labels that say "danger high voltage" or "to operate lift and twist", etc. Often stickers are overtly political. One read, "We give our sweat not our blood". Several women drivers display stickers on their hard hats which read, "Women can dig it too!".

Some stickers are less explicitly political. For example, recently a group of drivers made a label which they presented to one of their fellow drivers. The label that the drivers produced read, "Flip". This then became the individual's nickname. A few days before he had "flipped" his haulage truck on its side. Such a nickname on the hardhat helps define and separate management from workers. While for management an accident is an anathema, workers - while not wanting anyone hurt - "celebrate" accidents or damage to company equipment. Examples of other nicknames advertised on hard hats are "Crash" (self-explanatory), "Rapid" (referring to excessive speeding), "Buckeye" (this operator had pulled the fuel fitting - the buckeye - off of his truck's fuel tank by leaving the fuel station with the fuel hose still attached) and "Highwall" (for sliding off the road into a rockface). Another implicitly political and unusual sticker displayed was a sticky foil seal or pull-tab that can be found on tomato juice cans. When asked why he had the foil seal on his hard hat the driver replied, "Like I told the pit boss, it's so I can peel it off and pour my brains out before I start work".

Through folk technology, objects can be constructed as and when needed. Particular forms of folk technology are "born" in a specific context, have useful "lives" and then "die" when no longer useful or needed. For example, one operator (renamed Bill Smith) was disciplined for leaving his equipment during his 20-minute lunch break to have lunch with his friend, a grader operator. (Until this incident the practice of friends meeting for their break was a common occurrence.) Shortly after the "Bill Smith" discipline and grievance truck drivers began to use paper towel to communicate where they intended to park for lunch. This was done to

avoid attracting the attention of supervisors through communicating over the two-way radios. On any particular haul road there are marshalling areas with room to park haulage vehicles. Drivers wrap paper towelling around side-view mirror supports at various positions to indicate, to the driver they want to meet for lunch, where they expect to be at lunch time. Each time these drivers pass each other on the haul road they adjust their speed and the positioning of the towelling until they get a match with their "buddy". When a match is obtained both drivers will end up at the appropriate location without advertising it on the radio and without having to risk discipline for stopping early.

The use of paper towel for communication has been traced to beginnings on "Bill Smith's" shift from where it spread to the other work crews. The practice began to "die" as militancy and solidarity increased among workers. (Solidarity and militancy produced an environment in which secrecy was no longer needed for this type of rule "infraction".) Since the company has softened its approach to discipline and has attempted to change its industrial relations strategy to more modern or progressive management styles, the use of paper towel to communicate has vanished. Workers now communicate openly (over the two-way radios) to arrange meeting for lunch breaks.

Conclusion

The analysis of folk technology and the production of cultural objects clearly demonstrates the workers' creativity. But there is more of significance here than creativity. Data from this study also support the analytical utility of researching the life histories of cultural objects and folk technology to reveal the transformative capacity of social actors over their physical and interactive environments. Arjun Appadurai (1986:5) argues that "we have to look at things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories". Conceptualized in this way cultural objects are not so much things as situations, process rather than product. In this sense cultural objects take on a social life and can be analyzed into questions of temporality, political/economic categorization and object situation or context. The approach is "at once political, processual, and interpretive, founded on the methodological premise that [cultural] objects have 'lives'" that can be fruitfully explored (Ferguson 1988:497).

Hard hats covered with a changing display of stickers can represent art, notions of self, and resistance to authority perceived to be oppressive. With paper towel a worker can cool his soft drink or heat his meal in spite of a lack of facilities. Operators can control dust in the truck cab and regulate lighting using simple, available raw materials in creative ways to control their environment and organize their personal space. With paper towel or pieces of time card, truck drivers can effectively communicate resistance while avoiding the formal IR system.

The analysis of folk technology is not simply an analysis of objects. Rather, it is an analysis of the meaning that emerges from these objects in the context of the role they play in identity, quality of working life, change, and extra-institutional industrial relations processes.

End Notes:

3. The name of the company has been changed. Company specific traits, e.g. types of equipment not used by other mines in the area, have been disguised.

4. The "Dry", as it is called, is the building where miners have shower, toilet and laundry facilities and lockers for clean and dirty clothes.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SAAC BUSINESS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

SERGE BOUCHARD, last year's President, resigned from his office in May because of upcoming professional commitments in Europe. Because we were unable to find a replacement on short notice, I have taken the liberty, as Vice-President, of filling the position for this year. Thank you, Serge, for offering your services in the past year as President.

SAAC was a participant at the annual meetings of CASCA/CAMA/ACAM/SAAC at York University last May. Although the conference was academically successful, with 400 participants, spirits were greatly dampened by the deaths of **SALLY WEAVER** and **ROGER KEESING**. Our condolences go to the family and friends of these colleagues, and we will greatly miss them and their contributions to the discipline.

Our thanks go to **KEN LITTLE**, overall conference organizer, and to **JOHN VAN WEST**, who worked on behalf of SAAC. Thanks also to those practitioners who came from the general Toronto area to offer their expertise in special sessions, such as the one on the relationship between Anthropology and Law. The theme of the conference was particularly fitting for the relationship among the partner organizations. SAAC had relatively few members attending the conference overall, and the prevailing sorrow at the conference affected attendance at the AGM. Nonetheless, the issue of SAAC's "contribution" to the conference was raised by CASCA at the time, along with the contribution of CAMA/ACAM. I spoke with the incoming President of CASCA, Margaret Rodman, about the long-standing affiliation issue, and we agreed to begin discussions.

In July I received a letter from Dr. Rodman regarding options for affiliation. She provided a list of SAAC attenders as well as a budget breakdown of conference expenses. Annual conferences are increasingly being subsidized by grants rather than through fees, even though fees have been rising. The costs of bringing guest speakers as well as printing and publicity costs have risen, accounting largely for the increase in overall costs. In her letter, Dr. Rodman ascertained that the average cost per person at York was $96, but the average registration fee was $47. Many of those attending were paying the rate for students/unemployed, reducing the average figure to half the full registration fee. She proposed that SAAC-only members (and other non-CASCA members) pay a higher registration fee next year, enabling CASCA to pay a higher proportion of conference costs out of registration, and offset the supposedly high numbers of SAAC members who are attending the conference but not subsidizing CASCA.

A similar proposal went to CAMACAM, and the president of CAMACAM, Paul Antze, and I sent a joint reply to Dr. Rodman in

October. We pointed out that both SAAC and CAMACAM have played a major role in the past in conference organizing and fund raising, and will continue to do so. In 1988, for example, when the conference was held in Saskatoon, conference organizers brought in a large number of practitioners, paid for most costs through fees, and contributed a surplus (from grants) back to CASCA. In addition, many of the SAAC and CAMA/ACAM members who attend the conference are also CASCA members, as are the students who receive travel subsidies. We did not feel that the participation of our organizations was contributing to the tight financial situation of the conferences in a substantive way, but we have offered, on a trial basis, to "level the playing field" for the upcoming conference in May 1994 in Vancouver. In essence, we have offered to collect, at registration, "fee differentials" from SAAC-only and CAMA/ACAM-only members who register for the conference. This differential is not a registration fee, however, but a "top-up" of the difference between SAAC (in our case) membership fees and CASCA membership fees. This differential payment entitles the registrants, in effect, to become CASCA members for the year. We have also suggested that SAAC members will continue to assist with organizing; to that end, **KULDIP GILL**, **PAT BERRINGER**, and **NOEL DYCK** are assisting the organizers at UBC for the 1994 meetings.

The CASCA Board has responded favourably to the proposal on a trial basis, and we will work toward implementing this for 1994 only. It will be discussed more fully at the AGM, and decisions will be made as to how/whether to continue this type of voluntary affiliation.

I congratulate **JOAN RYAN**, the first recipient of the **WEAVER-TREMBLAY** award for outstanding SAAC practitioner. Joan graciously received the award at York under difficult circumstances, and dedicated the time allocated for her plenary address to a memorial session for Sally Weaver. Joan's remarks about her friend and colleague were printed in the Fall CASCA Bulletin, and describe not only Sally Weaver's contribution to anthropology, but the role that friendships and partnerships like these have played in the development of Canadian applied anthropology.

Nominations for the 1994 Weaver-Tremblay award are open, and I encourage you to consider sending a letter of nomination to **JIM WALDRAM** at the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan. This should be accompanied by a c.v. for the person nominated, if possible. We look forward to granting the next award in Vancouver, and hope that it may be possible for the recipient to provide an address at the conference.

Please let me know about any issues and concerns that you may have. Remember that elections for the executive will be open in Vancouver; please consider running for office and keeping SAAC alive. **We also need an editor for PROACTIVE to replace Sandy Ervin** at the University of Saskatchewan. Sandy developed PROACTIVE from

a newsletter in 1988 and has worked hard at keeping it going. I don't think anyone can actually "replace" Sandy's contributions to PROACTIVE, but, rather, build upon them to continue a very useful, and central, publication.

The VANCOUVER conference will be held at UBC on May 5-7. See the brochure accompanying this issue. Several SAAC sessions are currently being planned. Jim Waldram is organizing one on "Aboriginal Spirituality in Correctional Settings." Kuldip Gill is organizing a session on Production and Reproduction of Culture and Society: Implications of Changes in Health Care Policy in Canada, the U.S. and England. Suggestions have also been made about sessions on Anthropologists as Administrators, more about Anthropology and Law, and Applied Ethics.

PEGGY BRIZINSKI

THE 1994 WEAVER-TREMBLAY AWARD IN CANADIAN APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

SAAC is pleased to announce the second competition of this prestigious award in Canadian applied anthropology. Named in honour of two of our distinguished colleagues, the late **SALLY WEAVER** of the University of Waterloo, and **MARC-ADéLARD TREMBLAY** of Laval University, the award will be given to recognize distinguished work by both academically-based and practicing anthropologists.

The purpose of the award is to honour an individual working in the area of applied anthropology who has made a significant contribution to the discipline in Canada. Awardees need not necessarily be anthropologists. They may be Canadians working either in Canada or internationally; or they may be non-Canadians based in Canada working either in Canada or internationally. "Meritorious work" would be defined by the nominators, but may include publication of a significant work or works, advocacy activities, career contributions, consulting work and so on.

The awardee will be invited to attend the subsequent SAAC meeting to receive the award, and to deliver the annual SAAC address. Acceptance of the award is not conditional upon attendance or the delivery of the lecture.

The selection committee for the 1994 award will consist of **GILLES BIBEAU**, University of Montreal, **KATHY MOLOHON**, Laurentian University, and **RAOUL ANDERSON**, Memorial University of Newfoundland. All are past presidents of SAAC.

Individuals may be nominated for the award, or they may nominate themselves. The selection committee may also nominate candidates. A CV or resume, academic, professional and/or community letters of support, and any other supporting material (such as copies of the pertinent publications) must be submitted. Four copies of everything must be submitted. Materials may be in either French or English. The award will be bestowed only in meritorious cases, and the selection committee will retain the right to decline to make an award in any given year.

Deadline for submission of nominations and all supporting materials will be February 28, 1994.

Enquiries and nomination material should be sent to the Chair of the Weaver-Tremblay Award selection committee:

JAMES B WALDRAM,
Professor,
Department of Native Studies,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, SK.
S7N 0W0. (306) 966-6211 Fax: (306) 966-6242.

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