

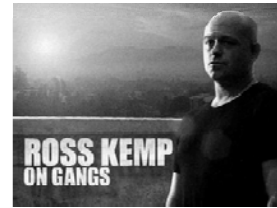
Criminology 321

Observation/Ethnography/Field Research
cont'd



Ethnography

- An example: *Ross Kemp on Gangs*



Issues to Consider

- Numerous decisions along the way:
 - Access: gatekeepers, guides
 - Your role
 - What/when/where/who you will observe

Gatekeepers



Guides; Getting Acquainted



Issues to Consider

- Numerous decisions along the way:
 - Access: gatekeepers, guides
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Your Role

- Four levels of participant observation :
 - Passive participation
 - No interaction; merely observe and record
 - Moderate participation
 - Mixing participation and observation
 - Active participation
 - Doing what others do
 - Complete participation
 - Total involvement; often live on site; *not* “going native”

Issues to Consider

- Numerous decisions along the way:
 - Access: gatekeepers, guides
 - Your role
 - What/when/where/who you will observe

Different Venues



Data Sources



Interviews: Multiple Perspectives



Procedures: General Game Plan

1. Immerse oneself in setting, usually for extended period
2. Participate in a variety of ways
3. Observe while participating
4. Take notes
5. Conduct (in)formal interviews
6. Take more notes (and more and more and more)
7. Analyze notes
8. Write up analysis

Not Quite Sure Where It Fits



Ethnography at SFU



Crim 321 Action Research



Action Research

- Term often attributed to Kurt Lewin, although has a longer history
- At its core is the idea that a problem exists and some form of evaluation research can be used to find ways to deal with/alleviate the problem *and* advance knowledge
- However, can be autocratic, top-down

Crim 321 Participatory Action Research



[Participatory]Action Research

- Participatory Action Research is AR's warmer, fuzzier sibling
- An inherently collaborative problem-solving approach

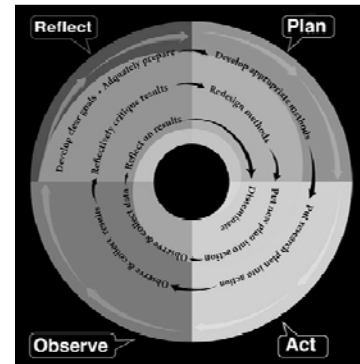


Participatory Action Research

- Key elements of participatory action research (PAR):
 - Seeks to explain social situations while striving for change;
 - Problem-focused, context-specific and future-oriented;
 - Problem identification, planning, action and evaluation all interlinked;
 - Whole group/community actively involved in change process;
 - Aims to be educative and empowering

Participatory Action Research

- An inherently iterative process



Participatory Action Research

- In some cases, the process can be brief
 - For example, with PACE, I was asked to talk about research methods and ethics review
 - We gathered experiential data about sex worker experiences with researchers
 - PACE workers then formulated their own ethics guidelines for researchers when recruiting sex workers

Participatory Action Research

- Other times the process can be longer, more elaborate, done in phases
- For example, study of Downtown Community Court (DCC) and Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services (VATJS)
- Interests overlap in relation to Aboriginal offenders in the Downtown Eastside

Participatory Action Research

- VATJS became concerned when the flow of referrals from DCC started to diminish to a trickle
- DCC wanted to partner more completely with VATJS, but was having its own organizational difficulties

Participatory Action Research

- Richelle Isaac-Schaefer went to VATJS and did interviews with key VATJS personnel regarding their role, aspirations, view of problems
- Yana Nuszdorfer did same at DCC
- Combined report presented to both sides

Participatory Action Research

- Final report outlined how two well-meaning entities can create problems
- Specific strategies were adopted to deal with the referral problem
- Future research directions identified; suggested starting with a tracking study of Indigenous offenders

Participatory Action Research

- Note the unique fit that qualitative approaches bring to the table:
 - Ground-up philosophy, inclusive approach;
 - Emphasis on collaboration, rapport, relationship-building, mutual trust;
 - Iterative process;
 - Need for flexibility in methods, approach

Challenges

- In academe: Is PAR a career killer?
- AR/PAR most likely to arise in the field context: welcome to the political world
 - Community itself may not have consensus
 - Future directions rooted in values; but are these shared by organization, funders?
 - Funding bodies/managers may not favour empowering others

Challenges

- For example, with DCC/VATJS project:
 - Conservatives axe, then resuscitate AJS
 - BC Corrections deems the project low priority; might involve sharing jurisdiction with Indigenous communities
 - “Empowerment” of Indigenous communities not in their interest

Next Week: Analyzing Your Data

