

## **People in Places**

### **Pre-conference student workshop on participatory research**

**June 26, 2011**

**Sobey Building, Saint Mary's University, Halifax NS**

#### **Attached:**

Participant list

#### **Roundtables**

Round table on various issues in community-based research that were of interest to the group. We also identified goals for the day. Issues are synthesized below, combined with the recommendations and insights shared at the concluding round-table.

#### **Process**

Thesis “versus” community needs, expectations, constraints (time)

What are our roles as researchers: activist? Objective? insider/outside? Prodigal daughter?

- Be aware of how are we perceived
- Work with gatekeeper/ local hire/ partner with local or local team
- Be mindful of the importance of good translation to capture multiple meanings
- and of how our roles relate to power relations in community, related to age, gender, etc.

Clear outcomes and scoping

- Learn as much as possible about the local culture first
- Find friends and mentors
- Build networks, find resources we need
- Acknowledge power relations and our role as “expert”

How to engage communities in research

#### **Outcomes**

Putting it to work ...

- Think carefully about process in dissemination (methodology)
- Don't be limited by institutional requirements
- Recommendations need to be contextualized

... in a way that is meaningful to communities

- Identify possible and realistic benefits first

Capturing and representing multiple perspectives within the communities we are working with

- Conduct focus groups with different ages, genders, professions
- Work on transparency in analysis (methodology)
- Develop critical interviewing skills
- Reflect on interviews as you go

#### **Other issues and content**

Use of film/social media

- radio, tv, newspapers, cd/audio podcast: all have different roles and relevancies

Special considerations when working with indigenous communities

Communities are over-burdened by research/ researchers

- Get it right the first time
- Pare down to essentials

## **Methodology Workshops**

**Anne Ouma**

**University of Umea, Stockholm, Sweden**

“Traditional Medicinal Knowledge, Commercialisation and Rural - Urban Dynamics

Abstract: Like many other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Eastern Lake Victoria Region is going through socio-spatial transformation with increased urbanisation, commercialisation with linkages to global processes. The purpose of this article is to examine how the processes of commodification of traditional medicinal knowledge and products are viewed by traditional healers in the context of dynamic socio-spatial transformations such as urbanization and commercialization in Mwanza (Tanzania) and Nyanza (Kenya) in the Eastern Lake Victoria Region. In-depth and semi-structured interviews, participant observational sessions and focus group discussions were conducted mainly with traditional healers. Participant observations took place during activities of gathering, healing ceremonies and market days. A total of 20 herbal practitioners aged between 30 and 95 years of age were interviewed and five focus group discussions were conducted of which one was all female, one all male and three were mixed. Out of the ten female respondents interviewed, six were above 50 years and four were below the age of 50. Of the ten male respondents, one was below the age of 50. The majority of the traditional healers had primary level western education (only two were not educated in the formal education system) while three females and seven males were educated at secondary formal education level.

During the methodological work, We were sensitive to the fact that TMK is scientific knowledge which is closely guarded and healers often share this knowledge primarily only with individuals who are either close relatives and/or are to inherit the profession. Outsiders are perceived with suspicion. Throughout the fieldwork we were careful to establish ethical consent with participants, research board and other collaborators. One of the authors (Ouma) originates from Nyanza and has older family members who are well known in the area, which facilitated access and permitted a snow-ball sampling technique for locating THs both in Mwanza and Nyanza. Interviews were taped and conducted in English, Kiswahili and Kisukuma in Mwanza, and in English and Dholuo in Nyanza. Thematic analysis (TA) was used as strategy for analysis of interview data; this approach is sensitive to emerging themes in the empirical data and permits flexibility in terms of theoretical perspectives (Clarke and Brown 2006). Major themes related to socio-spatial aspects of intergenerational learning processes were identified and analysed within a relational understanding of place and space.

The results show that there are gendered and generational differences in attitudes and perceptions towards the changing practices and increasing commercialisation of traditional medicinal knowledge. Themes discussed are monetisation of traditional medicinal knowledge and increasing urban practices of the traditional healer profession. Despite some major challenges to the continuity of the practice of traditional medicinal knowledge, new practices and opportunities are unfolding, mainly related to livelihood opportunities in urban areas by a younger generation of traditional healers.

### Comments from discussants

Chantal commented that Anne's insider status gave her an advantage in terms of time, and building respect and relationships. She offered that there are some examples in Canada of TMK and western knowledge being used along side each other. She also raised an example of rainmakers and meteorologists working together in Nairobi.

Irene began with congratulating Anne on her study, saying it was a huge accomplishment to learn about these different knowledge systems. She contrasted Anne's context to her work in Chile, where TM practitioners integrated willingly with the western medical system by for example building pristine stainless steel labs to gain some influence within the medical system. She also related that western hospitals in Chile and Kenya use TMK alongside western medicine. In Irene's experience integrating these other worldviews can help make communities more resilient. Irene commented on the gender orientation of Anne's focus groups. Anne commented that they were interested in the voices of men as TM is seen to be dominated by women. Irene also asked whether they interviewed clients/ beneficiaries, which Anne replied was outside of their scope as they were looking for perspectives of healers. As well, Anne reflected on the situation that beneficiaries testify for healers, whereas urban healers are more anonymous. In response to a question about how medical knowledge is stored, Anne replied that clients keep identification cards with a list of their treatments. A local couple is trying to build a database.

### Group discussion

The group discussion covered topics such as:

- Order of interviews and FG; Anne did a thematic analysis of interviews, helped by insights from participants, then went on to FG.
- Specific methodological challenges? Lack of documentation for quantitative study of health issues. Would be nice to have a large dataset to look at changes over times through the colonial, missionary periods.
- “Validation” of TK can be perceived as a poor strategy. But it can be useful to re-validate their own perspectives to youth, for example. Two eyed seeing concept in Mi'kmaq knowledge.
- There is a mystic value to TK and there are things that practitioners won't share with you.
- There are new property rights concerns with TMK, as communities start to ask what is in it for them, some of it being patented. There are contextual elements that can't be commodified.

### **Rachel Long Saint Mary's University Halifax NS**

NB: presentation slides to follow

“The Key Elements of Ecosystem-Based Management and an Assessment of their Application in 3 Fisheries in the Bay of Fundy, Canada”

Abstract: Over the last decade Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) has gained popularity in the fisheries sector. The lack of consensus on a single definition of EBM has resulted in no universal application framework, inhibiting its implementation. The immense number and variation of key elements associated with EBM makes it difficult to recognize where EBM is being utilized and a list of the essential ingredients of EBM is vital to assess its successful application on the ground.

My research compiles and compares the frequency of the key elements of EBM from a variety of published sources, across various disciplines. This is used to develop a list of the minimum core elements that must be applied for EBM to be fully implemented. This set of key elements is used to assess the degree and method by which EBM is currently being applied in the soft-shell clam, lobster and groundfish fisheries in the Bay of Fundy in both southwest New Brunswick and southwest Nova Scotia. Face to face surveys will be conducted with industry representatives to determine which key elements of EBM are being implemented at the ground level, recommendations for further application and an analysis of the industry priorities within EBM.

Multiple parties (industry, community, government and academic) will be interviewed within a single fishery accompanied by local technical and government reports to compare the perspectives of EBM and get a well rounded, in depth view of the EBM process in the area.

### Comments from discussants

Irene commented that Rachel has done enough. Her literature review could be an MES or MA. Rachel doesn't need statistical significance in her data as she is not looking at a random sample but rather a targeted group. There may be some possibility for statistical analyses within her data, if she wants. The qualitative data can be used to enrich quantitative data she has. Irene's recommendation is to accept limitations of our data.

Irene also made general recommendation about qualitative research:

- 23 is a rich sample, 30 is a magic number for data saturation
- if you're still getting new information, maybe the topic is too wide
- track this after every interview
- in community-based research you don't want/need too many interviews
- code and compile after every interview, can drop or add questions as you go along
- develop primary and secondary codes
- keep good notes during, track your thoughts, how you adjusted questions
- humility as researchers
- include open-ended questions in your research ethics application, most will accept
- ethnographic interviews are very different: no statistics, need very few interviews
- maybe I-FG-I, or survey, key informants, FG to triangulate and validate

### Group discussion

Randy Angus reported that in his communities their Aboriginal ethics board doesn't like open-ended questions and doesn't encourage a researcher to changing mid-project. There re 80 people in one community he works with and they are over-sampled, e.g. some researchers want to talk to 60. Many ask almost the same questions. As a result they control research tightly.

Other topics included:

- how Rachel chose to define key and contested terms she was asking fishermen about during interviews
- how she chose organizations and fishermen? The group was not representative; admit limitations.
- Whether she sought out DFO perspectives or those of other community members.
- Some were surprised that equity and forms of knowledge should be so undervalued in publications on EBM

### **C-Change ICURA: Lessons from student research and experience**

Presented by **Hooman Mostofi, Sahar Pakdel and Kaitlin Fahey**

Abstract: This session presents the experience of the team of researchers involved in the C-Change ICURA studying the adaptation of selected coastal communities to the changing climate in Canada and the Caribbean since 2009. This work includes student graduate level research on: (1) the development of coastal community mapping software with the purpose of detailing the impacts of storm surge and sea level rise to local community points of interest, (2) surveying and summarizing

community attitudes toward climate change; (3) understanding the dynamic linkages between natural, socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional components profiling coastal communities; and (4) developing evaluative methods for decision support of prioritized adaptation strategies for local community governance.

### Kaitlin Fahey

Kaitlin resented the history of the project. There are 4 Canadian sites and 4 Caribbean sites. The cities are very different, some large and some very small, but all vulnerable to climate change. Each Caribbean city has been twined with a Canadian one. The cities were selected in in part because of pre-existing relationships among researchers and in part because of buy-in from communities. Objectives were to help communities help themselves. There are community collaboration teams in Canada and in the Caribbean, but communicating is a challenge. They hope to present useful deliverables back to the communities. Challenges have included working across disciplinary boundaries within the research team; not being able to do it all in all communities, so they build templates for different communities to use based on the experience of one; time between meetings mean people all have to be brought up to speed and often times discussions are started anew, re-inventing the wheel; difficulties keeping communities engaged; unclear outcomes of the project; meet all the institutional requirements of the many institutions, like financial reporting, and etc.

### Discussion

Questions included:

- ⤴ Process for selecting the communities
- ⤴ Amount of funding for international work vs work in Canadian communities
- ⤴ Definitions of vulnerability and resilience, including methods for vulnerability assessment?

### Sahar Pakdel and Hooman Mostofi

As part of a Master's in System Science, Sahar modelled climate change vulnerability (sea level rise/storm surge) in Isle Madame, population 3500. She looked at 4 pillars of potential damage – environmental, economic, social, cultural - estimating dollar amount damage direct (immediate) and indirect (damage over time) in 6 different scenarios. Very little data to work with especially social and cultural so estimated from other sources of data using software. Software created to also assess damage to other pillars based on direct damage to one pillar. She based the scenarios on storms between 1965 and 1979 which had surges of between 1-6 m. She used software called Stella to estimate damage and ArcGIS to estimate storm surge extent. Hooman's work follows from Sahars.

In terms of Sahar's experience with C-Change, she reported that other student helped one another which was a positive experience. On the other hand, she was unable to go to Isle Madame to get a first hand perspective on what possible damage would be, and to ground-truth her findings.

Hooman reported that as an engineer, his initial approach to research was to develop a blueprint for everything. So this project was a challenge and he has learned how to work in an interdisciplinary context with respect for multiple perspectives.

### Discussion

- It would be useful to know what is important to communities as each will evaluate / weigh these possible impacts differently.
- These methods are somewhat transferable/ usable by communities themselves via ArcGIS software. For example, they could develop a website tool where you enter your postal code,

run ArcGIS and see what the water level would be under the various scenarios. But we'd have to present it in context, it could help mentally prepare and protect in advance They are also working on paper for mayor.

- Can help people anticipate insurance needs, protect infrastructure.
- No sharing of models among the different communities in the research group yet.
- Indirect damage does not follow the idealized curve (tending toward infinity over time) depicted. eg. in Haiti the cholera epidemic led to an increase in costs much later post-earthquake.
- Much of the data to help estimate these costs might be held by consultants. Kaitlin commented that Charlottetown consultants were unwilling to share data.
- With these models, researchers could solicit help of communities in collecting data and identifying needs. Hooman commented that he'd need training to work with communities in this way.

### **Concluding roundtable**

We summarized presenters' strategies for addressing our key concerns identified at the beginning of the day, and added new strategies from our experience. See above for more information.