“Amyong, Anito at Usag”

Patterns of Health Beliefs Among Aetas of Nabuclod Pampanga

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Story of 2 C’s
Rationale

Part of COPAR Process (Entry Phase)

Nomadic & Adaptive Nature of Aetas

Provide Culturally Sensitive Nursing Care
Clearance

MOA with Municipality of Floridablanca Pampanga
Permission from Local Officials of Nabuclod Floridablanca
Consent from Council of Elders & Community Members
Methodology: Approach

Focused Ethnography

the process & product of describing cultural behavior
(Schwandt, 2007)

Cultural Practices affecting Health

• focuses on small elements of one society (Knoblaunch, 2016)

Box 1 Characteristics of focused ethnographies

- Problem-focused and context-specific.
- Focus on a discrete community or organisation or social phenomena.
- Conceptual orientation of a single researcher.
- Involvement of a limited number of participants.
- Episodic participation observation.
- Participants usually hold specific knowledge.
- Used in academia as well as for development in healthcare services.

(Adapted from Muecke 1994)

Cruz & Higginbottom (2013)
Methodology: Approach

Focused Ethnography

the process & product of describing cultural behavior
(Schwandt, 2007)

Cruz & Higginbottom (2013)

Table 1 Comparison between conventional and focused ethnographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional ethnography</th>
<th>Focused ethnography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-term field visits</td>
<td>Short-term field visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experientially intensive</td>
<td>Data/analysis intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time extensity</td>
<td>Time intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary data collection and analysis</td>
<td>Data session groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social fields</td>
<td>Communicative activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant role</td>
<td>Field-observer role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insider knowledge</td>
<td>Background knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective understanding</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Notes and transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>Coding and sequential analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Knoblauch 2005)
Methodology: Ensuring Rigor

- Part-Obs
- Interview
- Immersion
- Photo-document
- Story Telling
- Group Discussion

Thick Description
The Aeta People: Overview

- Belongs to Negrito group (Australo-Melanesian)
- Aeta, Ayta, Agta, Atta Ata, Ati, and Ita (It = Itim), Own Name
- Scattered all mostly over Asia-Pacific region
- Nomadic, Adaptive
- Hunter/ Farmer
- Speaks variety of language
- Polytheist/ Animist

From: http://sc2218.wikifoundry.com/page/The+Aeta+in+relation+to+Gender+Roles

Brosius, 1990; Waddington, 2002
The Aeta People: Nabuclod

- Mixture of Pampanga at Zambales Aeta
- Speaks at least 4 language (Manga-si; Kapampangan; Tagalog; Ingles; Zambal; Ilocano)
- Systemically oppressed (taken advantage by “unats”)
- Mixed religion per sitio even within family
- Culturally “intact”
- “Kabatad = Brethren”
The Community: Nabuclod Floridablanca, Pampanga

Ancestral Domain

Resettlement Area after Mt. Pinatubo’s eruption (1991)

Made up of 8 sitios (Camachile, Labuan, Balendalag, Mawakat, Centro, Inararo, Malan-ac, Tagak)

Questionable stats: (Nomadic Nature of Aetas; Changing of Names)

(DSWD record)
Pop: approx. 1500
Families: at least 78
Ages: ??
The Community: Nabuclod Floridablanca, Pampanga

- 1 elem school
- No health center
- Farming & *uling*
- Few have electricity
- No waterline
- 148 “housing unit”
- 4P’s recipients
Cultural Patterns

“Amyong at Dizu”

“Pag-aanito”

“Usag”
“Amyong at Dizu”: Amulets as Preventive & Curative Ornaments

**Cultural Identifier**

“Alam mong (may lahing) Aeta pag may Amyong”

**Connection to “Ninuno”**

“Para bantayan kami ng ninuno namin”

**Curative**

“Gamot yan ...pakuluan at inumin (Amyong)”

**Preventive**

“Lagay sa ilalim ng dila (brass ring)”

“Para sa ubo, para mawala (tree bark)”
“Amyong at Dizu”: Amulets as Preventive & Curative Ornaments

Amiong – Aromatic Seed from a tree from “Itim na bundok” (A day’s hike)

Dizu– Aromatic bark from a shrub from “Itim na bundok”

“Para di mabuntis pakuluan mo siya, inumin (Makahiya)”

“Para di mabati o mausag (Amiong at Dizu)”

Preventive
“Usag”:
Cosmological Deities & Wellness

Anito
Apo
Kidlat
Usag/Usog/Asog
ANITO – Formless Immortal Neutral Nature Elemental affecting the daily lives of people and guardian of plant, place or animals

“Bawal makita, mamatay ka”
“Nandyan lang sila sa paligid”
“Pinaginipan yung sa halaman (gamot)”

“Madami sa itim na bundok, bantay ng mga hayop at halaman”

Societal Control
“pedeng mabati sa gabi”
"Usag": Cosmological Deities & Wellness

APO – Term of Reverence for something that is “old/ ancient” (a person, an anito, a deity)

APO Namallari – Supreme God of Aeta (Kap: Apung Mallari: God of 8 rivers living in Mt. Pinatubo)

“Malakas usog ng mga Apo (older person)"
"Usag":
Cosmological Deities & Wellness

KIDLAT – Personified (as if an Anito) with own consciousness. Must be appeased or can cause harm to individual.

“Ayaw nun (kidlat) ng maasim kaya pag kumain ka ng maasim pag kumidlat matamaan ka”

“Mapaalam ka muna bago lumabas baka tamaan ka”

Injection is kidlat

“Yung injection kidlat yun kaya pag nilagyan ka nun ng di nagpaalam (ritual) mamatay ka. Parang nakidlatan”
USAG – Ailment (usually GI or malaise) stemming from “contact” with metaphysical vital force emanating from the spirit (a living (old) person, deceased relative (ninuno) or anito)

“Kapag iba kulay ng mata, may usog yan (can inflict)”

Nabati - (Admired)  Unintended

Naparusahan - (Punished)  Intended
"Usag": Cosmological Deities & Wellness

USAG Prevention & Management

Nabati - (Admired)  Unintended

- Amulet (Amyong, Dizu, Brass Ring, Mt. Rat’s Tail, Monkey Tail, Scar
- “Lawayan” “Pwera Usog”

Naparusahan - (Punished)  Intended

- Alayan (Sacrifice to Appease)
- Ritwalan (Rites to Remove) (Pagtatawas at Pag-aanito)
“Pag-aanito”:
Rituals Rites & Ceremonies for Ailment

PAGTATAWAS – Generally used for “Nausag/nausog” treatment

For asking permission of the anito

“Para di makidlatan pag nagpabakuna” (i.e. Egg ritual)

PAGAANITO – Reserved for “naanito”, connotes possession vs simple contact from an anito or apo
"Pag-aanito": Rituals Rites & Ceremonies for Ailment

PAGAANITO – Reserved for “naanito”, connotes possession vs simple contact from an anito or apo

- Mat: Red Cloth, Beads, tagak
- Ritual blended with dance, chants and plea for the spirit to leave the person
- Passed within bloodline (most female, 2 in Nabuclod)
- Mang-aanito during the ritual is possessed by a higher anito to ward off the anito from the sick person
  - Cultural Bearer
Insights

Decision on Health Action and Behavior is still rooted in their unique Cultural Belief System.

Practices give them a sense of relief and calmness during crisis moments.

Health Practices are cultural markers and identifiers.

Practitioners are Cultural Bearers.

Charms, Rituals, and Belief are Universally Filipino.
Implication

Need to integrate their “harmless” health practices

Cultural Sensitivity and Competence must be developed

Be aware of the history and culture of the locale (Sys Opp)

Health must be holistically appreciated covering all “Bases”

We are not so different after all
References


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