



The Ethnography Circle

I've Collected My Data...Now What?

First Meeting Wednesday 28th November

Seminar with Emily Henderson

Blink and you miss it: ethnographic research in temporary, transient contexts

What is needed for the research site of an ethnographic study? Perhaps stability; recognisable boundaries; the possibility of the researcher scoping out the site before beginning research; durability so that the researcher can 'settle in' and 'hang out'...? This contribution to the Ethnography Circle revolves around the problematic of a phenomenon which does not allow for ethnographic research to be conducted in a traditional manner, but which is crying out to be researched ethnographically.

The phenomenon here is conferences, but this can also extend to other short, intense phenomena such as festivals and events. Because of their short duration and spatial transience, conferences are not traditional sites for ethnographic research. However, using an ethnographic research strategy to research conferences has the benefit of opening up the phenomenon to the researcher's gaze. For conferences have tended to be researched using positivist data collection methods which make use of easily retrievable data; alternatively individual reflexive accounts of conferences abound which are equally unsatisfying in a wider sense of capturing what happens at conferences. There is a reason for the popularity of these two modes – trying to conduct other forms of research at conferences is extremely challenging, due to the very nature of conferences.

This presentation draws on a conceptual ethnography of gender knowledge production at three national women's studies association conferences in UK, US and India to discuss firstly the challenges and benefits of researching short, intense phenomena such as conferences; secondly the presentation speaks to the annual theme of the Ethnography Circle by focusing on the processes involved in moving from data collection to analysis. The theme is addressed from different angles, including how to identify the temporal and spatial limits of data collection for a phenomenon such as conferences, and the representational politics of writing up a research phenomenon which is by nature temporary and transient.

Dr Emily F. Henderson is an Assistant Professor in the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick. Emily's research lies in the areas of gender and higher education, particularly the production of knowledge about gender; the academic profession, academic mobility and conferences; poststructuralist and feminist theory and research methodology.

Seminar will be conducted between 2-3:30 pm, 28th November at Wolfson Research Exchange, Uni of Warwick, Library, CV4 7AL

For information and to register please contact: ethnography@wbs.ac.uk

Admission is free and open to students from other institutions

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