1. Doing ethnography: introduction

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The derivation of the word ‘ethnography’ is from the Greek ‘ethnos’, meaning ‘a people’ and ‘graphy’, meaning writing, so ethnography literally refers to writing about people. This omits ethnography’s most important aspect: it is an active, agentive practice – the ethnographer ‘goes into the field’, spends a more or less extended time living in and studying a community, and returns to their desk to write up their experiences, deriving meaning and insights as they do so. But, curiously, there is no verb ‘to ethnograph’. Many years ago, before Google and the internet, one of us was told that ethnography ‘is what anthropologists *do*’. That begged such questions as: what is an anthropologist and in what ways are they distinguished from sociologists, what exactly do they do, and if ethnography is what anthropologists do, what do ethnographers do? The answer she was given was, firstly, that anthropologists spend more time in the field than sociologists, leading to the answerless question: where is the dividing line between anthropological time and sociological time? Secondly, she was told that anthropologists just ‘go into the field’, become part of the community they are studying, but remain apart from it in order to study it. That took her round in circles – ethnography is what anthropologists do – but with the added conundrum of how to remain both immersed within and separate from ‘the field’. Management scholars have the additional problem of distinguishing between observation studies (participant and non-participant) and ethnography: the dividing lines between them appear very vague.

Small wonder then that what Nigel Barley (1986) calls ‘the innocent anthropologist’ may be wracked with uncertainty when s/he ‘enters the field’. Sarah Gilmore describes how on the first day of her ethnographic studies of a major league football club in the UK, she had no idea of what she was supposed to do, except that she had to look as if she knew what she was doing (in Gilmore and Harding, forthcoming). Another Sarah, Bloomfield (in this volume) had no such qualms: the ethnographic elements of her study were an adventure that gave her a privileged peep behind a façade that few people can cross.

The aim of this volume is to prepare you, the reader, to ‘enter the field’ with as much confidence as Sarah Bloomfield (Chapter 13). To do this, we will ask you to treat each chapter as an action-learning project. This Introduction provides the guidelines, roadmap and template for this. It summarizes each

chapter's insights and asks you to experience them viscerally, in the body, rather than mentally, in the mind and the imagination. It is like learning to swim or ride a bike: reading books on how to develop these skills allows the reader to perform a perfect breaststroke on their bed, or to move their legs in perfect rotation. In reality, nature intervenes in uncomfortable ways: and one finds oneself nearly drowning, or the bicycle falls over and the erstwhile rider finds herself sitting in a bed of stinging nettles.

FIRST STEPS IN ETHNOGRAPHY

So the first thing we will ask you to do, before you read any further is: go a place with which you are familiar. Take a notebook with you – a paper notebook will be better than an electronic one, because you will need to do more than write words. It could be useful to invest in a good quality notebook, for reasons that will become clear later. The place you go to could be a café, a gym, a sports ground, a shop, a university building, a lecture theatre, an art gallery or museum, etc. It will be useful to choose somewhere where you can return several times to carry out the exercises that accompany each chapter in this book – over time you can accumulate a lot of data that could build up into an ethnographic study. Perhaps you go there often? But now, rather than carrying out the usual, taken-for-granted activities that require little conscious thought in their achievement, observe every movement and interaction. Imagine you have arrived from another planet and know nothing whatsoever about Planet Earth. Or perhaps imagine you are someone from the sixteenth century who has somehow been plummeted into the twenty-first century. What is the environment in which you find yourself? Look at it with the eyes of someone who knows absolutely nothing about this world. Note every detail in as much depth as possible. You should find you are seeing things you have never consciously seen before. Why do people queue? What distinguishes people in the queue who are obviously known to each other from those who are strangers to each other? What makes this physical space into the café, the recreation area, the lecture theatre, or wherever it is, you have found yourself (why isn't a lecture theatre with its terraced rows of seats and big screen at the front a cinema)? How do people interact? Do they? (What is a person – how do you distinguish between a person walking with a dog and a dog walking with a person?) What are the rules governing how you behave in this place? You may never have thought about this before, so it may take some thought. What power operates to ensure people follow those rules? Again, this is something you may never have thought about before. From our perspective as lecturers, we are always, at the start of each academic year, amazed at how

quickly new students grasp the unspoken rules of entering a lecture theatre, finding a seat, and not speaking.

Make lots of notes. Record all your impressions. Sketches and drawings can be useful, as can photographs if you are in a place where taking photos is allowed. Sometimes everyday objects, such as receipts or paper cups, can be taken back to your desk as ‘an object from the field’.

Before going any further: think about what you observed. Through seeing it as if through the eyes of a total stranger, did you see it in new and strange ways? What particularly impressed you about looking at that piece of the world in this way?

Welcome back. In what follows, we assume you will read the relevant chapter before undertaking the suggested exercise.

CHAPTER 2: MONIKA KOSTERA AND JOANNA ŚREDNICKA ON TAKING NOTES

We asked you to make lots of notes as you undertook that first exercise. Monika Kostera and Joanna Średnicka’s chapter, on ‘Notes and poetry from the field: a fieldwork diary’, explains why. You were, in fact, making a fieldwork diary. Look at those first notes you made now: do you see them now as something that bridges two worlds – the world you observed, where you were a visitor, and the world you are embedded in as you read this book? Can you see all those various impressions you have brought back, and perhaps odd pieces of things you have gathered, as a ‘collage’ that sketches a complex image of the social reality you were studying? These notes are fundamental to ethnography and will help you make sense of (develop a theory about) the social world you will be studying.

Kostera and Średnicka cite James Clifford’s (1990) discussion of note taking. It has three phases: inscription (what is written during the fieldwork), transcription (as soon as possible after the observation describing the experiences of the fieldwork as honestly and faithfully as possible), and description (turning all those scattered notes and observations into a ‘coherent representation’ of what you studied).

This next exercise involves the second two of these activities. It builds on that first observation you carried out. Firstly, ‘transcribe’ your field notes, that is, use your notes and observations and write in as much detail as you can an in-depth account of each moment you captured in those brief notes and observations. Write down as much as you can remember, of everything you can remember – actions, participants, experiences, observations, your

own thoughts and feelings, etc., etc. etc. When you have done this, move to the next stage. You need to organize those chaotic moments into a sensible description that brings the scene alive for a reader. A good ethnographer is an excellent storyteller. Read Kostera and Średnicka's chapter for lots of hints about how to do this.

By doing this exercise you will not only start to develop a fundamental skill of ethnography, you should also reflect upon yourself. Did you notice you have some skills you had not known you possessed? Are there others you need to develop? Were there incidents where you should have been more alert, or some where you needed to register more details in your field diary so that you had a better memory of important details?

CHAPTER 3: MONIKA KOSTERA ON OBSERVATION

This chapter emphasizes 'the importance of being there'. It will take you more deeply into the fundamental skills of ethnography, because it is about 'observation', which is perhaps the most ethnographic method within ethnography. Kostera identifies two central kinds: non-participant and participant observation. In the first the ethnographer observes, from the side-lines; in the second the ethnographer takes part in the activities of the organization being observed.

Non-participant observation is a conscious attempt to experience the here and now, before the words are allowed to come into the learning process and dominate it. Categorizations and judgements are to be avoided. It requires recording impressions and not imposing meaning on them. This is pure description of a 'third dimension', of acts/activities/objects that have not (yet) been interpreted, no labels applied, but are pure 'being' – interpretation comes later. Participant observation, on the other hand, involves becoming an 'insider' in the place one is studying. When this works well, the ethnographer understands the tacit knowledge that informs how things get done in that place. Direct observation is somewhere between the two, because the ethnographer is both inside and outside the culture being observed. What is fundamental to all three approaches is that the researcher is actively 'there', in the midst of the organization being observed.

In the first exercise above you were asked, as you will recognize after reading this chapter by Kostera, to practise doing a non-participant observation. We asked you to do things to disrupt the meaning you normally impose on what you observed. For example, if you went to a café you would have been bemused at why some people stand one side of what is called in English a 'counter' (although it does not count – what a curious language) while others stood on the other. Those on one side passed things to those on the other

side, who walked away with them.

Now it is time to practise doing a participant observation.

Choose an activity in a venue where you can actively participate in something. It could be a workout at your gym, going to a nightclub, having a coffee in a favourite café, taking your dog for a walk, going to a lecture, taking part in a regular meeting, going to the cinema. When you have chosen which activity to study, go along and do whatever other people there are doing. But this time do it with all your senses hyper-aware to what is going on. In particular, focus on the forms of tacit knowledge necessary to manoeuvre one's way through that place and take part in its activities. These may be things you hardly noticed before: exploring it with every nerve alert to what is going on means you should observe things you hardly noticed previously. For example, if you watch students entering a lecture theatre you will see how order is quickly achieved as people find their seats, usually avoiding the front rows. They sit down and usually do not say very much at all until the lecture has ended when they all stand up and leave the room. What tacit knowledge is operating in such a mundane activity as going to a lecture? How is that knowledge gained, and what sustains the orderly entry into and exit from a lecture theatre (or cinema, or football game)? Observe yourself taking part in the activities. This can be difficult – you almost have to stand outside yourself, but it helps you get better insights into that tacit knowledge. (E.g. what is going through your mind as you find a seat, or buy something?)

Remember to take your notebook and to make lots of notes.

Afterwards, think about the difference between being a non-participant and a participant observer? Were there any advantages to one or the other? Or do you need to do more practice before you can decide?

CHAPTER 4: BARBARA CZARNIAWSKA ON SHADOWING

This chapter, on 'How to shadow organizing', concerns the research method that involves following someone or something around (with their permission) and observing everything they or it does, as they do it, over the course of a working day, week, month or longer. One is as close to the shadowee as their shadows. This is an invaluable research method, illuminating what goes on from moment-to-moment in the complex messiness of the everyday organizational quotidian in ways that cannot be grasped in interviews (not least because people are often not aware of what they physically do all day). Czarniawska describes shadowing as a technique (the activity we have just described) but also an attitude. It is an attitude because it requires the ability to

stand outside one's self, so to speak, to observe one's self observing the person one is observing, while at the same time retaining a close connection with the person being shadowed and, at the same time, understanding one's own self. Shadowing is not separate and distinct from other ethnographic practices: distinctions blur at the edges and the shadower may find themselves sometimes acting as a participant observer. Czarniawska discusses the emotional and physical effects on the researcher of 'shadowing'. It can be physically exhausting and, because one spends one's time as an outsider who must blend into the background but at the same time may be an object of other's curiosity, it can be emotionally demanding. Crucially, emotional costs may be incurred through giving up one's professional identity as one 'role-plays'. She does not define what she means by role-playing whilst shadowing someone – that is something we will ask you to do when you have your first attempt at shadowing.

It is time for you to experiment with what it is like to use shadowing techniques. The first thing to do is to find someone who will give you permission to shadow them. For this first exercise convenience, comfort and security must be top priorities. Perhaps a fellow student will agree to be shadowed, or a PhD supervisor, or a relative or friend. What activity will you observe them in doing? Czarniawska cites Marianella Sclavi (1989) who shadowed a neighbour's daughter walking to school every day. It could be that you could shadow a friend or relative as they go shopping, or to a sports event, or to the gym, or spend a day at school or university. When you have identified someone who agrees to be shadowed, you need to make the practical arrangements. You will need your field diary and set of pens or pencils, a way of recording interviews (you will need to find appropriate times to interview the shadowee, to find out their thoughts and feelings perhaps). Perhaps a camera may be useful. You need to agree a place to meet, and a plan of action for the shadowing event. You will need to be able to put yourself in the position of an outsider, able to observe everything (again, as if you had arrived from Mars and knew nothing about Planet Earth so that everything must be regarded as strange and needing explanation). At the same time you need to be able to maintain a rapport with the person you are shadowing.

Make lots of field notes, but do this unobtrusively. What do you find works best for you? Can you make a recording on your phone, or is it better to make hand-written notes. Do you need to escape to the bathroom to make notes in your field diary?

How do you cope with boredom, or tiredness? In other words, you will be role-playing the role of the researcher. What are the effects on you of carrying out this role-play? How does it influence what you see, how you

ask questions, what you remember? In what ways does it differ from the time when you just observed, without shadowing?

Good luck! Enjoy your period of shadowing someone. Make lots of field notes.

CHAPTER 5: MARK LEARMONTH AND MIKE HUMPHREYS ON AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

If ‘graphy’ concerns writing, about ‘ethnos’, people, then ‘auto’ refers to writing about the self as one of the people, or rather the person that is doing the activity that is being studied. Learmonth and Humphreys identify two dominant strands of ethnography in management and organization studies. The first of these, exemplified in the work of Ellis and Bochner, aims to write first-person accounts that eschew social scientific conventions altogether. Their aim is to tell stories that evoke insights, so they avoid analysis or interpretation of the accounts they tell. Learmonth and Humphreys, while valuing some aspects of that approach, reject it, in part because of the political dangers of refusing to abstract and explain. They value an approach they call ‘autoethnographic vignettes’, that include vignettes from the autoethnographer’s own experience. These vignettes, once identified and written, are then analysed in ways similar to ethnographic accounts – in-depth and so as to develop insights about issues relevant to organization studies. These could be particularly relevant in organizational research where many researchers have previous experience of working in non-academic organizations. There are other ways of carrying out autoethnographic studies. In some well-accepted traditions, researchers enter into the area of work they wish to study, become one of the workers, and study themselves as a worker in that domain.

The next exercise does not require you to leave your desk. Instead, follow Learmonth and Humphreys in identifying an aspect of your own experience that may give insights into an area that may otherwise be difficult to study. Write a short account – a ‘vignette’ of that experience. When you have written something that satisfies you, it is time to analyse that experience. For now, you may wish to limit your explorations to analysing how power influenced what went on in the episode you are recounting. Or perhaps this was an incident in which you had to control your emotions, or when your emotions influenced how you responded. Analyse your vignette to explore what are the hidden aspects of it that give new insights into that and similar situations. What was the advantage of using your own experiences, analysing them in great depth, rather than using someone else’s account of a similar experience? Answers to this question should illuminate if autoethnography

could be a useful method to have available in your methodological tool-box.

CHAPTER 6: MONIKA KOSTERA AND ANNA MODZELEWSKA ON INTERVIEWS

Ethnography does not involve just observing – it involves a great deal of talk and discussion. Research interviews are a major resource in the ethnographer's toolkit, as Kostera and Modzelewska discuss. The research interview allows us to develop better understanding of how organizations are perceived from the perspective of their members. They involve the researcher asking respondents or interlocutors a series of questions, or sometimes no more than prompts, to encourage respondents to describe their world to us. A good qualitative interview will not follow any prescribed course: it will not always seem to be answering the researcher's questions. Rather, as Kostera and Modzelewska emphasize, it is a conversation that goes off in all directions, its direction influenced by what is important to the respondents. It requires careful and attentive listening on the part of the researcher, and a desire to let the participant guide the conversation rather than insist that they answer a set of pre-established questions. The interviewer should be alert to the language used by the interviewee – sometimes (perhaps often) we can impose our own meaning on what we hear, and so miss insights that could be vital to our research. A good interviewer is also alert to the language they use themselves: it is very easy to start using academic jargon that is not understood by the people with whom we are conversing, and that would destroy the trust that Kostera and Modzelewska argue is vital to good interviewing practices. Interviews in an ethnographic study differ from interviews in other forms of qualitative fieldwork in that they may be carried out many times with the same person, both formally (through an arrangement for an interview) and informally (in short conversations as opportunities arise during the fieldwork).

Kostera and Modzelewska's chapter provides lots of advice, hints and tips about carrying out interviews. However, there is only one way of learning how to develop good interview techniques and that is: practise doing interviews.

It is time to start learning how to carry out interviews. The first thing you might wish to do is to summarize the advice in Kostera and Modzelewska's chapter. The next thing to do is ask yourself: who can I interview who will be friendly and supportive, and will give me useful feedback about how to improve my interviewing style? In other words, do not identify potential interviewees for a study you wish to carry out and go and interview them. First you need to develop some skills through interviewing friends and relatives who will be kind and gentle with you. So, start with a vague idea for

a study so you have a guide of what to do. It could be as simple as: what is it like to work in that job? Then identify a good friend, a relative or a fellow student or researcher and ask them if they will agree to be interviewed. When you have found someone who says ‘yes’, you will need to compile a list of topics to explore in the interview. Perhaps this can take the form of a semi-structured questionnaire, when you have a short list of questions but you add to them as the interview progresses. (E.g. can you tell me more about that? Or: can you give an example of a specific incident when something like that happened?) Arrange a time and place for meeting the interviewee, check that your recording equipment will work, and off you go, to do your first interview. Afterwards, reflect on how it went. What did you learn from this first experiment at carrying out an ethnographic interview?

CHAPTER 7: DAVID CALÅS, KATARINA ELLBORG, DANIEL ERICSSON, ELIN ESPERI HALLGREN AND ALINA HUSUNG ON RECOGNIZING THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUR OWN PERSPECTIVE

Calås et al.’s chapter is written by a collective of people who formally could be described as doctoral students and lecturers. When you read this chapter, you will understand why we advocate your carrying out an exercise to accompany your reading of each chapter in this book. They explore a new perspective on ethnography that they call ‘inter-ethnography’. It emerges out of their critique of the dominant perspective of ethnography as a pursuit in which an unchanging individual gazes at a static and unchanging ‘field’. That is, there is a subject, the ethnographer, who studies her object, the ‘field’. Instead they argue in favour of inter-ethnography as collective becoming, and they aim to exemplify this through the five of them writing the text together. If you have been introduced to poststructural theory as a part of your doctoral studies or through participating in a course on research philosophy, you may find these arguments familiar.

However, the text is largely written as a series of distinct voices. Although they show that each of us changes over a period of time, such as over a course in which we learn research methods, they do not explore how each person can themselves take up different identities and/or perspectives as they move through the day. Our next exercise therefore will focus on *perspective* and how the perspective we adopt as ethnographers can (literally) influence what we see, and what we decide is important.

We are writing this chapter during the Covid-19 pandemic so we hope that by the time you read this the situation will have moved on sufficiently for

you to undertake this exercise. It requires you going out ‘into the field’ again.

Go to somewhere where you like to ‘people watch’. Ideally it might be a café where you can sit with a coffee to watch the world go by. It may be a park bench, a spot of grass in a city park – anywhere where you can watch the world go by. Take your seat and watch everything you can see. Make notes, perhaps make some drawings, and if you will not be intruding on people’s privacy some photos may be useful. Who can you see, what are they doing? After you have sat and observed for 25 minutes or so write a brief account of what you observed: what struck you as an ethnographer as most interesting? After you have written this brief account **CHANGE YOUR POSITION**. Move to the chair opposite where you have been sitting, or to a bench facing in the other direction, or shift around on your spot of grass so that you see the other side of the park. Now what do you see? Again, make notes, drawings, or whatever helps you develop a rich picture of the scene you are observing. After 25 minutes or so again make a note about what struck you as you observed the world go by from this alternative perspective.

Then compare and contrast what you saw, heard, thought, felt, experienced, etc. when facing one direction when compared with the other. You will probably notice that by simply changing the direction of your gaze you saw two subtly different slices of the world passing by.

Now – consider this. If you have seen a different world just by changing the direction of your gaze, what does this tell you about the ways in which you ‘frame’ what you see? (E.g. how do your own world-views or the things that particularly interest you alert you to some things and not others, and to interpret things in one way rather than another way?) And what might you miss, as an ethnographer, in only looking in one (physical or metaphorical) direction?

CHAPTER 8: ALEXIA PANAYIOTOU: MEDIA ANALYSIS

So far, we have asked you to go ‘out’ into ‘the field’. There are newer forms of ethnography that have developed to allow studies of the worlds opened up by the internet.

Alexia Panayiotou’s chapter on ‘Media analysis: on the importance of everyday images’ shows that sometimes you do not need to go ‘out’ into the field, because the field is there, in our living rooms and bedrooms, at our desks – anywhere where we experience media images. She emphasizes the importance of exploring ‘the ordinary’, because it is in ‘the ordinary’ that we can discover the taken-for-granted ‘extra-ordinary’. More practically, she dis-

tinguishes between media ‘on’ organizations and media ‘from’ organizations. In the first we can enter into an organization ‘as if’ we were actually physically there. Films, novels, etc., allow us to do that. In contrast, media ‘from’ organizations include corporate websites or annual reports – these should be a vital part of the empirical materials in any study of a specific organization. Panayiotou argues that these various images allow us to discover the hidden stories about organizations, the sides of themselves they do not wish the public to see. They also help reveal the unvoiced theories and rationalities that may influence how we exist in organizations in the contemporary era. Filmmakers and novelists, web-writers and cartoonists, journalists and public relations staff may, wittingly and unwittingly, reveal more about organizations than can be seen when immersed in ‘the field’, or they can help us understand aspects of organizational life, its social norms and rules, that are otherwise just out of sight, hidden, but highly influential. She cites examples of how researchers have used various forms of media to analyse power, gender dynamics, norms and attitudes that may otherwise have been impossible to study.

Panayiotou does not provide a ‘how to’ guide to analysis. This is perhaps because we sense our way through media analysis before we can identify what it is we may be seeing, and once we know what we are seeing we can switch to more traditional forms of data analysis.

This leads to our next exercise, one we hope you particularly enjoy.

Choose a film, television programme, a song or an artist’s repertoire, a painting or a cartoon, a company website or brochure, or a cultural event that is currently gripping your homeland – any media representation that intrigues you. Sit and immerse yourself in that image/artefact – be it a film, a song, a website. You may need to watch and look (and listen) several times before you see beyond the ostensible – very obvious – story that is being told. Once you have reached beyond the obvious, what story are you being told?

It may help, if you have never done this before, to choose a topic that is invisible but influential, to help you see beyond the obvious. It can be power, or gender, an ideology, rules of behaviour, a system of behaviour. When you have immersed yourself sufficiently in the media you have chosen to study, what have you ‘seen’ about contemporary organizations that you were not consciously aware of before this exercise?

You may have noticed nothing more than what seems to be an ordinary, everyday experience, one so matter-of-fact you hardly noticed it before. You may have been frustrated that this is all you ‘saw’. If so, look for the extraordinary in that ordinary experience. You may have noticed, for example, that some men (but rarely) women, wear ties around their necks in some dramas or news programmes, at a time when in many cultures ‘casual’ dress

is replacing the formality of the suit. You might ask: what is the significance of the portrayal of men wearing ties?

CHAPTER 9: NOOMI WEINRYB, NILS GUSTAFSSON AND CECILIA GULLBERG: MORE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Noomi Weinryb, Nils Gustafsson and Cecilia Gullberg continue the exploration of ethnography using media. Their chapter is related to netnography, or ethnography on the internet. They argue that digital aspects of organizing influence non-digital spheres of organizing, hence the increasing importance of exploring various forms of media. Further, they argue in favour of a mixed methods approach to capture complex empirical materials that derive from language, images, symbols and emotions and that are not specific to a single organization but to organizational experiences more generally.

One useful insight offered by these authors is how to narrow the focus of a study that otherwise may become so large it is impossible to progress. They first limit their focus to one aspect of social media – positive emotional expressions. Second, they narrow the study to 59 civil society organizations in Sweden, and, third, narrow it further to only the Facebook pages of these organizations. Fourth, they restrict their study to a specific, time-limited period. This resulted in 8074 posts on Facebook that could be analysed using quantitative methods, while their qualitative analysis focused on just one Facebook group. They augmented the online accounts with focus group interviews with 26 managers from Swedish civil society organizations.

Don't worry – we are not going to suggest you undertake anything so ambitious as the study described by Weinryb, Gustafsson and Gullberg!

Given the increasing influence and importance of social media, developing skills of some form of netnography may prove increasingly useful. At the moment, it will be sufficient to just 'put a toe in the water' of social media sites.

First, choose one social media platform you feel happy to use.

Second, choose one discussion on that platform. There may be an organizational group that you would find it interesting to analyse (e.g. one dedicated to a particular company), or a topic that can encompass many organizations and none (e.g. cooking), or a more general concept (e.g. political discussions, or the value of films of kittens and puppies during uncertain times).

Third, when you have identified what you will explore, choose no more than 20 postings on that topic.

When you have identified the postings you wish to analyse, download

them if you can, or save them to an online depository if you can.

Now analyse each posting in great depth. Use all the techniques already discussed – make the postings ‘strange’ (imagine you are a time traveller from the past perhaps); immerse yourself in them to find out what jumps out at you; sense-make through immersing yourself in them and exploring how they evoke emotions in you, and what you do with those emotions. (Remember to use your fieldwork diary.)

When you have completed all these steps, stop and consider the use of such approaches. Would you expand your knowledge of using social media in your ethnographic studies in the future? If yes, why? If not, why?

CHAPTER 10: ANNA ZUEVA: EXPERIMENTING WITH DATA ANALYSIS

What do you do with all this data – field notes, images, interview transcriptions, reflexive notes, artefacts? The next two chapters suggest forms of storytelling as a way of working with your data to tell fascinating ethnographic tales.

Anna Zueva writes of ‘Autoethnography through the folk tale lens’. Zueva’s perspective on autoethnography is this: a critical reflexive study of the researcher’s own experiences can provide insights into wider socio-cultural systems. She writes that myths and folk tales contain archetypes that resonate across centuries and cultures. They are not just stories: they instruct and socialize a younger generation’s entrance into a culture. But Zueva sees different advantages for the organizational ethnographer. By drawing on a familiar folk tale and analysing it to discover the timeless insights it gives, she shows, she can then apply those truths to what she is studying. In Zueva’s example, she uses the tale of the Baba Yaga to develop insights into her work as a teacher, as someone who nourishes the minds of the next generation. In so doing she discovers many things about herself, and thus about the higher education system in the country in which she works today. She recalls various aspects from her teaching, writing them up in the third person. The third-person account allows her to follow the norms of the folk tale, but also invites readers to identify themselves in the tale she is telling. The analysis she carries out is ripe for development into a rich paper on learning and teaching in higher education today, and her role within it as an educator. In other words, through drawing analogies between her own experiences and the insights of a folk tale, she pushes through to a new understanding of an everyday experience.

You have written an autoethnographic vignette to help develop the skills recommended by Learmonth and Humphreys. We asked you to analyse that vignette, but gave somewhat vague insights into how to do that. This is

partly because, like most qualitative data analysis, interpretation of ethnographic and autoethnographic field notes emerges in each and every unique research situation, a somewhat magical blend of reading, thinking, discussing, pondering, sweating and labouring. At some point there is a flash of insight and something new emerges to direct our analysis. Zueva provides a way of enabling that flash of insight. It requires much sweating and attempt at innovative thinking, but it offers a pathway of sorts.

So your next task is to take the vignette you wrote for the Learmonth and Humphreys chapter. Think now of a favourite folk tale or story from your own country. Do not think too long about which one to choose – just remember a story told to you as a child that has been handed down over generations. Delve beneath the ostensible story of that folk tale – what are the timeless truths it is portraying? Now think of how those truths and the insights from that tale help you see your vignette in a new and different way. You may need to cast around before you can see a connection – note how Zueva does this in her account through recognizing that the leg of her office chair could seem similar to the legs of Baba Yaga's cottage – after that recognition she is off, taking us with her into new ways of thinking about teaching. Now it is your turn.

CHAPTER 11: HAMID FOROUGHI ON STORYTELLING APPROACHES

Foroughi continues the theme of thinking more innovatively about how to write ethnographic accounts. Kostera and Średnicka (Chapter 2) did this also in the chapter on keeping a field diary as they delved into using poetry. Foroughi introduces a way of developing in-depth understanding of the organization or group we are studying through using storytelling approaches within our ethnographic studies. He discusses ethno-narrative and ethno-story – two somewhat different approaches to combining ethnography and storytelling. Storytelling approaches help us understand subjectivities, he writes. This is important because when we observe people we can have very little idea of what is going on 'inside' them, in their thoughts, feelings, emotions, bodies, and so on. We can see the 'outside' – what they are doing as they move within and through space – but not the 'inside'. Nor can observation alone tell us how people, in groups, construct meaning. The ethnographer using storytelling approaches can explore archival (pre-existing) stories; or can elicit stories through interviews, or can capture 'stories in situ', that is, those that are heard 'in the field'. These stories will usually not have stories' familiar structure: a beginning, development up to some sort of climax in the story, a denouement, and then an end. These have to be teased out during the data analysis stage.

At this stage of learning how to do ethnography it may be difficult to interview people or to stay in a place long enough to overhear how people talk about that organization. However, many organizations use visual graphics to tell us stories about themselves, or often how they wish us to regard them. A part of the skill of storytelling ethnography is the ability to look beyond the surface impression these visual graphics give us, to tease out the story behind the visual images.

To start to develop this skill, go to a café or a museum or art gallery, a gym or sports stadium, a shop or shopping centre, or a building or a lecture theatre on a university campus. Ideally choose a venue that you have used in one of the other exercises, so that you can see how combining different approaches within an ethnographic study can help you develop a far more insightful study than can be done using one approach alone.

When you have chosen your venue, go to it and aim to spend at least an hour there. What visual images can you see? Some of these will quite obviously have been designed to tell you a story about this place. Chains of coffee shops may want us to feel we are contributing to socially responsible and environmental practices, or that we are having an authentic Italian experience, for example. But look at the furniture and the layout of the place. What images does the furniture aim to invoke in people using the premises? If you are visiting a museum or art gallery, focus on one exhibition. How is it arranged, what visual images have been deliberately selected to encourage you to look, and how do people in that space go about the process of looking? If there are written guides or pieces of information, look at what they say but also behind the words: what story are they trying to tell you? That is, what does that exhibition wish you to understand about its topic, and the world more generally? Look at the furniture and the layout of the space – what is it encouraging you and other users to do? How do the space and the furniture and artefacts organize people so that they follow its rules without hardly noticing that they are following rules?

Again, write up notes, add drawings, photos or other visual images you may be able to collect, and sit down to work out how that space ‘worked’ on you and other people there. What stories did it tell you to make you feel part of that space, or perhaps excluded from it? Write up that story, as if the space is the author using your hands as the medium through which to convey its narrative.

CHAPTER 12: PAWEŁ KRZYWORZEKA AND HUGO GAGGIOTTI: THINKING ETHNOGRAPHY THROUGH THEORY

Krzyworzecka and Gaggiotti introduce some complex questions concerning theoretical aspects of organizational ethnography of which there is, they argue, a deficit. You may make similar inquiries as you develop your knowledge and practice of ethnography in organization studies. It includes questions about power. Firstly, what is the influence of those who commission ethnographic research? This question specifically concerns issues about where power lies when doing ethnographic research. If commissioned by managers there is a tendency for ethnographers to avoid conclusions that would be difficult for managers (or anyone with power or voice) to accept, whereas research funded by universities or research councils does not suffer from such qualms. This is, however, the overt face of power. The influence of postmodernism and poststructuralism has changed perspectives on power, to something that is not only restrictive (pressing down on us) but is constitutive (it makes existence possible). In this latter perspective power penetrates within and through the very capillaries of organizational life. Krzyworzecka and Gaggiotti also pose questions about organizational ontology. That is, what is ‘an organization’ and how, if at all, can ‘it’ exist? These questions are stimulated by their focus specifically on the anthropologist Lloyd Warner, who was invited to work with Elton Mayo and other researchers in the classical Hawthorne studies. Warner subsequently spent many years studying a small town, arguing that ‘an’ organization cannot be studied separately and distinctly from its context. Warner’s interest was thus in a holistic approach, to understanding not only ‘an’ organization but also the social structures in which it is embedded. His work was part of a wider trend that changed our conception of organizations – they do not begin or end at boundaries.

If you have carried out all the exercises accompanying the various chapters in this book you will now have quite a rich body of empirical materials. It is time now to think about how to develop theory from those materials.

Lay out the materials you have collected – some of them may be electronic so only available on screen, but if you have collected material artefacts lay them out.

The first thing to ask yourself: was what I studied an organization? If yes, what makes it into an organization. If no, why not? This is an ontological question and should not be rushed. You may need to do some reading to help you develop your answers.

The second thing is: how did power operate within this ‘organization’?

What overt examples of power were there (e.g. notices telling people what to do)? What other forms of power influenced how people behaved in this place? (Reading a discussion about Foucault's theory of power, and the internalization of the gaze, may be useful to help this analysis. The more theoretically minded may find Judith Butler's development of Foucault's work through an analysis of how we are governed and constituted by norms very useful.)

When you have thought through the answers to these questions (although at the moment this will be only the beginning – a lot more analysis is needed) you will find yourself starting to develop theory. An exciting adventure begins.

CHAPTER 13: SARAH BLOOMFIELD: A FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF LEARNING ETHNOGRAPHY

Bloomfield was still a doctoral student when she wrote the concluding chapter to this book. It is a lyrical piece of writing in which she describes how she developed the skills we have been exploring in this Introduction, and the chapters aim to help you develop. There is only one exercise left to do.

Make yourself a drink, sit in a comfortable chair, and read Sarah's chapter. Enjoy it.

When you have finished reading, stop and think through all the things you learned as you worked your way through the exercises we have suggested. What story would *you* write about learning the art and the skills of ethnography?

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