

Exam questions SUM3011/4011a, 2009

You are to answer 3 of the following 4 questions. Try to be comprehensive but concise. The quality of your answer is more important than its quantity.

- 1) Synthesize and critically assess the two sides of the debate on theory and method which Ortner lays out in her article "Thick Resistance: Death and the Cultural Construction of Agency in Himalaya mountaineering".
- 2) Choose one discipline (this may or may not be one which you have studied), and one topic (such as 'global warming' but preferably more limited). Critically assess the strengths and limitations of this discipline for understanding this topic, and indicate what other disciplines might contribute.
- 3) Daniel Bertaux claims that "we should tell stories; not only the life stories of various people but also the story of such and such a pattern of social relations, the story of a culture, of an institution, of a social group; and also, our *own* story as research workers". Explain how Bertaux came to this conclusion, and discuss what kind of understanding one can gain from using life stories as a method drawing on articles from the curriculum.
- 4) In the Peres et al (2003) article, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in order to produce reliable results. Discuss how quantitative and qualitative data may complement each other (you can use the Peres et al. article as an example). Could only quantitative or qualitative data have produced the same reliable results, if yes - why, if no – why.

Selected parts from the Peres et al. (2003) article:

Abstract (short version): *A comparative analysis of 23 populations of the Brazil nut tree across the Brazilian, Peruvian, and Bolivian Amazon shows that the history and intensity of Brazil nut exploitation are major determinants of population size structure.*

From the methodology: *The history of seed exploitation at each site was documented using public records, interviews with local Brazil nut collectors, and or systematic counts of fruits (...). ...surveyed and measured all trees > 10 cm in diameter at breast height. For all forest sites we compiled ranked data on forest type (reflecting canopy openness), soil nutrient availability, annual rainfall.*