



Our group:

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Introduction

Doing Anthropology in Cyberspace:
Fieldwork Boundaries and Social Environments

Mario J. L. Guimaraes



Main Idea

- How communities are created, how they interact, and how we can study them nowadays?
- How can you adapt a methodology to study this case and the interaction between groups of people?
- **What is a community?**



How to approach Communities

- Offline and Online deal with the same issues.
- Traditional approach: Community is the Entity, easily identified by race, religion, geography etc. "Are they a community?"



How to approach Communities

- Evolutionary approach: Community is merely the first stage of social gatherings, ordered by traditional values, and are overcome by society as a more social and rational group
- Symbolic approach: Community is the outcome of social relationships, where the symbolic boundaries (social, cultural, technological) are unique and identify the community. "How are they a community?"



Comments on ethnographic topics mentioned

- Ethical concern: Hidden observation.
- Researcher isolation
- “Dissociation”, and its use in the article



Cycle of informant life

- 1 year- minimum duration of ethnographic study
- Online social life – swift
- When to stop field work - suggested to consider its demographic renewal.



Who are the informants

- The focus is not individuals behind the keyboards but the interactions and performances in cyberspace.
- Online persona - informants online selves.



That's all

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"Stay tuned" for the next slide, containing a question for possible discussion in class!



Question for discussion in class:

- Ethical concern: Hidden observation.
 - What is most important? This ethical concern, or the fact that not being hidden might alter what is to be observed?