Title: Ethnoarchaeology as a strategy for building frames of reference for research

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Introduction and Definition

Ethnoarchaeology is a powerful strategy for structuring archaeological research questions that uses ethnographic information to make inferences about the material residues of past human activities. Ethnoarchaeology is not a theoretical approach per se, so it can investigate research questions generated from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives. Ethnoarchaeological scopes and scales of research are expanding rapidly in geography, chronology, method, and theoretical stance; from variables conditioning the manufacture of traditional technology to the evolution of symbolic expression and ritual behaviors.

Ethnoarchaeologists are uniquely positioned to construct frames of reference to aid archaeological inquiry. In this entry, ‘frame of reference’ is defined as a research strategy that makes projections from a better-known domain of knowledge to a less-well known domain.

Ethnoarchaeologists examine variation in characteristics of an independent, related, body of knowledge (ethnographic data) to generate frames of reference for testing and refining research about less well-known phenomena (the ways that human activities are expressed in the archaeological record, and implications of the archaeological record for past activities).

Ethnoarchaeology has been described as a subset of actualistic archaeology, but unlike experimental archaeology, which is conducted under acultural, controlled laboratory conditions, ethnoarchaeology documents and analyzes behaviors that are observed or described in ethnographic settings. Unlike ethnographic analogy, which identifies similarities and infers similar causal mechanisms, and the direct historical approach, which imposes traits of present-day material culture directly onto the archaeological record, ethnoarchaeology usually takes the intermediate step of developing frames of reference to investigate the archaeological record. Human behavioral ecology and bio-social anthropology also employ real-time observations of human societies as means to structure research problems, but are more narrowly concerned with biologically expressed evolutionary aspects of human behavior.
There is some overlap between ethnoarchaeology and actualistic research strategies, but ethnoarchaeology does have important characteristics that define it as a separate sub-discipline of archeology: the most significant being the conceptual linkage between the two domains of ethnography and archaeology. This entry begins with a summary of the history of ethnoarchaeology (for a more detailed review see David & Kramer 2001), and moves on to describe functions of ethnoarchaeology in various arenas of method and theory; explore key issues, current debates and critiques; and discuss future trends and opportunities.

1. Historical Background

The history of ethnoarchaeology can be summarized in four main periods of growth, drawn loosely from David & Cramer 2001. Like the archaeological record itself, the history of ethnoarchaeology is a palimpsest; traces of early tactics and perspectives can still be discerned in ethnoarchaeological research today, although they may be situated in new geographic or culture historical contexts.

a. Initial Period, 1956-1967
The term ‘ethno-archaeology’ was first coined in 1900 by Jesse Fewkes, who was describing the direct application of present-day cultural phenomena to materials left behind by past behavior. In 1948 Walter Taylor advocated the need for a ‘conjunctive archaeology’ that brought anthropological techniques of observation and categories of data into archaeological research. Female researchers were proponents of ethnoarchaeology early on, evidenced by Patty Jo Watson’s 1950s work in Iraq, Iran and Turkey and Maxine Kleindeinst’s interest in the African Paleolithic (Kleindienst & Watson 1956). The call of Taylor, Watson and Kleindienst, and others to integrate ethnographic and archaeological patterning grew from dissatisfaction with the ‘mainstream’ strategy in the early to mid-20th century, which emphasized analytical categories. Culture-historical archaeology mostly involved excavating sites with relatively rich, well-stratified arrays of material remains, grouping their stylistic elements into formal artifact types, tracing the distribution of those types through time and space, identifying bounded, co-occurring sets of types as archaeological “cultures,” and explaining changes in composition and distribution by reference to past movements of people, or ideas, or both (O’Connell 2011).

Most early ethnoarchaeological approaches superimposed cultural phenomena observed in the present directly onto material traces of the past, and this had some success in cases where cultural continuity was strong. Analogical approaches during this time largely explored the parameters of artifact manufacture, focusing on characteristics that are visible in the archaeological record. Spatial analyses of living spaces at that time were scarce, and served mostly as cautionary tales against unwarranted inferences about site structure and function (Heider 1961). This early role of ethnoarchaeology as a check and balance against “just-so stories” is still relevant today (Gifford-Gonzalez 2010).


The emergence of ethnoarchaeology as a major sub-discipline was linked with the advent of cultural ecology studies that documented human subsistence, technology, and mobility as essential indicators of the dynamic relationship between societies and their home environments (cf. Steward 1955). Archaeologists, moving from discernment of categories of artifacts toward descriptions of dynamic adaptive systems, realized that frames of reference were needed to
explain the relationships between properties of the archaeological record and behaviors that condition for those properties. Lewis Binford’s series of publications in the 1960s asserted that archaeologists must not only use anthropological information, but become proficient in anthropology in order to build frames of reference for archaeological research problems. The groundwork for ethnoarchaeological fieldwork among the Nunamiut in the 1970s grew from his doubts about F. Bordes’s “ethnic geography” of Mousterian tools; Binford felt that Mousterian technological variation could be functional, but realized that he needed a frame of reference about arctic hunting tools and lifeways (Binford, personal communication). In the ‘60s and ‘70s, most proponents of the New Archaeology focused on adaptive systems and processual change rather than ideology and symbolic thought, and they found a ready source of baseline information in ethnoarchaeology. At about the same time, Richard Gould was conducting ethnoarchaeological fieldwork among the Ngatadjara peoples of the Australian Western Desert. His interests in symbolic and ideational behaviors led him to assert that these behaviors could be discerned in the archaeological record by identifying the anomalies between archaeological expectations and ethnographic observations.

Ethnoarchaeology underwent a brisk self-examination in the 1970s and early ’80s in a series of debating articles between Gould and Binford: Gould (1980) asserted that the proper research objectives of anthropology are symbolism and meaning, thereby confining ethnoarchaeology to the more humble realms of behavior that generate archaeologically visible material residues (e.g., cooking, toolmaking, house construction, etc.). The danger of investigating only materially significant behaviors was a uniformitarian, determinist view of human culture as materially dictated. Binford countered that culture mediates human interactions with the world, and variability in those culture-environment interactions are patterned, with material signatures that are observable anthropologically (Binford 1989). This back-and-forth discussion, never ‘resolved,’ foreshadowed the vigorous processual/post-processual debates that began in the mid-1980s and continue today (see below).

The geographic scope of ethnoarchaeology expanded during the 1960s and ‘70s to include nearly every region of the world, with particularly active research programs in sub-Saharan Africa and Australia. Nearly every level of societal organization was investigated with emphasis on
foraging peoples, but industrialized or ‘state’ level societies were under-represented during this period. Not surprisingly, accumulating ethnoarchaeological data led to the realization that linkages between behaviors and their archaeological consequences are complex. New Archaeologists who sought large generalizations felt that ethnoarchaeological data were sometimes too particularistic due to the ‘embedded’ nature of the data collection process. The 1980s arrived with no grand unifying theory of archaeology in place, but the wealth of data generated by pioneering ethnoarchaeological fieldwork during this time period remains highly influential to archaeological and anthropological research today.

c. Expansive Period, 1982-1999

With the advent of post-processual archaeology in the 1980s and ‘90s, Hodder (1982), David et al. (1988), and others employed ethnographic information to argue that symbolism, ideation, meaning, and identity are active formative agents in the archaeological record; and that material culture is itself an active agent of communication. Ethnoarchaeology was now called upon to document the social, ritual, and geopolitical contexts within which behaviors play out, and the ways that materials are made, used, and employed as social and ritual symbols. Along with reflexive anthropology, which re-oriented the object of inquiry from observed to the observer by making explicit the observer’s sociopolitical position, post-processual archaeology focused on subjective interpretations of the textual or narrative aspects of the material record, which was described as a series of symbols. The persons conducting ethnoarchaeology were viewed as active agents of communication who influence research outcomes in non-replicable ways. Although post-processual approaches may have influenced ethnoarchaeology less than other research strategies, post-processualism addressed ritual and ideational behavior in a more robust manner than the ‘new ethnoarchaeology,’ and led to a growth of interest in complex, sedentized societies with a more robust material record of symbolic and textual expression.

d. Recent Diversifying Period, 2000-2011

Ethnoarchaeology in the 2000s has expanded to include processual, science-oriented forms of inquiry about variability and evolution that involve explanation of differences and similarities as
well as post-processual explorations of the ways that researcher and researched explore meaning and reify their own connections to the past: for a good cross-section of current variability in ethnoarchaeological research problems see the SAA Archaeological Record, Volumes 9(5) and 10(1). Ethnoarchaeology contains enormous potential to contribute fine-grained, reliable information to heritage and identity studies, which has captured the interest of scholars associated with descendant communities. Ethnoarchaeology has become a major contributor to intangible archaeology by documenting spiritual implications of seemingly utilitarian objects, and helping to document and pass on key language terms and traditional skills to the next generation. The social systems studied in ethnoarchaeology now include foragers, horticulturalists, pastoralists, industrialized urban peoples, as well as occupational specialists from every socio-economic status and corner of the globe. Research topics range from lithic tool production to the study of material expressions in urban middle-America. In the past three decades the transformation of the main job market from academia to cultural resources management and other forms of public archaeology – particularly in North America – has given rise to the citation of ethnoarchaeological research for rapid diagnostic ascriptions of archaeological materials, features, and settlement complexes. Women researchers, always well-represented in ethnoarchaeology, are growing in number; in the recent double issue of the Society for American Archaeology’s Archaeological Record in 2009 and 2010, women authors outnumbered men by eight to two.

Functions of ethnoarchaeology

Ethnoarchaeology as a research strategy is a chameleon, taking on different shades from the contexts of its use. Gifford-Gonzales (2010) notes that ethnoarchaeology has functioned in the larger landscape of anthropology as

- A category-checker for implicit assumptions or analytic categories of archaeological materials,
- A prediction-tester for hypothetical statements drawn from a formal body of theory, and
- A Middle Range Theory builder that defines relational analogies in ways that are relevant to the formation of the archaeological record.
These functions are generally ‘built in’ by researchers during the formulation of research designs. Other important functions of ethnoarchaeology may become apparent after the conclusion of research, sometimes many decades afterward. In these cases, people come to realize that ethnoarchaeology has also served as

- A spoiler to received wisdom, disproving generalizations and revealing unanticipated variability,
- A heritage keeper for descendant groups who have inhabited a region for long periods, and
- a public relations bridge-builder that shows archaeologists engaging directly with living people and societies.

Sometimes unintentionally, the ethnoarchaeologist may find her/himself acquiring bodies of knowledge that are outside the ‘traditional’ confines of archaeology; these could range from proficiency in indigenous languages to an ability to identify dozens of species of fish to competency in traditional skills like weaving, butchering, or home construction. Thus an important ‘after the fact’ function of ethnoarchaeology is to broaden the experiential, intellectual, and ethical repertoire of archaeologists.
Figure 2. Claudia Chang talking to a Greek woman herder in Grevena in the late 1980s. Photo: Perry A. Tourtellotte

**Ethnoarchaeological research problems and strategies**

When these many functions are overlaid with different theoretical perspectives, the variation in uses of ethnoarchaeological research questions can be breathtaking, reflecting a very broad spectrum of anthropological and archaeological research domains. The below categories are derived from Cramer and David 2010, in approximate chronological order of appearance and emphasis. Ethnoarchaeology has been, and is, employed to study

1. The ways that residues of human activities enter archaeological contexts
2. Mobility, at varying temporal, spatial, and organizational scales
3. Subsistence, including procurement and processing
4. Artifacts, including functions; as elements of technological systems; operating sequences; and taxonomic categories
5. Style and the marking of boundaries including regional studies
6. Settlement systems and patterns
7. Site formation and structure
8. Architecture, including form, construction, function, context
9. Specialist craft production and apprenticeship
10. Trade and exchange
11. Systems of thought such as status, ideology, and mortuary practices

This list is evolving with each passing day. Emphasis in the 1960s and 1970s centered on foraging and small-scale horticultural societies with a focus on hunting and processing of game animals, production of lithic tools, and frequent mobility. Over the decades, ethnoarchaeological research has diversified to agriculturalists, pastoralists, fishing societies, and urban settings; craft specializations such as ceramics, weaving, and metallurgy are well-represented.

There are very few people who identify themselves as full-time ethnoarchaeologists; rather, ethnoarchaeology is conducted by researchers trained as archaeologists in the broader sense. Whether a student or an ‘old hand,’ identifying the best data to collect--and the means to collect them--is a major challenge to the ethnoarchaeological researcher. Simple questions such as, “Where should I go, and how long should I stay? Whom should I talk to? What should I observe?” can generate complex research logistics. In the field, duration of the research can play a key role in the applicability of data to the research problem; seasonal, inter-annual, or long-term variation is unlikely to be reflected in a two-week field stay. But a researcher interested in manufacture of a specialized artifact type can focus field time and target observations more narrowly.

Techniques for collection of quantified data might include item counts; identifications (of species, material types, methods, architectural traits, etc); weights; durations; measures of distance; and demographic information. Archaeologists’ proficiency at map-making and visual data collection like photography are very useful. Methods borrowed from the field of human ecology have proven quite transferable, and include ‘scans’ (cyclical observations of varied phenomena, such as walking through a camp and recording all activities at hourly intervals) and ‘focals’ (targeted on individuals or activities and collected in a continuous stream for the duration of the activity, such as observing a man making a mask, or following a woman on a trip.
to gather weaving materials). Scans provide low-resolution data at large spatial and temporal scales that offer opportunities for pattern recognition and generalizations, and focals generate high-resolution information at smaller scales that illuminate the ways that individuals operationalize bodies of knowledge in specific contexts.

The role of qualitative data is complementary, and essential. Interviews and direct participation in activities (nearly always as a clumsy acolyte) can capture nuances and variability that don’t manifest in quantitative data. Children and teenagers who are still in the learning phases, and enjoy interacting with unusual grown-ups, can be particularly effective language coaches, teachers, and informants. Photographs, video, and audible recordings are precious forms of documentation that can be referenced in the remote future for a wide variety of research questions. When considering ethnoarchaeological research design, it is important to consider the comfort level of the study community and its individual members with the presence of a researcher. Techniques that require prolonged observation periods in houses, or focal follows of individuals, are obviously invasive, especially early in the acquaintance between the researcher and the community. These techniques are best undertaken after a preliminary adjustment period in which the researcher becomes a known, and hopefully trusted, entity (also see Critiques, below).

Although the most visible and charismatic form of ethnoarchaeological data collection is direct engagement with traditional peoples in the field, background information collected in library settings is an essential pre-field step for structuring and refining research questions. Consulting library sources post-field will likely provide insights in the light of the ethnoarchaeologists’ newly acquired knowledge. Too, traditional experts are not always available to the researcher; lifeways may have changed or vanished. In these cases, collection and analysis of ethnographic library sources alone can also contribute to original and useful hypothetical statements about material correlates of behavior and organization that can be assessed with archaeological data.

2. Key Issues and Current Debates

Critiquing goals of ethnoarchaeology
Because ethnoarchaeological research comes in every theoretical stripe, it is subject to an equally wide spectrum of critique. Ethnoarchaeology has been called particularistic by processualists; deterministic by post-processualists, and colonialist and reductive by descendant communities. This entry focuses on critiques of ethnoarchaeology as a research strategy and the ways that ethnoarchaeologically derived arguments about key linkages can lead to weak or inaccurate inferences. Wobst (1978) makes a strong case against directly superimposing ethnographic observations, which are localized and temporally narrow, to archaeological data, which reflect long periods of time and/or clusters of sites or regional scales. This could be read as a critique of ethnoarchaeology, particularly in its early career as a fairly direct means of comparison. The intervening step of deriving an hypothesis from appropriately scaled ethnographic observations (e.g., numerous comparable observations on similar subject matter, or observations taken from a large spatial area) that can be tested using archaeological data should, in most cases, alleviate the issue raised by Wobst.

Obviously, the successful application of ethnoarchaeological observations to archaeological problems requires the researcher to understand the context and applicability of observations, and a reasonable critique is that ethnographic techniques can never ‘perfectly’ capture phenomena. If an observed behavior or relationship is anomalous, or observed/interpreted in error, the usefulness of the research is lost or reduced. This can result from insufficient consideration of variability (such as overstating the applicability of a small-scale observation), or observations never made (a researcher can’t be everywhere at once and may miss important facets or variations of systemic relationships). Something as simple as unwillingness of a host community or informant to discuss a sensitive subject, or insufficient control of the language by the researcher, can also compromise the accuracy of observations. Addressing this critique requires careful attention to the context and applicability of observations to one’s research problem; adjusting as needed; and acknowledging data gaps and future research needs.

A related critique of ethnoarchaeology as a research strategy is insufficient integrity, or ‘authenticity’ of the traditional nature of the study culture (e.g., Belcher 2009, Jones 2009, Hudson 2010). The excitement and controversy generated by discoveries of the Tasaday and other small, allegedly pristine, “Stone Age” groups highlights the hunger of the academy and the
larger public for cultures un-altered by the modern world. Once more, ethnoarchaeologists must emphasize the role of the intermediary role of the frame of reference, which requires that the research question specify scales of observation, and exercise control over properties that vary and those that are held constant. For example, an ethnoarchaeological investigation of wild plant gathering might note that women climbed through barbed wire fences and carried metal machetes. This does not compromise the value of observations of, say, the number and type of plants gathered, the decision when to leave a patch, the relative contribution of young girls and a blind woman in the group, and distribution of raw and cooked plant foods to family members back at camp. However, if the women hitch a ride to the gathering site on a friendly rancher’s truck, this obviously reduces this trip’s explanatory power for patterns of mobility. A similar issue is lack of control over context: no field conditions today can approach the conditions encountered by foragers colonizing the Australian Western Desert in the Pleistocene, for example. No people (or animals) resemble Pliocene hominids today, so using ethnographic information to explore Pliocene behaviors is risky according to paleoanthropologists (Liebermann et al. 2007). Addressing conditions for which there is no modern comparative context requires close control over variables, and clear, defensible rationales for the derivation of ethnoarchaeological frames of reference and their application to archaeological questions.
Related to the above is inadequate applicability or “fit” of ethnographic observations to the archaeological record, a very common critique. Ethnoarchaeologists frequently find themselves explaining to a variety of audiences why motorized transportation, modern tools, wage labor, loss of language, participation in the national education system, non-traditional clothing, manufactured items and commodity foods, and other influences of the globalized culture and economy do not necessarily compromise the value of ethnoarchaeological observations. Global influences can’t be ruled out in most ethnoarchaeological field contexts, and (as with the Pliocene case above) ethnoarchaeologists must maintain good control over variables, describe defensible rationales for deriving ethnoarchaeological frames of reference, and explain clearly their application to archaeological questions. This is no reason to cease the practice of ethnoarchaeology: indeed, the continual influence of industrialized, globalized society and its material forces on traditional life and culture enhance the research utility and heritage value of ethnoarchaeological observations.
The uneven use of ethnoarchaeological concepts in public archaeology has received its share of criticism. Few archaeologists working in public archaeology have not seen the forager/collector dichotomy (Binford 1980) invoked to explain everything from site distribution and structure to lithics, along with curated/expedient tools, and MNI/NISP for faunal remains, particularly in dealing with foraging cultures. Simplistic application of ethnoarchaeological categories can be a cost-effective way to ‘interpret’ the archaeological record, leading to hasty assignment of archaeological materials to established, prescriptive categories. This is reminiscent of culture historical taxonomics and forecloses the strength of ethnoarchaeological research, which lies in the formation of frames of reference prior to data analysis. However, ethnoarchaeology has play an important role to play in public sector archaeology; data can contain information of immense value in hypothesis generation and testing for cultural resources-related research. In the past 20 years, descendant communities have become professionally involved with the practice and goals of public archaeology, and are recruiting ethnoarchaeological information for the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of cultural heritage in both tangible and intangible realms.

**Critiquing methods of ethnoarchaeology**

The unpredictability of fieldwork is particularly high in ethnoarchaeology; a reasonable critique is the likelihood that unanticipated field conditions will compromise a research agenda. If ethnographic background data used to structure the research question aren’t adequate, or field conditions (geo-political, socio-economic, environmental, climatic, etc.) are dramatically different from those anticipated, the researcher must be prepared to adjust data collection methods or even research questions, all while living under conditions that are challenging in and of themselves. For this reason, many ethnoarchaeological research programs build in a brief reconnaissance prior to the main body of fieldwork, to assess conditions and make adjustments. Failing to account for the influence of a researcher in the community, and resulting compromise in the validity of observations constitutes another basis for methodological critique; the immediate local economy is altered by trade relationships or provision of goods or wages, and the status of the community relative to neighbors and the government will almost certainly change. Researchers bringing food or tools for themselves or the community, or providing medicines or trade goods, can have a huge influence on a small traditional community--
sometimes leading to undesirable impacts. These considerations should be front and center when planning for ethnoarchaeological research.

**Critiquing ethics of ethnoarchaeology**

The ethical landscape affects how ethnoarchaeological research is structured, carried out, interpreted, applied, and referenced. More importantly, ethical decisions that a researcher must make on a daily basis can have a disproportionate effect on the economic, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the community and its members. Many ethical issues echo those of ethnographic fieldwork: how should the researcher reimburse people for information? For shouldering the burden of a naïve anthropologist living in their midst who often must be fed, protected, housed, and instructed? Is it appropriate to enter into wage relationships for services like laundry, housecleaning, and food? Should an ethnoarchaeologist interfere in situations like the perceived mistreatment of a child or a helpless person? What about reporting abuses or crimes perpetrated by neighbors, local military, or local governments? How should the ethnoarchaeologist best protect sacred or other sensitive information? What about personal involvement with a community member? Each situation will require careful, and sometimes very rapid, decisionmaking -- and “one size does not fit all.” One guarantee in ethnoarchaeological fieldwork is that the ethnoarchaeologist will be called upon to deal with ethical situations that s/he has not anticipated, which increases the value of a short reconnaissance before major fieldwork.

Critiques from within and without have strengthened and refined this uniquely productive and powerful research strategy and are worth careful consideration by practicing ethnoarchaeologists, students of ethnoarchaeology, and scholars who use ethnoarchaeological data collected by others. Taking steps to avoid, offset, or remedy theoretical, methodological, and ethical pitfalls involve background research, discussions with experienced field researchers, and excellent communication skills with communities in which researchers live and study.

**International Perspectives**
As the theoretical stage of ethnoarchaeological practice has broadened, so has its use by non-Western researchers from all over the globe. Some areas of emphasis are listed in the table below, summarized from David & Cramer 2001 and a survey of recent journal articles in international ethnoarchaeology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research subject</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ceramic-making and its larger role in society</td>
<td>Philippines, Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>settlement patterns as they relate to house construction, agricultural practices, ethnogenesis, and community interactions</td>
<td>Africa, China, Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>material expression of symbolic behavior, including animal sacrifice and mask design/construction</td>
<td>Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metallurgy</td>
<td>India, Africa</td>
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<td>Agro-pastoralism</td>
<td>India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-disaster recovery subsistence and exchange</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical mobility and technology, architecture and settlement</td>
<td>South America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Underrepresented in this listing are South America, North America, and Australia. Although robust ethnoarchaeological research has been carried out in these countries, researchers are usually of Western European or Euro-American origin. This situation likely reflects low numbers of archaeologists of non-European descent in nations with colonial pasts. However, the growth of legislation mandating cultural resources management-related archaeology is fostering the growth of Native American archaeology programs and students in North and South America. Increasing research partnerships between archaeologists and Australia’s First Peoples are gradually integrating scientific and cultural heritage perspectives on the goals and techniques of research about ancient peoples.

Regardless of the ethnicity of the person collecting the information, there is considerable overlap in the value of ethnoarchaeological data to both scientific and traditional domains of knowledge.
“Salvage ethnoarchaeology” can help document and perpetuate lifeways that are in danger of being overwhelmed by global culture and economies. This contributes to the stewardship of heritage both tangible and intangible. Ethnoarchaeology carried out “of the people, by the people, for the people” can provide data that are simultaneously

- Germaine to archaeological inquiry,
- Relevant to heritage resource managers, museums, and heritage tourism, and
- Essential to descendants striving to maintain and transfer traditional knowledge, skills, techniques, materials, and worldviews (also see Conte 2006).

3. Future Directions

Ethnoarchaeology is maturing as a research strategy. David & Kramer (2010) describe maturity as “progressive incorporation into the discipline from a variety of viewpoints within a broadly agreed philosophical framework, a range of lively approaches to diverse subject matter, and the appearance of second generation studies that group and synthesize individual case studies” (31). There is no doubt that ethnoarchaeological data will continue to inform and structure archaeological research far into the future; the value of these data grows daily as traditional knowledge becomes transformed by global culture and economy. When combined with expansion of the research enterprise to archaeologists from increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds, the scope, depth, and societal value of ethnoarchaeological research will continue to broaden (although the data collected may become less obviously generalizable, at least in the short run).

That said, the boundary between ‘scientific/theoretical’ and ‘heritage’ ethnoarchaeology is porous and mutually beneficial. Lewis Binford noted that members of the Nunamiut community felt his research was very important and directed children to watch elders as they demonstrated traditional hunting, butchering, and construction techniques for anthropologists. Children followed Binford and his crew around on their mapping trips (Binford, personal communication, 2006). The author of this entry was recruited as a “teaching tool” by Pumé parents and grandparents during fieldwork in Venezuela, and educating the anthropologist in traditional skills and knowledge provided one more way for the Pumé to maintain continuity and integrity for the
next generation (Yu 1997). Ethnoarchaeological data collected and used for research purposes have irreplaceable, and growing, value for other anthropologists and the traditional peoples of the world. The ethnoarchaeological data collected today certainly possess scientific and heritage value that may not be obvious today.
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