

APPLIED ETHNOGRAPHY AND CUSAG AT 25!

Scientific Session Abstracts Submitted for the 2015 Annual Meetings of the the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), Pittsburgh, PA (March 24-28)

A. Program Abstract

WHITEHEAD, T.L. (University of Maryland) and BUTLER, M.O (University of Maryland). APPLIED ETHNOGRAPHY AND CUSAG AT 25! The Cultural Systems Analysis Group (CuSAG) is an applied ethnographic research, training and technical assistance unit at the University of Maryland. This session was organized to celebrate CuSAG's 25th anniversary. The paper presenters in this session include Whitehead, CuSAG's founding director reporting on the research system that has informed the design and implementation of most of CuSAG's past and current projects; and former and current professional and student CuSAG associates and staff members. The second session in this two-part program will consist of a discussion by leaders in the fields of Anthropology and ethnography.

B. Session 1

1. Abstracts of First Five Papers

WHITEHEAD, T.L. (University of Maryland) THE CULTURAL ECOLOGY OF HEALTH & CHANGE: CODIFYING THE CULTURE CONCEPT AS AN INTERPRETIVE HUMAN SCIENCE. The author argues that a traditional opposition to methodological standardization in cultural anthropology/ethnography has made it difficult for its practitioners to be taken seriously when working in interdisciplinary groups where such standardization is viewed as a necessary attribute of science. He goes on to argue that some level of standardization is a sort of shared language that facilitates communication both within and beyond one's disciplinary culture. He goes on to offer the methodological paradigms and methodologies he has developed over the years as a codification system (language) for a new and interpretive human science. **(15 minutes).**

REISINGER, Heather Schacht, (CADRE – Iowa City VAHCS and University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine). NOT QUITE A LIFER: REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DR. TONY WHITEHEAD AND CUSAG. As a former student and CuSAG associate, I was trained in Dr. Whitehead's Cultural Systems Paradigm (CSP). Currently, I am conducting an "ethnography" of infection control in the Veterans Health Administration. More specifically, I visited six VA hospitals and conducted individual and group interviews and observations of infection control activities. I also analyzed policy documents from local and national levels. CSP challenges ethnographers to develop a holistic understanding of a community through a systematic process. In this paper, I reflect on how CSP continues to frame my thinking as I attempt to understand infection control in a national healthcare system. **(15 minutes).**

HALL, Casey. (University of Maryland). PRISON-TO-COMMUNITY REENTRY AND MOTHERING: A CULTURAL SYSTEMS APPROACH. Hall will be presenting on her current research with formerly incarcerated women in Washington, D.C. returning to their communities after release. Using an ethnographic approach guided by the framework of the Cultural Systems Paradigm (CSP) her research focuses on the impact of incarceration and reentry on women's maternal identity, and the lived experiences of returning for women who are mothers as they navigate the reentry process and attempt to reunite with their children. **(15 minutes).**

KEARNEY, Maya (University of Maryland). ETHNOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT OF A HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION: THE OFFICE ON RETURNING CITIZENS AFFAIRS. Mass incarceration and community reentry are two of the most pressing social justice issues in the US today as 600,000 adults per year return to mostly communities without resources to meet their plethora of needs. Most studies on these issues focus on these phenomena as social justice issues, or the needs and challenges faced by reentrants, which lead to an almost 70% re-incarceration rate. The current paper uses an ethnographic approach in carrying out a case study of the DC's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (ORCA) to assess the organization's objectives, strategies, successes, and barriers attempting to meet its objectives. **(15 minutes)**.

PETERSON, James (George Washington University). THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA YOUTH ETHNOGRAPHY. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) describes the collaboration between a community-based organization and researchers to design and implement exploratory research. Our primary research aim was to increase knowledge about sexual risk behaviors and concomitant sociocultural dynamics among subsets of 16-24 year olds, including young heterosexual men and women, men who have sex with men, and male-to-female transgender youth. Ethnographic methods were used to understand the complexity of the behaviors and dynamics of contextual that characterize sexual health risks. Results from this ongoing research will inform efforts to identify and devise new strategies to reduce HIV/STI infections among youth in D.C. **(15 minutes)**.

2. Questions, Comments, and Discussion (10 minutes)

C. Session 2

1. Abstracts of Final 2 Papers

LUNDGREN, Rebecka (Georgetown University) LEARNING GENDER: THE HUMAN ECOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE IN NORTHERN UGANDA. The Cultural Systems Paradigm, developed by Tony Whitehead, is used to examine how the cultural and social systems into which youth in northern Uganda are born and develop shape their gender identity, and ultimately their gender-based attitudes, norms and behaviors. It offers an organizing framework to understand the intersectionality of system components within which youth develop in order to identify opportunities to promote gender equitable practices for lifelong sexual and reproductive health. An example of anthropological engagement in intervention science, this study applied an ethnographic approach adapted to resource constraints while retaining underlying tenets of anthropological perspectives – holistic integration of interdisciplinary theories and methods. **(15 minutes)**.

BUTLER, Mary O (University of Maryland-College Park) ETHNOGRAPHY IN PROGRAM EVALUATION: DEMONSTRATING VALUES IN MULTIPLE CONTEXTS. Anthropology has built the theories and methods of ethnography into a holistic way of looking at cultural systems, incorporating the ethnography of values in complex, multi-layered cultural contexts. Ethnographic analysis in evaluation requires both the theory and methodology of ethnography in order to deconstruct and then synthesize the national, state, local and

organizational contexts in which people identify and use resources. An explicit understanding of ethnography is needed to promote this kind of evaluation to both clients and colleagues on interdisciplinary evaluation teams. This paper will illustrate ethnography in program evaluation using ethnographic evaluation of regional teen pregnancy prevention program. **(10 minutes)**.

2. Discussants

SCHENSUL, Stephen (University of Connecticut) DISCUSSANT 1. **(10 minutes)**.

GRAVLEE, Clarence (University of Florida) DISCUSSANT 2. **(10 minutes)**.

SCHENSUL, Jean (Institute of Community Research, former President of the SfAA, and former President of the Council on Anthropology and Education) DISCUSSANT 3. **(10 minutes)**.

MOSES, Yolanda, (University of California Riverside, former President of the AAA, and former President, Council of Anthropology and Education). DISCUSSANT 4. **(10 minutes)**.

HARRISON, Faye (University of Illinois). DISCUSSANT 5 **(10 minutes)**.

3. Questions and Comments From the Audience.