
Ethnography Coefficient and Categorical Populography Coefficient: How to Facilitate the Study of Cultures

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In 1997, I interviewed a candidate applying for a faculty position (Japanese) that my department advertized. During the interview, I raised a simple question: “What hypothesis did you test in your doctoral research?” The candidate shocked me by the following answer: “No, I did not test any hypothesis because my research is an ethnography where I had observed a multiethnic group of American college students taking some Japanese courses at my university.” The way the candidate used the term ‘ethnography’ to answer to my question was the remotest one that I could ever imagine about the nature of ethnography. To my knowledge, an ethnography was supposed to be ‘a description of a culture of a reproductive ethnic group’.

However, his view of ethnography was not an isolated case. Rather it has become increasingly the case that people use the term ‘ethnography’ without considering the nature of a target group observed. Ethnography seems to be taken lightly and to become something like a handy video camera for some field researchers. What is worse, even anthropologists use the term ‘ethnography’ for a descriptive study of a categorical population which does not function as a reproductive ethnic group. What has ever happened to confuse lay people and anthropologists in using the term ethnography?

This semantic confusion created by the inconsistency between the term ‘ethnography’ and its target group/population had gone unchallenged for many years and remained unexamined in the recent efforts discussing the issues of ethnography (e.g., Adler and Adler 1995; Agar 1982, 1995; Atkinson and Hammersley 1994; Burawoy 1991; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gephart, Jr. 1988; Guba 1981; Hammersley 1992; Lyon 1997; Marcus 1994; Marcus and Fisher 1986; Noblit and Hare 1988; Thomas 1993; Van Maanen 1988, 1995; Vidich and Lyman 1994; Wolcott 1995). Much of these efforts have been directed toward identifying methodological or epistemological issues. None of these efforts have addressed the issue of the semantic confusion created by this inconsistency, contributing to an endless debate over what ethnography is all about. For example, a recent effort to refine the term ethnography has defined ethnography as “the study of the culture(s) a given group of people more or less share” (Van Maanen 1995, 4). This definition has demonstrated that there is a chance for inconsistency between the term ethnography and a wrong target population because any group of people, say a categorical population, can be studied under

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the title of an ethnography.

This study addresses the issue of semantic confusion and attempts to find solutions to the issue. In an effort to do so, this study proposes a pair of new terms: (1) 'ethnography coefficient' (an index showing the degree to which a study is an ethnography) and (2) 'categorical populography coefficient' (an index showing the degree to which a study is a description of a primary group's culture of a categorical population). These new terms are further clarified by two formulas to calculate their coefficients, as is shortly discussed. These new terms and formulas are also designed to facilitate the further development of the study of cultures in ethnography, cultural anthropology, social science, and human science.

An Ethnography of Non-Ethnic Group?

The development of cultural anthropology has paralleled the development of ethnography. However, ethnography has become loaded with many misconceptions in the course of the expansion of cultural anthropology. Among the misconceptions, the worst and most undetected misconception has centered around the type of population studied. When no attention is paid to what type of population makes a study ethnographic, an ethnography is often considered as a qualitative description of a culture resulting from a long-term participant observation over a given group. In the formative time of anthropology, an ethnography did not necessarily mean a description of a culture of any given group, rather implied a description of the culture of a 'reproductive ethnic group' (an ethnic group who is engaged in reproduction), as shown in Malinowski's classic *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski 1922). The primary requirement of being an ethnography was to choose a reproductive ethnic group. This was an unwritten rule of anthropology.

However, this primary requirement (i.e., a reproductive ethnic group as a target population) of being an ethnography has been often omitted or conveniently ignored in the course of the expansion of cultural anthropology. The omission of this primary requirement is nowadays seen ubiquitously among professional anthropologists. For example, a recent effort to redefine ethnography made by two editors of a professional journal of ethnography has omitted this primary requirement from the attributes for a paper to be accepted for publication. Rather the editors have mentioned the following points as appropriate base for evaluation for a paper to become a publishable ethnography: (1) sufficient rapport, (2) a clear relation to the extant empirical literature, (3) originality and potential contribution to the field, (4) empirical richness, (5) well organized and written, and (6) a clear conceptual or theoretical significance (Adler and Adler 1995, 20-22). These evaluation criteria have not requested ethnographers to demonstrate that their study was a description of a culture of a 'reproductive ethnic group'. This type of omission was the case with similar efforts to discuss the criteria of ethnography (e.g., Guba 1981; Hammersley

1992). This type of omission has been ubiquitous in recent years.

This salient omission may lead to a further question: What allowed this kind of omission to happen in anthropology whose original and major concerns are human biological and cultural evolution? Although this is not the place to argue the origins of the omission, part of the origins may be attributed to Geertz's view of cultures as meaningful texts which natives constantly read (Geertz 1973). Whether it was intended or not, his view of cultures has advanced ethnography to a new direction, allowing anthropologists to omit the primary requirement (a reproductive ethnic group) of a target population. Many evidences of the omission have been seen in the definition of culture made by anthropologists. For example, in a recent effort to redefine ethnography, an ethnographer has defined culture as "the totality of all learned social behavior of a given group" (Thomas 1993, 12). Such examples can be endlessly multiplied: "Cultures are traditions and customs, transmitted through learning, that govern the beliefs and behavior of the people exposed to them" (Kottak 1997, 2), or culture is "the way of life of people, including their behavior, the things they make, and their ideas" (Rosman and Rubel 1995, 344), to name a few examples from some textbooks.

The key to this type of definition lies in the ambiguity of the term 'group' or 'people'. When culture is defined in this way, it follows that anything goes, as far as a target population of ethnography is concerned. As long as any given group is studied, the description of a culture of the group can be considered to be an ethnography. Another recent effort to make a study more ethnographic has contended that "the research process deserves the label of ethnography only when the intended product is ethnographic" (Wolcott 1995, 83). No hint is given about what kind of population should be studied to make a study ethnographic.

Meanwhile, this type of definition of culture has executed a significant impact on other social sciences. This type of definition of culture has eliminated the difference between the anthropological view of culture and the sociological view of culture. For example, a sociology textbook has defined culture as "a system of symbols that a group of people share to help them make sense of the world" (Conklin 1984, 491). In short, these two disciplines have reached the same view of culture. This type of definition of culture has been, thus, widely accepted in other disciplines. A study of communication has defined culture as "the total accumulation of an identifiable group's beliefs, norms, activities, institutions, and communication patterns" (Dodd 1989, 41). Among the studies following this trend, the studies of organizational culture have thrived on this type of definition: organizational culture is often defined as "a shared and collective property of the organization" (Schultz 1994, 25). It is apparent that a culture is defined as something shared by a given group, by social sciences.

Is Participant Observation An Ethnography?

The elimination of the difference between anthropology and other social sciences in terms of the definition of culture has emancipated ethnography from being confined to reproductive ethnic groups. Once a culture is defined in this way, any social group is assumed to have its own culture: a culture of policemen, a culture of medical doctors, a culture of homosexuals, a culture of heroin addicts, a culture of prostitutes, a culture of a business organization, and so on. Accordingly, any kind of ethnography could be conceivable. Thus, a number of ethnographies of a variety of occupational groups have emerged: ethnography of policemen, ethnography of medical doctors, ethnography of homosexuals, ethnography of heroin addicts, ethnography of prostitutes, and so on.

How have researchers studied the cultures of these categorical populations that do not function as a reproductive group? Many researchers have kept a particular method of data collection (participant observation) that cultural anthropologists use in field work. To those who ignore the original focus of cultural anthropology, the particular method of data collection (participant observation) has appeared to be an ethnography. The best incident depicting this trend has been seen in a recent review of computing anthropology. A reviewer has stated as follows: "Defined as participant observation, ethnography can easily be spilt from anthropology and added to the methodological armamentarium of other disciplines as sociology" (Hakken 1993, 118). Another incident has been seen in the following sentence: "Despite the persistent lack of fundings for analyses based upon participant observation, a small but growing number of ethnographic studies have also emerged" (Weston 1993, 355). Other recent efforts to examine the methods of ethnography have argued participant observation as a practically common method of ethnography (e.g., Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, Burawoy 1991). This view of equating participant observation with an ethnography has been manifested in a widely-used textbook of research methods of anthropology as follows: "Participant observation, or ethnographic fieldwork, is the foundation of cultural anthropology" (Bernard 1994, 136).

This type of short circuited association has abounded even in professional journals. Thus, a recent review of ethnographic writing about American culture has cited 87 studies from anthropology, 49 studies from sociology, 5 studies from educational studies, 8 studies from linguistics, and so on by the particular method of data collection (i.e., long-term participant observation or interpretively sophisticated interviewing) (Moffatt 1992). Simply put, the term 'ethnography' has served to connote anything resulting from participant observation, regardless of the characteristics of the target population. "An Ethnography of Dinner Entertainment in Japan" (Befu 1974) based on a participant observation could be the ultimate example of viewing a participant observation as an ethnography.

The view of ethnography as a participant observation has enabled anthropologists to expand their target populations. The expansion of target population has appeared to hold promise for anthropologists. However, anthropologists have soon become frustrated by the blurred disciplinary boundary between their genuine ethnographies and seemingly ethnographic studies, or travel writing, or “superficial garbage” (Agar 1982, 779). Amid the blurred boundary and frustrations, ethnography’s public image has appeared tarnished beyond repair.

Can A Method of Data Collection Define Anthropology?

This type of ill-defined ethnography has permeated through so that even professional anthropologists go so far as to define cultural anthropology by this particular method of data collection. The following incident has depicted this type of ill-defined view of anthropology even on a professional level. In 1993, I submitted a paper to a journal claiming an anthropological status. Because my study relied on inferential statistics (i.e., factor analysis and regression analysis), I was not certain whether or not my paper would fit the journal which seemed to prefer nonquantitative studies. Within a week, I received a letter from an editor of the journal saying the reason for not accepting my paper as follows:

“I have reviewed your manuscript and determined that it would not fit the needs of our journal... (omitted by the author) ... that specializes in topics related to culture and education based on long term field work within the relevant culture under study. While quantitative data is not precluded, it is usually included as part of the field work. An article that shows no evidence of the researcher having spent considerable time in the field (e.g., six months or more) is not acceptable in an anthropological journal.”

Of course, I was not surprised by the editor’s judgment that my paper would not fit the needs of the journal, but puzzled by the editor’s view of anthropology. In short, the comment indicated that it would be the method of data collection that can define whether a study is ‘anthropological’ or not. While the characteristic of my target population required me to use the method of mailing questionnaire survey for data collection and inferential statistics for data analysis, the method of data collection was employed as a result of my long-term field observation of a large number of samples. Unfortunately, my method of data collection (sampling survey by mailing questionnaire) failed to convince the editor of the ‘anthropological nature’ of my study.

The oddity of defining anthropology by a particular method of data collection escaped the editor. This incident may remind one of a proverb saying that a dog does not wag its tail, but the tail wags the dog. When a tail wags the dog, even professional anthropologists define anthropology by a method of data collection. This issue of ill-defined cultural

anthropology has become evident, as cultural anthropology has expanded its target population beyond the conventional scope (reproductive ethnic groups) without paying attention to the characteristics of target population. What other academic disciplines define their own disciplines by a method of data collection? It is unlikely that botanists define botany by a method of data collection. Defining anthropology by a particular method of data collection has distorted the original focal point of studying culture.

The involvement of sociological arguments in the debate over ethnography has further distorted the significance of studying culture in the context of human evolution because sociologists tended to argue ethnography as one of the unstructured field studies that take place in natural setting (e.g., Bailey 1982, 28-33). Arguing ethnography as one of the methods of data collection for social science is as wrong as arguing dolphins as one of the species of fish. When ethnography is argued as a method, ethnography is viewed as only a half step away from ethnomethodology: “the study of how people construct and share their definitions of reality in their everyday interaction” (Robertson 1981, 628). Thus, more sociologists have assured little difference between the ethnography of speaking and contemporary ethnomethodology, particularly conversation analysis, in the argument of microsociology (e.g., Atkinson 1988). Arguing ethnography as a method of social science has resulted not only in dwarfing the original focus of anthropology into insignificance but also in eliminating the boundary that differentiates anthropology from sociology.

Two Types of Populations

Whether cultural anthropologists, sociologists, or self-appointed ethnographers are aware or not, two types of populations should be identified for human science: (1) breeding population and (2) categorical population. When social scientists study a group of people, they must have a clear-cut understanding as to which of the two types of populations is under investigation. The two types of populations can be defined as follows.

(1) Breeding population (Mendelian population): “a group of individuals of the same species living within a sufficiently restricted geographical area that any member can potentially mate with any other member” (Hartl 1988, 19). The breeding population is the level on which evolution operates. The breeding population is the foundation of an ethnic group whose members share a common culture. Anthropology has developed with the study of a local breeding population who is engaged in reproduction within a shared territory or a sufficiently restricted geographical area.

(2) Categorical population: “a set of persons, objects, or events having at least one common attribute to which the researcher wishes to generalize on the basis of a representative sample of observations” (Bohrnstedt and Noake 1988, 19). The categorical population is often called ‘statistical population’.

Which of these two types of populations used to be a target population of anthropology? Obviously, the local breeding population, or reproductive ethnic group was the major target population of anthropology in a general sense, for human evolution operates on the local breeding population, or reproductive ethnic group. It would be still wise that anthropologists focus on local breeding populations as long as their focus is placed on human biological and cultural evolution or variation in time and in space. In fact, many anthropological studies were conducted over local breeding populations, or reproductive ethnic groups, such as the !Kung, the Yanomani, and so on. These anthropologically well-known peoples happened to be observable by a field study of anthropologists in a natural setting. It is neither the size of population nor the method of data collection that made these studies anthropological. It is the type of population that made the studies anthropological.

Categorical population is often the best target population of other social sciences. Political scientists often raise the following type of question: 'What kind of attribute induced people to vote for a republican candidate in the U.S. presidential election of 1992?' The population investigated by the question is obviously a 'categorical population' in the sense that the voters were defined by 'a common attribute of having voted for George Bush'. The same holds true with the following question: 'What types of white Americans tended to vote for George Bush?' While this question focuses on white American voters, the population is still a categorical population because the population is defined by a common attribute of having voted for George Bush.

Therefore, a categorical population seems to be the last target population that anthropologists would like to inquire about, for human biological evolution is unlikely to operate on a categorical population. It is absurd that anthropologists study a sheer collection of people who are categorically defined only by such a common attribute of one particular action in a given time.

Two Types of Groups: Primary Groups and Secondary Groups

Two types of social groups should be identified for social science of modern industrial societies: primary groups and secondary groups. The development of modern industrial society has paralleled a shift from primary groups to secondary groups. These two groups are defined as follows: a primary group as "a group consisting of a small number of people who interact in direct, intimate, and personal ways" and a secondary group as "a group consisting of a number of people who have few if any emotion ties with one another and who come together for a specific, practical purpose" (Robertson 1981, 632-34).

Which of these two types of social groups is preferred by cultural anthropologists? Obviously, cultural anthropologists prefer studying a primary group to studying a

secondary group, whether the primary group belongs to a categorical population or not. The reason for this preference is influenced by their favorite method of data collection, participant observation. The application of this particular method is guaranteed by the definition of culture that emancipated cultural anthropologists from being confined to reproductive ethnic groups. An advantage of this particular method is that cultural anthropologists are not requested to take the risk of testing hypotheses on the basis of samples, for the members of the group observed are often equal to the total population. In other words, a direct participant observation could be sufficient enough to examine the attributes of the members. It is a routine that cultural anthropologists express fortes of participant observation in studying face-to-face interaction among the members of the primary group in a natural setting. In order for cultural anthropologists to conduct a participant observation, they must choose a primary group. A secondary group is too large for cultural anthropologists to handle.

Four Different Target Groups/Populations

Thus, when one tries to know the array of the diversified target groups/populations for social science, one must take account of two dimensions: (1) the dimension of either 'breeding population' or 'categorical population', and (2) that of either 'a primary group' (a small number of people) or 'a secondary group' (a large number of people). To combine these two dimensions, Figure 1 can be drawn as below. The vertical classification represents the difference of primary group and secondary group (i.e., the size of population: a small number of people or a large number of people). The horizontal classification represents the difference of the type of populations: breeding population or categorical population. Type I population is a large number of a categorical population (e.g., employees working for a large multinational corporation such as IBM, GM, etc); Type II population is a large number of a breeding population (e.g., an ethnic group who is very endogamous such as the Chinese); Type III population is a small number of a local breeding population, or reproductive primary group (e.g., a very endogamous tribe); and Type IV population is a small number of a categorical population, or non-reproductive primary group (e.g., a multiethnic group working for one section of a metropolitan police department of New York city). Obviously, the primary target population of anthropology used to be a Type III population (a small number of a local breeding population, or a primary group of a large breeding population, or a reproductive ethnic group).

		Population	
		Breeding Population	Categorical Population
Social Group	Secondary Group (LargeNumber)	Type II	Type I
	Primary Group (SmallNumber)	Type III (Ethnography)	Type IV

Figure 1. Four Different Target Groups / Populations

The Best Population for Ethnography

As shown in Figure 1, it is obvious that ethnography is the description of a culture of a Type III population: a primary group of a breeding population, or a reproductive ethnic group. From the outset of cultural anthropology, a major target population of anthropology has been the type III population. The very reason for using the term ethnography lies in the characteristic of the target population (a primary group of a breeding population, or an ethnic group who is engaged in reproduction). Many classic studies of ethnography are the best description of this type of a primary group of a breeding population.

(A) Ethnography Coefficient

It would be wise that cultural anthropologists know the degree to which their study is an ethnography. I would like to introduce a new term 'ethnography coefficient'. It is defined as follows: an index showing the degree to which a study is an ethnography. A formula to obtain the index is expressed as follows.

$$\text{Ethnography coefficient} = \frac{(\text{number of observed people}) - (\text{number of categorical population})}{(\text{number of observed people})}$$

(B) Hypothetical Cases

The following two hypothetical cases are designed to clarify what this coefficient means.

The first hypothetical case. One hundred years ago, 50 individuals of five families settled down in an isolated mountainous valley and started rice agriculture. Since then, the small village had survived on rice agriculture in an isolated valley over 100 years by a variety of technological innovations (e.g., irrigation and terracing). The population had

grown to 200 individuals over the century. Over the years, the villagers had maintained close kinship through marriage among them and developed a distinct life style adaptive to their mountainous environment. A researcher had decided to study how the village had grown on the basis of the close kinship and the distinct life style adaptive to the environment. The researcher had moved in the village, worked side by side with the villagers in rice agriculture, and participated in all the activities of the village for two years. The researcher had particularly investigated the close kinship and found that all members of the village were potential mates to each other and therefore several marriages among the villagers had taken place during the two years of the field study. After completing the field study, the researcher had come back to his/her own department of anthropology and published his/her study of the description of the culture of the village. The ethnography coefficient for this study would be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Ethnography coefficient} = \frac{200 - 0}{200} = \frac{200}{200} = 1.00$$

The second hypothetical case. One year, an interstate highway was built running through the village by a central government for the economic development of the region. Due to the suitable environment for precision machinery, a large corporation built an assembly plant at the corner of the village. Ten employees (managers and engineers) were relocated from the headquarter of the corporation to the village. The managers hired 50 female workers from the village. The plant achieved a high productivity on the basis of the close-knit kinship of the village. The high productivity and harmonious management style drew the attention of management researcher. A management researcher decided to study the organizational culture that had developed at the plant. The researcher moved in the village, started working as an assembly worker of the plant, participated in all the activities of the plant as an employee of the plant for two years, and observed the organizational culture of the plant. The researcher investigated if the relocated managers and engineers considered the locally hired female employees as potential mates for them and found that they were instructed by the headquarter not to get involved in locally hired females. During the two years of the field study, no marriage occurred between the two groups. All of the employees stayed as an occupational group seeking for economic transaction, except for the researcher. After completing the field study of the two years, the researcher came back to his/her own department of management and published his/her study of the organizational culture of the assembly plant. The ethnography coefficient for this study would be calculated as follows.

$$\text{Ethnography coefficient} = \frac{60 - 60}{60} = \frac{0}{60} = 0.00$$

(c) The Differences between The two Cases

These two hypothetical cases are not sheer imaginations of the author. These cases represented what has taken place in Japan after World War II. The 1950's was the decade where many American anthropologists flocked to rural Japanese communities to study the culture of pristine rural Japanese communities (e.g., Bennett and Ishino 1955; Cornell 1956; Norbeck 1954; Smith 1956), following a classic study of a rural Japanese community (Embree, 1939). The products of these studies were ethnographies describing the culture of rural Japanese communities. However, the chances for studying the cultures of rural communities quickly diminished in the growth of the Japanese economy during the 1960's and 1970's. Instead, the economic growth provided management researchers with the best chances for studying the Japanese-style human resources management. The genuine ethnographic attempt to study rural communities was eventually displaced by the management-oriented research (e.g., Abegglen 1958; Clark 1979; Dore 1973; Rohlen 1984).

The differences between the two hypothetical cases lay in the following points. The study of the first case fell in the study of a culture of a primary group of a breeding population, or a reproductive ethnic group. The villagers were born into the village. Their membership of the village was conferred on them by their birth. The status of the villagers was an ascribed status, so to speak. The study of the second case fell in the study of a culture of a primary group of a categorical population or primary occupational group. Their membership was achieved by their choice or effort. The status of the employees was an achieved status, so to speak.

Both studies used a long-term participant observation as a method of data collection. However, these two studies observed different types of populations: The first study observed a primary group of a breeding population, whereas the second study observed a primary group of an occupationally categorized population. Therefore, it would be confusing to call both studies ethnographies. Calling a cultural study of a primary group of an occupationally categorized population an 'ethnography' would be tantamount to calling baseball cricket. As the popularity of baseball cannot justify baseball players to claim the title of cricket for their sport, so cannot the popularity of a study of the culture of a primary group of an occupationally categorized population justify management researchers to claim the title of ethnography for their studies of organizational culture. Those who nevertheless claim status of ethnography for their studies of the culture of an occupationally categorized primary group must bear the burden of proof that their population worked as a reproductive

group or a breeding population.

The Best Population for Categorical Populography

When target population is a primary group of a categorical population (Type IV), it raises a question: What should be called for a study of culture of a primary group of a categorical population? Ethnography, again?

(A) Categorical Populography

The semantic problem created by the inconsistency between the term ethnography and a categorical population has remained unchallenged for many years even when cultural anthropologists conduct a long-term participant observation research over a primary group of categorical population. When the target population is a collection of people who happen to have a common attribute (e.g., being an employee of a multiethnic occupational group), it is unwise to define the kind of study as an ethnography, for their target population is not a reproductive ethnic group, as shown in Figure 1. Nonetheless, a shift from primary groups of a breeding population to primary groups of a categorical population has happened over the decades, as the chances for studying pristine reproductive ethnic groups have diminished.

The shift, however, has proved to be very costly to cultural anthropology. There has been a price attached to the shift. The shift has blurred the boundary between the genuine ethnographic studies of cultural anthropologists and the seemingly ethnographic news reports of media reporters. Simply put, the media reporters can conduct a long-term participant observation over a primary group of a categorical population as a part of their media activities and produce the results as news reports as well as cultural anthropologists can, as is often suggested (e.g., Agar1995). Thus, anthropologists have found themselves embroiled in a heated debate over whether ethnography is a research process or a research product, missing the essential point of an ethnography.

Even professional anthropologists are blind to the semantic confusion created by the inconsistency between the term of ethnography and a target population, as shown above. It is no wonder that a whole generation, undergraduate or graduate students, grew up accustomed to absorbing the study of a culture of a primary group of a categorical population as an ethnography. As a graduate student, I witnessed one incident showing that the study of a culture of a primary group of a categorical population was imprinted as an ethnography on the mind of my fellow graduate student.

A graduate student twice conducted a participant observation over the club-fishermen of Savannah, Georgia in the U.S.A. The student defined his study as an ethnography due to

the method of data collection. Contrary to his claim, it would be untenable to define his study as an ethnography, for the target population were a collection of people who happened to make a living in the same occupation in a particular region. The fact of pursuing a common occupation in a particular region did not necessarily assure that the fishermen could be defined as an ethnic group. Actually, the graduate student reported that the club-fishermen failed to organize their own 'cooperation' and kept on acting on their own individual interests. In other words, the failure made it further difficult to view his target population as a collective social group and therefore to define his study as an ethnography. After completing his data collection, the graduate student presented the results of his studies at the department colloquium by showing a large number of slide pictures that he took during his participant observations. The graduate student seemed to believe that a large number of slide pictures illustrating his target population made his study ethnographical and anthropological. However, his study was criticized by some other graduate students and some professors in the following manner: His study of the club-fisherman could be done by a news reporter of a local news paper. There was no difference between his study and the news reports of some local media. There was much to condemn and little to commend for his study because he chose a wrong target population for his 'ethnography'.

It is about time for cultural anthropology to coin a new term to refer to a study of the culture of a primary group of a categorical population. I would propose a term 'categorical populography' for the study of a culture of 'a primary group of a categorical population'. Although it may sound awkward, it would be better to coin a new term than to apply the time-honored term ethnography or to have recourse to an umbrella term such as applied anthropology.

(B) Categorical Populography Coefficient

It would be wise that anthropologists know the degree to which their study is a categorical populography. I would like to introduce a new term 'categorical populography coefficient'. It is defined as follows: an index showing the degree to which a study is a categorical populography. A formula to obtain the index is expressed as follows:

Categorical populography coefficient = $1 - \text{ethnography coefficient}$

This formula allows me to calculate the degree to which each of the two hypothetical cases previously mentioned is a categorical populography: $1 - 1.00 = 0.00$ for the first case, and $1 - 0.00 = 1.00$ for the second case. It would be tenable to classify that the first case was an ethnography, whereas the second case was a categorical populography.

There is nothing wrong with studying a culture of a primary group of a categorical population. The work places of modern industrial societies consist of a number of primary groups of a categorical population, for people work for economic transactions.

(C) The Focal Points of Categorical Populography

One point should be clarified when researchers study a culture of a primary group of a categorical population. The point is that researchers must understand why cultural anthropology is concerned with culture. Cultural anthropology is concerned with culture not because the culture of a primary group is available for their participant observation, but because culture is one of the key ingredients of human evolution. There is always the possibility that shared beliefs and knowledge can have an impact not only on the way the group distributes valued resources but also on the way the members of the group reproduce their offsprings or die out: an impact on human evolution, whether the culture is a product of a reproductive ethnic group or an occupational primary group.

Thus, the focus of categorical populography is to examine the degree to which beliefs and knowledge are shared among the group members. This focus is often pointed out by studies of anthropology of work and occupational groups. In fact, some studies of occupational groups actually revealed that the members of a primary group of occupational population developed discrepant views of their own profession and shared less views even within occupationally circumscribed group (e.g., Hakken 1993; Traweek 1989). A similar aspect was often reported in the study of organizational cultures (e.g., Gregory 1983). It would follow that the higher the categorical populography coefficient of a study becomes, the less the members of the group under the study share their own occupational culture.

Besides the focus, there may be a number of things to report in categorical populography in order to describe the population. One of them is that categorical populographers must find the distinction between breeding and categorical populations in the field observation, for the identification of the distinction is the very reason of categorical populography. As a result, categorical populographies may not look as ethnographic as classic ethnographies (e.g., Geertz 1973; Malinowski 1922). In fact, this type of the dissimilarity highlights some classic studies that should be classified as categorical populographies (e.g., Goffman 1961; Manning 1977). Due to this dissimilarity, categorical populographies can coexist along with ethnography to study cultures, serving anthropology, social science, and human science.

Anthropology and Cultural Studies

What distinguished anthropology from other social sciences is its major concern with

human cultural and biological evolution. It is in this sense that cultural anthropologists study cultures of reproductive ethnic group, or local breeding populations. Originally, culture was developed and nurtured for a reproductive ethnic group to survive in a particular environment. Thus, it would be desirable that cultural anthropologists study a reproductive ethnic group as their target population.

However, gone are the days where cultural anthropologists can easily find a reproductive ethnic group for their study. In addition, the original view of culture is also gone. Anthropology has merged into other social sciences in terms of viewing culture. The unified view of culture has facilitated a shift of the focus of cultural study from the evolution of culture to the degree of sharing of beliefs and knowledge by the members of a social group. Thus, the demarcation between anthropology and other social sciences has been no longer maintained even by professional anthropologists when they study a culture. These situations have eventually worked to dwarf the original focus of cultural anthropology on culture to insignificance while enabling cultural anthropologists to expand their target populations from a primary group of a breeding population or a reproductive ethnic group to a primary group of a categorical population.

There is nothing wrong with conducting a research over a primary group of a categorical population per se. Neither is it wrong for a study which did not test hypotheses. What is fundamentally misleading is to claim the status of 'ethnography' for a study of the culture of a primary group of a categorical population due to a particular method of data collection (participant observation). A study of a primary group's culture of a categorical population falls in another kind of cultural study.

The problem that has plagued ethnography for the recent years lies not only in the methodological and epistemological aspects but also in the semantic confusion that occurs when researchers fail to understand the inconsistency between the term ethnography and the categorical population. The semantic confusion can be resolved by a new term (categorical populography) and two types of coefficients. Thus, the solutions to the semantic confusion are proposed as follows: (1) to recognize which of the two types of populations is under investigation and (2) to demonstrate the ethnography coefficient or the categorical populography coefficient in their study. As long as researchers recognize the different nature of the populations, ethnography will not be antiquated by categorical populography. Both ethnography and categorical populography can coexist and contribute to the understanding of human cultures. The further development of the study of cultures thus depends on the interplay between ethnography and categorical populography. The active interplay can further contribute to ethology, as long as researchers understand the different characteristics of the two types of populations. Whichever of the two types of populations is chosen by researchers, better days lie ahead for the study of cultures.

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