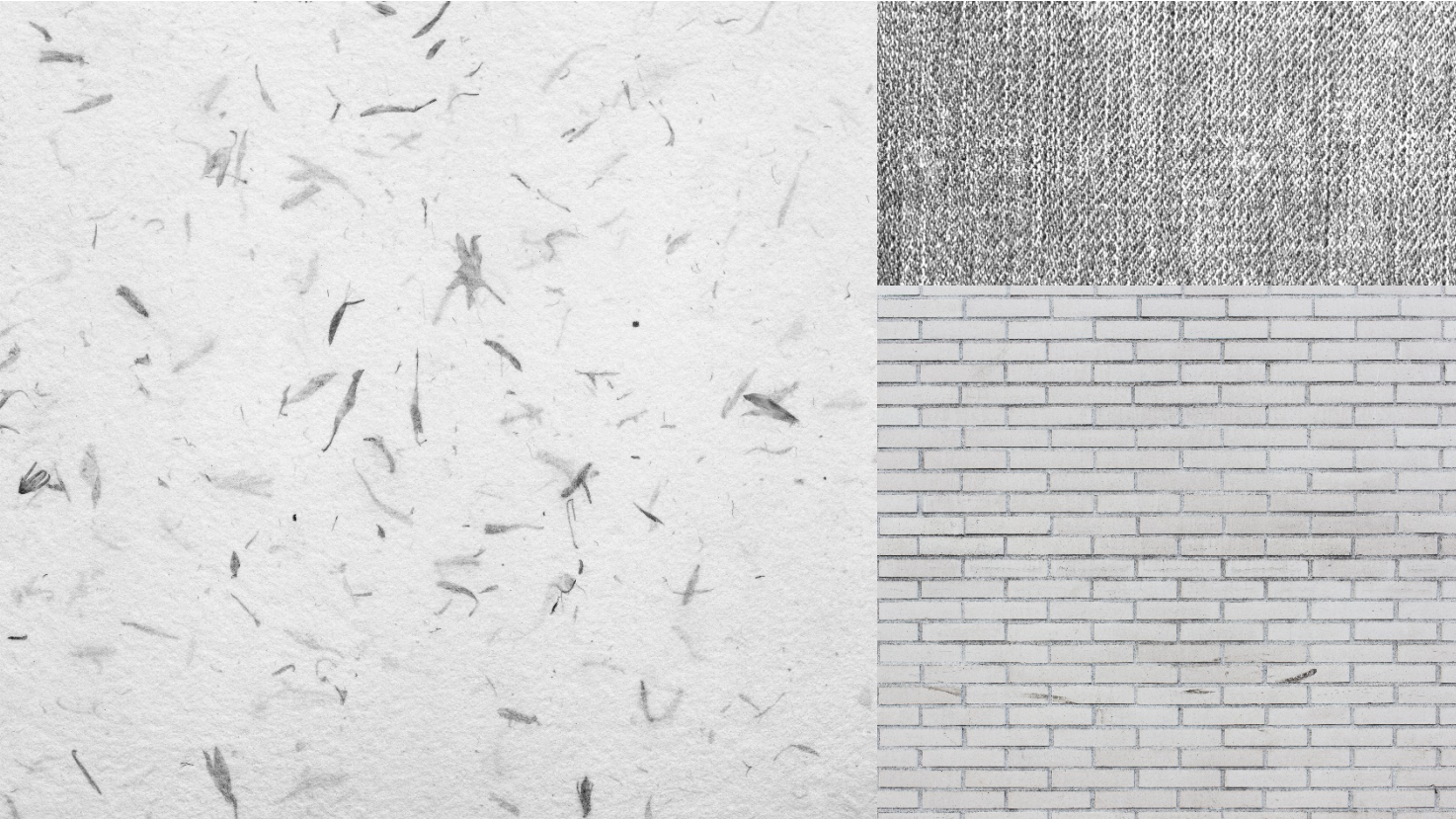


Global Research & Ethics:

Researching from somewhere, not nowhere

Rachel Carmen Ceasar
06.26.19



CULTURE OF HEALTH+TECH

Rundown



- 01 me, the anthropologist
- 02 research in “exotic lands”
- 03 researching from a place of nowhere

01. me, the anthropologist

A close-up photograph of a man wearing a tan cowboy hat and a dark blue jacket over a light-colored shirt. He has a slight, smug smile and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

ANTHROPOLOGIST.

AWESOME.

**What does an
anthropologist do all
day?**



How do people expose a violent past when they feel that there is no justice? (Spain, South Africa)



How do clinicians share information and knowledge at the point-of-care? (U.S.)



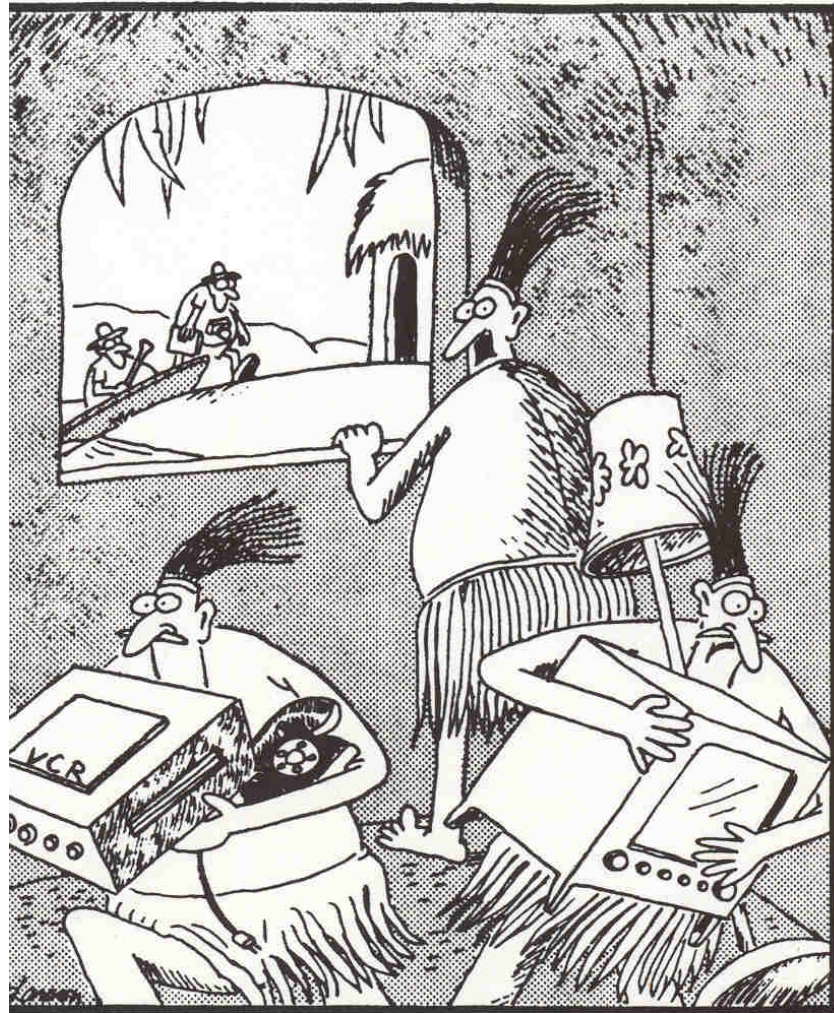
How might commuters incorporate air taxi transportation into their daily commute? (U.S.-Brazil)



Takeaway 1:

Anthropology is a method to systematically understand people's problems.

02. research in “exotic lands”



"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"

Body Ritual among the Nacirema

HORACE MINER
University of Michigan

THE anthropologist has become so familiar with the diversity of ways in which different peoples behave in similar situations that he is not apt to be surprised by even the most exotic customs. In fact, if all of the logically possible combinations of behavior have not been found somewhere in the world, he is apt to suspect that they must be present in some yet undescribed tribe. This point has, in fact, been expressed with respect to clan organization by Murdock (1949:71). In this light, the magical beliefs and practices of the Nacirema present such unusual aspects that it seems desirable to describe them as an example of the extremes to which human behavior can go.

Professor Linton first brought the ritual of the Nacirema to the attention of anthropologists twenty years ago (1936:326), but the culture of this people is still very poorly understood. They are a North American group living in the territory between the Canadian Cree, the Yaqui and Tarahumare of Mexico, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles. Little is known of their origin, although tradition states that they came from the east. According to Nacirema mythology, their nation was originated by a culture hero, Notgnihsaw, who is otherwise known for two great feats of strength—the throwing of a piece of wampum across the river Pa-To-Mac and the chopping down of a cherry tree in which the Spirit of Truth resided.

Nacirema culture is characterized by a highly developed market economy which has evolved in a rich natural habitat. While much of the people's time is devoted to economic pursuits, a large part of the fruits of these labors and a considerable portion of the day are spent in ritual activity. The focus of this activity is the human body, the appearance and health of which loom as a dominant concern in the ethos of the people. While such a concern is certainly not unusual, its ceremonial aspects and associated philosophy are unique.

The fundamental belief underlying the whole system appears to be that the human body is ugly and that its natural tendency is to debility and disease. Incarcerated in such a body, man's only hope is to avert these characteristics through the use of the powerful influences of ritual and ceremony. Every household has one or more shrines devoted to this purpose. The more powerful individuals in the society have several shrines in their houses and, in fact, the opulence of a house is often referred to in terms of the number of such ritual centers it possesses. Most houses are of wattle and daub construction, but the shrine rooms of the more wealthy are walled with stone. Poorer families imitate the rich by applying pottery plaques to their shrine walls.

While each family has at least one such shrine, the rituals associated with it are not family ceremonies but are private and secret. The rites are normally only discussed with children, and then only during the period when they are being initiated into these mysteries. I was able, however, to establish sufficient

Ethnocentrism

Our culture = the standard

Everything else = Other



...**Each family has at least one...shrine**, [and] the rituals associated with it are not family ceremonies but are private and secret...

The focal point of the shrine is a box or chest which is built into the wall. In this chest are kept the many **charms and magical potions without which no native believes he could live.**

These preparations are secured from a variety of specialized practitioners. The most powerful of these are the **medicine men, whose assistance must be rewarded with substantial gifts.**





Takeaway 2:

There is no exotic, only biases.

03. researching from a place of nowhere

Virtual panels & online communities in Sub-Saharan Africa?

1 post by 1 author ▾



Jun 7



☆ Hello--I'm a public health researcher working on bringing innovative, women-driven products that combine contraception with HIV or STI prevention through R&D and to market. For reference, the only such product that currently exists is the condom, which has been around as a method in various guises for 2,000 years. So far, R&D efforts for this class of products, called MPTs (Multipurpose Technologies) have been stalled by the lack of user research, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 70% of the global HIV population lives.

Early research on these products, which range from rings to inserts, gels and injectables, indicates that they would have a high acceptance rate among women, but the field needs more input from potential users throughout the R&D process. Since much of this product research is being done by pharmaceutical scientists in academia and tiny companies, there is limited funding for such research. The idea of creating virtual panels or communities within the target population, from adolescent girls to women with families, is really intriguing and could help move the best products forward. The goal is for these products to be easy to use, broadly available, inexpensive and discrete so women don't have to negotiate their use with a partner.

We've been thinking about virtual panels as Sub-Saharan Africa has high mobile phone usage rates and the ability to provide minutes or mobile money as incentives. I'm curious if anyone in this group has ever built such communities in Africa or other low and middle-income countries, particularly using SMS or Whatsapp, or perhaps has other suggestions for gathering user input. I could really use the advice!

For more info on the field, see our website 

Thanks very much,

Virtual panels & online communities in Sub-Saharan Africa?

1 post by 1 author ▾



1. **Literature review:** Do your homework—what's already been done?
2. **Research setting:** Sub-saharan Africa....Africa....low and middle-income countries
3. **Research participants:** Users = experts
4. **Hypothesis:** Start with questions and gaps, not problems/solutions

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For more info on the field, see our website [\[redacted\]](#)

Thanks very much,



Takeaway 3:

Research from a place that is actually somewhere.

Sit your knowledge down.

And surround yourself with the knowledge of others.

buoy

Log in | Sign up 

Welcome!
Let's figure out what's going on.

b

Are you answering for yourself or someone else?



Me

Someone Else

11:06

buoy



Welcome!
Let's figure out what's going on.

b

Are you answering for yourself or someone else?



Me

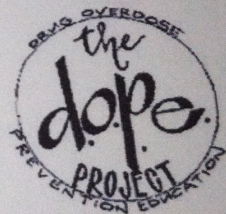
Someone Else

I HAVE NARCAN



PLEASE
ASK FOR
MY HELP!

**I AM TRAINED TO
HELP WITH AN
OVERDOSE**





Takeaways



01

me, the anthropologist

Method to understand human problems.

02

research in “exotic lands”

There is no exotic, only biases.

03

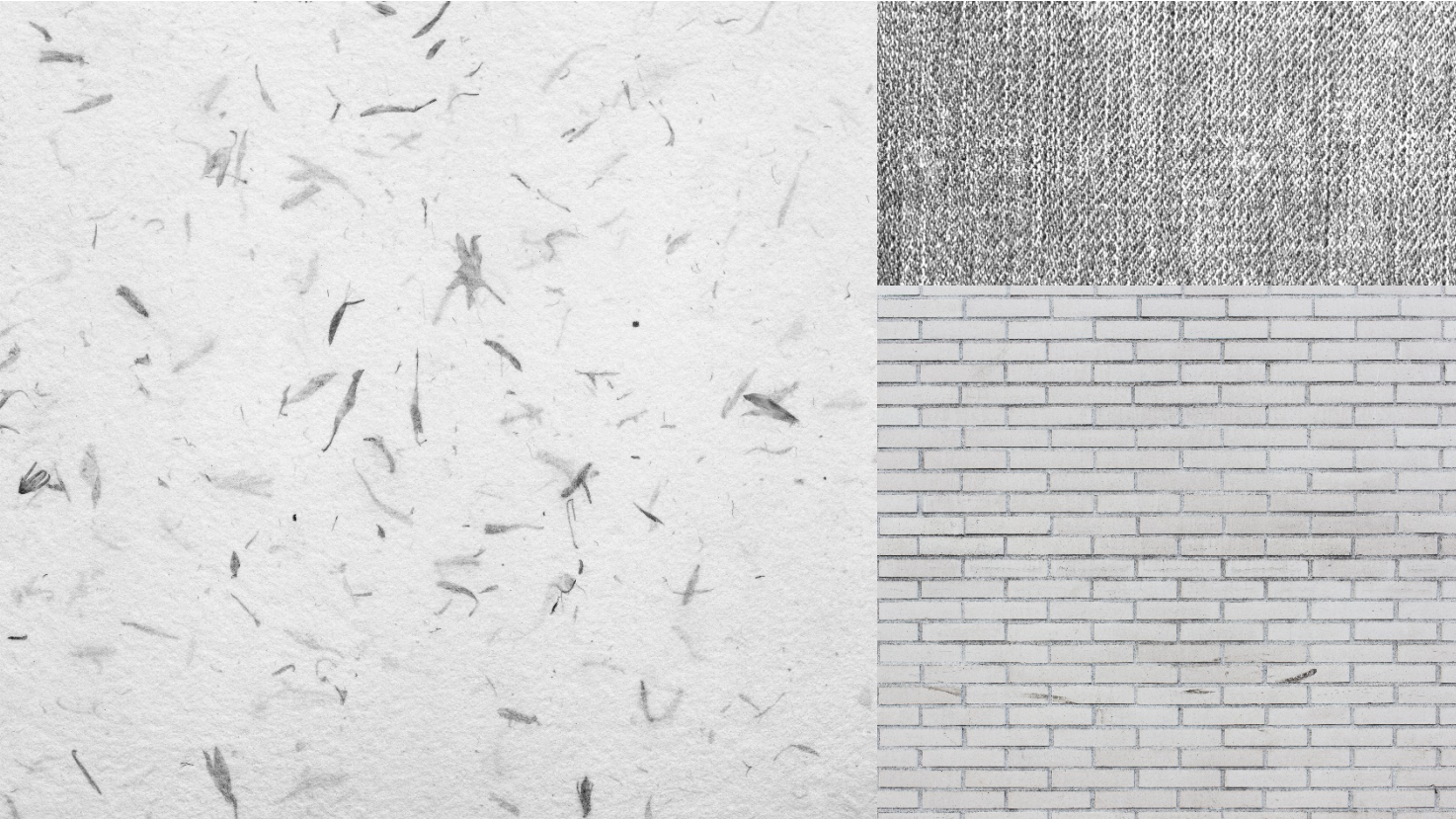
researching from a place of nowhere

**Research from somewhere—
Surround yourself with the knowledge of others.**

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