

Conceptual and Methodological Approaches to Collaborative Community-Based Transformational Research for Change

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This chapter is written from the perspective of the commitment of the authors to an anthropology that seeks to reduce the power imbalance for underserved and marginalized populations in society (S. Schensul, 1973; Singer 1990; J. Schensul, 2013). We strive to change the model of research from solely scientist-directed and implemented to approaches involving members of underrepresented communities and groups as research collaborators rather than objects of research. We argue that the “science” of anthropology lies not in theory or methodology alone, but in the application of research results to change processes that validate or modify anthropological theory (S. Schensul, 1985) and that both theory development and results must involve the participation of representatives of the affected populations as our partners (Singer, 2003; Brydon-Miller, et al. 2008; J. Schensul 1999; 2002). In doing so we resist the charge of some that by contributing to the goals and development of underserved communities, we may lose our scientific objectivity (S. Schensul, 1985). Instead we argue that the demands for accurate results needed to address real world problems and improve the human condition certainly parallels and may, at times, far exceed those that are discipline-based (J. Schensul et al, 1999). We believe that anthropology, through participant observation and face-to-face interviewing is rooted in local communities and that place-based research can provide both a grounded perspective on the impact of social and structural factors on community groups and residents, and a “ground up” perspective on the world drawn from members of under-resourced, marginalized, or otherwise unrepresented communities. We do not argue that the methods utilized for this work are unique; many are drawn from classic cultural anthropology as well as other social science fields. We do argue that consideration of structural factors and power differentials lead to the formulation of questions developed from the perspective of engaged groups and communities, making the results of this kind of research available to them as they seek to advocate for needs and required resources (J. Schensul, 2006).

The authors of this chapter have been involved for many years in conducting applied anthropology in domestic and international communities. S. Schensul began his applied work research in the Mexican American community in Chicago (from 1968-1976), continued that work in the Puerto Rican and African American communities in Hartford, CT and has conducted applied anthropological research in Mauritius, Sri Lanka and for the last decade in India. Jean J. Schensul began her work in 1974 on educational issues in Chicago, directed research at the Hispanic Health Council from 1979 to 1987 and was Director of the Institute for Community Research from 1987-2004, continuing as full time and senior scientist from 2003-present. Merrill Singer was Associate Director for Research for the Hispanic Health Council from 1987 to 2008 and is currently professor of anthropology at the University of Connecticut. Margaret Weeks joined the Institute for Community Research in 1990 and assumed the directorship in 2007. Marie Brault, is an applied researcher-in-training, conducting field research in economically marginal communities in Mumbai, India as a part of the PhD program in anthropology at the University of Connecticut. Many of the examples in this chapter are drawn from our own experience, both individually and in collaboration, and have been drawn from models developed in Chicago (Van Willigen, 1993) and Hartford, CT (Singer and Weeks, 2005; J. Schensul, 2006).

Many terms, with often overlapping meanings, are used to categorize the approach to anthropology that we describe here, and the authors of this chapter have used most of them in publications describing their own work as well as the work of others. They begin with “applied” anthropology, a generic term with a long, well established and well criticized history in anthropology (cf. Rylko-Bauer et al., 2006; Tax, 1958; 1975; Agrawal, 1981; S. Schensul, 1974). Other terms seek to distance the work from applied anthropology, while at the same time attempting to identify the unique focus of each endeavor. Such terms are “action” anthropology (Tax, 1958), “engaged” anthropology (Low and Merry, 2010), “public” anthropology (Borofsky, 2000; Checker, 2009; Beck, 2009), “advocacy” anthropology” (S. Schensul and J. Schensul, 1978), “collaborative” anthropology (Fluehr-Loban, 2008; J. Schensul and Stern, 1985; J. Schensul and S. Schensul 1992; Austin, 2004; Geilhufe 1978; Gonzalez, 2010) and terms that have counterparts in other fields, such as “participatory action” research (Berg & Schensul and “community-based, participatory” research. (Israel et al. 1998). Below we describe some of these approaches in more detail.

Applied anthropology

“Applied” is the omnibus term for those who use anthropological concepts and methods to contribute directly or indirectly to policy, administration, and intervention in larger systems and in communities. From this perspective, all of the above approaches and terms can be seen as subsets of applied anthropology. The association of applied anthropology with colonization, Japanese relocation, colonial administration, armed conflict, and other forms of working with and in the power structure in the 20th century resulted in intense criticism within and beyond anthropology (Rylko-Bauer, et al. 2006; Low and Merry 2010; Bennett 1996). At the same time, many university-based anthropologists saw themselves as involved in “basic” research and resisted the concept of the discipline as forgoing its “objectivity” and participating in the engineering of change. Anthropologists committed to involvement in societal change sought new labels that would distance them from the negative critiques of applied anthropology and justify the legitimacy of their involvement as academically valid and socially useful for marginalized peoples.

Action Anthropology

Action anthropology was developed by Sol Tax and his students (1958; 1975) in an effort to overcome the post-WWII critique of applied anthropology as paternalistic. Tax (1975) developed action anthropology with two goals: to help a group of individuals solve social problems and to learn something that could be anthropologically and scientifically useful use through the process. To achieve these goals, Tax proposed that anthropologists, particularly those with an academic base, volunteer their services to communities and encourage local residents to choose both the research issues and development directions. Tax and his students in the Fox project started out to do traditional ethnological research but the work “...conspired to turn us into actionists” (Gearing et al. 1960). The project facilitated the development of a cooperative farming effort, an education project, a scholarship program and traditional crafts using a method of non-directed facilitation. Tax also sought to engage action anthropologists with policymakers at county, state, and national governments in seeking solutions. His critics, both within his University of Chicago department and in the discipline argued that Tax’s approach to action anthropology was more like a type of “social work” (Gross, 2002), that it lacked a coherent set of methodologies, and did

not develop or build upon anthropological theory (Bennett, 1996). Others have questioned whether and to what degree, the efforts of Tax and his students were participatory, from the standpoint of indigenous Mesquaki people (Foley, 1999). Nonetheless, the term “action” anthropology and action research (see below; S. Schensul and Bakszys, 1974; J. Schensul, 2010) has been used to describe research that supports community advocacy and development (see Action Anthropology blog at: <http://openanthcoop.ning.com/group/actionanthropology>).

Public Anthropology

Borofsky (2000; 2011) criticizes anthropology as a field no longer interested in producing research relevant to the general public. He has called for a “public anthropology” that researches and disseminates accessible studies that relate to public concerns. Borofsky states that public anthropology should not be concerned with distinguishing between application and theory, but should incorporate both into work relevant for the general society. Singer (2000), responding to Borofsky, is critical of the contention that anthropologists fail to engage the public and points to the wide variety of work conducted by anthropologists that span topics ranging from HIV in minority communities to environmental issues to land reform. The call for public anthropology seems more to do with topical foci and the dissemination of research results to the wider public than new methodologies or orientation to the needs of a local group or community. In other words, the public of concern is not those with whom anthropologists may work to help address their pressing needs but those publics who consume books and other media that thoughtfully address contemporary social issues without necessarily acting on them. A soon to be published book (Beck and Maida, 2013) argues for a more critical definition and approach to public anthropology through its application to problems of inequity and social, economic, and ecological injustice.

Engaged Anthropology

Low and Merry (2010) use the term “engaged” anthropology, identifying various forms of engagement including: (1) “sharing and support” that emerge from the close working and professional relationships that anthropologists develop through participant observation, a kind of ancillary contribution consistent with S. Schensul’s use of his Toyota Land Cruiser to transport women with complicated deliveries to the regional hospital while conducting field research in Uganda; (2) teaching and public education,” consistent with Singer’s classes at the University of Connecticut providing a critical perspective on global health, infectious disease and other issues or J. Schensul’s training of inner city youth to conduct research on topics affecting their lives and conditions they wish to change ; (3) social critique, which “...refers to anthropological work that uses its methods and theories to uncover power relations and structures of inequality consistent with Singer’s (2009) perspective on “syndemics”; (4) collaboration, broadly ranging from working with local organizations, investigators at multiple sites, co-construction of ethnographies and a shared leadership approach to the development and implementation of research and intervention, as seen in Weeks’ et al (2010) relationships with the Peking Union Medical College and the Hainan Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to develop and evaluate interventions that make female initiated forms of protection available to women in the service industry; (5) advocacy, in which anthropologists work to support the objectives of groups seeking to redress inequities, consistent with the work of Schensul and Borrero (1982) seeking to generate a societal response to Hispanic health needs; and (6) activism, in which anthropologists work side by side with members of groups seeking to address inequities, such as the work of S.

Schensul, J. Schensul and M. Singer in the Puerto Rican community in Hartford, CT, and the many efforts of the Institute for Community Research to partner in advocacy resulting from research on health, education and other issues. This broad definition of engaged anthropology is very inclusive and most anthropologists would see themselves as “engaged” in some manner. As such, the term is a less useful rubric for classifying an anthropology seeking direct involvement and collaboration for transformative change in local communities.

Action Research

In action research, the action is meant to be transformative, that is to reverse oppressive power structures, organizational hierarchies or national systems that intentionally or unintentionally raise barriers for advocacy, voice or decision making. This form of action research has a long tradition in the Americas and elsewhere. In the U.S., this tradition has roots in the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and later on more focused issues such the environment, housing and health movements of the 1980s and 1990s. For example, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, S. Schensul and colleagues (1975; 1980) mounted an action research/community development approach from his base in the Community Mental Health Program of the Westside Medical Complex in Chicago. The approach that evolved brought anthropologists and Chicano community activists together to develop alternative service and cultural institutions during a time when federal resources were becoming available for the development of ethnically targeted programs. S. Schensul and family lived in the community, became part of community life and engaged in many activities with community activists to further the visibility and the economic, cultural and political development of the 18th and 26th street Chicano neighborhoods. This joint approach merged local knowledge and the tools of ethnographic research to build neighborhood social, cultural and health and mental health infrastructure created and administered by neighborhood based professionals. Alternative culturally-based drug and mental health programs were developed and funded, mental health paraprofessionals were trained in a unique program that was rooted in the diversities of Mexican health and cultural histories in the area and local groups were successful in building community educational institutions, a bilingual public education program, and a women’s health and leadership center (Schensul 1972; 1974; 1980).. The work of these early Chicano leaders, bolstered by formative research and program development, produced a new generation of activists that included elected public officials, a Chicano-oriented public high school, and a well recognized art museum.

The Chicago model established the importance of a long term commitment and residence in a community in finding approaches to the development of new ideas within ongoing community processes (e.g. introducing interventions into ongoing systems). It provided a means of culturally situating interventions and training efforts that could be conducted from a community base with community resources. It demonstrated that institutions and organizations that produced, taught and promoted community cultures were important in anchoring a community to its history and future development. By drawing anthropology and social science students into action research, it showed that this form of development work could provide an important field school setting but only if faculty senior anthropologists were involved to make the link between academic training and local program development and activism. Through linkages created with the National Institute of Mental Health, federal research funding could be channeled to a community organization and conducted by teams of community researchers and anthropologists.

The Chicago model, with its emphasis on building community organizations that establish a community's foothold and political place in a complex urban environment, has been adapted elsewhere (Singer and Weeks, 2005; Li et al., 2003; S. Schensul 1980; J. Schensul 2005; J. Schensul 2010; Hyland, 2005) . Many communities are now quite sophisticated in thinking about their need for information and are requesting very specific kinds of relationships with researchers, enhanced by federal efforts to promote community engagement in scientific research through centers for translational science, urban research, prevention research and the Carnegie initiative to promote engaged scholarship. Some HIV and translational research centers fund pilot collaborative studies directly to community organizations that enhance their capacity to take leadership in research to improve services to their constituencies. Further, organizations that accept funding to implement evidence based interventions are sometimes required to conduct their own evaluations, and seek the scientific capacity to carry out these evaluations. Community organizations that conduct research, such as the Institute for Community Research and the Hispanic Health Council have established their own institutional review boards, to review ethical practices in studies.

Community-based, participatory research (CBPR) Community-based, participatory research (CBPR) is a term coined by public health researchers to refer to research in which community partnerships are formed between researchers, community organizations, leaders, and individuals living in the community that minimize power inequities between researchers and research participants utilize research to effect change at the community level (Israel, et al. 1998). CBPR in public health, which developed well after many of the anthropologists writing about involvement in action, draws from many of the same sources of inspiration as action research in anthropology. Acceptance of this approach in public health has been demonstrated by federal agencies including the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that issued recommendations (AHRQ, 2003) to increase the use of CBPR in health care research in the United States. CBPR developed out of a growing recognition that traditional population-based biomedical research methodology lacked authentic community roots and often led to alienation of the community from both research and researchers. In certain instances, communities have come to view researchers not as natural allies but as self-interested exploiters of communities. Consequently, in CBPR-guided projects, the emphasis is placed on the central role of the involved community in setting the research agenda. In this approach, communities are guided by their experience-based concerns about specific health-related problems and the ways community or local knowledge can be put to use in addressing those health concerns. As the concept of CBPR has developed and its value recognized, various institutional efforts have been made to establish adoptable guidelines for successful and mutually satisfying participatory research initiatives.

Like action research projects initiated by anthropologists, CBPR projects use the concept of a local "community" as the unit of research (Israel, et al. 1998; Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). Further, CBPR supports and builds collaborative partnerships for the duration of the project with organizations and individuals within the community. Once these relationships have been established, the researcher must ensure that the interests of the community are represented in the research questions.

A primary goal of CBPR is to integrate knowledge and action for the benefit of all partners involved. Information is gathered to inform subsequent action. While not every project will have an intervention component, all CBPR projects strive to affect social change. CBPR also

promotes a co-learning and empowering process that facilitates transfer of information and skills between all parties involved. This principle recognizes that marginalized groups have often not had a voice in the research in which they have participated. CBPR-oriented researchers acknowledge the inequalities that may exist between researchers and community participants, and attempt to ameliorate these inequalities through an emphasis on information, resource, and skill sharing. CBPR also strives to be iterative and reflexive throughout the research process. As information and data are collected, researchers and community members refine methodologies and determine future actions. Research findings are disseminated to all collaborators in language that is understandable and accessible to all collaborators. This principle includes discussion of materials and findings with research participants prior to publication submission and the acknowledgement of the contributions of community collaborators. Research findings are to be disseminated to all collaborators (Israel, et al. 1998; Cornwall and Jewkes 1995) often in public forums or other public arenas.

Both the process of CBPR or any participatory research, and the dissemination of results may involve disagreements and require conflict negotiation. For example, -as Louis Marcelin, J. Bryan Page, and Merrill Singer's work in Haiti showed, unaligned sectors of involved communities were in significant disagreement with their study of attitudes about community development in Cite Soleil, Haiti. Presentation of research findings initially sharply splintered forum participants with pre-existing differences in political perspective. In the end, however, seeing the usefulness of the research and the extensive efforts to involve the community at every step in the process, participants met together to plan a strategy for community advancements.

There are many examples of CBPR in the literature; most of them, while collaborative, are missing several main features of anthropologically driven CBPR work. First, many of them are short rather than long term efforts, lasting for the duration of a project but not over long periods of time, although there are examples of community alliances that have lengthy duration that have been founded through university/community collaborations, and with which researchers such as Israel, Parker, Minkler and Wallerstein collaborate. (Israel, et al. 2001a; Israel, et al. 2001b; Minkler and Wallerstein 2011; Minkler, et al. 1997; Parker, et al. 2003; Wallerstein and Duran 2006).

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory action research" (Hagey, 1997) is the systematic data gathering process involving those affected by a social or health problem in a collaborative effort to conduct research that is then directed towards actions to alleviate the root causes of the problem. Thus, PAR is generally thought of as being transformative in all respects: it is research directed toward structural, policy or other higher order changes; it is conducted by affected groups; and in the process, brings about change in individual level capacity, power, influence and voice. PAR becomes the basis for the analysis of political structures impeding access of marginalized and oppressed groups, indigenous people, impoverished and exploited workers, and the use of that analysis to spearhead radical political actions. The analysis of oppressive structures stems in large part from the earlier work of Paulo Freire (1970) who used visual images to help rural farmers to understand inequitable distribution of resources and to ask about the root causes of these inequities. The work was continued by Fals Borda (1979; 1987) and others who used PAR to assist in the mobilization of indigenous populations in Colombia.

PAR also has been used as a form of critical pedagogy in which adults and children whose voices have been silenced, learn from and with researchers ((Berg, et al. 2009; J. Schensul, et al. 2008; J. Schensul, et al. 2004; Sydlo, et al. 2000, Cammarota, 2008 #9) to use ethnographic methods along with other group and capacity building techniques, to identify issues that affect them directly, study them with their peers and others who may hold power over them, and use the results to advocate for transformational change, or social or educational improvements or both. This form of PAR, which also addresses concerns about open discussion of research findings, is a way of democratizing science, i.e. conceptualizing theory for action and making it available to those who need information to bring about social change. At the same time, like other forms of PAR, it transforms the researchers, creating opportunities for improving communications and critical analysis skills. Because this form of PAR, like other approaches, is always conducted by groups, it forges group voice which increases potential for power and influence. This form of PAR resembles the political agenda framed by Fals Borda (1987) but at times it places more emphasis on the development of critical consciousness through collective efficacy which may or may not be specific political action.

PAR for community development has been advanced by the work of William Foote Whyte and colleagues (1991; Greenwood et al., 1993) both in the U.S. and internationally. This approach engages university based “intellectuals” or politicized scholars working collaboratively with marginalized or underserved communities on issues of infrastructure (housing, economic development and education), political inclusion and voice. They explore ways of transferring research technology such that community organizations have more control over the research process. These researchers are empirical in their approach using research technology to address community questions over time, and direct their attention to communities experiencing inequities. By collaboration, they mean integrating local community knowledge into policy through PAR (Davis and Reid 1999).

Feminist PAR is rooted in social psychology, phenomenology, empowerment theory and the social construction of knowledge. It focuses on the co-construction of knowledge based on lived experience. Most feminist PAR scholar activists work with relatively small groups of women to assist them, using reflexive research techniques, and auto-ethnography, including performance ethnography (performing their lives), to help them to reflect together on barriers to self efficacy, personal and group achievement, and external structural and political dynamics that restrict their voices (Goodman et al, 2007; Gatenby and Humphries 2000; Reid et al., 2006; Maguire 2006).

Many, though not all forms of PAR utilize a critical perspective, emphasizing structures and processes through which power is exerted in smaller and larger social structures. Baer et al. (2003) refer to these as the vertical linkages that tie a social group to the larger regional, national, and even global human society in often unequal social, political and economic relationships. J. Schensul (2013) uses the term “eco-critical” to acknowledge the ways in which power differentials shape the interaction of individuals, groups and organizations at various levels within a social ecosystem. Critical anthropology including critical medical anthropology emphasizes structures of power and inequality in health or other systems that reinforce inequalities worldwide (Baer and Singer, 2003). Moreover, critical medical anthropology addresses the social origins of health and mental illness, including the ways in which poverty,

discrimination, stigmatization, trauma and other forms of structural violence contribute to poor community health and well-being.

A Shift to Transformational Research (TR) After considerable debate, the authors have moved toward the term “transformational research” in referring to forms of applied anthropology that address community or group inequity resulting from unequal distribution of political, economic social and informational resources. By “transformation” we mean acting to bring about changes in social structures to equalize power relationships and improve access to resources and power. The concept also brings with it the notion of personal and group transformation that shifts consciousness to recognize more fully the roots of inequality, and the responsibility of the researchers to collaborate with communities and groups in the production of results and in the generation of policy implications and interventions. The principles of transformational research emerging from anthropological experience include:

1. The use of anthropological research to reduce imbalances in political power and economic resources, limited access to needed resources, and environmental constraints.
2. Developing and building personal and enduring relationships with members of local communities experiencing inequities.
3. Engaging local groups and community members in research as an approach to strengthening community organizing and community development
4. Sharing knowledge and research technology resources.
5. Involving researchers in community activism, development and transformational change as a means of solidifying relationships with communities, shaping and transforming their socio-political perspectives, and improving research.
6. Enhancing the ability of marginalized populations to access, utilize and conduct research that addresses their needs and aspirations.
7. Co-constructing research with community members and groups that seeks to understand and have maximum effect on remedying social inequities and structural violence
8. Generating empirical data, using a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative methods as a basis for the positions and actions of both community members and anthropologists.
9. Contributing through these processes to anthropological theory, method and data related to human and community development and transformational change and its limitations.

Personal and political values come into play in taking this stance insofar as it requires a commitment to specific partners, processes and forms of social change, especially as viewed through the lens of community collaborators. At the same time, rigorous empirical research is required to raise critical questions and answer them through the production of results that fare well under scrutiny. This is critical to ensure the credibility of the results, and those presenting them and to maximize their impact. Finally, anthropologists who take a transformational research approach contribute directly to the goals, aspiration and actions of the communities with which they seek to collaborate. At the same time, they maintain an active role in the discipline of anthropology through publications, presentations at anthropology meetings and elected and appointed positions in anthropological associations. And whenever possible they introduce their community collaborators to these opportunities to contribute to scholarly work, and intellectual debate.

Opportunities for conducting transformational research

There are several bases that have the possibility to provide anthropologists with the freedom and flexibility to operationalize transformational research principles:

University departments or centers provide some flexibility for anthropological involvement in underserved communities or groups. Faculty members have time, student resources, and academic freedom to pursue a variety of topics. They must however overcome the natural inertia of remaining on campus rather than venturing into communities, the pressure for rapid publication and grant-getting, the greater value sometimes accorded a distant field site to one that is local and the natural delays and need for negotiation that must accompany this kind of community and community involvement. It must be recognized that anthropologists who seek to be involved both in the university and in the community must commit significant time and effort to both initiatives. Effective programs that seek to implement transformational research cannot just send out students to communities but must also have faculty engagement so that students can learn under the guidance (apprenticeship) of an experienced anthropologist. Courses that integrate in class examination of anthropological theory and practice with field-based hands-on guided experience in action research in the community can provide a powerful learning approach for students. Community service learning, which has gained considerable attention within the academy in recent years, provides one context for this approach to merging engaged pedagogy and transformational research.

International Organizations. Intervention programs are often frequently based in international organizations (WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank), bilateral organizations (USAID, CIDA, GTZ) and private voluntary organizations (PVOs such as PATH, Pathfinder, John Snow, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and many others). Anthropologists have been playing prominent roles in these organizations since the 1980s. Their assignments can include a specific set of responsibilities for formative research, adapting the intervention to the cultural context and evaluating outcomes. Under some circumstances, anthropologists can define part of their role to include community involvement and community facilitation (see Schensul, 1974). However the flexibility to engage and develop approaches that meet action research guidelines are achieved only when anthropologists have a clear view of their skills and identities, a set of objectives, and the opportunities to negotiate flexibility into their roles.

Community based research institutes such as the Hispanic Health Council and the Institute for Community Research in Hartford, CT provide both a community base for and a strong commitment to empirically based, action research (see Singer 2003; S. Schensul and J. Schensul 1978; J. Schensul 2010). The original mission of the Hispanic Health Council was to conduct research training and advocacy to improve the health of the Puerto Rican community of Hartford. Over its 30 year history, the relative role and importance of research has shifted depending on funding, personnel and the need for community service. Its goal, however remains to integrate research and services to promote health improvements among Latinos in central Connecticut.

The mission of the Institute for Community Research is to conduct research in collaboration with community partners to promote justice and equity in a diverse, multiethnic, multicultural world. It engages and supports community-based research partnerships to reverse inequities, promote positive changes in public health and education, and foster cultural conservation and development. For the past nearly 25 years, ICR together with many partners, has experimented with a variety of different approaches to carrying out research, integrated with education, training policy promotion, participatory action research, and community cultural development. Both organizations represent “community-based research organizations, a type of institution that places research goals, methodologies and results in the hands of community constituencies.” There are a growing number of activist oriented community based research and evaluation organizations that, if organized, would offer a compelling force for social justice and transformational change (J. Schensul, 2010). The Community Based Research Organization (CBRO) model allows for flexibility in hiring practices, administrative modalities, collaborative structures and the use of research for social justice purposes

Methodologies for transformational research

Transformational research must be based on an empirically-based methodology that utilizes and triangulates qualitative and quantitative data. All of the specific data collection methods in this Handbook could be utilized within a framework of transformational research. However there are several unique features of the ways it is organized and implemented that constitute an identifiable methodology for this approach to the applied study of the human condition.

(1) Entry into the community

The process of entering a community for purposes of conducting research has been well described in anthropology. For the most part, anthropologists provide a general description of the goals and methods of their research and convey these explanations to community gatekeepers, leaders and key informants. These explanations are quickly forgotten as these potential research allies and facilitators focus more on the personality and motivation of the field researcher. Over time, the development of rapport and relationships and the researcher’s trustworthiness can create an environment that allows anthropologists to proceed with their own field work. There are instances in the course of researcher-directed fieldwork, when a group or community may call upon an anthropologist to provide data and input that might address a need for intervention or advocacy (this would be called “sharing and support” in engaged anthropology or “testimony” in advocacy anthropology). However in the case of transformational research, anthropologists are not interested simply in entering the field to study an issue or question of their own choice. The transformational researcher enters a community, seeking collaborative relationships with groups experiencing injustices or disparities to identify together with them a range of issues that are problematic for them. These issues may be shaped by the limitations of the anthropologist’s organizational base, interests, and the priorities of the community. Information on these issues and the individuals and groups addressing them can be collected through key informant interviews, observation at governmental, organizational and community meetings, available archival and secondary data (e.g. school performance, court and police records, prior surveys). This initial phase can identify competing sectors and organizations, factions, and differential approaches to change as well as partners for change.

For example, S. Schensul's entry into the Mexican American community on the Westside of Chicago (Schensul and Bakszys, 1972) was facilitated by a key informant who arranged meetings with key community activists and provided entry into community meetings, bars and recreational settings; these contacts and settings made it clear that official Chicago had failed to recognize the growing Hispanic population from the point of view of their health, educational and recreational needs. Ten years later when he entered the Puerto Rican community in Hartford, Ct., key informants presented the same picture in the realms of health, housing and education (Schensul and Borrero, 1984).

Margaret Weeks entered the "AIDS" community by seeking out relationships with all AIDS related organizations in the Hartford area. Similarly, Jean Schensul's efforts to situate the Institute for Community Research by developing a support base for research in a skeptical urban environment, required meetings and negotiations with numerous community organizations representing different ethnic/racial and special interest constituencies over a two year period after which it became relatively easy to enter into research collaborations.

(2) Developing relationships with citizen action groups

Transformational researchers seek to use the results of the research for social change or social justice ends. For this reason, they look for partners who are interested in using information to advocate for and introduce change strategies at multiple levels. While these partners and collaborators may be individuals, the more likely situation is that like-minded individuals from the community have banded together in citizen groups or community-based organizations with an agenda of service and change. Once these groups have been identified, anthropologists need to develop relationships and rapport and identify opportunities to demonstrate the contributions of research and information gathering that mesh with the agenda of the group. Relationships start with attending meetings, conducting key informant interviews with leaders, identifying group goals, and understanding the group's history and functioning, and building rapport, while finding opportunities to demonstrate the utility of research.

Every community has issues and residents who have already formed, or will form collectives to address those issues. Regardless of whether the scope of the problem is big or small, an action researcher needs to engage with these individuals and collectives. It may well be that the engagement is not at all about what the researcher is interested in or focused on, but rather, about any issue in which individuals and groups are interested. The most important element is that the anthropologist shows interest in community needs and keeps in mind that even if the research is in a topic area with which the anthropologist is unfamiliar, partnerships with other researchers can be sought to fill the gap. The engagement is most likely to start with small scale contributions that researchers can deliver relatively easily. In doing so, transformational researchers develop rapport and relationships with members of the group, become familiar with group dynamics, learn about the how advocacy can occur, and begin a process of joint planning for both the research and the action. It has been our experience that one actionable issue evolves into others, developing long term relationships that can generate successful outcomes.

As one example, S. Schensul began his work in the Department of Community Medicine at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine seeking to link the School with citizen groups involved in health action. One of the groups consisted of a public housing tenants group

addressing community health problems. At an initial meeting, tenants determined that we could be helpful with the “rat problem.” Tenants were being accused by the Hartford Housing Authority and the City Health Department of throwing garbage on the streets rather than in the available dumpsters. Tenants, in turn, complained that the Housing Authority failed to respond to requests to pick up the garbage or repair what residents believed were leaky dumpsters, leading to the “rat problem.” Schensul and anthropology students were asked by tenant leaders to identify and document the leaky dumpsters and the rat holes near the dumpsters. At 5:00 am they photographed the dumpsters as they were picked up by the private garbage service, documenting garbage spewing from massive holes on the sides and bottom. These photographs and the mapping of rat holes were the “data” presented at a meeting of the City Health Department. The outcome of the meeting resulted in the provision of new dumpsters to the community and a change in the dumpster contractor. The success of this event showed tenants that they could advocate for their own needs and use research as a weapon in this process. This action expanded the tenants group, involved both faculty and students of the University of Connecticut, and, after three years of struggle, led to the establishment of a Community Health Center in the housing project.

(3) Mutual learning

Anthropology has a long tradition in which the field researcher becomes a learner while becoming integrated into the study community. A relationship that involves the researcher in regular contact with a citizen’s action group provides the opportunity for mutual learning. Anthropologists provide information on formulating research questions, systematic data collection methodology, opportunities for systematic data collection to contribute to action and training of group and CBO personnel to participate in all aspects of the research process. At the same time, involvement in the organization offers the anthropologist the opportunity to learn about the power structure in a local area, what issues can be addressed, what approaches to advocacy might be effective, how to disseminate research results and to whom, the transformation of research results into action, and the successes and failures of underrepresented groups working with the researchers, in their efforts for transformational change.

(4) Timing and action

Anthropologists involved in basic research in the academy are generally under time pressure to generate results and publications primarily for the promotion and tenure process. Transformational researchers however, must respond in a timely and sometimes immediate way to another form of pressure; the pressure to maximize the impact of their data and results in order to ensure that community groups achieve their desired outcomes. Events that have profound implications for the community, for example the imminent dislocation of residents, a bill being heard in a legislative body that affects health care or educational choice, a change in school policy, an incident involving discrimination at a local hospital and other such events generally require rapid organizing, a public action and a series of time-limited outcomes. The transformational researcher, committed to the objectives that have been collaboratively established with community and other groups, must deliver research results at the right time and in the right format.

For example, S. Schensul was well into his work in the Mexican American community on the West Side of Chicago in the 1970s, when he was asked by a community group to develop a

research plan that could document problems in the implementation of the “Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program. In response, he devised a methodology requiring three months that involved observations in the classroom, in-depth interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents and a month of data analysis and report writing. While the community group was appreciative of the effort, they pointed out that they wanted to document the implementation of the program and present the results to the US Civil Rights Commission meeting in Chicago in two weeks. In what was later described as *commando research* (see S. Schensul, 1978), the group decided to organize teams of three persons each including a member of the research staff. Watches were synchronized and each team presented ourselves at exactly 11:00 am in each school in the district and asked to see the TESL classroom. In one hour the teams in the 18 schools had talked with the principals, observed the classrooms, and conducted brief interviews with both the teachers and the students. The results showed that TESL was being poorly implemented, teachers were monolingual English speakers, classrooms were in basement boiler rooms and other dilapidated areas of the school and both teachers and children complained about learning and teaching limitations. A plan for data collection that was originally planned for three months was more effectively implemented through an hour of data gathering and a week of data analysis and brief report writing. The process provided a compelling case of TESL non-compliance leading the US Civil Rights Commission to mandate the Chicago Public School System to upgrade implementation.

This example illustrates the use of rapid research methodologies that can facilitate some action research. Rapid ethnographic assessment methods, which developed as streamlined versions of more traditional ethnographic research, have been used internationally in public health and in response to other community issues for many years. Rapid assessment techniques include qualitative data collection strategies such as direct observation of behavior, in-depth interviews, and informal interviewing in field setting. Often these approaches are complemented by the collection of survey data and the examination of secondary data sources (e.g., government records, public health information, media reports). Commonly, rapid assessments involve communities in the formulation of research issues, data collection, data analysis, and the translation of findings into action initiatives (Trotter and Singer, 2007; Beebe 2001; Scrimshaw and Gleason 1992). However, on-going commitment to a group or community consists of both rapid and long-term research that builds a body of data and trusted collaborations available both for current and future challenges.

At the same time, community collaboration may slow the process of moving from data collection to results. S. Schensul as Principal Investigator of a grant to the Hispanic Health Council sought to speed up the process of analysis of survey data in the Puerto Rican community by taking it back to the University to work on with colleagues. The response by Council staff was that they wanted to be full participants and as such the data and the analysis should take place at the Council. S.Schensul reluctantly agreed and as a consequence several months were added to the time required for analysis and dissemination of the data. On the other hand, joint analysis resulted in better interpretations and a stronger sense of ownership of the data.

(5) *Formulating data collection activities*

The transformational researcher involved in relationships with communities and groups needs to develop a research agenda to do two things: (1) gain a broad-based understanding of the context

of both the community or local setting and its relationship to the wider society. These data can be collected through key informants, in-depth interviews with residents and members of the group, primary and secondary survey data that characterizes the community and its various sub-populations, and documentation of the resources available to the community from the political, economic and service sectors. Schensul et al. (2012) refer to this as community level assessments; and (2) focus on targeted topical issues consistent with the action agenda of the community or group or new issues that arise unexpectedly either through new or unexpected events, or from ongoing research.

For example, the Hispanic Health Council received a grant from the Office of Minority Health of NIMH to document the health and mental health needs of the Puerto Rican community in Hartford. One question on the study's survey focused on contraceptive use. The first set of 30 respondents indicated very low use of reversible contraceptives, but a very high level of sterilization, particularly among women younger than 21 years of age. The survey was refined with more extensive questions about sterilization such as timing and consent. The survey found that sterilization was highly prevalent, that many women were sterilized after their second child at an age younger than 21 and many women were unclear that the procedure was, in most cases, irreversible. The collection of these survey data and the follow-up qualitative interviews was presented at a press conference and a legislative sub-committee leading to significant changes in the in the laws and procedures associated with sterilization (S. Schensul et al., 1982).

A three year study of HIV exposure among residents of senior housing in Hartford and Chicago conducted by the Institute for Community Research in Hartford, CT., indicated higher than anticipated levels of depression symptoms. The research team investigated this further by talking with residents and management about depression and isolation. The results showed that depression was indeed a problem that needed to be addressed. An interdisciplinary research team developed another three year study examining barriers to mental health care in older adult residents of senior housing. The study consortium of clinics and older adult advocates expanded the research model and added many questions investigating factors contributing to depression as well as to inability to access care. Questions about social networks were added to try to address the social isolation that advocates mentioned in discussion (Disch et al. 2007).

Similarly, the Hispanic Health Council initiated a survey on community perceptions of food insecurity among Latinos, including the availability of food in households in the last week of months. This approach was used because of community complaints about low incomes and food stamps being insufficient for a full month of family food consumption in an era of rising food prices. Working with community food activists, findings of this research were used to work with the city of Hartford in addressing limited food resources in the city (Romero-Daza et al., 1999; Himmelgreen et al., 2000).

The specific action agenda of a citizen group will initially structure the data collection activities. These data collection activities will yield new perspectives and issues that become integrated into the action agenda. In addition, broad based data collection is needed to undergird future activities and as we have just seen can, by itself, generate action issues. Over time, both the broad based and the focused data collection activities accumulate a base of data that simultaneously can serve both action needs and contribute to overall anthropological knowledge.

(6) Seeking external funding

The ability to maintain an extensive research agenda that can keep up with advocacy and action on community issues requires staff and financial resources. The recognition in 1974 (the Latina Mother-Infant Research Project awarded to Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Chicago) and 1977 (the Latino Mental Health Research Project, Hispanic Health Council, Hartford) that community groups could be the recipients of NIH funding opened up a new era in the way action research could be conducted. The recent change allowing joint Principal Investigators creates the opportunity for multiple institutions (community groups, research institutes, universities) to share more equitably in research grants.

The acquisition of research grants requires the transformational researcher to compete against primarily university-based peers without always having the extensive infrastructure required to be successful. Writing competitive research grants to government and foundation sources calls for a comprehensive understanding of the literature and skill in research design (e.g. randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental design), intervention development and implementation, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. At the same time, grants need to link the proposed grant application to the action agenda. The generation of good proposals is a creative process that can involve community partners in conceptualization and methods when done well. Collaborative grant writing always produces more authentic, grounded, and realistically do-able and community-relevant proposals.

Community-based grant writing initiatives provide a foundation for unification of the efforts of multiple community organizations. In Hartford, for example, multiple agencies working on issues of HIV came together as consortia to conceptualize and address significant issues in the community including substance use among youth, HIV prevention, substance abuse among pregnant women, depression in older adults, and a variety of other concerns. Anthropologists at the Institute for Community Research and the Hispanic Health Council worked closely together and with researchers from other institutions to articulate community concerns in grants submitted to federal funding agencies (Singer, 2000; Weeks et al., 1995; Schensul 1999, Book 3). In all cases, receipt of the grants facilitated the discussion of other issues of concern across community organizations working for social change especially in HIV.

(7) Training lay people to participate in research and intervention studies. A key element of transformational research process is the inclusion of community action groups and their members in all steps of the research process. Members of these groups frequently have lived experience in the issues facing the community, entry into multiple sectors, language capacity, commitment and recognition that there is more to know and that research can be an important tool in action and development. They lack formal training and degrees in research conceptualization and methods, yet their knowledge of the community and commitment to the action make them valuable partners in the research process.

It is the responsibility of the action researcher to work collaboratively with action leaders who will be collaborators in conceptualizing research and community people who will assist in carrying out the research. The ideal goal is that action leaders come to understand research,

frame research questions and assess appropriate methodology, while researchers understand the dynamics of action and the role that research data can play in enhancing successful outcomes.

There are a number of ways in which lay leaders become community researchers. One primary approach is to include integration of community residents as members of a study's research team. Residents have many skills that can be brought to bear on intervention or basic research projects. These include knowledge of community history and politics, extensive social capital, ability to reach so-called hidden populations (such as injection or other drug users, young gay men or men with asthma), and a very good sense of what research tools and approaches might or might not work in their communities of reference. With proper training, their legitimacy with the study population enables them to reach, and interview people that "outsider" researchers might be unable to reach regardless of their years in the community. Many organizations, university research centers and researchers hire community residents as members of research teams. Hierarchies of knowledge and authority coupled with established pay scales make it difficult, however, to ensure that community researchers, who may at times have less than a high school degree, are paid equitably for their skills or treated with respect for their knowledge. An action research approach, combined with the effort to situate research within community organizations, can do much to alleviate these structural inequities.

Training community residents to do research as members of a research team has its roots in the 1970s. In our experience, it began with the training of women in Chicago's west side Mexican American community to think about and, with funding, to conduct research on the benefits of continuing the *cuarentena*, the traditional 40 day period following the birth of a child when mother and child are sequestered and the mother supported by friends and family members as the child begins its new life (Gaviria et al, 1981).

Both the Institute for Community Research and the Hispanic Health Council have hired and reciprocally trained community researchers as core members of research teams, for nearly three decades. Anthropologists J. Schensul, Singer and Weeks have directed multiple community research initiatives to address pressing health needs including substance abuse, HIV-AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, hepatitis, community violence, depression, female initiated protection methods, community violence and other topics. All of these projects involved the training of outreach and intervention staff from the community in multi-method research (e.g. Singer et al., 1991; Weeks et al., 2006; J. Schensul 2006).

A second approach is to train community residents to do their own research. We have referred to this approach earlier as PAR for political action, or critical PAR, and the development of critical consciousness and collective self-efficacy. We have described the process as one way of democratizing science (J. Schensul 2002); that is, making the methods, theories and results of science available for use by lay or community researchers. The first effort to implement this approach occurred in the context of a National Institute for Education (NIE) funded project based at La Casa de Puerto Rico, in Hartford, to train community educational activists to learn research and evaluation methods in order to monitor the newly granted bilingual consent decree. With this three year project, J. Schensul and a team of community advocates together trained more than 35 community educational research activists to do ethnographic research to monitor

important educational processes in the community; many of these trainees are still active in the Hartford area, and beyond, and several obtained educational leadership doctorates over time.

The Institute for Community Research has used a similar approach with adult activists in a wide variety of ICR projects. The first of these projects funded by a local foundation, involved more than 40 community organizations and residents groups as partners in an alternative census and neighborhood survey process. Resident groups and CBOs in each of 11 city neighborhoods and six municipalities structured their own questionnaires with help from ICR research staff, to focus on topics of concern to them. They also created an alternative form of the Census short form. They engaged in data collection, and conversations around data analysis, and received the data, plus a report on each neighborhood/municipality, and instructions on how to make use of their neighborhood data set (LeCompte et al., 1992).

A second, four year project brought together five women's organizations, and women from different parts of the city of Hartford to define, collect and analyze data on women for use by women's advocacy groups including the project steering community. The women spoke to city and state representatives about the issues on which their research focused, got college credit for their work, and many went on to become leaders in city political circles (J. Schensul et al. 2008). ICR has also implemented this approach with children and youth for over 20 years, with federal, state and foundation funding and more recently suburban youth have used ethnographic methods to study many issues affecting them including stress, teen pregnancy, teen dating violence, sexual harassment, abuse, dropping out of school, drug use, hustling, racism, and diverted substances (prescription medications). They have used the results to make public presentations to legislators at the state and local levels, to advocate for jobs for youth, to speak out against racism, and to develop prevention strategies, and to advocate against binge drinking and illicit substance use. ICR studies have also involved community residents in the creation of culturally appropriate intervention materials in a process that matches their local knowledge with a critical analysis of scientific knowledge, and the production and implementation of materials that reflect their synthesis of the two (J. Schensul, 2009). Recently in a study led by researchers J. Schensul and Reisine with older adults in senior housing integrated local and expert knowledge oral health into a set of interactive health promotion materials, and delivered them in social marketing campaigns to large numbers of residents in senior housing in the Hartford CT area.

In a similar example, Margaret Weeks provided leadership for the Risk Avoidance Partnership (RAP) study, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), that was designed to train illicit drug users to become Peer Health Advocates (PHAs) to deliver intervention to their drug using peers in high risk sites and at times when it would be most appropriate and effective. The goal was to support the prevention of HIV, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, and other common infectious and chronic diseases and risks among injection drug users and crack smokers in Hartford. The study was designed using intensive ethnography of the process and effects of the PHA training program and the PHA-delivered intervention on their networks, tracking the network characteristics of the PHAs and their contacts for changes in risk and intervention "action," and using multiple time point survey and narrative interviews with a cohort of Hartford drug users (PHAs and their contacts). A key feature of the study was PHA involvement in the development of prevention materials (referred to as the RAP Flipbook) to be used by other PHAs in intercept interventions with members of their drug using networks. A mixed-method and

integrated qualitative/quantitative approach with a longitudinal design allowed for a deep examination of both process and outcomes of the intervention at the community and drug-user macro network levels needed to understand the intervention being implemented and its effects (Weeks et al, 2009; Dickson-Gomez et al., 2006; Weeks et al., 2006).

A third initiative involves training community based organizations to conduct research. Usually CBOs are interested in understanding their constituencies better or expanding their constituencies, obtaining information on a new problem so they can seek funding to address it, evaluating their own programs or working more effectively with researchers. Anthropologists have been involved for some time in a variety of efforts to train CBOs to do research for their own use. Internationally this takes the form of rapid appraisal or community assessment (Theis and Grady 1991). For the most part, the CBPR movement, which emphasizes the engagement of organizations in health related research, does not have a track record of training organizational partners to do their own research, although there are exceptions in the field of HIV research (Sanstad, et al. 1999). More recently research capacity building for CBOs has been fostered by the CTSA movement, under the rubric of community engagement, and the more progressive CTSAAs for example, those in New York and San Francisco are providing some ethnographic training to their community based partners. The Institute for Community Research has offered research training to CBOs in Hartford and New Haven under the umbrella of Yale's Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA), with which it has partnered since its inception. Training has consisted of orientation to ethnography, basic data collection methods and analysis, and participatory and other forms of evaluation. Most recently, ICR has embarked upon training with CBOs that provides a framework for critique of and more effective knowledge based participation in clinical and other forms of controlled trials. Such training prepares CBOs and their clients to develop an informed voice as science policy is formulated and implemented with respect to advances in clinical medicine (e.g. genetically tailored medicine), new medications, and new forms of medical technology.

S. Schensul (2009) has trained many members of the study community in Mumbai with special emphasis on observation, key informant and in-depth interviews, freelists and pilesorts and administration of survey instruments. Singer and colleagues (Malta et al., 2008) trained activists from the commercial sex worker population and service sector in Brazil in grant writing to assist them in addressing identified needs related to HIV prevention.

(8) Dissemination and uses of results.

The publication of research results in the form of articles in peer-reviewed journals, books and book chapters are an essential part of conducting scientific research, important for a productive image in competing for research grants and a requirement for individual academic advancement. We strongly urge transformational researchers to publish in these forms as crucial to action goals and to individual careers. It is also critical that such work be co-authored with community collaborators who make vital contributions to conceptualization, methods, data collection and interpretation of findings.

However, for transformational researchers, these modes of dissemination while necessary are insufficient. First and foremost, they have a responsibility to broadly disseminate findings in the communities in which research is conducted. This means working with community advisors in

identifying the best methods to share findings and the ideal format and language for community dissemination. Further, the transformational researcher must not only produce results but be involved in the translation of their policy and intervention iterations. These realms may include: community education (Singer, 1993), policy maker awareness (Singer 1993), designing community and culturally appropriate interventions (S. Schensul, 2009), press releases (J. Schensul et al, 1984), web postings (J. Schensul, 2010), pictorial representations (J. Schensul, 2010); gallery exhibits and public programming (J. Schensul 2010). In all of these realms it is most important for the transformational researcher to modify the format to enhance comprehension, gauge audience response allowing for further modification in researcher interpretation, and identify strategies for change and intervention that emerge through discussion of results. The results of research for purposes of policy change and intervention programming is always a work in progress if the end goal is community development and positive social change.

(9) Long Term relationships

The authors have had the opportunity and commitment to work with groups and communities over an extended period of time. S. Schensul worked in the Mexican American community in Chicago for seven years on site and continued contacts for many years. In a conference on the “Science of Community Intervention” in Chicago, in 2009, Schensul in collaboration with Ayala, Schensul, Capoccio and Giachello and Stern (2009) presented a case study that encompassed over 40 years of community development work in Chicago’s west side Mexican community. S. Schensul was actively involved in inner-city Hartford for 14 years, in Sri Lanka for 15 years and in India for more than a decade. J. Schensul has been involved in Hartford for more than three decades and India for over a decade, Margaret Weeks in Hartford for two decades and China for two decades and Merrill Singer for almost three decades in Hartford. With this continuity, the authors and their collaborators have been able to compile the results of short and longer term action research projects into a substantial data base that can provide on-going information and measurements of change. Building a base of action related knowledge and making progress in terms of action simply cannot be fit into one to two year time increments. Instead, success in contributing to social changes that make a difference in the lives of residents requires five to ten years to ensure sustainability and institutionalization. Both timely response and long term commitment are essential components of transformational research.

Discussion

Transformational research as an approach may not be appropriate for all anthropologists, However, those anthropologists who choose this route by working together with communities experiencing resource challenges and inequities frequently find it both consuming and highly satisfying. Satisfaction comes from long-established, rewarding and often life-long personal relationships, the pleasure of doing research that is immediately useful, and the positive effects of research on the quality of life of community residents and the building of community institutions and organizations.

At the same time, regardless of base, action research involves simultaneous involvement in multiple sectors, each of which demands considerable time and effort and commitment. Simultaneous involvement in ongoing community-based action research efforts while continuing to engage in a meaningful relationship with the discipline of anthropology requires meeting the very different needs, expectations, obligations and outputs of each sector, which frequently do

not overlap. The requirements of a transformational research approach mean that anthropologists rarely choose to act alone. Thus ideas, theories, initiatives, methods, analysis, results and interpretations require continuous negotiation. These negotiations can lead to delays, modifications in research design and methods, and in data analysis and interpretation. In some cases, initiatives could be rejected completely.

Dissemination and use of the data by communities for purposes of policy change and organizational transformations is never through the preparation of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and academic presentations. Transformational research requires anthropologists to develop modes of dissemination that are amenable to lay audiences of policymakers, community residents, electronic and print media and specialized groups (e.g. adolescents, teachers, intravenous drug users). The greatest majority of anthropologists exit graduate school with few skills in this area and are required to learn on the job. S. Schensul developed a detailed report on the communities in the catchment area for the Board of the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute early in his work with the Westside Community Mental Health Program in Chicago only to learn that five of the 20 pages had been inadvertently left out of the copies; even more devastating was that not one of the members of the Board had noticed, leaving a clear unobtrusive measure of the degree to which it was read.

Anthropologists for the most part are unprepared for the rough and tumble world of action where just having the data that firmly supports a particular position may be important but insufficient to affect actions. S. Schensul in his early days in the Mexican community on the Westside of Chicago became involved with community activists in the effort to fight displacement of a series of buildings that were to be torn down for a gas station. He collected data on the demography of the residents, their rental costs, the hardships of their finding a new residential location and the lack of need for another gas station in the community given the close proximity of many others. The data were presented to a positive response by the Chicago Zoning Board. In his naiveté he failed to understand the power of the oil companies. A week after the hearing he passed by the area to find that the buildings were torn down, the gas station put up and customers were pumping gas.

Communities are complex entities with many different sectors. The anthropologist may be committed to work with “the community” but, which sector and what if there are significant differences in point of view and action? For example, the Mexican American community in Chicago in the early seventies consisted of a majority of first generation migrants directly from Mexico, with significant numbers of Mexicans from the southwest US (“bracers” derived from “braceros”) as well as increasing numbers of second and third generation Chicanos. Most of the activists in the community came from this second and third generation group and were committed to the developing “brown power” movement. At the same time, many of the more middle class, bracers held conservative views that clashed with the younger activists. The recent migrants in the community kept a low profile since many of them were undocumented. S. Schensul had entered the community through the activist sector who matched him in terms of age and interests. It was only after systematic surveys and qualitative data collection that he and the activists recognized the divisions in the community and developed strategies to address the needs of the different sectors. At the same time, S. Schensul required a post-graduate course in

power politics and community mobilization, which he was fortunate to acquire over the course of seven years in working with community activists.

The issues to which anthropologists who are committed to action research are involved are not easily addressed and while there may be short term “victories,” they are for the most part long term “sloughs.” After a 40 year history of anthropological involvement in the Westside Mexican American community, anthropologists and activists concluded that the issues of *la migre*, bilingual education, gangs, health disparities, culturally sensitive services and many others, while showing some improvement were still very much present in 2009 as they were in 1969. The health and human problems that stem from structural inequities cannot be addressed entirely at the local level and are likely to take generations/decades to resolve. Furthermore, the immediate consequences of inequities may not be resolved through taking direct action, but through economic development and political mobilization. Anthropologists must understand the long term nature of change and appreciate the process of action and the development of new institutions and organizations that increase a community’s ability to advocate for its needs and develop resources to meet those needs.

Transformational research can make anthropology a more “engaged” “public” “action” oriented discipline. while still making a major contribution to the “science” of anthropology (S. Schensul, 1985). The typical anthropological study involves the development of theory, the testing of that theory through data collection in the field and the modification of that theory based on the results of data analysis. Transformational research pushes the anthropologist beyond this point to test the adequacy of the modified theory by generating policy change that emerges from the modified theory to be tested in subsequent data collection procedures. These ongoing iterations include the natural validation of theory through action/intervention as experimentation. In addition, these iterations must also account for the impact of policy changes, events both in the community and in society in the course of time. The long term commitment of anthropologists and their partners to transformational research allows this sequence of theory, data collection and intervention to evolve multiple times leading both to an improved anthropological science and to a well-defined and important contribution to under-resourced groups and communities.

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