

# The Applied Anthropologist

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## POINT-TO-POINT

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Volume 32, Number 1 of *The Applied Anthropologist* tackles issues of trans-cultural collaboration, benevolent dictators, indigenous film, and gender neutral language. As with past editions the authors tackle many issues central to applied anthropology as a discipline, and can motivate our colleagues to engage these further.

The examination of the collaboration between anthropologists and tribal members concerning traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is an important, and arguably seminal, contribution to a growing focus within applied anthropology. Betsy Chappoose, Sally McBeth, Sally Crum, and Aline LaForge participate in an important discussion of participatory research through collaboration between anthropologists and tribal members in regards to Northern Ute traditional ecological knowledge. Through five different ethnobotanical projects they seek to explore, document, and revive Ute traditional ecological knowledge in the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado. This work contributes to a larger focus of applied anthropology in collaborative resource management and participatory research which continues to push the discipline ahead.

Shawn Russell offers a provocative argument of the role of United States in foreign civil wars utilizing Rwanda as a case study. Russell contextualizes his argument with the history of Rwanda and the civil war as well as analyzing the current system of government which he describes as a benevolent dictatorship. He considers factors such as stability, continuity of government, security, invasions, insurgencies, crime rates and patterns, number of political prisoners, terrorist attacks aimed at overthrowing the government, food security, health, education, economic improvement, and press freedoms. This case study analysis of the Rwandan benevolent dictatorship is then utilized to understand the role of the United States in foreign civil wars, including differences among acting before, during, or after a conflict. Russell argues that benevolent dictatorships, although curtailing many social and political freedoms, can create more stable economic and political conditions that facilitate an easier transition to democracy, and that the United States can apply this knowledge to its role in overseas engagements.

By way of comparative analysis, William Lempert expounds on the role of anthropologists in indigenous film. With a postmodern lens Lempert discusses the double-bind for academic indigenous film makers in the pressure to conform to romanticized images as well as to provide critical analyses of film, but on the same note legitimizes their specific ability to explore issues of identity and self-determination while presenting culture change in a complementary light. Ethnographic filmmakers cannot tackle issues of identity and yet perpetuate an “ethnographic reality” without also addressing culture change in an effort to be objective in their filmmaking. In the end Lempert calls for a critical engagement with indigenous film by anthropologists in an effort to more broadly complement contemporary indigenous scholarship.

Richard Clemmer provides two case studies in order to evaluate the role of anthropologists in collaboration. His two examples relate to an expert panel convened by the AAA and being an expert witness in a court case. Clemmer argues that anthropologists can learn three important lessons from these case studies of collaboration. In brief, first is that many baseline ethnographies are limited, second that representing a group of people is not straightforward, and third that consultants and clients have very different priorities and goals in collaborative ventures. In the end Clemmer comes to the conclusion that, typically, collaboration in representation is usually possible and almost always desirable.

Edith King concludes the issue by revisiting the status of gender-neutral language in the 21st century. She discovered that the use of gender-neutral language since the Feminist Movement of the 1970s has declined and that as writers and readers we need to be critical of the use of male-gendered language such as “mankind” or “man-made”. King reasserts the importance of identifying and correcting sexist language both in our own writing and in the writing of others.

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