FQS FORUM: QUALITATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH SOZIALFORSCHUNG

Volume 7, No. 4, Art. 36
September 2006

An Ethnography By Any Other Name …

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Key words: ethnography, abduction, translation, complexity theory, education

Abstract: The debate over what counts as a "real" ethnography continues and even accelerates with growing interest in this alternative approach to the mainstream of social research. As part of a "Thematic School" sponsored by the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the author was asked to consider the question. This article is an informal written version of some of the points covered. It first of all summarizes some of the classic and recent debates, noting that both sides are actually examples of acceptable ethnography. Next a different version of the question is formulated to handle the fact that more than one ethnography is possible but not all are acceptable. In this version, parameters of an ethnography are identified that envision a space of possible ethnographic trajectories. The question then shifts to the characteristics of this space. Two are described in some detail. The first is a kind of logic, abductive, iterative and recursive. The second is a concern with questions of meaning and context to enable translation across points of view, though the questions raise problems of infinite expandability and integration in the lived experience of ethnographic practice. While problems of fuzzy set membership in the space remain at the end, this different version of the question of real ethnography offers an alternative way to ask and answer the question. The original series of lectures can be viewed online.

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1. When Is An Ethnography Not An Ethnography?

How can you tell if it's a *real* ethnography? [1]

This was the question that motivated my hosts at the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, to invite me to come and talk. It's not a new question. In fact, a couple of decades ago, I organized a panel at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association called "An Ethnography By Any Other Name …," a play on the Shakespearean lines from *Romeo and Juliet*: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." [2]

I was driven to organize such a session because of a turn in my life, a turn that led colleagues to ask of my work, "Yes, but is it *really* ethnography?" In 1968 the Vietnam War propelled me into a new career when the U.S. Public Health Service offered me a commission to work at a hospital for narcotics addicts in Kentucky. The book I eventually wrote was called *Ripping and Running: Toward a Formal Ethnography of Urban U.S. Heroin Addicts (1973)*. That work began a thirty-year run, off and on, as a U.S. drug expert. [3]

As far as anthropology went, though, I had left the fold when I wrote about addicts. Research on heroin addicts, in an institution, in the United States. It couldn't possibly be an ethnography. I disagreed, at first with all due respect, but as the years went on with an impatience that grew into annoyance. Maybe a session at the national anthropology meetings would clear the air, I thought. So I organized one. *An Ethnography by any Other Name* … [4]

I invited a few anthropology colleagues, but also a few from sociology whom I knew would think that research with addicts—"social deviance" they called it—was a reasonable thing to do. It was a packed and lively session. I can't remember what happened, but I do remember that we didn't answer the question, namely, what is a *real* ethnography? I also remember the tension between the anthropologists and the sociologists. The anthropologists felt that they were the *real* ethnographers. The sociologists considered themselves fully qualified, perhaps even theoretically and methodologically superior—Descendants of WEBER's social action, SCHUTZ's phenomenology, George Herbert MEAD's pragmatism, and W.I. THOMAS's definition of the situation, thank you very much. What a *real* ethnography was, though, wasn't clear to that panel. And it still isn't now. [5]

There were and are many other versions of the question, what's a *real* ethnography, too many to list here, but a couple of more examples wouldn't hurt. When I was in graduate school, I remember heated debates in the 1950s about "community focus" versus "problem focus." The idea that an ethnographer might have an actual problem in mind rather than embarking on an exhaustive content sweep of every detail of village life was novel and, according to some, a little sacrilegious. [6]

Along about the same time another shift rumbled under the academic terrain. Usually an anthropologist earned a geographical badge to identify him- or herself. One was an "Africanist," another studied "Micronesia," a third, "Native Americans." My credentials were "South Asianist" because I'd worked in India as an undergraduate, and in fact I started graduate school with an advisor who specialized in that area. [7]

But a new kind of expertise was bubbling up. Some anthropologists started thinking of their "area" as *institutional* rather than *geographical*. All of a sudden I found out I was a *medical* anthropologist, sort of, because I'd worked on heroin addicts in a treatment center. Others claimed their *area* was the nature of work, or of industry, or of the organization. And one of the strongest new categories

was a field called *educational* anthropology, something most of my hosts at the University of California were involved with. Their field obsesses about the same question, is educational ethnography *really* ethnography? They had the same problem I had. That's why they invited me to lecture. [8]

Several other debates cropped up in those days, at least within anthropology. I can't resist one more, since it shaped the academic world I grew up in—the *emic versus etic* distinction. Ironically enough, I just finished a summary of this distinction for a forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Sociology (RITZER, in press)*. I still sometimes stay awake at night thinking of all the trees murdered in service of the argument. In crude form, it boiled down to whether ethnography was about learning an "insider's" view of things—the emic—or whether it was based on observations cast into an "outsider's" frame of reference. Both of those are of course part of *any* ethnographic research. The cartoon version became: Emic meant you only cared about all the detailed things that the "natives" could name in their language. Etic meant that whatever you saw, it exemplified yet again how people were oppressed by the lackeys of the running dogs. [9]

Times have changed since the days of community versus problem focus and the new institutional specialties and the emic/etic brouhaha, but the question of whether or not something is a *real* ethnography is still with us. In fact, it's a more complicated question than ever. Again, the list of variations on the theme is too long to enumerate here, but let me give another example or two. [10]

Consider the famous *globalization*, the great explanation of so many good and evil things. For ethnographers, it means that our fantasies of an isolated tribe or village, with no contact with the modern world, vanish once and for all. Such tribes and villages didn't exist even when anthropology was born in the late 19th/early 20th century. But the impact of distant connections did increase dramatically as the 20th century morphed into the 21st. Everyplace and everyone were connected, more and more. What happened today in Podunk might have had its start in another country, a government agency, a corporate boardroom, a local planning commission or all of them in some combination. And vice-versa. When I was a college kid, the lower Peninsula of the San Francisco Bay Area was Podunk. Things changed when it turned into Silicon Valley, and Silicon Valley changed the rest of the world. Was an ethnography that spent most of its time looking at events and people far from the village a *real* ethnography? The argument continues. [11]

And another example: After the anthropological market crash in the early 1970s, more and more new PhDs chased fewer and fewer academic jobs. Demand for anthropology courses is partly a function of discontent with one's home culture. In the 1960s, enrollments skyrocketed and departments expanded. By the 1980s demand went into the cellar. Thanks to George W. Bush, enrollments are up again as his feed-the-rich policies make an increasing number of young Americans wonder if their home culture really represents values to aspire to. [12]

This new wave of academics marginalized by the market ventured forth into the so-called real world. For them, ethnography no longer meant a year or more by yourself in a village far from home. Ethnography meant applying what you knew to a problem of interest to clients in a government agency or community organization or business. A tradition of *applied* anthropology existed long before the market crash, but it was viewed with disrespect by the *real* anthropologists. All of a sudden it became fashionable, fashion in this case having to do with necessity being the mother of invention. [13]

Work outside an academic anthropology department? On problems of interest to the unwashed? In less than a year? That just couldn't be *real* ethnography. And yet more and more of us do it. [14]

Here's one last story about the question of whether or not an ethnography is the *real* thing, one born of the rapid and recent diffusion of interest in this strange kind of research. All of a sudden, some years back, it seemed that everyone started talking about *qualitative* research. What did they mean by that? Sometimes they meant ethnography, much to the horror of professional ethnographers who'd been perfectly happy with the label they'd used for a hundred years or so. But they also meant other things, a variety of other things, and it wasn't clear just exactly what this family of things included. It was clear that there were a lot of bastards and adoptions and a fair amount of incest. [15]

I obsessed and wrote about this some, since I was at work outside the university by the time "qualitative" turned into a trendy chant. The first thing I learned was, *qualitative* was ambiguous as to whether it referred to epistemology, theory, method, or data. The only clear difference was, what kind of *data* did you use, numbers or propositions? I'd never done a study where I didn't use both, and I know a lot of old-fashioned positivist social scientists that used both kinds of data as well. [16]

The result of this confusion? A group of very different people would sit around and smile at each other and say they wanted to do qualitative research, but then once the research started everything went to hell in a hand basket because they really didn't agree on very much at all. There's no point in rehashing all that now, since I'm assuming readers know the issues. I'll just say that most of my qualitative colleagues work in the same way that I'm calling “ethnography” here, the term I'll continue to use because of my own disciplinary background. On the other hand, much qualitative research isn't ethnographic at all. The difference will become clearer as the argument is developed in this article. [17]

For now I'll repeat, for the last time, the question that rolled across the land, "is *qualitative* research *really* ethnography?" Not necessarily, maybe not even most of the time. What is clear is that the term hinders rather than helps answer the question, how can you tell if something is a real ethnography? [18]

2. One Site, Many Ethnographies

So what is a *real* ethnography? Where do we start, given this long and inconclusive history of debate? Is it even worth the effort to take the question seriously? I think it's worth the effort because ethnography is different from most everyone's image of social research in ways that are intellectually interesting, politically useful, and esthetically attractive, an opinion I hope to convince you of in the course of this article. [19]

It's obvious that answering the question hasn't worked out, at least not in the half-century's worth of debates I mentioned in the preceding section, and we probably won't get an answer again if we keep posing the question in the same way. Why is this? What's wrong with asking about the *real* ethnography? [20]

The first thing that's wrong is a simple fact that most of us are comfortable with, even though it makes ethnographers sound unscientific. The simple fact is, for any particular study, *there isn't just one real ethnography*. [21]

If a Nigerian Vygotskian ethnographer and a Czech cultural theory ethnographer both did a study of Podunk at the same time, do you think they'd come back with the same results? Based on many historical cases, like the famous LEWIS-REDFIELD debate, and many modern ones, like the rise of indigenous ethnographers who work in their own country and see it differently from the foreigners, we know that different ethnographies come out of similar studies. [22]

If more than one ethnography is possible, then there can't be any single *real* ethnography. They will be different because of different combinations of ethnographer and community, different ways that a study moves, different choices and different contingencies along the way, different events in the world around the study—any or all of these can change the *trajectory* of a study over time. More than one path is possible. [23]

This calls to mind films like *Run Lola, Run*, which shows how Lola's story could have taken three different trajectories depending on small differences in how the story started. For a more recent example, I just saw Woody Allen's new film, *Match Point*. I can't say I recommend it much, but he uses the premise as well, based on the metaphor of a tennis ball hitting the net and then, depending on which way it falls, determining the winner or loser of the set. A little difference can make a big difference. [24]

More than one ethnography is possible, so picking the *real* one among a number of perfectly acceptable ones sounds pretty silly. So now we throw our hands in the air? Accept the philosopher FEYERABEND's (1993) "anything goes" principle? [25]

No. Though more than one ethnography is possible, *not all ethnographies are acceptable*. We all know that as well, especially in this day and age when so

many people discover qualitative research with no background or training whatsoever. [26]

For example, I read a book some time ago, an ethnography of a hospital. I won't say any more about it to spare the author's feelings. It was a lot of work to write a review that didn't sound annoyed. The problem? The person didn't really know what ethnography was or how to do it. So that person described hospital daily routine, one thing after another, which was ok as far as it went, but the person kept noticing that "pain management" came up over and over again, wherever one looked. [27]

There were other problems, but that's enough to make the point. The ethnography wasn't acceptable, period. The person needed to shift from the organization of daily routine to the repeated themes that signaled core concerns of an institution, a critical step in ethnographic analysis. The person whose book I read didn't take that step. [28]

Here's another example of the "not all ethnographies are acceptable" problem. Some people think focus groups are ethnographies. The thought makes me break out in a rash. Focus groups are narrow—a group of six to eight strangers talking in a room for an hour or two. An ethnography requires a wider range of contexts than that. A focus group might be *part* of an ethnography, or it might be done in ethnographic ways we'll get to later, but the usual way they're conducted? It's like telling a composer, "Here, here's one note and a length of string that will produce it if you pluck it. Now make a symphony." [29]

One final example. "Coding" is a name for reducing a lot of complicated material into a smaller set of categories. Ethnographies always involve a lot of complicated material, like transcripts of conversational interviews and field notes. How do you code? Ethnographers develop codes interactively with the material itself before they address any theory. In fact, their codes change with time. Stable codes from outside, like from a prior theory, with none from inside, are a sure sign of an unacceptable ethnography. [30]

So given an ethnographer and a group of interest, two things are true. *More than one ethnography is possible, but not all ethnographies are acceptable*. [31]

That's why the question, what is a *real* ethnography, leads us astray into arguments none of which conclude with any answers. The question is caught up in our Aristotelian tradition. It's either right or wrong. It's just not going to work. But if it's more than one but less than all, that means there's a *boundary* there somewhere. It's probably not razor thin, to put it mildly. But that difference between the *many possible* and the *very many unacceptable* has to be recognizable somehow. [32]

3. Real Ethnography as a Space of Possibilities

Maybe we can answer the question after all, if we think about the problem differently. This is, in fact, one of the key cutting-edge methodological issues in the field right now. [33]

How can we look at that boundary? We start with an assumption that the "right stuff" isn't a *point*, but rather a *space of possibilities*. Let's look at ethnography as part of a co-evolutionary system with reference to an environment of problem and world. As an ethnography starts, we can't be sure exactly what it will turn into, but we can be sure that whatever it does turn into, there will be limits on what it becomes. Most of the debates about ethnography aren't about the boundary of this space. Most are about parameters that can reasonably vary. [34]

Consider this thought experiment. Suppose that ethnography was a computer program, maybe even a game. The program has several parameters a player can set that take different values. We can imagine many that might be relevant. Here are a few of them that occur to me.

- *Control*: How constrained is the ethnography? How much of a preference does an ethnographer have for structured methods? How much is his/her personality of the "take charge" rather than "go with the flow" sort?
- *Focus:* How much is an ethnographer focused on a particular issue or problem going in?
- *Scale*: To what extent is an ethnographer committed to the phenomenological level of experience? Or is he/she also after higher global levels and/or lower psychobiological levels?
- *Events*: What range of time and space does the ethnographer mean to cover? One particular event in one particular setting, at one extreme, or all events and settings that any group member participates in, at the other?
- *Event Links*: Events stretch out in time and distribute across space. How far are they pursued back and forward in time and how far are they followed as they move through space? [35]

All of these parameters probably look reasonable to any professional ethnographer. A particular reader might have a preference for a particular setting, but he or she would see that other settings were possible. And it looks, on first blush, like the parameters can be set independently of each other. [36]

The parameters do label issues that are contentious in professional debates. Some resemble the arguments over what a *real* ethnography is, reviewed earlier. "Focus," for example, number two in the above list, obviously relates to the problem versus community focus debate way back in the 1950s. [37]

Now, a second thing to imagine about our ethno-computer game in this thought experiment: The game itself is full of *contingencies*. Unanticipated things will

happen that ethno-players will react to in different ways, depending in part on their parameter settings, depending on many other things as well. [38]

With differences in parameter settings, and differences in contingencies, we expect any number of games to be possible. In fact, if we look at a million plays of the game, we see that *successfully* played games take many different trajectories over time. We see that more than one "ethnography" was possible. [39]

We can add a few more parameters, ones that have more to do with the ethno-player's game environment. Here are three that occurred to me.

1. *Priors*: "Prior" is traditional social research jargon for the prior categories and propositions you take into a study with you, categories and propositions from some theory that you must say something about at the end. By "prior," though, I also mean *all* the stuff you drag in with you, including you yourself—biography, identities, the personal history that shapes what you see.
2. *Deliverables*: "Deliverables" is also jargon, bureaucratic and usually associated with the applied world, but it applies to everyone including academics. What have you promised or what must you deliver in return for the support to do the work?
3. *Interests*: Here I echo Jürgen HABERMAS' work on "Knowledge and Human Interests" (1971). What interests brought this study about? Who is paying for it and why? Who is doing it and why? Who is participating in it and why? What interests are being served at all these levels? [40]

Any professional ethnographer will recognize that these three parameters also vary and also make a difference in how an ethno-game goes. Once again we can imagine different settings for these three parameters at the beginning of a program run. Once again those settings define contentious debates among ethnographers. Some readers, I promise you, will already be annoyed that I used the term "deliverable" since it connotes applied rather than academic funding, a signal of the basic/applied split in social research more generally. [41]

The eight parameters are not trivial. All of them are worth discussion and debate. All of them, in fact, have been and are topics of passionate exchanges of the sort reviewed earlier. Consider the event parameter, and recall the question well known among my hosts, educational researchers—*is* an ethnography of a classroom a *real* ethnography? Of course it is. Are other kinds of "educational ethnography" possible? Of course there are. [42]

Or think of the debates between applied ethnographers who know they can contribute to a policy debate with a month's work versus an academic who argues that anything less than a year on a theoretical issue isn't the real thing at all. Or consider the ethnographer as a prior and think of all the literature on ethnographer identity and what if any difference it makes on the results of a study. Each parameter is an issue. Most have been for decades. [43]

It looks like the example parameters for an ethnographic study can be set in ways that reasonable and competent ethnographers disagree on, but the parties in a debate would see the other's position as a possible argument, the wrong one, but possible. None of the disputants would have a monopoly on the *real* ethnography. Instead, they would be arguing about ethnography under different parameter settings with games taking different trajectories depending on those settings and the contingencies that arose. [44]

In other words, more than one ethnography would be possible. [45]

And if we looked at the results of a million different runs, we would see that *successful* trajectories—runs that produced an acceptable ethnography at the end, a *win* in the ethno-game—would not just wander aimlessly through the space of possibilities. Instead, they would *fill* a part of that space. The filled part would show the space of acceptable ethnographies. The empty part of that space would show the space of unacceptable ethnographies. [46]

In other words, not all ethnographies are acceptable. [47]

The filled part of the space, the part thick with lines representing the trajectories of games that produced acceptable ethnographies under different parameter settings, that part is called an *attractor*. The attractor is the space that shows how more than one ethnography is possible, but not all ethnographies are acceptable. [48]

The question now isn't how do we define *real* ethnography. The question now is, can we figure out how to describe that attractor? [49]

I want to argue that the attractor boils down to a logic and a couple of questions. As HABERMAS already knew, I'm motivated by my own interests here. I've often done things that colleagues said were outside the ethnographic space when in fact I knew they were inside. As I mentioned earlier, my work at an institution for the treatment of narcotics addicts in the late 1960s was viewed with suspicion if not disdain by many anthropologists of the time. But I knew it was in the space. [50]

As usual, there are more examples, more than I can list here. Here's one: Some years ago I did a project for the Thomas Edison museum. They wondered why former workers and townspeople weren't more involved. It took just a few days to find out. The "museum" was a "closed factory" as far as they were concerned. It represented a loss of work and the beginning of economic decay for the town. This obviously wasn't a traditional "ethnography" by any stretch of the imagination, but it still belonged in that space. [51]

One of my favorite minimalist examples: A colleague of mine, Charles CHENEY, worked years ago in Texas. A medical school built a new clinic for poor people but the poor kept going to the old clinic even though it was farther away. They asked Charley to find out why. It took him an hour. A bus ran straight to the old clinic from the neighborhood where they lived. No public transportation ran to the new one. The way Charley did this work fits in the space. [52]

A final, very different example: I just finished a six-year NIH grant to look at illegal drug epidemics. We spent most of the time in archives rather than talking with living breathing humans. That's not ethnography by the old rules, but the way we did the research and the results belonged in the ethnographic space. [53]

I could go on and on, including the traditional ethnography I did as a kid in a small village in Karnataka in South India. But by now you see the point. Many of us have done work whose trajectory fit well inside that ethnographic attractor. And, given the parameters described in the previous section, we see how they all could be a possible runs in an ethno-computer game. [54]

But the usual debates about "how do you tell if it's a *real* ethnography," would rule many of these examples out. I want to step back from the various "my parameter or death" positions in the historical debates. I want to take the list of examples I just offered, and many other examples as well that readers will have in mind, and show how the trajectory of each of them lies within the attractor space of possible ethnography. The way I will do this is to show that they all use a certain kind of logic, and they all ask a key question in a certain way. [55]

The logic is central. Let me deal with that first. [56]

4. A Peculiar Kind of Logic

The logic is an old story, one I've written about in other places, starting in the 1980s and most recently described in *The Professional Stranger* (1996). I won't show the old slides I used in the original book, or in the lecture on which this article is based. Instead, I'll begin by saying that, more and more as time goes on, I think of ethnography as a *kind of logic* rather than any specific method or any particular unit of study. Ethnography names an *epistemology*—a way of knowing and a kind of knowledge that results—rather than a recipe or a particular focus. [57]

I want to argue that the endless debates around *real* ethnography miss the point, in part, because examples of what is and what isn't *both* use the logic. If you want to ask if a trajectory is inside that ethnographic attractor, first ask if it displays the logic. The logic is constitutive of the space of acceptable ethnographic work. [58]

So what is ethnographic logic? It is first of all *abductive,* from the Latin for "lead away." The term is often used in the sense of "kidnap." Charles PEIRCE (1906) the logician and semiotician among the founders of American pragmatism developed the logical meaning of the term. [59]

As he looked at the logic of his day, PEIRCE wondered, where do the *new* concepts come from? *Deductive* logic was the way to get new conclusions from old premises. *Inductive* logic was the way to see how well new material fit the available concepts. But both those kinds of logic were *closed* with reference to the concepts in play. Was logic limited to figuring out consequences of what we already knew, or fitting new experiences to what we already knew? Didn't we

learn something from experience that took us to new places, that "led us away" in the old Latin sense of the term? [60]

Of course we did. Whatever else ethnography does, it *has* to produce new concepts. In fact, I often joke with my traditional research colleagues: If *they* wind up with a new concept at the end of their study that they didn't have at the beginning, their career is over. If I *don't* wind up with a new concept at the end, *my* career is over. The joke summarizes one of the core contradictions between ethnography and the mainstream tradition of social science. [61]

In fact, ethnography is usually in demand, *outside* the university, when new concepts are desperately needed. The inelegant question, "what in the hell is going on out there," motivates organizations to seek ethnographic help. They can't *de*duce or *in*duce because old knowledge clearly doesn't work. It's how I make a living since I left the university. Abduction for bewildered organizations is my market. Hardly a snappy TV ad, but there it is. [62]

PEIRCE's abductive logic formalizes this critical part of any ethnographic trajectory. Let me borrow from an unpublished paper by Michael HOFFMAN (1997), a trained philosopher currently at Georgia State University. Here, in PEIRCE's own words, as quoted by HOFFMAN, is abductive logic:

> The surprising fact, F, is observed.
>
> If H were true, F would be a matter of course.
>
> Hence, there is reason to suspect that H is true. [63]

The "surprising fact F" echoes what I call "rich points." Rich points are the raw material of ethnographic research. They run the gamut from incomprehensible surprise to departure from expectations to glitches in an aggregate data set. As PEIRCE would have advocated, the purpose of ethnography is to go forth into the world, find and experience rich points, and then take them seriously as a signal of a difference between what you know and what you need to learn to understand and explain what just happened. People are said to be creatures of habit and seekers of certainty. Abduction turns them into the opposite. [64]

How do we make sense of all these big and little "F's?" We don't just box them in with old concepts in the style of inductive logic. Instead, we imagine "H's" that might explain them. We *imagine*. The surprise F, the rich point, calls on us to create, to think, to make up an antecedent H that does indeed imply the consequent. Where did *that* F come from? Well, what if … H? Rather than reaching into the box and pulling out a concept ready at hand, we make up some new ones. [65]

Any trajectory in the ethnographic space will run on the fuel of abduction. You'll read or see how surprises came up, how they were taken seriously, and how they were explained using concepts not anticipated when the story started. [66]

We need to reign in our enthusiasm a bit. PEIRCE wants some plausibility. Stephen KING just wrote a new thriller where, the review said, a pulse transmitted through cell phones turns users who happen to be calling at the time into monsters. The plot appeals to me, but the likelihood that the story will turn into an actual news item is pretty slim. It's probably an entertaining read, but a plausible scenario? [67]

PEIRCE also wants us to follow up the abductive epiphany with some tedious work. And the tedious work looks a lot like old-fashioned science. We need to systematically collect, compare and contrast, try to prove the new H → P link wrong, all that systematic drudgery, whether we're in the lab or in the field. It reminds me of one of my favorite Einstein quotes, that he never made a significant scientific discovery using rational analytic thought. But he did a lot of work *after* the discovery to test it out. And it reminds me of Edison's famous quote, since I mentioned his museum a while back—Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. And it reminds me of why I like the first days of ethnographic work the best, because they are the most creative part where the learning curve accelerates exponentially. [68]

Hoffman also emphasizes that the range of imagination in play is bounded by history. We can only stretch so far is the sad moral of the story. VYGOTSKY's (1978) "zone of proximal development," about which I learned much from education colleagues during my visit, is a case in point. But still, some stretching is better than no stretching at all. That's the message that abduction conveys. [69]

Abduction is a key feature of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable ethnography. But the logic is more than that. Abduction is static. H implies F and we're done. Ethnography is not. It is dynamic. [70]

Finding surprises and pursuing them—This goes on and on until the money runs out or you drop dead. Years ago, a group of anthropologists wrote of the surprises they encountered even after twenty years of work. What they wrote is *not* a surprise. Since the point of it all is to construct new understandings based on new concepts, abduction is the motor that drives the lumbering machine, however long the tires hold out. [71]

The technical term is *iterative,* from the Latin "to repeat." Iterative abduction can turn into a clinical condition if you're not careful, not to mention exhaust you even in the course of an ordinary ethnography. Imagine that you're always on alert for surprises, always skeptical towards whatever ready explanations are at hand, always trying to imagine a new and previously unimagined alternative. No one could live like that all the time and, in fact, no one does. [72]

Iterative also foregrounds the *dynamic* nature of ethnography and helps understand how conclusions can eventually be reached, even without self-medication, however partial those conclusions might be. Remember that abduction occurs in a historical context that limits its range of possibilities? *Iteration* means that the early applications of abduction in fact *change* the

historical context and create a new one within which the next abduction will occur. And the change narrows the focus. [73]

I used the metaphor of a "funnel" to describe ethnographic research a long time ago. At first you cast the net wide, but with time the focus narrows, *within* what you learned in those early wide-open days. Iterative abduction explains why the funnel metaphor wasn't a bad choice. Those early abductive moves constrain what comes next by moving history away from its old constraints while at the same time adding new ones that the encounter itself has produced. [74]

Michael MOERMAN (1969) wrote an article called "A Little Knowledge." After he'd worked in a Thai village for a while, he forgot what he used to know because he took those first new concepts for granted as he moved further along the ethnographic trajectory. A film crew visited and asked questions that refreshed his memory, since they were newcomers, and the experience inspired him to write the article. What an ethnographer learns early might be the most important to report to an outsider, but that early abduction fades with time as new rich points come up that were invisible until the earlier work was finished. A little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing, as his title suggested. [75]

Iterative abduction shows yet another major difference between this logic and old-fashioned social science. The old guard wants an interview guide. The iterative abductors do a couple of interviews, then obsess about them, then *change* the interview guide, then do a couple of more, and on and on it goes. It makes those who worship standardization break out in a rash. [76]

Iterative abduction already sounds a little awkward, but I need to make it even worse with one more adjective—*recursive*. A famous example of recursion is linguistics since Noam CHOMSKY. To make a sentence, you might put another sentence inside it. Say you've got a rule that says a Sentence consists of a Noun Phrase plus a Verb Phrase. "The dog sits on my foot." (Actually one just did in the coffee shop where I'm drafting this.) But then it turns out the next rule is, one way to make a Noun Phrase is to rewrite it as a Noun Phrase plus a Sentence. "The dog who has a ball in its mouth sits on my foot." NP = "The dog" and S = "The dog has a ball in its mouth." (Actually the one sitting on my foot does. He wants to play.) So in the process of making a Sentence, according to Chomsky, we reach back up to the top of the rules and make a sentence again inside the sentence we are making. [77]

This is *recursion*, from the Latin for "run again," or "run back." Abduction in ethnography is also recursive. Sometimes we use abduction right in the middle of abducting. A surprise happens and we pursue it on the way to constructing a new H that explains it. But as we pursue it, another surprise comes up, so now we need to pursue that. An embedded sequence of abduction occurs as we explain one surprise after another before we return to the original surprise. It's not of course so mechanical as that, but it is recursive in the sense of abducting in the process of abducting. [78]

Examples could go on and on. Often an ethnography begins with a giant surprise that shapes hundreds of abductions to come. When I first arrived at the treatment center for heroin addicts, for example, I was surprised at how all the experts and all the literature said addicts were social-psychological failures. As I got to know some, I learned that they were also social-psychological successes. When I first met independent truckers as I started that research in the early 1980s, I was surprised at how different they were from their late 1970s cowboy image and, in fact, how much they disliked that image. In cases like the addicts and the independents, an entire ethnography turned into recursive abduction off those initial surprises. [79]

Here's a more focused example: As a newcomer to South India, I was surprised when a villager put a lump of charcoal on my lunch before I left to walk to another village. I've used this example ad nauseum in other writings. Here I'll just say, in the course of figuring out *that* surprise, I came across another—the local sense of spirits—and that led me into new abductive work. In the course of figuring out spirits, I came across another surprise—people who were possessed by spirits were usually new brides and absent villagers living in the city. And so it went, one abduction calling up another calling up another until the study ended. [80]

Recursion helps understand when you are "done" with a particular rich point, and why some rich points are richer than others. You are done when abductive work yields no more abduction. And you are dealing with a truly spectacular rich point when the abduction seems like it will never stop, one abduction calling up another calling up another until you run out of time. Those kinds of rich points lead to book topics or even a life's work. [81]

Speaking of recursion, it's now time to return to the top layer of *this* section and finish it up, the top layer being the importance of logic as a characteristic of the trajectories inside the space of acceptable ethnographies. Do we have a better sense now of what this logic looks like? I hope so. It is first of all *abductive* logic, taking surprises seriously and creating new explanations for them. It is also *iterative*, something that is applied over and over again in the course of a piece of work. And it is *recursive*, calling on itself to solve a problem that comes up even as it is solving a problem. [82]

In the lust for acronyms that infects anyone who lives in Washington DC for too many years, how can I summarize this logic in an abbreviated way? It is an iterative, recursive, abductive logic. The initials give us IRA logic, which is pretty amusing, since the initials also abbreviate Individual Retirement Accounts and the Irish Republican Army, not to mention—as education colleagues pointed out during the lecture—the International Reading Association. But then perhaps that just means the acronym will stick more readily in that many more minds. Besides, the person suggested by all the acronyms at once is interesting to contemplate. A militant Catholic Northern Irish schoolteacher worried about retirement? [83]

IRA logic is constitutive of the ethnographic attractor. If a trajectory is ethnographic, it contains IRA logic. The eight parameters described earlier can be

set in any number of ways. If the process that follows uses IRA logic, it is in the space of acceptable ethnographies. [84]

Even the Edison museum example mentioned earlier is in the space. The surprise? The hostility towards the Edison museum on the part of former employees and townspeople. The new H that explained it? The museum had been a factory, a going concern that another company bought and moved to Florida where they could dump the unions and get a better tax deal. Local jobs and the economic center of the town vanished. [85]

Even the Texas clinic example is in the space. The surprise? People didn't take advantage of a more convenient clinic. The new H that explained it? Public transportation made the old clinic "closer," the availability of busses not being something the doctors had considered. [86]

IRA logic isn't the only thing that matters, though. Earlier I said the space was defined by a logic and a key question. That question has to do with *context* and *meaning*, and it's time now to talk about them. [87]

5. Changing Point of View with Context and Meaning

Our use of IRA logic all the time drives traditional research colleagues crazy. One once told me in an annoyed tone that ethnographers "always go for the error variance." Our obsession with questions about *context* and *meaning* are also annoying to colleagues, except when they are useful, like my work with the Edison museum and CHENEY's with the Texas clinic. They're annoying because, even if everyone is happily abducting along, noticing F and building H have to be done within some *frame of reference*, within some *point of view*. And whatever else ethnography is about, it's about an encounter with a *different* point of view, not a commitment to stay inside your own at all costs. [88]

A few years ago I was asked to help out with a quick look at LSD use among youth in a Washington DC suburb. I'll spare you the entire story. The point for now is this: Just before I headed out for some interviews, a bunch of us sat around a table at NIH and invented an H to explain the surprising F, the F being a belief that LSD use had increased dramatically. (It hadn't, really, but that too is another story.) [89]

The bunch of us around the table were all old white guys who had gone to college during the 1960s. We all knew about LSD use in that era, by reputation if not from personal experience. Based on that knowledge, we abducted our way into a new H. We figured that the kids were just doing the 60s all over again. Probably they were hippie kids who had learned counter-culture values from their old hippie parents who were now busy monitoring mutual funds and scheduling maintenance on the BMW. It was a cyclical thing, like the title of the book that the project eventually produced, *LSD: Still With Us After All These Years* (HENDERSON & GLASS, 1994). [90]

Wrong. When I started interviewing, I used a nostalgic question: "So I was a Berkeley kid in the 1960s," I said, "and LSD was used a lot. People were doing critiques of American politics and culture and looking at alternatives, like Eastern religions. Is that what you kids are into?" They looked at me like I'd just stepped out of a flying saucer. *They* were having fun and fleeing boredom with chemically induced visual effects. Cultural critique? What the hell was *I* talking about? And the parents? I only met with a couple, but they had to have been some of the most conservative college students who went through the 1960s. [91]

The bunch of old white guys at NIH, including me, abducted all right, but we only did it within our own point of view. ("POV" I'll write from now on, like in a screenplay.) IRA logic alone isn't enough to put you into the ethnographic space. It takes something else, and that something else has to do with *meaning* and *context*, not the meaning and context you, the abductor, brought with you, but the meaning and context of a different POV that produced the surprise in the first place. [92]

With POV and IRA logic we're getting close to a formulation of what makes an ethnography the *real thing*, at least as far as being a possible trajectory in that space of acceptable ethnographies. We can link IRA logic and a different POV like this:

> An initial view of X from POV_1 *changes* through the iterative and recursive application of abductive logic. It changes to a *different* view of X that takes into account contexts and meanings of POV_2. [93]

Not exactly a definition you can dance to, but one that does carry forward the importance of IRA logic from the previous section and coordinates it with the importance of context and meaning from a different POV. [94]

But what does it *mean*, you should excuse the expression, "a concern with context and meaning." It first of all means some pathological personality characteristics. Remember earlier I wrote that IRA logic worked against our supposedly normal human longing for habit and certainty? Well, a concern with context and meaning is just as bad. It requires us to enjoy not knowing what's going on around us. [95]

We humans tend to make sense of the world around us all too easily. We see people doing things and hear what they say—even assume we know what they *must* be saying when they're speaking a different language—and take it from there. If we have little or no contact with the people we're explaining, those beliefs are even easier to have and to hold. [96]

This is a recipe for catastrophe, ranging from the micro-moment to the macro-event. In the micro-moment, *mis*-reading meaning can lead to assumptions of malevolent intent when in fact the intent was exactly the opposite, friendly and benign. At the level of the macro-event, those with power impose new incentives and constraints based on their knowledge of how "those people" see and do

things, but their knowledge is wrong. The results change things in ways opposite from what was intended. [97]

Here's a micro-level story: I lived in Vienna, in Austria, during that amazing year of 1989. One day I took an American friend to Schwechat airport. The long check-in line was full of tourists returning to the US. She wanted to buy something to read on the flight so I stayed and watched her bags. An American guy turned around, looked at the elegant luggage, and smiled at me. "Nice bags," he said. I thought to myself, "Who cares what you think? Mind your own business." Then I snapped back into America. "Yeah, thanks," I said. [98]

Classic mis-reading, the kind of thing that books have been written about. In Austria, where I'd lived for months, "politeness" meant keeping your distance and giving others their space. In America, "politeness" meant a display of approval based on shared values. Different meanings, different contexts, between POV_1 and POV_2. [99]

Here's a macro example: Consider Bill CLINTON's catastrophic health care reform, botched in its design and its implementation so we could keep the health care industry safe for insurance companies. "Capitation" became one buzzword. Insurance would reimburse by the case instead of by treatment. The results? More competition to keep prices down and more emphasis on prevention. [100]

Nope. Capitation turned out to mean fly as many bodies as possible through the office as quickly as you can, limit the doctor's choices, and outsource work that requires high overhead to specialty providers. And prevention? Expensive and time-consuming and hard to evaluate things that don't happen. Different meanings, different contexts. [101]

Ethnography is always aimed at POV_2. We know it's there because of the rich points that come up. Context and meaning questions are the way we *make* them come up. We wonder, always, within the limits of sanity, if maybe what we think is going on isn't, in fact, something else entirely. [102]

Ethnographers, by and large, suffer from a disease called "chronic Popperism," if I can refer tongue in cheek to the writings of philosopher Karl POPPER (1963). We keep looking for evidence that what we think is going on in fact is not. We are ambulatory falsification machines. And the falsification we seek relies heavily, though not exclusively, on questions about meaning and context. [103]

Chronic Popperism is the reason ethnography is a science, even though it doesn't look like one to the average NEWTON wannabe. And Chronic Popperism, the repeated use of context and meaning questions aimed at POV_2, is what switches on IRA logic over and over again. [104]

Here is a simple local in-the-moment version of the meaning question. Within a particular event, I ask: Did that sign X, which I assume signifies Y, also signify Y to interpretant Z? [105]

Often the most important meaning questions will be asked and answered for you, with a clear *no,* as in rich points that are incomprehensible. Those make the job easy. But most of the time, especially nowadays with so much work within a society that contains both POV_1 and POV_2, an ethnographer *has* to keep asking, because he/she often thinks he/she knows what is going on when, in fact, he/she often does not. [106]

The context question is similar, at least as far as the moment goes. Within a particular event, I ask: Does sign X have any co-occurrence relations with other signs $Y_1 \ldots Y_n$ within the event dimensions? [107]

Once again a major difference between ethnography and the usual social science: The usual approach, once it spots something interesting in a particular event, what does it want to do? It wants to *isolate* it, figure out how to *abstract* it from what's going on, and then *measure* it in some way. That way a large number of events can be compared. [108]

But when an ethnographer focuses on something in an event, the question isn't, "How do I isolate and measure that?" The question is the context question summarized above. "What else in the event is the sign connected with?" Look around and see what else is going on. Traditional social science is on the lookout for *variables*; ethnographers are on the lookout for *patterns*. [109]

Questions about meaning and context, questions that push for differences between POV_1 and POV_2, produce rich points that in turn trigger IRA logic. But remember, none of this dictates how *parameters* have to be set in the ethno-game described earlier. And remember, most of the arguments summarized at the beginning over what a *real* ethnography is, they debate the parameters, not the boundaries of the space that includes them all. [110]

Context and meaning questions and IRA logic were a part of figuring out why former workers and townspeople avoided the Edison museum as much as they were part of the traditional anthropological ethnography I did in a South Indian village. Differences in parameters? No question. Differences worth discussion and debate? Absolutely. But differences in which kind of ethnography was the *real* thing? Nope, both were. Both used meaning and context questions and IRA logic. [111]

6. Meaning and Context Expand, Contract and Then Blur

Well, this would be a nice place to end, but there are two severe problems with meaning and context questions dangling in the breeze. The first? The questions are, for all practical purposes, *infinitely expandable*. The second: They *collapse* into each other in actual practice. Outside of that they're fine. [112]

Let's look at expansion first. The abstract questions described in the previous section were only about the ethnographic moment. What does X mean *right here right now*? What other signs is X connected with as sign X is produced, *right here*

and right now? Those are important ways to ask them, no doubt about it. But answers to both meaning and context questions are about *connections,* connections among different signs. So why stop the connections just with what's available in the moment? And if both questions are asked about connections, are there any differences between them? [113]

Consider the word "methadone." A simple little word, often used around the house, as Groucho used to say on *You Bet Your Life*, especially often used around a house where a narcotics addict lives. What is the meaning of methadone? [114]

For a pocket dictionary it's easy. Methadone is a synthetic narcotic. [115]

But in the moment? Which moment? For one addict it's a cure. For another it's a stopgap to keep from getting sick. For a third it's a nice high. For a doctor it's treatment for a disease. For a cop it's just another kind of dope in the street. For a politician it's a way to look like the great social fixer. For an entrepreneur it's a way to make money. For a pharmaceutical company it's a product. And on and on it goes. [116]

Are all those meanings, or are they contexts? [117]

And what about outside those various moments? What if I tell you that methadone was invented in World War II Germany, called "dolophine" after Adolph himself. How about if I tell you it replaced heroin in the late 1960s/early 1970s when President NIXON cracked down on the traditional French Connection? How about if I write that the idea of *maintenance* was invented by Marie NYSWANDER, a psychiatrist frustrated at the failure of the usual clinical approaches to addiction, and Vince DOLE, a physician who worked on obesity and thought that maybe addiction was due to a physiological deficiency, like insulin for a diabetic. What if I talk about how as soon as the Sumerians invented writing millennia ago, one of the first things they wrote about was narcotics? Have I gone too far afield now? [118]

And are those all meanings or are they contexts? [119]

I call this the "heartbreak of the holistic mind." Ethnographers, or anyone else who searches for patterns, learn that everything is connected with everything else. No matter how many links it takes, eventually you can construct a bridge from any sign A to any sign B. [120]

You know the cliché about "six degrees of separation," a cliché that inspired the 1993 movie, though the phrase is actually based on the research of Stanley MILGRAM (1967). It asserts that we're all connected in one large global social network, and that on the average there are six hops from any of us to anyone else. So-called "small world" research complicates this cliché considerably now, but the main point still holds. The potential interconnection of everything with everything else is as true of meaning and context as it is of social ties. [121]

So the problem is, where do you snip the webs of connection? When is enough enough? This is a major issue for ethnography. There is no hard and fast rule, no easy answer. For now, let's just say you've done at least the minimum when, at whatever point in the ethnographic trajectory you are on, you've moved forward. To put it another way—a bit of pithy advice I give novices—as long as you're learning something you're on the right track. [122]

The infinitely stretchable meaning and context are one thing. What about the second problem, the problem that sometimes it looks like there's not a dime's worth of difference between them? Since meaning and context are both about connections among signs, why do we need *both* concepts? [123]

Intuitively "meaning" and "context" seem different. In a way they are, at least as I think about them, since meaning suggests a focus on a particular sign and context suggests linking one sign *in* an event with others. At an informal level, the two terms alert people to different questions. "What does that mean" and "what about the context" direct our attention to different parts of an ethnographic moment. Don't they? Or do they? [124]

Bronislaw MALINOWSKI, considered one of the founding fathers of ethnography, didn't think so. He wrote about language in a way that collapsed the distinction (1923). The meaning of a word, he said, was the way it was *used* in different situations. His view was called "context of situation." It flourished in the UK and eventually turned into one of the foundation stones of modern approaches to discourse analysis. If meaning *is* context, then what's the point in pretending they're separate? [125]

Or consider the founding documents of American pragmatic philosophy, the intellectual movement that produced PEIRCE and the abductive logic we relied on earlier (JAMES, 1907). By their argument the meaning of a word was the *consequences* of its use. This is a different formulation from MALINOWSKI the fieldworker, but it, too, blurs the lines between what we usually think of as meaning and context. [126]

As a final example, think of the later work of WITTGENSTEIN in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). He advanced the idea of language as a "form of life." A treatment of his concept, like MALINOWSKI's and the American pragmatists', is well beyond the scope of this article. But like those two previous examples, language is part and parcel of the flow of life. Understanding blends meaning with context. As WITTGENSTEIN wrote, the meaning of a word is its use in the language. The line between meaning and context disappears again. [127]

I think the angle of vision here is the right one when it comes down to ethnographic practice. What am I doing when I'm doing ethnography? Learning what is going on in an event by paying attention to behavior, whether it is movement or sound, or smell or taste, or anything else for that matter. In the flow, *in media res* as the writers say, there aren't any distinctions between meaning and context. As I like to joke, using a line from an old government anti-drug TV

spot, "This is your brain, this is your brain on distinctions." If I knew enough, I'd try to turn all this into applied Buddhism. [128]

All well and good. But at the end of the day, I need to tell an audience with POV_1 something about what goes on in a POV_2 world. I build a *representation*, as they say. And it's in that shift from Buddhist flow to cerebral object that "meaning" and "context" separate out and play an important role. [129]

Many readers will know the story of SCHRÖDINGER's cat, a story meant to teach us something about the strange world of quantum physics. The general idea is sketched on Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schrödinger's_cat. It's a horrible story if you like cats, which I do. But here's how it goes. [130]

You put a cat in a sealed box. A vial of poison is in there along with a Geiger counter like sensor. You put radioactive material in the box. The material emits particles at random. If a particle happens to hit the sensor, it trips a trigger and releases the poison and the cat dies. [131]

I wonder how people would have reacted to this story if there had been a physicist in the box instead of a cat? [132]

The point is, you can't know if the cat is dead or alive unless you open the box. Both states are possible at any point in time—alive or dead. The only thing tells you which is true is when you intervene and take a measurement of the situation by opening the box and looking inside. [133]

The story helps understand why meaning and context both *are* and *are not* the right way to think about ethnography. In the flow of the ethnographic moments what is meaning and what is context? Who knows? It's not the right question. A particular sign X could be either or both, depending on how you look at it when you stop doing ethnography and start thinking about what you've done. [134]

And then comes the time when you have to think of your audience, the POV_2 target of your efforts. You need to deliver the box and open the lid. Where are the key rich points that signal the difference between POV_1 and POV_2? That's the problem that you have to address in the end, whether it's in a report or a book or a movie or a museum exhibit. You have to explain why the POV_2 audience sees X in one way while the POV_1 audience sees it another. You open the lid of the box and look at the cat. What used to be an undifferentiated set of possibilities is now fixed. [135]

When you explain to the POV_2 audience what the differences are, you declare *X* to be the problem and something else to be the explanation. Remember PEIRCE's abduction? You select a surprising F and construct and H to explain it. *F is the meaning; H is the context*. [136]

The problem in meaning, and what you need to explain the problem, will depend on which group you're explaining to. What is meaning and what is context will

depend on the job you're doing and the way you decide to do the job as you travel along your ethnographic trajectory. X could be meaning, Y could be context, or vice-versa. But during the actual work, in the midst of various ethnographic moments, the edge between meaning and context just won't be there, like MALINOWSKI, WITTGENSTEIN and the American pragmatic philosophers said. [137]

During the work, SCHRÖDINGER's box is closed. As you begin to build a representation to bridge POV_1/POV_2 differences, the box is open, and some things become the problem, the meaning X, and some things become the explanation, the context. [138]

There is a traditional name for this semiotic shape-shifting. The name is *translation,* from the Latin for "carry over." It's no accident that translation has been used as a metaphor for ethnography for many years. As far as I know, it's never been seriously developed to show how closely the two are related. That's a topic for another article, now in preparation. [139]

For now we return to the nature of the ethnographic space, the space that shows which research trajectories are acceptable ethnography and which are not. Meaning and context questions remain constitutive of the edge of that space along with IRA logic. They remain because they refer to ethnography as conscious reflection, not ethnography as lived experience. They are particularly important when building a representation for an audience showing how a POV different from their own makes sense. We write, or say, or show it—Here's something that looks strange to you, a surprising F, and now I'll show you what it means by explaining something about the different H that the other POV represents. [140]

When we actually *do* the work, the distinction between meaning and context doesn't make sense. Everything is potentially both. When we think about the work in the field or report the work to an audience, meaning and context play a role, because we stop and look in the box and "measure" the results. [141]

7. Conclusion

We have our second feature of ethnographic space, questions about meaning and context. Taken together with IRA logic, I'm finished with this minimalist definition of the ethnographic space. [142]

Have I done my job? Have I answered the question, how do you tell if it's a *real* ethnography? Not in the crisp and clean way I used to aspire to, but I think I've changed the terms of the argument into a form that makes more sense than the older efforts to answer the question. [143]

Several of those older efforts were summarized at the beginning of this article. They all represented issues worth debating, but the problem was, *both* sides of the issue were examples of ethnography. They differed in their parameters, but

not in their basic logic or fundamental concern with questions of meaning and context. [144]

So next we played with the idea of an ethno-game, where several parameters could be set in different ways, but each successful play would still be considered an ethnography. The game represents the scientifically uncomfortable but intuitively accurate conclusion that more than one ethnography is possible but not all ethnographies are acceptable. [145]

We shifted the question from whether or not a particular study was a *real* ethnography to the characteristics of that abstract space, that attractor, that showed the trajectories of successful plays of the game. Two characteristics were featured. The first was IRA logic, iterative recursive abductive logic, a kind of logic that clarifies ethnography's peculiar status and particular power in the world of traditional social research. [146]

The second characteristic was questions about meaning and context, born of ethnography's core task of translating among different points of view. This second characteristic raised new issues, such as the infinitely expandable answers to the questions and the fact that the difference between them vanishes in real experience. But, difficult as the new issues might be, they are at least the right questions for ethnographers to worry about as they articulate the nature of the space within which they all work. [147]

Other problems remain, of course. They always do, and we're trained to comment on at least one as we conclude a piece of academic writing to prove we haven't lost our critical faculties. One good problem is the fuzzy nature of the boundary of that ethnographic space. What if a research trajectory has a little IRA logic and context and meaning questions in it and a lot of survey questionnaires? What if it has a lot of IRA logic and context and meaning with a little experimental frosting on top at the end? The answer is that the space now has to be linked to fuzzy set theory with a membership function that displays *degree* of membership rather than simple inside or outside the space conclusions. [148]

Enough for now. The lectures on which this article was based resulted in some interesting disagreements and lively debates. I hope this written version can do the same. [149]

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Citation

Agar, Michael (2006). An Ethnography By Any Other Name … [149 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *7*(4), Art. 36, http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0604367.