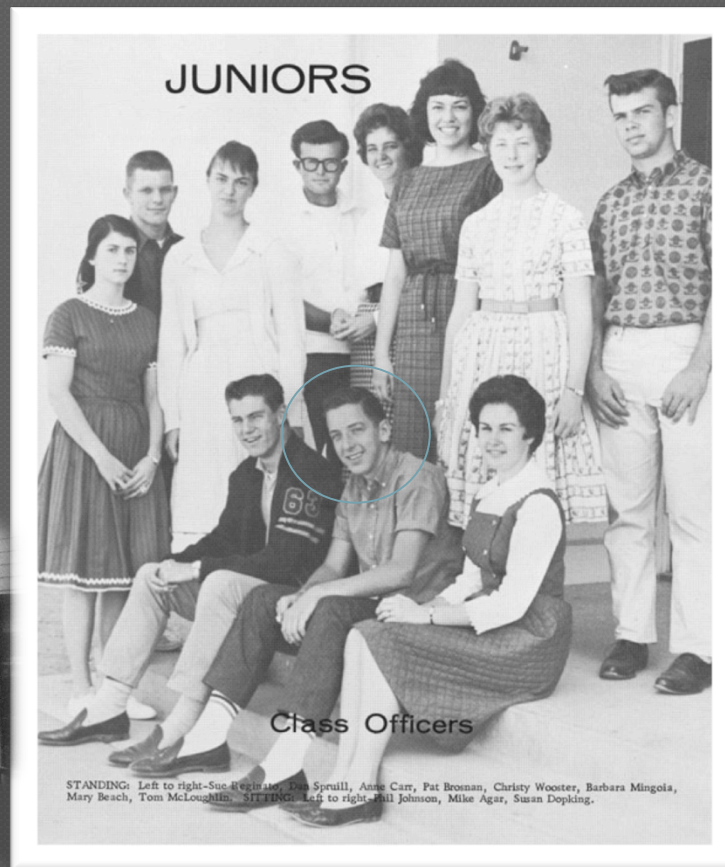
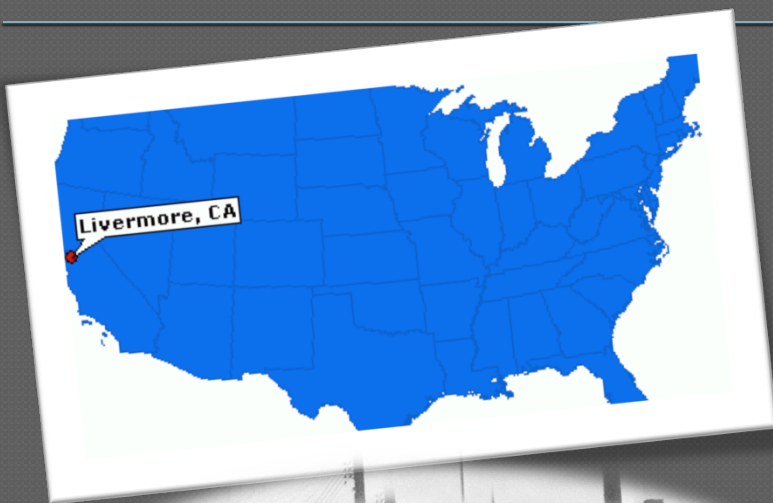


Mike Agar, anthropologist

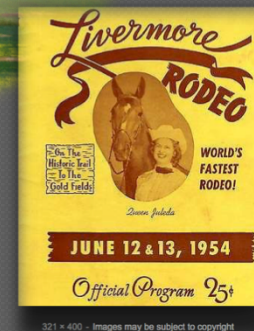
"An undocumented worker from another planet:"

Can method drain the moat between
application and theory?

Our town: Livermore, California

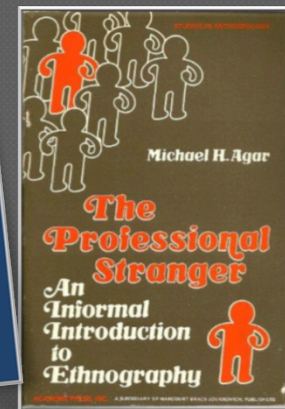
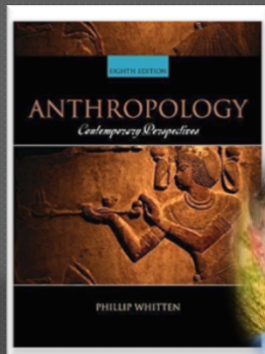


"Strange mix of cowboys and science"



Crucible for anthropologists

- Eastern transplants, coming of age as outsiders.
- "Professional strangers" who figured out the alien worlds.
- Ethnography: seeking of understanding through "massive over-determination of pattern."



But Mike, is it basic science?



A typical NSF social science "outreach" slide

Basic scientific research is grounded in a broader theoretical framework.



It focuses on one or a few research questions grounded in that broader framework.



It uses scientifically sound approaches to assess the viability of answers to those questions.



Its focused results contribute to enhancement of broader theoretical knowledge.

Basic anthropology science

- ◉ “Outstanding anthropology... doesn’t just funnel what it finds into a pre-fab pattern template... It puts the ready-to-wear pattern on the shelf, learns the tasks first, and then re-shapes or re-invents or just dumps the original template in favor of a pattern that preserves what was learned on the ground.”
 - ◉ NSF: Add a piece to the edifice.
 - ◉ Mike: You may need to build a new edifice to accommodate your data.
- ◉ *Check your work with the people you study; if your results work for them, you may have it right.*



Another NSF slide: "Basic" vs. "applied"

- Basic research results may have great direct and indirect utility and applicability.
- But at its core, basic research is first and foremost about broader theoretical development, not the focused application of specific research results.
- Analysis and synthesis are favored over prescription.
 - *Post-panel Mike: "We've got to talk."*
 - *I didn't see how much this haunted him.*