



**TRANBY**

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ADULT  
EDUCATION & TRAINING

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# **11026NAT Diploma of Applied Aboriginal Studies**

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## **LEARNER MANUAL**

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### **Block 1 Historical Perspectives and Identity**

**NAT11026005 Investigate family histories**

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**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

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# Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

When collecting and analyzing data, quantitative research deals with numbers and statistics, while qualitative research deals with words and meanings. Both are important for gaining different kinds of knowledge.

## Quantitative research

Quantitative research is expressed in numbers and graphs. It is used to test or confirm theories and assumptions. This type of research can be used to establish generalizable facts about a topic.

Common quantitative methods include experiments, observations recorded as numbers, and surveys with closed-ended questions.

Quantitative research is at risk for research biases including information bias, omitted variable bias, sampling bias, or selection bias.

## Qualitative research

Qualitative research is expressed in words. It is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences. This type of research enables you to gather in-depth insights on topics that are not well understood.

Common qualitative methods include interviews with open-ended questions, observations described in words, and literature reviews that explore concepts and theories.

Qualitative research is also at risk for certain research biases including the Hawthorne effect, observer bias, recall bias, and social desirability bias.

## The differences between quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative and qualitative research use different research methods to collect and analyze data, and they allow you to answer different kinds of research questions.

Quantitative research	Qualitative Research
Focuses on testing theories and hypotheses	Focuses on exploring ideas and formulating a theory or hypothesis
Analyzed through math and statistical analysis	Analyzed by summarizing, categorizing and interpreting
Mainly expressed in numbers, graphs and tables	Mainly expressed in words
Requires many respondents	Requires few respondents
Closed (multiple choice) questions	Open-ended questions
Key terms: testing, measurement, objectivity, replicability	Key terms: understanding, context, complexity, subjectivity

## Data collection methods

Quantitative and qualitative data can be collected using various methods. It is important to use a data collection method that will help answer your research question(s).

Many data collection methods can be either qualitative or quantitative. For example, in surveys, observations or case studies, your data can be represented as numbers (e.g. using rating scales or counting frequencies) or as words (e.g. with open-ended questions or descriptions of what you observe).

However, some methods are more commonly used in one type or the other.

### **Quantitative data collection methods**

- Surveys: List of closed or multiple-choice questions that is distributed to a sample (online, in person, or over the phone).
- Experiments: Situation in which variables are controlled and manipulated to establish cause-and-effect relationships.
- Observations: Observing subjects in a natural environment where variables cannot be controlled.

### **Qualitative data collection methods**

- Interviews: Asking open-ended questions verbally to respondents.
- Focus groups: Discussion among a group of people about a topic to gather opinions that can be used for further research.
- Ethnography: Participating in a community or organization for an extended period of time to closely observe culture and behaviour.
- Literature review: Survey of published works by other authors.

### **When to use qualitative vs. quantitative research**

A rule of thumb for deciding whether to use qualitative or quantitative data is:

- Use quantitative research if you want to confirm or test something (a theory or hypothesis)
- Use qualitative research if you want to understand something (concepts, thoughts, experiences)

Sourced on 14/12/22: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-quantitative-research/#:~:text=and%20qualitative%20methods%3F-,Quantitative%20research%20deals%20with%20numbers%20and%20statistics%2C%20while%20qualitative%20research,and%20experiences%20in%20more%20detail.>

## **Historical Research Methods**

Historical research or historiography, "attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present". (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 305 )

Historical research relies on a wide variety of sources, both primary & secondary including unpublished material.

### **Primary Sources**

- Eyewitness accounts of events

- Can be oral or written testimony
- Found in public records & legal documents, minutes of meetings, corporate records, recordings, letters, diaries, journals, drawings.
- Located in university archives, libraries or privately run collections such as local historical society.

#### Secondary Sources

- Can be oral or written
- Second-hand accounts of events
- Found in textbooks, encyclopedias, journal articles, newspapers, biographies and other media such as films or tape recordings.

Historical research involves the following steps:

1. Identify an idea, topic or research question
2. Conduct a background literature review
3. Refine the research idea and questions
4. Determine that historical methods will be the method used
5. Identify and locate primary and secondary data sources
6. Evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of source materials
7. Analyze the data and develop a narrative exposition of the findings.

(Berg & Lune, 2012, p.311)

#### References

Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (9th ed.). by Berg & Lune. ISBN: 9781292164397  
Publication Date: 2016

#### Some Sources of Historical Information

- [Trove](#)

Books, images, historic newspapers, maps, music, archives and more

- [National Archives of Australia](#)
- [Pandora](#)

PANDORA, Australia's Web Archive was established by the National Library in 1996 and is a collection of historic online publications relating to Australia and Australians. Online publications

and web sites are selected for inclusion in the collection with the purpose of providing long-term and persistent access to them.

- [Internet Archive](#)

Digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public.

- Royal Australian Historical Society – Finding Your Ancestors: Researching Aboriginal Family History in NSW <https://www.rahs.org.au/aboriginal-family-history-nsw/>
- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies <https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history>

## Researching Family History

### Collection of data on Aboriginal people

The collection of data on Aboriginal people has seen a history where information on and about Aboriginal people has been used to control their lives. For instance, the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Act 1909 (1909 - 1969) was based on the assumption Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were dying out.

#### ***The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 (25/1909) NSW***

The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 (25/1909) was 'An Act to provide for the protection and care of aborigines; to repeal the Supply of Liquors to Aborigines Prevention Act; to amend the Vagrancy Act, 1902, and the Police Offences (Amendment) Act, 1908; and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto.' It provided the Aborigines Protection Board, which had existed since 1881, with legal powers to 'provide for the protection and care of Aborigines.' It was the first piece of legislation that dealt specifically with Aboriginal people in New South Wales. It applied to all Aboriginal people but contained particular provisions for children, including the right of the Protection Board to remove youths from Aboriginal Reserves and place them into service. The Act was amended in 1915, 1918, 1936, 1940, 1943 and 1963. It was repealed by the Aborigines Act 1969.

The development of this act came about when mainstream society of the day started to complain largely about Aboriginal people moving into the fringes of towns and civic centres, as well as the increase in population of 'half-castes' (sic) demanding that something be done to better control the lives and movements of Aboriginal peoples.

The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 provided the Aborigines Protection Board, which had existed since 1881, with legal powers to 'provide for the protection and care of Aborigines. That is, whilst some laws were in place which gave power the police and government agencies to enforce or deny services, there was not a comprehensive piece of legislation, which gave the government the comprehensive powers to do so. Many argue that this enshrined the powers of the colonial government to control the people's lives from birth to death – mission to work.

#### **Current Use of Data**

Today there are clear, ethical rules and guidelines drafted by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra. Tranby has developed guidelines for Library and

Archive use based on these very guidelines. Current use of data on Indigenous people such as from medical centres, legal services, community based organisations and government services and agencies, are used to report on the well-being and service usage by Indigenous people.

The Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) has the largest collection of statistics on Indigenous people and reports can be located at the government website [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

Data on Indigenous Australians are used by a variety of stakeholders and for a range of purposes. There is considerable overlap with, for example, governments and Indigenous community organisations both having an interest in knowing whether the outcomes of the Indigenous population in <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> a particular community are improving or worsening; but there is often a tension between different users. Extending the example, the outcomes that an Indigenous community organisation might be interested in monitoring might be very different to those that the government is interested in.

## Hypothesis Generation and Testing

A *hypothesis* (plural *hypotheses*) is a proposed explanation for a phenomenon. For an *hypothesis* to be a scientific *hypothesis*, the scientific method requires that one can test it.

Hypothesis generation is largely explaining something based on information obtained. Therefore, someone can be said to generate a hypothesis based on the information that they have found, and they create meaning from this information.

The ABS uses statistics collected in the Census to generate hypotheses. This makes participating in the Census is important for social and economic planning.

Other important reports include the *Bringing Them Home* Report developed by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Australia; as well as the *Closing the Gap* Report. These reports document the Governments response and proposed actions to improving Indigenous health and well-being. The outcomes from such reports are then used as a benchmark to future programs and policies.

## Researching Family Trees

Researching one's family tree to identify and or re-connect with the biological family members, can sometimes be complex for Aboriginal people. This is because:

- there has not been consistency in the handling and treatment of early Aboriginal records
- the recording of names and places is patchy
- no written records existed in precolonial Australia

This is where ethnographic methods can be of great help. Gathering information from a range of sources is more likely to build a clearer, more accurate picture. Collecting Information for a family tree may include:

- visiting the NSW State library – Early records are held here
- visiting NSW State Archives, including the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- oral histories (family and friends) could include access to personal items, e.g. letters, photos, medals, keepsakes, etc. or others who have a shared family or community history

- web research may include:
- Ancestry.com
- aistsis.gov.au etc. trove.com.au - this website has old newsletters and articles which may help in piecing together family stories or events.
- Archived newspaper articles

### **Cultural Protocols**

When researching family histories, you need to consider people's privacy and gain permission to source and use information. You will also need to consider Cultural protocols while conducting interviews for your research. Considerations and protocols may include:

- refraining from using the first name of deceased persons when speaking about them
- obtaining information via appropriate channels (information held by men /women)
- gaining permission to view photos and documents
- gaining written permission to submit copies of photos and documents as part of your assessment
- Including a written statement with photos etc. to warn about images of deceased persons

### **Family Tree Research Issues**

Sometimes researching the family tree, can be difficult because the memories are too painful for some family members to share, particularly when there has been a death or a removal. It is very important to be sensitive to this.

Difficulties can arise in family research in communities due to the impacts of colonisation. Common issues impacting family research may include:

- Removals – Aboriginal people have been forcibly removed, this is where State records may be helpful
- Adoptions - Aboriginal people have been adopted and the records may have been sealed. There is a process for this in each State and Territory.

Click on the following link to access the *Communities and Justice* website for assistance in applying for past adoption information or those who are considering making contact with an adopted person, birth parent or family member:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/adoption/finding-info>

- Deaths – people dying off country without family members being notified and in many instances the remains not being returned home, or to country

- Name changes –some people have had their birth or traditional name changed as many of the people recording information in the early years of the colony had limited literacy. Many documents display that Aboriginal words, names or places were not clearly understood as names have been spelt in different ways, or just recorded incorrectly
- missing information
- lack of records
- family members unwilling or unable to give information
- stories that have conflicting information - from one written account to another or oral accounts from different family or community members
- you have formed hypotheses that you cannot verify
- Please note that in some instances the statute of limitations on information has not expired, such as access to records for births, deaths and marriages, and this can make access harder.

### **Verifying Information**

Verifying information from research and oral histories is important. Not only is this the ethical thing to do, it also honours the people you are researching. It may also assist others looking for the same material.

Librarians and archivists are usually happy to work with people when finding this information. Be diligent in making notes so that information can be cross checked.

Tranby has developed protocols around researching here so that people understand that we recognise rights, roles and responsibilities of those being researched as well as those doing research. Many Indigenous research bodies and organisations now have Indigenous research protocols in place, especially in the education and the health sectors. Education protocols are usually reflective of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Guide and the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. Both documents underscore the importance of working with Indigenous people and organisations and gaining informed consent when seeking to conduct research with and for Indigenous peoples and organisations.

You can access these research guides through the following links:

AIATSIS Research guide: [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines: [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

Oral histories are a very important part of research practice and additional information from articles, newspapers etc. is often used to inform, and or validate the experiences of people being interviewed.

Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.

Methods you can use to analyse, evaluate and verify (test) the information or hypotheses may include:

- Looking at how other people have developed their tree with professional researchers or archivists such as ancestry.com or aiatsis.gov.au
- Comparing documents with oral stories
- Linking dates and places of events from oral histories with documented information etc.
- Comparing different versions of the same or related stories (different family members or friends of family)
- Considering the culture and political climate of the time when events took place
- Maps of old reserves, missions or settlements
- Church records for marriages, funerals, baptisms
- Map of Indigenous Australia to refer to tribes and language groups
- Former employment records
- Event and program flyers
- Newsletters, newspapers and such as 'New Dawn', 'Koori Mail' or 'Indigenous Times'.

Documenting what you have found is also important, as well as the process of how you found the material or information.

<b>Learning Activity</b>
Where would you plan to look for information on your own ancestors? (70-80 words, 10 min)

## Archaeology, Anthropology, Ethnography, Indigenous Anthropology

**Archaeology** is the study of the human past using material remains. These remains can be any objects that people created, modified, or used.

Portable remains are usually called artifacts. Artifacts include tools, clothing, and decorations. Non-portable remains, such as pyramids or post-holes, are called features.

Archaeologists use artifacts and features to learn how people lived in specific times and places. They want to know what these people's daily lives were like, how they were governed, how they interacted with each other, and what they believed and valued.

Sometimes, artifacts and features provide the only clues about an ancient community or civilization. Prehistoric civilizations did not leave behind written records, so we cannot read about them.

Sourced on 15/12/22: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/archaeology>

**Anthropology** is the study of the origin and development of human societies and cultures. Culture is the learned behaviour of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods. Anthropologists study the characteristics of past and present

human communities through a variety of techniques. In doing so, they investigate and describe how different peoples of our world lived throughout history.

As anthropologists study societies and cultures different from their own, they must evaluate their interpretations to make sure they are not biased. This bias is known as ethnocentrism, or the habit of viewing all groups as inferior to another, usually their own, cultural group.

Sourced on 15/12/22: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/history-branches-anthropology>

**Ethnography** is a qualitative research method in which a researcher—an ethnographer—studies a particular social/cultural group with the aim to better understand it. Ethnography is both a process (e.g., one does ethnography) and a product (e.g., one writes an ethnography). In doing ethnography, an ethnographer actively participates in the group in order to gain an insider's perspective of the group and to have experiences similar to the group members. In writing ethnography, an ethnographer creates an account of the group based on this participation, interviews with group members, and an analysis of group documents and artifacts.

Sourced on 15/12/22: <https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-communication-research-methods/i4910.xml>

### **Indigenous anthropology**

Where research is undertaken *about* Indigenous people it is unilateral and allows no engagement with Indigenous people and all the control of the research is outside of Indigenous peoples' parameters. Research *with* Indigenous people allows some negotiation, but control of the research – who runs it, where it is undertaken and who is involved – again is outside of Indigenous control. Research *by* Indigenous people allows for an empowered situation to occur, where Indigenous people control what research they want undertaken, who is involved in the research, where the research occurs and how the data gets analysed.

When carrying out research we need to be very clear how the research is undertaken to allow optimum empowerment of Indigenous communities, to resolve their own community directions and crises and provide self-determination for them and their communities.

From: Lynette Riley, Community-Led Research through an Aboriginal lens, in Community-Led Research - Walking New Pathways Together, Edited by Victoria Rawlings, James L. Flexner and Lynette Riley, Sydney University Press 2021 (p15)

## **Ethnographic Research Methods**

Anthropologists aim to study and present their human subjects in a clear and unbiased way. They attempt to achieve this by observing subjects in their local environment. Anthropologists then describe interactions and customs, a process known as ethnography. By participating in the everyday life of their subjects, anthropologists can better understand and explain the purpose of local institutions, culture, and practices. This process is known as participant-observation.

Sourced on 15/12/22: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/history-branches-anthropology>

**Ethnography** is a type of qualitative research that involves immersing yourself in a particular community or organization to observe their behaviour and interactions up close. The word

“ethnography” also refers to the written report of the research that the ethnographer produces afterwards.

Ethnography is a flexible research method that allows you to gain a deep understanding of a group’s shared culture, conventions, and social dynamics. However, it also involves some practical and ethical challenges.

### **What is ethnography used for?**

Ethnographic research originated in the field of anthropology, and it often involved an anthropologist living with an isolated tribal community for an extended period of time in order to understand their culture.

This type of research could sometimes last for years. For example, Colin M. Turnbull lived with the Mbuti people for three years in order to write the classic ethnography *The Forest People*.

Today, ethnography is a common approach in various social science fields, not just anthropology. It is used not only to study distant or unfamiliar cultures, but also to study specific communities within the researcher’s own society.

For example, ethnographic research (sometimes called participant observation) has been used to investigate gangs, football fans, call centre workers, and police officers.

### **Advantages of ethnography**

The main advantage of ethnography is that it gives the researcher direct access to the culture and practices of a group. It is a useful approach for learning first-hand about the behaviour and interactions of people within a particular context.

By becoming immersed in a social environment, you may have access to more authentic information and spontaneously observe dynamics that you could not have found out about simply by asking.

Ethnography is also an open and flexible method. Rather than aiming to verify a general theory or test a hypothesis, it aims to offer a rich narrative account of a specific culture, allowing you to explore many different aspects of the group and setting.

### **Disadvantages of ethnography**

Ethnography is a time-consuming method. In order to embed yourself in the setting and gather enough observations to build up a representative picture, you can expect to spend at least a few weeks, but more likely several months. This long-term immersion can be challenging, and requires careful planning.

Ethnographic research can run the risk of observer bias. Writing an ethnography involves subjective interpretation, and it can be difficult to maintain the necessary distance to analyze a group that you are embedded in.

There are often also ethical considerations to take into account: for example, about how your role is disclosed to members of the group, or about observing and reporting sensitive information.

Sourced on 15/12/22: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/ethnography/>

### **Learning Activity**

1. Think of at least 3 reasons why Indigenous peoples or groups might not want Western ethnographers to collect information on them, and write down those reasons. (50-60 words, 10 min total)

## Changing Interpretations of Aboriginal Culture

Europeans were, Stanner has said:

... unable to see, let alone credit, the facts that have convinced modern anthropologists that the Aborigines are a deeply religious people. That blindness ... profoundly affected European conduct toward the Aborigines. It reinforced two opposed views — that they were a survival into modern times of a protoid form of humanity incapable of civilization, and that they were decadents from a once-higher life and culture. It fed the psychological disposition to hate and despise those whom the powerful have injured ... It allowed European moral standards to atrophy by tacitly exempting from canons of right, law, and justice acts of dispossession, neglect, and violence at Aboriginal expense.

WEH Stanner, 'Religion, Totemism and Symbolism' (1962), in Stanner (1979) 106, 108. cf CD Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, repr, Penguin, Ringwood 1978, 7.

## Colonization and Anthropology

Anthropology has been criticized by numerous anthropologists and other scholars as participating in the colonization of Indigenous societies. While settlers took land and resources from tribes and forced them to relocate to reservations, anthropologists gathered knowledge from Indigenous peoples for their own purposes. Another critique has focused on the right claimed by some anthropologists to speak for Indigenous peoples. Books written by early anthropologists have been viewed as disempowering Native peoples, claiming a place of greater legitimacy than the perspectives of Native people themselves. Some anthropologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries collected images of Indigenous people posed and dressed to fit a stereotypical conception of "Indians." Edward S. Curtis was one such anthropologist and photographer. Although his photos are rendered beautifully, they reflect his own conceptions rather than the realities of life for Native peoples at the time the photographs were taken. Curtis and many of his contemporaries are now critiqued for privileging their personal perspectives over the stark realities of Native peoples impoverished on reservations.

### Deloria's Critique

These criticisms of anthropology gained strength in the 1960s, with several Native scholars questioning in particular the higher value assigned to academic scholarship than to the voices of Native peoples. These critiques caused many scholars to reassess the nature of anthropological research.

Vine Deloria Jr. was a Sioux scholar who gained fame in the 1960s. Deloria openly challenged the legitimacy of anthropology as a discipline, criticizing anthropologists for benefiting from their research projects, whether through selling books or achieving tenure at their universities, while those they studied rarely received any benefits. Deloria developed his evaluation over a long career

consisting of five decades of scholarship. One focus of his scholarship was the biased nature of supposedly “objective” scientific research, which he called “an entrenched state religion” (1997, 211). He also accused Western academics of relying on notions of Native peoples that were biased by stereotypes and assumptions.

In many ways, Deloria inspired the growth of Native studies programs. His critical arguments resonated with tribal communities and were, and still are, an inspiration to generations of Indigenous scholars. His critiques have resonated with the discipline as a whole as well, resulting in adjustments and changes to anthropological methods and practices. There are now many more Indigenous and minority scholars in anthropology than ever before, in part aided by Deloria’s critique. Maori scholar Linda T. Smith describes the mission of these scholars in this way: “Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past are all strategies which are commonly employed by Indigenous peoples struggling for justice. . . . The need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance” (2021, 38). Indigenous specialties have been developed in most areas of anthropology, including Indigenous anthropology and Indigenous archaeology. Deloria’s criticisms have also been influential in the creation of the fields of public anthropology, public archaeology, and applied anthropology, all of which seek to establish a closer relationship with research subjects and apply research findings to address current problems.

### **The Othering of Indigenous Peoples**

Othering, discussed earlier in this text, refers to viewing those from different cultures or backgrounds as “other,” or inherently and importantly different from oneself or one’s own “type” of people. Indigenous peoples have been particularly affected by a tendency to be viewed as other by White society. As Linda Smith writes, “A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history as Indigenous peoples and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts” (2021, 31). The “otherness” that Smith refers to reflects tendencies both to not think about Indigenous peoples at all and to deliberately deny Indigenous cultures an equal share of the history of their land. Indigenous histories and contexts are viewed as something “other” than White histories and contexts and are largely ignored. Othering happens in every conceivable context and affects almost all aspects of social existence, including social mobility, civil rights, getting a job, and applying for grants and funding. Othering figures strongly into sometimes subconscious determinations as to whether a person is the right type of person for a specific position or role. Othering is a form of discrimination and racism. Othering has played a large role in recent discussions of policing in the United States. Othering is influential in the ongoing issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Many police agencies are not investigating missing Indigenous women because they are the other—Indigenous—and the women are singled out by predators because they are clearly Indigenous.

### **Cultural Experts and Authority**

Anthropologists have noted the value of tribal cultural experts to their research projects. A cultural expert is immersed in the culture of their Indigenous community and has insight into the intricacies of their community. Cultural experts have been used by anthropologists since the beginnings of anthropology. However, when reporting information provided by cultural experts, anthropologists have too often taken a position of authority that somewhat disempowers these same cultural experts. Those learning about an Indigenous society will typically turn to the published ethnographic literature on the subject. This literature will most likely present an outsider’s understanding of that society, frozen in a specific time frame and based on a single research project. This gives the readers

a warped understanding of the culture they are interested in, only completely valid within the time frame of the study.

Cultural experts, on the other hand, adapt and modify their insights and knowledge as they age. It is now common for researchers to seek out cultural experts to provide contemporary understandings of a culture and society. In addition, many researchers will now form collaborations with cultural experts that assign ownership and authorship to the cultural expert or the culture they are researching. Within this approach, the anthropologist becomes the compiler or editor of any publications, or perhaps the lead author of a team of authors. Many Indigenous scholars now conduct their own research, taking the roles of lead authors and editors of studies. Tribes are also taking control of research projects, contracting with anthropologists who agree to conduct the work with significant tribal input and review.

### **Indigenous Societies as Colonial Societies**

Indigenous societies are in many ways colonial societies. Most Indigenous people are of mixed heritage, and Indigenous cultures have changed in ways that make them more similar to the surrounding White communities. As just one example, many Indigenous peoples have adopted Christianity as their primary religion. But in most Indigenous communities, there is space for Indigenous traditions and spirituality as well. Sometimes, White and Indigenous cultures exist parallel to one another. Such hybrid societies are often criticized by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as no longer being Native or Indigenous, but this criticism reflects an understanding of what it means to be Indigenous that is frozen in time. Many people envision Native cultures as they existed in the 19th century as being the “true” cultures, while the cultures of Native people living in urban suburbs with automobiles and ranch-style houses are viewed as tainted or inauthentic. Culture is not a static thing; it is dynamic, constantly changing to fit the context of the present. Native peoples continue to maintain a cultural core that is Indigenous while they adopt the technology and trappings of contemporary society.

### **Decolonizing Anthropology**

In the 1970s, a movement began to “decolonize anthropology.” This movement seeks to address anthropology’s role in collecting and taking ownership of Native knowledge and culture and to speak out against anthropological analyses and products that support colonialism. One aspect of anthropological practice that has been particularly criticized is a tendency to treat Native people purely as research subjects, without acknowledging their agency or their rights, such as the right to protect their buried ancestors or control their knowledge, stories, and even place names. As part of the “decolonizing” movement, scholars began developing research protocols to address these criticisms. The Indigenous perspective has begun to be recognized as valuable, and people from diverse backgrounds have been welcomed into the discipline.

Sourced on 15/12/22:

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Introductory Anthropology/Introduction to Anthropology \(OpenStax\)/19%3A Indigenous Anthropology/19.03%3A Colonization and Anthropology](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Introductory%20Anthropology/Introduction%20to%20Anthropology%20(OpenStax)/19%3A%20Indigenous%20Anthropology/19.03%3A%20Colonization%20and%20Anthropology)