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Anthropology of the Crowd, Blog 5

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Everything is going to be alright!

We often tell people this.. not only we say that.. we keep on repeating it again and again.. Even though sometimes we just don't believe it ourselves, but we keep on saying it.. Why do we do that?

are we reassuring them, or are we reassuring ourselves?



[FARAHWORLD AUGUST 30, 2015](#)

Richmond 2015 UCI Road World Championships crowd



At first thought, one might think, maybe only Richmonders will attend the race and be among the crowd, but this event will probably attract different kind of people.

I expect that the crowd will mainly consist of :

1-tourists from other states in USA

2-tourists from all over the world

3-Richmond residents

4-sport enthusiasts especially bicyclists

5-VCU students

6-famous athletes and politicians

I am guessing the crowd will be a little bit more males than females.. but the difference won't be that apparent anyway..

I can't wait to attend the race!



How would I describe the race crowd?

I think it's fair to say that the crowd was there for the race bikers.. They never failed to show their enthusiasm and excitement every time a race biker came by.. It was thrilling to watch them cheer the cyclists, no matter how fast or slow they moved. It shows that the crowd cared about these contestants regardless of their skin colors, their country of origins, their genders, or their religions. This shows how open-minded, respectful, and encouraging the crowd was. Their politeness particularly showed when I tried to interview some of them, they never said no, and they never shied away from my questions and requests.

The crowd consisted mostly of Americans, but there was a fair amount of other international individuals .. It was also a relieve to see that some one who is 85 years old was watching the race along with someone who was 20 years old.. Males and females were following the event alike with a little concentration from the male part; people from different backgrounds and ethnicity were watching the race. Overall, I am happy to announce that the crowd was diverse.



The hardest part of collecting the data about the spectators?



To be honest, collecting the data was hard as a thought, but it wasn't really hard in reality. Once I started approaching people, and I witnessed how most of them were really nice and polite, all the anxiety and apprehension was too far gone.

After I explained to the people I interviewed, who I was and what class I was part of, they fully cooperated with me, and they answered the questions patiently, and they even let me take pictures of their arms and hands as part of my data collection. This leads me to believe that there are many things that we dread to do, but once we do them we realize they are not as hard or complicated as our minds let us believe.

However, I have to admit getting the race itself was hard for I don't live at campus and most roads were closed, so I had to get up early in the morning, but other than that, everything went smoothly.



Did the sample of humanity in the bike race crowd accurately reflect the “global population” of the world? Why or why not?



The crowd of the UCI 2015 championship was diverse and it represented different people of varied backgrounds, colors, religions, genders, orientations, socio-cultural, and linguistic differences. However, it could not reflect the global population in a precise manner.

For a sample of humanity to accurately reflect the “Global population”, each race and ethnicity should be present in that sample, and this is not feasible as the time of the race was short and many people cannot attend such events because they can’t afford it or do not have the means to come.

Moreover, even if the sample did represent each country, race, and ethnicity in the world, it cannot represent them with the correct percentage and ratio compared to their total number.

Still, the race was able to reflect a sample of the crowd that was both diverse and international, it succeeded to show us a sample of the huge world we are living in, and it shaded the light on how our differences made life more tolerable and interesting, if we were all the same, life would be dull and colorless.



FARAHWORLD OCTOBER 2, 2015

What aspect of the crowd did I find most interesting?



There are many things that were interesting regarding the crowd. For example, the crowd tried to attend the bike race even when the weather was bad and it started raining. They didn't care if their clothes got wet or if they might catch a cold, they came anyway and cheered for the cyclists. This shows deep dedication and respect toward the championship, which require our reverent admiration!

Also, the diversity of the crowd was interesting, and although Richmond is a diverse city, but the UCI 2015 brought different kind of people together and it united them despite their differences, which proves that sport is really a good way to unite people and bring them together, and I hope to see more international events in the future in our beloved city Richmond.



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What was one day's worth of data collection like? How did it go?



p.s: my dad appears in the picture he is wearing a blue shirt!

At start, I was a bit afraid I won't make it to the race because of how the roads were closed and then how to find people because I wasn't sure where

the race bikers drove. I decided i should be organized, i printed all the questions, and even sent a document to my group in case they wanted to print the questions too.

After arriving to VCU, I was relieved to know that the cyclists route passes by VCU, so I started my hunt for people! The first man I met was the nicest, he was 85 and was standing in front of the church, and he paved the way for me to interview more people, the more people I met the more exciting and thrilled I felt.

Interviewing people felt amazing, I wanted to see more people, so I went to the start line and the finish line and there the real fun began, there were tons of people there and from many foreign language, I was so happy to cheer for the cyclists with them and taking picture of them and the bike racers. At the end of day, other VCU students saw us and make interview with us, you can see it on covering the coverage, I was so excited that someone interviewed me too. All in all, the day didn't just go well, it was phenomenal and rewarding!



FARAHWORLD OCTOBER 5, 2015

What would I change about the way I collected data?

Although I printed all the questions that I prepared for the crowd, but still there were some things I could have changed, like I could have used my iphone to write the notes on it instead of using papers, or I could have taken picture of what I recorded after each interview, because at one point my papers started scattering in the street because of the wind; I panicked and chased, so I won't lose all the data I have collected. That would have been unfortunate.

I also could have recorded the data, instead of writing what they said, I could have recorded the whole interview and maybe if they agreed I could have taken some videos of them, but I realize not all people would be comfortable with videos!



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What other types of data about the crowd members did I wish I had collected?

My group decided that we ask the crowd about their holidays costume and collect the color of their eyes as a barometric data, it was easy to collect the data about their eyes, and exciting as I would look into their eyes to figure out the color of their eyes and it's fascinating that within a single race how many variations of eye colors there were!

Once I started talking with people, I felt curious about them, I wanted to know more about them. I definitely wished I could ask the crowd more questions, for example: what they are studying or working, their dreams, obstacles they met in life and how did they overcome them.

Beside that, if I had more time and liberty, I wish I could have collected data about their family size, height, weight, number of countries they visited, what did they think about Richmond, which team they were rooting for, and other questions.



Why is measuring variation in a crowd important? What can we learn about variation from this type of sample?

I think knowing how different we really are, is an eye-opening experience, it shows us how complicated and uncomplicated life is. There is no black or white, not really; it's a combination of colors, each color tries to celebrate its being in a unique way, each individual has his or her own characteristics that set him or her apart from others. These differences do not make us weak or divided, on the contrary, these differences make us strong and rich.

If we were all but the same color,height, weight, ethnicity, gender, orientation, and same belief, we would not be special; we would be like a dull page that no one wants to look at. With our differences we thrive; we should not fight them, and we should not hide them. We should embrace them! These differences can play a great part in our evolving as human beings or in our demise, as with every new generation; there are more diversity and variations. Some people people claim that with diversity, our individual differences are fading away, but I beg to differ, our differences lie within us, They do not need a certain guidelines or criteria. They are right here in our hearts, minds, and souls.

In the end, we might be different, but we are really the same, just like what Shaylock says in this amazing Shakespeare play (The merchant of Venice) :

“If you prick us do we not bleed?
If you tickle us do we not laugh?

If you poison us do we not die?
And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?"



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What can a holistic, anthropological perspective on human variation contribute to how we understand ourselves and others?

Human variations and differences help us understand ourselves because it urges to think and contemplate these differences in a new way.. When we encounter new people, we have to think about their beliefs, ideologies, cultural norms, and compare them to ours, some might be very foreign to us, yet they still teach us something, if nothing, they teach us to tolerate them.

These humans variations expand our horizon and let us grow intellectually because after observing these differences, we start to ask questions, why, how, when.. Questions can enlighten us and make us less judgmental toward other traditions and cultural differences.

I think when we know others, we recognize what we are and what we are not. Who knows what can we adopt from different culture to enrich ourselves and be better human beings in this big, yet united world!



FARAHWORLD OCTOBER 5, 2015

Anthropology of the Crowd Course

I took this course because I needed to take a one credit class, and I chose it to be an anthropology course to learn more about this discipline. I thought it's

gonna be just like any other class, you study the materials, and take a quiz or a test and pass it.. But I couldn't be more wrong, and frankly, I am glad I was wrong.

This class wasn't a traditional class, it taught us its material in a different way, it did not tell us about it, no it let us experience it first hand. This class is open; meaning there are not many rules on how to understand the material. The whole point, is to see it with our eyes and feel it in our heart. We learn how to deal with people, collect data, analyze a sample of people, and try to make up what the data means and implies.

Moreover, this class taught us how to deal with people from different worlds and cultures, this something we don't see everyday. How to overcome our fear and anxiety, socialize with people, and enjoy the time. It taught us how to work with a group, and how each member of the group is valuable to make the whole work successful and acceptable.

This class wasn't just work, it was a chance to attend an international event and enjoy its triumphs and excitement. Then we had to write what we felt and sensed, and express them in words, which gave us the chance to contemplate what we did. It was not enough just to be there, we had to go back again and think about every aspect we witnessed and watched.

All in all, this was a phenomenal class and I am happy that I met new people and worked with a great group. More than anything, I am glad that I took it with Dr. Verrelli, she made the class exciting and memorable for us all.



Richmond needs more international events.



I know that sometimes we think races and marathons can only cause delays and traffic, but after seeing UCI 2015 turned the city upside down in an exciting and unusual way.. I really hope to see more international events celebrated at the heart of Richmond.

Richmond is a great city, and it needs more care and attention. It definitely needs more tourists, and funding.

Such events, if organized like the UCI 2015, will change Richmond as we know it forever. I remember one of the people I interviewed said this race is a game changing for the city of Richmond, and I really hope he is right. Time will tell





FARAHWORLD OCTOBER 6, 2015