Ethnography in the Performing Arts

A Student Guide

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Ethnography in the Performing Arts: A Student Guide

In order to understand the individual and group creativity, expression and experience that lies at the heart of the performing arts, ethnography is a particularly suitable tool, allowing us both to study and reach our own understandings while gathering those of the people involved and situating them within their broader social and cultural contexts. Yet what is ethnography, and how do we approach ethnography in a performing arts culture, be it in music, dance or drama? This is the concern of the student guide here, which illustrates the multiple, complex steps of ethnographic research and writing, and presents them one-by-one in simple, reader-friendly language. Written with the novice fieldworker in mind, the content is informed by the multifaceted experiences of university students when conducting their own ethnographic research project in music, dance and drama. Their ethnographies, as well as fieldnotes and other collected materials serve as illustrative matter and case studies. Hopefully you will find the student guide useful and meaningful for the conduct of your own ethnographic project in the performing arts.

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To My Students,

Past, Present and Future

INTRODUCTION

Formal university education in the performing arts—that is, in music, dance and drama studies—often allows students to undertake independent study in the form of semester-long projects or more substantial final-year dissertation writing. When such an option is chosen, students are typically required to present written work of an original and critical nature, perhaps accompanied by some form of creative output. In approaching the individual and group creativity, expression and experience that lies at the heart of the performing arts, ethnography is a particularly suitable tool, allowing us both to study and reach our own understandings while gathering those of the people involved and situating them within their broader social and cultural contexts. Ethnography may be described as an approach to learning about the social and cultural life of individuals, communities and institutions through the researcher's personal immersion in investigative and empathetic participation and observation research. Its result is writing that emphasises and builds on the perspectives of the people in the research setting in question, documenting their actions and values according to conventions established in scholarship in a number of fields.

Ethnography as a means of research and way of writing has long been employed in the performing arts, yet despite its explanatory power, ethnography is less widely used at undergraduate level, appearing daunting and ambiguous to certain students and non-specialists. At the same time, written guides and books that are intelligible to both students and non-specialists are rare. The student guide presented here will address this by providing a practical, easy-to-understand guide to ethnography in the performing arts tailored specifically to students and non-specialists for use in university education. Designed with the novice undergraduate and postgraduate fieldworker in mind, the guide explores and illustrates the multiple, complex steps of ethnographic research and writing by presenting them one-by-one in simple, reader-friendly language. The student guide serves thereby as learning and teaching resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students and educators in dance, drama and music wishing to utilise ethnography as a mode of enquiry and way of writing.

To this end, the student guide illustrates to students and educators the special characteristics and applicability of ethnography as a method of research and style of writing in the performing arts. It outlines practical ways for conducting ethnographic research in university settings through students' active participation in a dance, drama and music culture, and for presenting this research in writing, while also considering other possible ethnographic outcomes. Additionally, the student guide includes sample ethnographies in selected contexts in music and dance, while illustrating students' expectations, motivations and experiences during research and writing.

A note on the project

The project began as a cross-institutional collaboration led by Simone Krüger (Liverpool John Moores University) in association with Jonathan P. J. Stock (University of Sheffield). The initial idea was to write a student guide to 'performance ethnography' in dance, drama and music and to provide specific insight into carrying out performance ethnography in the context of the performing arts. Our previous experience as ethnographic researchers and educators informed the *initial* conception of the student guide. More specifically, my own work with students and ethnomusicologists for research into the transmission of ethnomusicological knowledge at universities (Krüger 2007) led to the idea of creating an educational resource on ethnography, and the writing of a successful development grant bid to PALATINE in September 2007.

Whilst the project started jointly, it was decided mid-way through that I would complete the work and finally write up the student guide. I therefore continued working with the two research assistants, reviewed all collected sample materials and ethnographies, and completed the student guide presented here. To this end, the student guide has grown out of my own experience-based position as ethnographer, which provided the basic writing materials for the project. This also explains why the student guide is in parts strongly informed by the specific practices at Liverpool John Moores University.

For example, I led undergraduate modules in cultural and music studies (music and gender; music and globalisation) that required students to complete an ethnographic research project in a local music culture related to gender or globalisation, and to present an ethnographic report of 2,000 words length. During the course of the semester, I led sessions on fieldwork methods, ethics and health and safety, and how to approach the writing up of the ethnographic report. Working with these students, Annie was engaged in selecting student participants, conducting interviews, and collecting illustrative materials for inclusion in the student guide. Meanwhile, Tram worked with music students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the University of Sheffield who were involved in ethnography or fieldwork exercises, as well as other research projects.

This spread across institutions and levels of study drew on the experiences of students from a variety of backgrounds. At the same time, however, the initial focus on 'performance ethnography' has shifted in the course of the project, since the majority of students included here focused on cultural (rather than performative) immersion in the culture studied. To this end, the student guide more generally introduces ethnography as a method of research and way of writing in the performing arts, and only includes a shorter section on performance ethnography.

The student voice greatly informs the content of the student guide and provides a rich account of the motivations, expectations, difficulties and successes

experienced by students during fieldwork or the conduct of an ethnographic research project. Four sample ethnographies, as well as fieldnotes, interview transcripts and other materials serve as illustrative matter and case studies throughout the student guide. Working from real examples, the student guide introduces theory in the direct commentary on those instances, and so does not overburden the reader with abstract ideas. Hopefully you will find the student guide useful and meaningful for the conduct of your own ethnographic project in the performing arts.

A personal reflection on the project

When I became interested in the project (due to my interest in research and speaking to people), I was a novice to ethnographic fieldwork and was curious as to what to expect, what to avoid, how to succeed in ethnography and what to watch out for. When I was appointed as a research assistant, there already existed initial, albeit general questions to ask students about ethnography, so I developed questions that went into further detail and explored the topics from as many different perspectives as possible. For example, one topic I wanted to explore in more depth was "What are your experiences as a participant/observer and interviewer?". I went into further detail by asking the interviewees "What were your positive experiences?"; "What tools did you bring along with you?"; "Did you record anything and how did you execute the recordings?" "Was there anything that seemed too obvious to record?". I had the freedom to take the interviews in many different directions. My initial plans were to speak informally with friends about the project. What I did not expect was to get nervous the night before interviews. I also found it more difficult to interview friends rather than strangers, since we already had a relationship established, so I had to step out of my role as a friend and present myself as a professional. During the course of this project, I began to see the pros and cons of interviewing. At the same time, I have gained much insight into ethnographic fieldwork and will continue to use ethnographic methods in my own work. I want to thank Simone, Jonathan and PALATINE for granting me this wonderful opportunity. Once again, thank you so much for letting me participate in the project; it has been a life changing experience. *Tram Nguyen, University of Sheffield, UK*

How to use the guide

Why study ethnography? The reasons are numerous. Ethnography—with its attendant methodology of participant-observation and informal interviewing—is a particularly suitable tool for use with university students in the performing arts. It enables students to feel greater ownership of their work, and it changes their

perspectives in often significant ways by interrogating their own relationship with a culture in which they participate. It leads students towards originality by offering them the chance to integrate theory and practice, as well as giving them greater ownership of theoretical ideas. It results in often incredibly positive and rewarding experiences through students' development of important transferable skills for work and life. Most students agreed that ethnography represents a particularly valuable learning and teaching tool in university education:

> Although I was rather dubious at the prospect of actually taking part in an ethnography project for fear of how I would approach the task and how it would ultimately be received by participants, peers and lecturers, I found the whole experience to be highly beneficial as it allowed me to develop the relevant transferable skills needed in jobs after university. The topic that I looked at was something that I had always been interested in but had never had the chance to investigate to my own accord. Presenting the findings, although daunting, made me appreciate my work because I could see it unfold before my eyes, in contrast to merely relying on readings. After conducting the project, I felt confident enough to be able to communicate to people in different circumstances and write accordingly about their perspectives. I believe that it is because I was taken out of my comfort zone during this project. Being given the opportunity to explore my own creativity and interests, I became better equipped when picking a job that would reflect these new found skills.

> This was an exciting project to be part of because ethnography can be difficult to understand and approach as many people may not understand the limits or the expectations of the process, so by having the opportunity to do it and see the results not only academically but in 'the real world' proves that ethnography is a good way of not only being able to find out about others but also to find out about yourself; who you are, what you are good or not so good at. So, if you get the opportunity to conduct an ethnographic project then definitely go for it because some of the things you'll learn about yourself and others aren't always in the books. (Lianne, personal reflection, 11/07/08)

    I have designed this student guide with the novice undergraduate and postgraduate fieldworker in mind. It is also aimed at educators who have little experience of ethnography in the performing arts. Informed by the actual experiences of students, the guide introduces ethnography as a method of research in and a way of writing about the performing arts, be it a music, dance or drama

culture. The guide introduces the basic characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research so as to contextualise ethnography as a qualitative method. It then guides the reader in simple, accessible language through the processes of approaching, doing and writing ethnography.

To this end, the student guide can be used in various ways:

- University educators may integrate an ethnographic research project in an undergraduate module in the performing arts over the duration of one semester or longer in years 2 and 3. Here, the student guide can be used to accompany the entire lifecycle of students' self-directed ethnographic projects. Regular seminars, tutorials and an in-class presentation would assist students in consolidating their knowledge and experiences.

- To the final-year dissertation and first-year postgraduate fieldworker in the performing arts, the guide can be used as a reference tool, which introduces the differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches, as well as providing a solid basis for preparing their own longitudinal research project.

- The student guide may also be used in parts, specifically for accompanying short and more focused practical exercises that form part of undergraduate and postgraduate modules. For example, a module on 'fieldwork techniques' may use the sections on interviewing or the use of audiovisual equipment, whilst a module on 'work-based learning' may use the sections on participant-observation and writing up reflexive notes.

- Finally, educators may find inspiration and ideas in the student guide for conducting their own ethnographic research project in a performing arts culture.

In all instances, the bibliography provides a wide-ranging list of sources relevant to the topic, along with references to selected examples of ethnographies in the performing arts, which will help the reader in locating sources for continued study.

Structure of the student guide

The student guide consists of four chapters that are based on the logical sequence of steps necessary in the research process (introducing research; approaching ethnography; doing ethnography; writing ethnography), complemented by a further chapter that contains annotated sample ethnographies by undergraduate students at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

To this end, chapter 1 entitled 'Introducing Research' starts with an overview of research methods and approaches. More specifically, the chapter introduces you

to the notion of research by defining research and identifying pertinent steps in the research process, whilst also considering important ethical issues. The chapter then considers the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches by defining each, and explaining their distinct characteristics in the research cycle and within the context of the different academic disciplines. In doing so, the chapter locates and contextualises ethnography as a mode of qualitative research and way of writing. Providing a link to the chapters that follow with their specific focus on ethnography, our student participants are briefly introduced here, beginning with the students at LJMU who completed ethnographies 'at home' and on issues relating to gender and globalisation, and followed by the students at the University of Sheffield who completed fieldwork exercises or ethnographies in remote music cultures, or projects other than ethnography.

Following on from this is a special chapter entitled 'Sample Ethnographies' that contains four exemplars of ethnography conducted at undergraduate level. The sample ethnographies span a range of genres (rock music, Brazilian culture, dance in rap/hip hop, football) as well as research sites (nightclub, bar, internet, football ground), and their general concern is with gendered representations or processes surrounding globalisation. The ethnographies have been annotated so as to indicate the steps in the research process and make explicit the particular characteristics of ethnographic research and writing. The inclusion of annotated sample ethnographies will hopefully enhance your understanding of the nature of ethnography, and support you in conducting your own ethnographic research project.

The subsequent chapter II 'Approaching Ethnography' introduces you to the qualitative research method of ethnography by defining it as a method for research and way of writing, and outlines the stages of planning and preparing an ethnographic research project. These include considering the development of a set of research questions; the setting up of a research design; the identification of a suitable research site and people; the timeframe for research; the steps in collecting research data; and ethical issues pertinent to ethnography, including gaining entry and consent. The chapter also considers the importance of health and safety during ethnographic research, and critically assesses the concept of validity and reliability, followed by discussions on the notion of truth, as well as reflexivity and auto-ethnography. The chapter closes with discussions on the writing of a research proposal, and the preparation of an oral presentation.

Leading on from the previous discussions, the following chapter III 'Doing Ethnography' considers the methodological foundations for the conduct of ethnographic research. Two central means of data collection are explored, namely participant-observation and informal interviewing. This is followed by introducing research approaches more *specific* to the performing arts, namely performance ethnography and ethnodrama. The chapter also considers the impact of technology in the age of globalisation, including the characteristics of virtual

ethnography. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the practicalities of capturing ethnographic data through fieldnotes and audiovisual techniques, which leads to a brief sub-section on visual ethnography and, more specifically, ethnographic film that has become an important subfield among some scholars in the performing arts. The chapter concludes with pivotal discussions on being an ethical ethnographer, and comes to a close with brief guidelines on data management.

The final chapter IV 'Writing Ethnography' introduces you to suitable methods to transform collected data into meaningful, theoretical discussions in order to make sense of a particular dance, drama or music culture. To this end, the ethnographic writing process is sub-divided into four stages, namely reading; analysis; transformation; and interpretation. Starting with discussions of data review, the chapter also discusses the practicalities of transcriptions, both of words and performance. This is followed by data analysis, and with it, the coding of data and deriving of themes. The next step introduced in the writing of ethnography is the transformation of raw data into retrospective descriptions, which is followed by discussions of the interpretation of data and the role of literature in the written ethnography. Throughout this chapter, examples of transcriptions, interviews and other materials serve to illustrate the practicalities of writing up your ethnographic report.

The student guide is then brought to a close with a brief conclusion. The bibliography that follows contains relevant discourse on ethnography, as well as a sub-section listing the titles of examples of ethnographies in dance, drama and music.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCING RESEARCH

What is research? What are the different types of research? This is the concern of the first chapter, which introduces you to research and considers the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Starting with an introduction to research, we argue that most students already possess the necessary skills and attributes for research.

The chapter then identifies and discusses pertinent steps in the research process, which includes identifying a research problem; reviewing the literature; specifying a research purpose; collecting data; analysing and interpreting data; and evaluating data and writing the report. This is followed by considerations of ethical issues, including the practicalities of using a consent form and participant information sheet. The chapter moves on to discuss the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches by defining each, and explaining their distinct characteristics in the research cycle and within the context of the different academic disciplines. This also includes illustrating the different writing conventions in quantitative and qualitative research. In doing so, the chapter locates and contextualises ethnography as a mode of qualitative research and way of writing.

Providing a link to the chapters that follow with their specific focus on ethnography, the student participants are then briefly introduced, beginning with the students at LJMU who completed ethnographies 'at home' and on issues relating to gender and globalisation, and followed by the students at the University of Sheffield who completed fieldwork exercises or ethnographies in remote music cultures.

What is a researcher?

The students featured here who were required to engage in an original project, frequently voiced concern when discussing the concept of 'research'. They often regarded research beyond their own ability, or thought that research was just the domain of academics and specialists. Yet research is often already a common and familiar process for university students. Most students are involved daily in activities that require creative problem-solving processes, necessitating a systematic process of collecting and analysing information in order to gain or enhance understandings into a specific problem or topic. Indeed, this is what researchers do who typically engage in a systematic process of collecting, comparing and contrasting (analysing), and interpreting (conceptualising) data and information to generate new and original knowledge. This process is called *systematic* as it generally involves three consecutive steps: posing a problem or

question; collecting data and information from informants and written sources that are relevant to this problem or question; and presenting an answer or solution to the problem or question. Students too are often already involved in such activities as part of their studies, for example in essay writing, investigative projects, case studies and problem-based learning, which also require them to situate findings within relevant literature so as to enhance theoretical and/ or conceptual understanding of a specific topic.

The activities of essay writing and self-directed projects thus fit well within a more formal definition of research, which can be understood as original investigation aimed at generating theoretical and/or conceptual knowledge and understanding. It is important to recognise that you already possess important skills, knowledge and experience that enable you to pursue a research project, including:

- *Solving puzzles:* Researchers look at problems as puzzles to solve, e.g. assembling bits of information into patterns and structures;

- *Lengthening attention span:* Research requires patience, thus an enjoyable research activity lengthens one's attention span in order to conduct longitudinal research (often over several months);

- *Using libraries:* Researchers engage in reviewing literature and other library resources, involving skills in locating relevant materials, reading and summarising them, while relating them to one's own research;

- *Writing and editing:* Writing is a key-facet of research and often involves continuous editing and re-writing, organising and recording ideas, preparing interview questions, making notes during observations, etc. Writing is necessary in all phases of planning and conducting research.

The research cycle

So far, it has been suggested that research is a systematic process, which Creswell (2005) represents in an accessible framework consisting of a number of consecutive, interlocking and recursive steps. To this end, research is:

> 'a cyclical process of steps that typically begins with identifying the problem or issue of the study. It then consists of reviewing the literature, specifying a purpose for the study, and forming an interpretation of the information. This process culminates in a report disseminated to the audience that is evaluated and used in the [academic] community' (Creswell 2005:18).
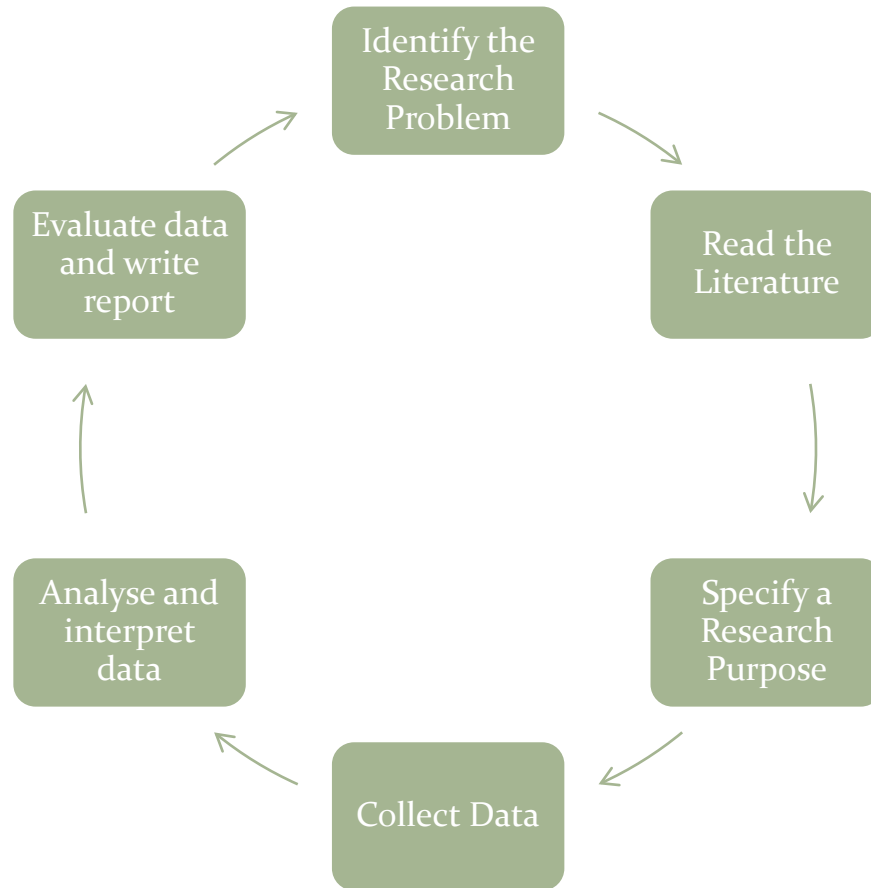
Figure I- 1: The Research Cycle

In the following, each step involved in the research process is briefly considered (see Figure I-1; source Creswell 2005). Note that the subsequent chapters will explain these steps in more detail as relevant to ethnography.

- *Identify a Research Problem*: This is typically the first step, yet may continuously be redefined. The first task is to specify, limit or focus on an issue or problem, which you may have become aware of through your own personal experiences. You may alternatively have read about an interesting issue in a journal article, or discussed a problem with your tutor. There is no definite route to identifying a research problem, so the most important advice is to be confident, and perhaps to share your ideas with someone who may provide advice on the suitability of your identified issue or problem for a research project.

- *Read the Literature*: Research needs to build on existing knowledge and add to the accumulation of findings on a specific topic. For this reason, good research necessitates reading relevant literature, which involves locating summaries, books, journals, publications, databases, etc. This may seem like a daunting task, particularly when you are new to research.

Yet a sound awareness of relevant literature is crucial not only to inform your own research, but also to understand the particular writing styles and academic conventions in your own discipline.

- *Specify the Purpose for Research*: This step requires a more focused restatement of the research problem that conveys the overall objective or intention of your research. The research purpose usually introduces the entire study, signals the procedures for data collection, and indicates the anticipated results. Structurally, it consists of (a) the major intent or objective for a study, which are narrowed into specific research questions or hypotheses (predictions); and (b) the major focus of the study, the participants, and the location or site of enquiry.

- *Collect Data*: This step involves identifying and selecting individuals for a study, obtaining their permission to study them, and gathering information by asking people questions or observing their behaviours. There are two types of data to be collected: (1) numbers (test scores, frequency of behaviours, etc); and/ or (2) words or text (responses, opinions, quotes).

- *Analyse and Interpret Data*: Data analysis and interpretation occurs either *during* data collection (as in most qualitative research), or *afterwards* (as in quantitative research). The process usually involves taking the collected data apart to determine individual responses, and then putting it back together to summarise it in concise ways and in your own words. Interpretation, more specifically, requires you to draw conclusions at a conceptual level about the data, representing it in tables, figures, or pictures to summarise it (as in much quantitative research), and using text/ words to provide answers to the research question(s) and summarise this in a conclusion.

- *Report and Evaluate Research*: The final stage in the research process involves writing a report and distributing it to select audiences, for instance tutors or fellow students. At this stage, it is important to consider the audiences your research will be aimed at, such as academic researchers, tutors, or peer students. This will determine your structuring of the report to make it acceptable to these audiences, which may range from formal to more informal writing styles. You should also write the report in a manner that is sensitive to all readers, including your informants or the participants in the research process. Once the report is written, your study will inevitably undergo some form of assessment of its quality against certain standards that are set out differently by different audiences, for instance your tutor, or even a conference audience.

As discussed in this section, research can be understood as a systematic process involving a range of consecutive steps that generally lead from the conception and planning of a project, via the conduct of the project, towards the

writing up and evaluation of the project. Thinking of research in such a logical sequence of steps will help you in approaching your own ethnographic research project. First, however, quantitative and qualitative research approaches will be discussed, while illustrating the particular characteristics of both approaches when applied to the research cycle introduced in this section.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches to research

Research is usually categorised according to two broad domains, namely quantitative and qualitative research. Each approach is useful for different research contexts and purposes, and different academic disciplines have historically aligned themselves with one or the other approach. This is illustrated in Figure I-2, which provides a broad categorisation of academic disciplines and their research alliance on a continuum across four main discipline areas, namely sciences, social sciences, humanities and applied sciences (adapted from Coffin *et al* 2002). At the same time, each research approach is situated within a broader theoretical paradigm:

- quantitative research is located within the *positivistic* paradigm that broadly seeks knowledge from observable and quantifiable behaviour. Here, the role of the researcher is affectively neutral and objective, that is, uninfluenced in the conduct of the study by personal experience of the research. The goal of the positivist paradigm is the generalisation of results to subsequent similar events and phenomena; and the development of universal laws, which govern human behaviour in all settings.

- qualitative research is located within the *interpretive* paradigm that generates knowledge from people's shared understandings and negotiation within a historical and social context. The researcher is involved and subjective, that is, informed by his/her personal experience in interaction with the people studied. The goal of the interpretive paradigm is the comparison of results to similar or dissimilar processes and phenomena; and the development of workable and shared understandings regarding regularities in human behaviour in specific settings.

In the following section, each research approach is briefly introduced.

Quantitative research

Quantitative research began to develop in the late 19th century, and until recently, it remained the dominant type of research in the so-called *hard sciences*. It is a type of research used for experimental and survey designs, and statistical procedures, in which the researcher decides exactly what to study beforehand (this is often captured in the form of a *hypothesis*). Research problems best suited for quantitative research are those in which trends are explored or explanations need to be made. To this end, the researcher typically asks very specific and narrow questions, and collects numeric (numbered) data from participants. The researcher then analyses the numbers using statistical procedures, tests and/or other measurement practices.

The overall aim of the quantitative researcher is to conduct the enquiry in an unbiased, objective manner, and to investigate and measure certain patterns to derive *predictable* laws and axioms. The quantitative researcher thus requires training in measurement, statistics, and data collection procedures, including survey questionnaire design. The general characteristics of quantitative research include an emphasis on (a) collecting and analysing information in the form of numbers; (b) collecting scores that measure distinct attributes of individuals and organisations; and (c) procedures of comparing groups or relating factors about individuals or groups in experiments, correlational studies, and surveys.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a more recent (late 19th – early 20th century) and alternative form of research, which became an approach in more diverse academic disciplines (specifically in the so-called *soft sciences*) only during the last thirty years. Qualitative research is used when broader problems need to be explored to gain a *deeper* understanding. It is a type of research in which the researcher relies on and seeks to understand the views of a limited number of participants. To this end, the qualitative researcher asks broad and general questions, and collects data that consists largely of words (or text) from participants. The researcher then describes and analyses these words for themes, from which he/she can draw some theoretical conclusions (this is also called *bottom-up, inductive* analysis).

The qualitative researcher typically conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner, thereby acknowledging the impact the researcher has on the research process. The qualitative researcher thus needs experience in fieldwork methods, such as participant-observation and open-ended interviewing, as well as skills in analysing and writing about *text* data. The characteristics of qualitative research include that (a) the researcher needs to listen to the views of participants; (b) the researcher needs to ask general, open questions; and (c) the researcher collects data in places where people live and work (naturalistic settings).

THE ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE CONTINNUUM

Sciences

Social Sciences

Humanities

'Hard' sciences

'Hardish' sciences

'Soft' sciences

Empirically-based, quantitative: new knowledge is accepted on the basis of often quantifiable experimental proof. Research often foregrounds a gap in knowledge, a hypothesis related to this gap, and quantifiable experimentations and findings.

Adapted much of the empirical approach, and applied it to different and less predictable types of data. Claims are often based on statistical analyses of probabilities.

Interpretative, qualitative: knowledge about a subject is accepted or rejected on the basis of how well argued a case is.

Performing Arts; English; History; Languages; Classics; Philosophy; Fine Art; Religious Studies

Sociology; Geography; Economics; Politics; Cultural & Media Studies

Physics; Chemistry; Biology; Geology; Psychology

Applied Sciences

Rest on either discipline, and are practical in their orientation.

Business and Management; Engineering; Health & Social Welfare; Nursing; Education

Figure I- 2: The Academic Knowledge Continuum

The application of research approaches to the research process

So how do quantitative and qualitative approaches differ in the research process? This is demonstrated in Figure I-4, which shows the ways in which quantitative and qualitative research approaches differ at each stage of the research cycle. In writing up research, the final report will reflect the choices made by the researcher, as it is modelled on and grows out of the conventions and distinct characteristics of each approach. Different disciplines employ different styles and use specific vocabulary to construct and represent knowledge, and it is thereby crucial for you to understand the different formats acceptable to and expected by different audiences from across disciplines:

- Quantitative researchers typically write experimental reports with standardised, fixed structures, which reflect the researcher's objective and unbiased stance.

- Qualitative researchers use flexibly emerging structures that typically reflect the researcher's subjective and biased approach.

The writing conventions of both approaches are further exemplified in the following table, also indicating the characteristics of hybrid reports:

EXPERIMENTAL REPORTS	HYRBID REPORTS	TEXT-BASED REPORTS
Often 'highly structured':	Multimodality:	Use text-based argumentative approach
1. Title	blending quantitative (tables, diagrams, maps) with text-based data	
2. Authors		Three structures to
3. Abstract		argumentation:
4. Introduction		
5. Literature Review	Often via *case studies*, the	1. Exposition,
6. Methods	integration of theory with	2. Discussion, or
7. Results	professional practice:	3. Challenge.
8. Discussion		
9. Acknowledgements	1. Background	The basis on which to persuade
10. References	2. Analytical Framework/	of the validity of the argument
11. Appendices	Approach to Study	clearly differs.
	3. Findings	
Emphasise a clear line from	4. Implications for Professional	
recognising a gap in the	Practice	
understanding of some aspect		
of the natural world		
(introduction), through setting		
up an experiment, and		
interpreting the results as		
filling that knowledge gap		
(methods and results, and		
discussion)		

Figure I- 3: Writing Conventions in Quantitative & Qualitative Research

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The research problem requires a *description* of large trends. An *explanation* is sought about an overall tendency of the views of a large population.

Quantitative research typically includes a substantial LR at the beginning of a study. The LR plays a major role in justifying the study itself, the research problem and the direction of the researcher.

The purpose statement, research question and/or hypothesis are specific and narrow, and seek measurable and observable data.

Quantitative research uses tools (survey questionnaires, standardised tests, checklists) that contain preset questions and responses to measure, observe or document specified variables. The tools are designed to gather numeric data from a large number of individuals with the intent to generalise the results for a large population.

Quantitative research uses statistical analysis (mathematical procedures) to describe trends, compare group differences or (cor-)relate variables. Results are then compared to prior predictions and past research to explain the emergent results, and whether (*not* why!) they support or refute the hypothesis.

Quantitative research uses standardised, fixed structures for writing up: 1. introduction; 2. literature review; 3. methods; 4. results; 5. discussion of results. It applies evaluative criteria, such as extensive literature review; testing of research questions and hypotheses; impartial data collection procedures; statistical procedures. Researchers typically take an objective and unbiased approach without referring to own reactions and perceptions.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The research problem is little known to the researcher, thus requires *exploration* from the participants' perspective to gain an in-depth *understanding*.

The qualitative researcher relies on the literature for the research problem and writing up of the study. While the LR plays a minor role, literature is important and used as and when required throughout the study.

The research purpose is much more open-ended, asking broad and general questions so as to gain a deep understanding of participants' experiences.

Qualitative research uses methods (interviews, observations) that allow general questions to emerge continuously, and that permit the participant to generate in-depth responses. The researcher gathers text and images from a small number of individuals/ research sites.

Qualitative research uses text analysis and develops descriptions of events and themes. The larger meaning of the findings are then explained by reflecting on how the findings relate to existing research/literature, by stating personal and critical reflections, or by deriving larger, more abstract meanings (concepts).

Qualitative research typically uses a flexibly emerging structure to writing up. Evaluative criteria vary from one study to the next, and may be both 'scientific' and descriptive. Good studies typically involve extensive data collection to convey a realistic/ persuasive and credible picture. Researchers typically take a subjective (reflexive) and biased stance, reflecting (in the writing) on own biases, values, assumptions and experiences.

Flow chart (center column):

Identifying a Problem for Research
↓
Literature Review (LR)
↓
Specifying the Purpose of Research
↓
Data Collection
↓
Data Analysis and Interpretation
↓
Writing-up and Evaluating Research

Figure I- 4: The Research Cycle in Quantitative and Qualitative Research

There exist different research designs for each approach. For example, quantitative research approaches include experimental, correlational and survey designs, whereby qualitative research approaches include grounded theory, narrative research and ethnographic research designs. Disciplines in the 'hardish' sciences typically combine both research approaches (while often leaning more towards quantitative approaches), which can include mixed methods and action/applied research designs.

Ethnography – a qualitative research method

Ethnography as a method of research is often used to explore the shared culture of a group of people, and it is thus firmly located within the qualitative research paradigm.[1] A qualitative research method, ethnography is a suitable tool for gaining an understanding of the perspectives of the people studied, and the meanings given to and placed on dance, drama or music. Two broad types of ethnography can be differentiated, namely applied and non-applied ethnographic research (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). The first type is concerned with using the understandings gained during ethnographic research in order to *solve problems* or bring about *positive change* in institutions, communities or groups. Applied research is most commonly found in education, health and other practice-based disciplines that seek to improve the lives of the people studied. It is *problem-oriented* research that is designed to bring about a desired *change*, the direction of which is guided by the research results. Such research produces better knowledge for better 'action'—that is, improved services, better education, or changes in policies.

The main focus of the student guide is on the second type of ethnographic research, which seeks to answer questions *without* reference to solving any problems (this is most commonly found in the humanities, but also some social science disciplines). You should thereby focus on studying and understanding a group of people in a naturalistic setting in the performing arts. Your aim is to discover and document a particular culture through intimate, face-to-face interactions with people, for example in a music culture.

The conventions identified as being characteristic for qualitative research (Figures I-2, I-3 and I-4) are applicable to ethnography. In ethnography, the researcher is the primary tool for data collection, using methods of cultural participant-observation and open-ended interviewing, while becoming a cultural insider among the people studied. The ethnographic process typically includes the collection of text-based data including fieldnotes, transcribed audio- and video

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[1] It is noteworthy to mention that in some disciplines, such as education and the social sciences, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches may be used either separately or blended in the conduct of an ethnographic research project. Ethnography itself, however, is regarded as a qualitative research method.

recordings and images during fieldwork, which is an active, interpretative and subjective method that distinguishes ethnography from other approaches, specifically quantitative methods. Data collection is usually followed by an inductive and recursive approach to the analysis and interpretation of collected data. Remember that whilst existing literature plays a lesser role in determining the research problem and direction of the research, than would be the case in a hypothesis-driven study, it is nonetheless vital for constructing the written ethnographic report. The open-ended nature of the ethnographic approach is particularly suitable for active discovery and exploration.

In the following chapters, the steps in conducting your own ethnographic project will be discussed in more depth. Starting in Chapter II, the specific characteristics of ethnography will be introduced, while examining the ways in which you may plan and prepare your own ethnographic research project. First, however, important ethical considerations will be discussed.

Ethical considerations

As a student researcher, you have the responsibility of ensuring the safety, dignity and rights of research participants whilst providing assurance that research is being conducted within an ethical framework. Ethical considerations are therefore pivotal at every step of the research process.

For example, Liverpool John Moores University is committed to maintaining high ethical standards in the research undertaken by its staff and students. In its Code of Practice for Research,[2] LJMU sets out the following professional standards that staff and students have to adhere to: honesty; openness; leadership and co-operation in research groups; documenting results and storing primary data; publishing results; acknowledging the role of collaborators and other participants; the needs of new researchers; integrity in submitting research proposals; integrity in managing research projects; conflict of interest; and research misconduct. More generally, ethical considerations should involve:

- *respecting the rights of participants;*

- *honouring the research sites visited;*

- *reporting research fully and honestly.*

To this end, you should inform individuals about the purpose and aims of the study, the use of results, and the likely social consequences of the study on their lives. At any stage in the research process, allow your participants to refuse and withdraw from participation. Always protect and guarantee participants'

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[2] You can download LJMU's Code of Practice for Research here http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/researchcop.pdf.

anonymity and consider reciprocity. Before entering the research site, gain permission from key people and ask all participants for permission. During your research visit, disturb people's everyday life as little as possible; view yourself as 'guest' at the study site. In your writings, report your results honestly without changing or altering the findings to satisfy certain predictions or interest groups. Also, avoid plagiarism by accrediting citations and other authors. Try to avoid jargon and write in ways that are understandable to the people being studied. Most importantly, communicate the practical significance of the research.

Prior to the start of a research project, students should normally apply for ethical approval to their university, and prepare a consent form together with a participant information sheet. *Ethical approval applications* are dealt with differently by different institutions, and further information should be provided by your tutor or Head of Department.[3]

- A *consent form*[4] is normally obligatory of good practice and should be presented for signatures by those who are involved in the consent process, e.g. the participant or informant, the researcher and a witness, thereby confirming that they have read and understood the information provided for the study; had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily; understand that participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect legal rights; understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential; and agree to take part in the study.

- A *participant information sheet*[5] should normally include information on the purpose of the study; what will happen to participants; any risks involved in participation; details of how confidentiality will be ensured; and a clear statement that participation is voluntary and that they are able to withdraw at any stage.

Whilst a subsequent section will return to discussions of ethical considerations, what follows now is a brief section about the student participants so as to create a link to the chapters that follow with their specific focus on ethnography, and that will contain the voices of students together with illustrative materials.

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[3] Information on the application process for ethical approval by students on undergraduate courses at LJMU can be found here http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93127.htm.

[4] You can download a sample consent form on the LJMU website http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/Consentformandguidancevs1March_2008.doc.

[5] You can download a sample participant information sheet on the LJMU website http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/ParticipantInformationSheetvs1March_2008.doc.

The student participants

This section briefly introduces the student participants who have conducted an ethnographic research project as part of their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. Their experiences, perceptions and opinions have significantly informed the construction of the student guide presented here. Throughout subsequent chapters, you will find illustrative examples of fieldnotes, collected materials and sample ethnographies by these students. The use of students' voices and sample materials will hopefully enhance your understanding of the particular nature of ethnography, and support you in conducting your own ethnographic research project.

Music ethnography locally

At Liverpool John Moores University, two third-year undergraduate modules required students in music, media and cultural studies to complete an ethnographic research project. Around forty students approached ethnographic research in relation to gendered representations in music and dance, out of whom eleven students were selected to provide materials as illustrative examples for the student guide, and ten of those students were interviewed about their experiences of conducting ethnography. Ethnographies spanning a wide range of music genres are included here, such as hip hop, bouncy house, metal, dance in hip hop/rap, and football chanting, as well as venues and sites for research, including nightclubs, pubs and bars, internet chat rooms and football grounds.

Beginning with **Lianne**, her ethnographic project focused on gendered representations and stereotypes reflected in hip hop music. Lianne's ethnography looked at the ways in which women are presented to audiences in hip hop, and specifically gangsta rap, asking questions as to whether these are accurate representations or mere stereotypes that have been incorporated into the music industry as an attempt to boost profits. The ethnography emerged from research conducted in local Liverpool-based nightclubs, including Camel Club, Azure and Mood, all complemented by background research on the internet, books and other media.

Dominique too chose hip hop music as the music genre for research, but focused more specifically on a young Liverpool-based artist called Young Kofi to show that UK hip hop reflects alternative, more positive stereotypes than those negotiated in US-based hip hop. The ethnography was based on a series of interviews with a range of people, including the performer Young Kof, his manager, some family and friends and a group of fans, which revolved generally around gender and sexuality in hip hop.

The aim was to study the ways in which Young Kof challenges the Americanised misogynistic forms of hip hop by carving a new hip hop niche in the UK.

Meanwhile, **Christa** focused on the 'bouncy house' scene, a genre that originated from 'scouse house' and is predominately popular in the North West of the UK. Particularly considering the 'hero worship' of DJs in different North West areas, Christa's ethnography aimed at assessing the popularity of the genre among different gendered groups. This was studied in conjunction with the commercial dissemination of the club's music via independent music stores on 'non-official' CD's and tapes. In doing so, the ethnography focused on studying music as 'lifestyle'.

A contrasting ethnographic project was conducted by **Gareth** who focused on the male-dominated metal genre, and with it, the notions of masculinity and aggression that are integral expressions in that genre. Here, Gareth took a self-reflexive stance as a metal fan, which enabled him to notice that there is actually very little difference in the proportion of male and female fans. The ethnography thus focused on the reasons why such a typically masculine music form has a large female audience, which he researched via online metal communities (virtual ethnography). This approach was complemented with interviews with a small number of metal fans whom Gareth knew personally, as well as a media analysis of gendered representations in metal-orientated media, such as Kerrang and Metal Hammer magazines, as well as Kerrang and Scuzz television programmes.

Another ethnography completed by **Tim** focused on the 'open mic' culture in Liverpool, specifically in The Pilgrim. Here the emphasis was placed on the people who participate in open mic shows, as well as the audience who attend to mix casual drinking with live amateur music. Tim wished to assess the extent to which the male environment of 'The Pilgrim' may intimidate women to participate in this music culture. Research methods included participant-observations in the pub, which were complemented by interviews with the pub manager and audiences. Overall the ethnographic study showed that women are underrepresented in the open mic music culture, not because of lack of talent, but because of the 'lad culture' and male-dominated atmosphere of this musical culture.

Morgan, by comparison, looked at gendered representations in rap music culture, specifically through participant-observations of rap and r&b nights in the Azure club on Slater Street, Liverpool. Her ethnography (with the title *'Drop it like its hot': Gender Representations in Rap and Hip Hop Clubs*) placed particular attention on the ways in which young men and

women negotiate gender relations on the dance floor of rap and hip hop clubs. This was complemented by in-depth interviews with fans. Overall, the ethnography argued that the misogynistic ideology prevalent in rap is transferable to all aspects of rap and hip hop culture, including dance and dress. Morgan's ethnography is included as an exemplar in the next section.

A contrasting ethnography (entitled *'A Game of Two Halves': How Gender and Sexuality are represented at Football Matches*) was conducted by **Richard**, who studied the singing, chanting and clapping of fans at football matches and gendered representations in 'football music'. By attending and observing a football match between Tranmere Rovers versus Swansea City, Richard focused on gendered issues by studying specifically football fan stereotypes, women's participation and inclusion, and singing, appearance and participation. This was complemented by interviews with friends and family members. Richard's ethnography is also included as an example in the subsequent section.

A contrasting ethnography has been written by **Nadia** whose research focused on Liverpool's renowned nightclub Krazy House and the representation of gender on the club's three floors. Here, Nadia focused on the fact that on each floor, different musical genres are played, which enabled her (through participant-observation) to note and record gendered issues so as to explain the interrelatedness between gender/sexuality and different styles of music. This was juxtaposed with the ways in which the Krazy House also creates a sense of belonging regardless of people's gender. The ethnography also involved interviews with friends and students who are regular visitors of the Krazy House. Nadia's ethnography (*Representation of gender in Liverpool's Krazy House*) too serves as an exemplar in the subsequent section.

Out of around twenty students studying on the module on 'Globalisation and Music' in 2007/08, we worked specifically with three students by interviewing them and selecting sample materials for inclusion in the student guide. This included **Christine**, who focused on the authenticity of salsa in Birmingham in the context of processes surrounding globalisation. Background research into salsa as a music genre, its history and development helped to contextualize the topic, which was complemented by participant-observations of salsa classes and nights at Bar Risa on Broad Street, Birmingham and informal interviews with several people who attended the salsa evenings.

By comparison, **Claire**'s ethnography revolved around cover bands in the light of globalisation, specifically in Bolton where there numerous pubs and clubs frequently feature cover bands. The focus here was on marketability and

commercialisation, specifically where British bands cover music of American groups. Overall, Claire's ethnography aimed to assess the impact of globalization on cover and tribute bands. Research for the ethnography included numerous participant-observations at the Moses Gate pub, complemented by interviews with the landlord and staff at this venue.

Finally, **Sarah**'s ethnographic research project examined the impact of globalisation on a Brazilian music venue in London called Guanabara. Research involved informal interviews with people who attended Guanabara, during which Sarah focused on issues surrounding musical exoticism and aural tourism. Research included numerous visits at the venue, whereby Sarah observed both the people and physical surroundings. This was complemented by background research on the internet, library sources and other materials. Sarah's ethnography entitled *The impact of globalisation on Brazilian music in London* is included in the subsequent section.

Ethnography in a remote music culture

At the University of Sheffield, nine postgraduate students in music were selected for inclusion in the student guide, all of whom were engaged in conducting ethnographic research into a remote music culture, and who selected the topic for their own research more freely.

Hyunseok focused on Korean folk music, specifically the differences between performances as imagined by the government and those given by local artists, in the case of two local arts from Gyeongsangnam province: Tongyeong Ogwangdae (Mask Drama of Tongyeong) and Jinhae Gunhangje (Jinhae Naval Port Festival). To this end, Hyunseok organised interviews with officials from the national and Gyeongsangnam provincial government, with the artists of the Mask Drama of Tongyeong and with the artist performing the folk music at local festival in Jinhae city, South Korea. During participant-observations, Hyunseok recorded the performances, which served as the basis for discussions on notation in the written ethnography.

By contrast, **LiJuan** conducted research into the growth of popular music in China, and the ways in which emotion, identity and democracy is increasingly expressed in Chinese pop, including film music. This research involved fieldwork trips to China during which LiJuan conducted interviews and collected relevant materials. Likewise, **Yue** focused her ethnographic research on popular music in China. To this end, she conducted interviews with music producers, chairmen of entertainment companies and singers.

Another project on Chinese music was undertaken by **Shu**, with an emphasis on popular music, and specifically rock music, for which she conducted field research into Chinese rock music culture, combined with participant-observations as a musician herself. For example, Shu participated in the 'rock village' at the outskirts of Beijing during which she performed, observed and talked to musicians, landlords of venues and other participants to gain a sense of their experiences of rock music. By considering 'fan culture', Shu aimed to study and understand people's identity in relation to rock music culture.

Wally (see photograph below) conducted ethnography in an African country, namely Nigeria in West Africa, considering the ways in which Yoruba [the major tribe] culture and language impacts on the development of popular music in Nigeria. In doing so, Wally conducted fieldwork and interviews with musicians both in Nigeria and the UK, as well as looking at media coverage of Nigerian music on African television channels, radio, videos and the internet.

Ethnographic research into another African music culture was conducted by **Rebecca**, who focused on church music in Zambia. To this end, Rebecca visited Zambia in 2005 and conducted ethnographic fieldwork there for over three months in summer 2007. Rebecca's reflections on her insider/outsider status there will provide interesting insights in the student guide.

Meanwhile, **Lipok** completed a brief ethnographic study on English traditional music, and specifically the music performed during jam sessions at the Fagon pub in Sheffield. Research here included participant-observations as a musician (that is, as *erhu* player), interviews with the musicians and the recording of the music and musicians. For a dissertation, Lipok focused on the role of music in preserving culture with specific emphasis on Indian folk music. The ethnography involved the collecting and transcribing of songs and interviews with villagers who pass down the musics orally.

Samuel selected an African country for his ethnographic research and specifically focused on the preservation and dissemination of traditional folk and royal music in Bunyuro, western Uganda. Samuel's research methods included fieldwork in Uganda, while interviewing young and older musicians, radio presenters and DJs, and school music teachers, complemented by archival research at museums, libraries and institutes in Africa and Europe, as well as conducting background research both online and in libraries and archives.

Wally, Lipok and Samuel (left to right)

Other research projects

At the University of Sheffield, we also worked with students who completed contrasting research projects that were not rooted in the ethnographic tradition. One research project on people's physiological responses to music has been conducted by **Maria**, who carried out in-depth interviews with her participants. Maria wanted specifically to find out about people's experiences of groove and bodily sensations in response to music. As a music psychology student, Maria approached the project as a quasi-experiment, which is not typical in ethnographic enquiry. Nonetheless, Maria's reflections about conducting in-depth interviews will play a pertinent role in the student guide.

Interviews were also conducted with students who completed research other than ethnography, for example **Bishwaroop** who completed a comparative, musicological analysis of Persian and Indian classical music; and **Sylvia** who is working on a creative sonic arts project. Some students completed shorter tasks on fieldwork techniques, for example **Rachel, Liz, Lauren** and **Lucy** who interviewed friends and family on 'What is music?' for their first-year world music course; and **Chara** and **Stella** who completed a musical transcription exercise. On occasions, their voices will also feature in the student guide.

This chapter is now followed by a special chapter entitled 'Sample Ethnographies' that contains four exemplars of ethnography conducted by undergraduate students at LJMU. The sample ethnographies span a range of genres (rock music, Brazilian culture, dance in rap/hip hop, football) as well as research sites (nightclub, bar, internet, football ground), and their general concern is with gendered representations or processes surrounding globalisation. The ethnographies have been annotated so as to indicate the steps in the research process and to make explicit the particular characteristics of ethnographic research and writing. The inclusion of annotated sample ethnographies will hopefully enhance your understanding of the nature of ethnography, and support you in conducting your own ethnographic research project.

SAMPLE ETHNOGRAPHIES

Representation of Gender in Liverpool's Krazy House

By Nadia

This ethnographic study discovers and documents a local music culture within Liverpool. To illustrate manifestations and representations of gender and sexuality, the music culture of the night club Krazy House, which holds almost eight hundred people, was explored. As the Krazy House contains three separate floors of different music genres, the ethnographic research focused on the ways in which gender and sexuality of the participants either shaped or were influenced by the music.

Ethnography opens by identifying a research problem

This was conducted through analysing raw, primary data during participant-observation, websites, images and interview material, and applying it to academic theoretical discussions. The participant-observations were used to build the basis and prepare for the interview questions, which allowed for an emic and etic discussion, thus providing a more in-depth interpretation.

The problem requires exploration and understanding from 'inside'

The Krazy House is described by its official website as being 'one of the most established and diverse night clubs in Liverpool' (website, accessed 10/11/07). Thus the ways in which the Krazy House creates diversity in relation to gender and sexuality was a key arena in this study, as well as discussing the notion of the nightclub creating gendered hybrid communities or acts of differentiation.

Research questions are broad and general

Music and gender differences in the Krazy House

The participant-observation, which took place on Thursday, 15 November 2007 allowed an understanding of participants in their local music culture, whilst also considering surrounding factors that provided significant gender representations. As Thursday nights are student nights at the Krazy House, the majority of people who attended were young adults, estimating their ages from eighteen to twenty-five.

Data analysis consists of describing information from first-hand observations

The Krazy House consists of three floors, each playing a different musical genre, and each with a separate disc jockey. The three floors are named K1, K2 and K3, with K1 playing rock and heavy metal, K2 playing indie and alternative music, and K3 playing more mainstream music such as chart pop and 'cheesy' music.

It was observed that there were different dress codes amongst the different floors, with the people on K1 displaying a more alternative, mostly black dress code, combined with heavy black and white makeup. It was noted that the females present on K1 donned a more revealing attire, with short skirts, leather fetish style clothing, and some wearing underwear bras as their tops. K2 reflected more of a variety of different dress styles, but was mostly casual and understated, similar to the dress code observed on K3.

Data analysis includes descriptions of participants' demographics and behaviours

Providing a rough estimate of the amounts of different genders on each floor, there seemed to be an equal amount of both males and females on K2 and K3 compared to mostly males on K1 (Figure 4). Also, K1 contained a podium, which mostly females danced on. It is significant to note that the Krazy House provided areas for social interaction, such as tables and chairs in K1 and additional seating on K3 nearby the painted clocks and ladies' toilets.

Complementing the participant-observation, interviews were conducted on the 25 and 26 November with the above insights providing the basis for further discussions. Ethical issues were addressed by maintaining participants' privacy and confidentiality. A male of 22 years of age and a female of 20 years of age were interviewed who are regulars at the Krazy House. Additionally, a male of 34 years was interviewed who attended the Krazy House between the years 1990 and 1994. This allowed to gain further information of the ways in which gender and sexuality relations have stayed the same, or changed within this particular music culture.

Data collection involves in-depth interviewing of small numbers of participants

From my research into gender differences in the Krazy House, it became vital to address in-depth the gender motivations represented on only one particular floor. Also, the notion of the objectification of women, such as the observed dress code and podium on K1 was important to expand theoretically. The formation of subcultures within the Krazy House, identified through the music and dress code, suggests a sense of community, that is, a space where people can form their gendered identities. From an emic perspective, the provision of seating areas suggests the notion that the Krazy House is an arena where space is provided for peoples of both genders to interact and engage. Through the different forms of music, the Krazy House demonstrated that it is a cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, which, in turn, suggests that gender and sexuality is played out differently within that particular music culture. Thus the three themes of *Young Audiences: Constructing Gendered Identities, Dress Codes: Women Competing*

Ethnographers take a reflexive and biased approach

Data analysis includes developing themes for conceptualisation

Against Men, and *'Serious' Rock versus 'Girly' Pop* were derived, all furthermore to be discussed in the following sections.

Young Audiences: Constructing Gendered Identities

As already mentioned, the Krazy House is a space for a younger musical audience, supported by my male participant who claimed that 'I used to go there when I was younger, but not so much anymore as there are too many younger people there' (pc, 25/11/07, Figure 1). This may suggest that the Krazy House is a space where younger people see their gendered identity reflected in music. It is argued, for instance, that young people, rather than remaining committed to a particular organisation, move in and out through forms of music and temporary communities (Hollands 2002:157). This is demonstrated in the Krazy House, which provides the opportunity and space to move and alternate through the different floors and musical genres. This helps creating a temporary gendered identity, a notion emphasised by my female participant proclaiming that going to the Krazy House ' is like a double life' (pc, 26/11/07, Figure 3).

Certain genres of music can also be categorised into an age bracket. Rock music, for example, 'doesn't appeal to youngsters anymore; well, not real music anyway' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 2), which suggests that rock music has been adapted and new subgenres emerged so as to facilitate contemporary tastes and identities. For much of its history, rock music has also been primarily appreciated and supported by young male audiences. This conveys that my older male participant identified rock music with that which he listened to when he was a young adolescent, and thus not regarding contemporary rock music as authentic. The complexity of the term authenticity in this instance is related to value judgement, prescribed by the individual through perceptions of what 'real' rock music is, whilst rejecting more modern forms of rock, which also conveys stylistic changes in rock music (Frith et al 2001:131).

Dress Codes: Women Competing Against Men

The dress code in the Krazy House was significant as dressing a certain way allowed for an expression of gendered identity. According to my older participant, 'the Krazy House in the past only had two floors of the same music genre of rock music' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 2), and goes on to suggest that his own dress code adhered to

Ethnography integrates the voices of participants

Interview transcripts may be appended to the report

Relevant literature plays a role throughout the text for supporting or subverting an argument

Ethnography is organised around themes that have emerged from the raw data

the 'grunge look', [including] DocMartins, leathers, cut-off denim jacket' (ibid), and continued that 'we had the grunge look really, everybody dressed in the same style' (ibid). A shared taste in clothing suggests that clothing allows people to communicate specific gendered identity and musical taste within a subculture (Rentfrow and Gosling 2007:306-26). The 'grunge look' is particularly associated with rock and heavy metal music, which draws upon sources of power as an attribute of masculinity (Walser 1993:109). This will further be discussed in a forthcoming section on *'Serious' Rock versus 'Girly' Pop.*

The introduction of other music genres in the Krazy House has created further forms of gendered expressions, explained by my male participant who used ambiguous clothing to move amongst the three floors with ease, wearing 'casual... always understated' clothing (pc, 25/10/07, Figure 1). By contrast, my female participant wore what she describes as 'skimpy clothes' (pc, 26/11/07, Figure 3 and 5). Her style of dress clearly conveys her feminine sexuality, which somewhat hints towards the objectification of women as the subject of the 'male gaze' at this venue. Here it can be argued that women are present to motivate male sexual desire, reflected in the ways in which my female participant expressed a more sexualised identity than my male 'casual' participant.

This may also suggest that women feel the need to prove themselves (as opposed to men) by making more of 'an effort'. This is reflected in other cultural practices, such as enjoying the music, whereby 'women were always more fanatical about music than men' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 2). It was also noted that females consume a significant level of alcohol and drugs compared to their male counterparts: 'Within my girl group of friends we all get shit-faced... Some of them either take pills and don't drink, or drink and don't take pills. The boys I go with are more straight-edge, they don't drink.' (pc, 25/10/07, Figure 3). This in turn portrays female spectacle within a music culture.

'Serious' Rock versus 'Girly' Pop

The research also conveyed the theme of 'serious' rock versus 'girly' pop, which is reflected significantly when considering the difference between rock/heavy metal and pop music, and how fans

Ethnographic data collection involves gathering images to be included in the report

Interpretations situate findings within larger meanings

experience conformation and alteration of their gendered identities through their interaction with it (Walser 1993:109). My female participant, for example, preferred the 'bottom floor [K1] because of all the boys there' and usually attended 'with a group of girls to meet the boys there' (pc, 25/10/07, Figure 3). K1's association with the musical genre of rock and heavy metal, combined with the claim that there is 'all boys there', suggests that my female participant associated rock music as being a predominantly male arena. Her only motivation of entering K1 was to interact with men, which thus emphasises the objectification of women and the apparent need of men in the Krazy House. Also claiming that she meets 'the boys' there somewhat suggests that the female has invaded the male space.

The objectification of women is also apparent with the feature of the podiums on K1. My female participant explained that 'there's these girls who go there all the time and wear practically nothing; real fetish stuff like leathers and just dance on the podiums' (pc, 25/10/07, Figure 3). This demonstrates that variations of nakedness carry connotations of female submissiveness. It can thus be suggested that rock and heavy metal's cultural association with masculinity reflects what patriarchy perceives as 'threat of women' and therefore tries to control it (Walser 1993:110). It does this by objectifying women and placing them as subject of the male gaze, thereby contributing to an elusive male community within that music culture. Indeed, the genre of rock and metal is often regarded as articulating a dialectic of control and power (ibid:108). Interestingly, my male participant too liked this music, and mentioned, for example 'AC DC, Motley Crew, Korn [and] Pearl Jam' (pc, 25/11/07, Figure 2) and more recently 'Nine Inch Nails and Rammstein' (ibid). This also reflects that rock and heavy metal were and remain to be male-dominated musical genres.

The notion of rock music representing 'serious' masculine music was a recurrent theme in my research. My male participant claimed that 'K3 is more fun, chart and dance music', whereas 'the bottom floor [K1]… is more serious' (pc, 27/10/07, Figure 3). Thus rock and metal music has more cultural capital than pop music. The latter was also described as 'shit… I hat it! It's soulless, commercial crap!' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 2) and 'a laugh because you can dance like an idiot… be silly… and dance stupid because it's pop music' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 3). Pop can therefore be seen as a need to satisfy excitement (Longhurst 2007:202) with the act of dancing intimately associated with diminished inhibition (Straw 1991:379). This also shows that my female participant feels comfortable in the pop

environment of K3, having associated with a female arena free from impressing or interacting with men. Significantly, pop music is associated with the female gender or 'being girly' or 'wussy' [homosexual]' (pc, 26/10/07, Figure 2). This suggests that people explain themselves and the music they listen to and prefer in terms of value judgements (Frith 2004:34). Value judgements of pop music therefore revolve around 'inauthenticity' and the feminine sphere, whereas rock and metal music is accrued as serious and related to the male sphere. The different types of music within the Krazy House have thus acquired distinct statuses, involving a distinction between a male elitist culture and that of mainstream female culture (Thornton 1995:3).

Discussion and conclusion

By reflecting on my experiences of ethnographic research, I found that participant-observations in the music culture allowed me to gain emic and qualitative material on participants' social reality in the Krazy House build the basis for interview questions. Maintaining reflexivity and remaining unbiased allowed me to gain trust and confidence with my participants. It became clear by studying participants' experiences and perceptions of the Krazy House that music reflects and shapes gendered identities through the notion of expressing belonging to a particular sub-culture. This is reflected on the three separate floors in the Krazy House, which provide opportunities for 'movement' and for specific gendered identities to be constructed.

Ethnographers take a reflexive and biased approach

Through critical comparison of collected data, I have demonstrated how music is categorised to accrue value judgement in relation to gender and sexuality. A sense of gendered social identity is thus articulated through the notion of taste, which in turn forms cultural capital across the vector of gender (Straw 1991:380). Drawing on relevant literature to strengthen the argumentation presented here, it was implied that rock music possesses more cultural capital than pop music, and is associated with male dominance and the objectification of women, as opposed to pop music's association with fun and being girly.

Ethnographic research reports use flexible and emerging structures and evaluation criteria

Offering and facilitating a variety of musical genres, in which people can see their values and assumptions reflected and shaped, the Krazy House is a space that offers not divides but distinctions between different gendered groups and sub-cultures.

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[Note that the appendices are omitted here.]

The Impact of Globalisation on Brazilian Music in London

By Sarah

In this ethnographic research project, I will examine the impact of globalisation on Guanabara, which is a Brazilian music venue, bar and nightclub located in Central London. As Charlotte Davies states, "we cannot research something with which we have no contact, from which we are completely isolated" (Davies 1999: 3), therefore the 'hands-on' method of ethnographic research is necessary in determining the impact of globalisation in this particular local music culture. My research will focus on two main areas; the venue itself, and the people who frequent this establishment. By concentrating on these two main areas, I aim to discover how both the venue and its location, and the people who attend Guanabara are significant to issues regarding globalisation within this local music culture. Before conducting my research, I had the preconceived idea that the venue and its attendees may be tapping into aspects of musical tourism and exoticism. My ethnographic research aims to discover if there are any truths to this notion, and if so, to what extent does exoticism play in the ethos of this local music culture.

Ethnography asks broad, open-ended questions

Ethnography requires discovery and exploration

Ethnography uses participant-observation and interviewing

Ethnographic data collection involves small numbers of people and sites

The Venue

My initial visit to Guanabara was an observational exercise, in order to find out more about the venue itself. I wanted to see who the venue was aimed at, and what sorts of people attended Guanabara. On my first visit on October 2007, I arrived at Guanabara for the 5pm 'Happy Hour', which affected the diversity of the range of attendees, as this time slot is aimed at the after-work drinkers. Sure enough, the majority of the clientele were office workers, taking advantage of the 'Happy Hour' drink prices. 'Happy Hour' is a Western custom, which shows that this venue has had to adapt to suit more westernised models. Guanabara seems to be targeted at British people, and tries to encourage them to take part in Brazilian traditions. Examples of this include the vast array of 'Brazilian' cocktails on offer at the bar, free salsa dancing lessons, and live samba and salsa bands.

Ethnography consists of describing the research setting and environment

One observation that particularly stood out to me was that all of Guanabara's staff were of Portuguese/Latino origin. One of the barmen who I spoke to, Paco, 28, was originally from Portugal and moved to London 4 years ago. When I asked him whether he enjoyed working in Guanabara, he said, it was a fun atmosphere to work in, and that he could share the same experience of living in a different country with the other staff, as they were also from outside of the UK. When I asked

Ethnography seeks participants' experiences

Ethnographers seek the meanings 'behind' the data

The ethnographic report contains photographic images

Ethnographers take a reflexive and biased stance

Ethnographers seek to interpret the results by looking for their deeper meanings

him what he thought the appeal of Guanabara was, he said, *"Good music, lively atmosphere, and Latin cocktails mixed by real Latino's!"*. This led me to the opinion that the Latin staff are employed to add a sense of authenticity to the venue, and to enhance the Brazilian package offered at Guanabara.

Figure1: View inside Guanabara

Following on from this, I looked for various representations of Brazilian cultural identity within Guanabara. The Latin music and Brazilian cocktails (Caipirinhas) were the main signifiers of Brazilian identity in Guanabara, and integral to re-creating the Brazilian vibe in London. I also noticed more clichéd representations of Brazilian-ness such as a video of Pelé projected on to the large screens around the venue. There was a large painting of the Rio de Janeiro skyline next to the bar (see Figure 1), and a food menu consisting of 'traditional Brazilian delicacies'. This, combined with the salsa and samba music, the Latin bar staff, the free salsa dancing lessons, and the Caipirinhas and Mojito cocktails led me to believe that Guanabara uses cultural stereotypes and obvious connotations of Brazilian lifestyle to establish its cultural identity in London. This led me to question whether geographical location is a substantiating factor in Guanabara's market appeal.

Guanabara offers a taste of Brazilian culture in Central London. As the website states, Guanabara's ethos is "Brazilian music, drink, food and culture" (Guanabara, 17/12/07). The very fact that this venue is located in a geographical site outside of its indigenous cultural territory is an example of globalisation, and the appropriation of cultural customs from non-western countries. In this way, Guanabara promises a taste of the exotic to its customers, and through using Brazilian culture and lifestyle as a marketing tool, it offers a kind of escapism from typical British music venues. The psychogeography of London

allows for the appropriation and incorporation of other cultural influences – namely music - and this, I believe has added to the appeal of Guanabara. As Taylor argues, "many listeners are looking for something out of the mainstream" (Taylor 1997: 20). However, I believe that Guanabara being located in London has contributed to the venue's need to use obvious cultural stereotypes and cliché's in order to establish its cultural identity outside of Brazil. I believe this is proof that Guanabara adheres to globalisation theories, namely cultural hybridisation and heterogeneity, in that this music venue incorporates western drinking traditions ('Happy Hour') in order to indigenise itself within its new cultural setting. Guanabara's offering of Brazilian culture is exploited in a diasporic way and used as currency in selling the exotic Brazilian experience to a new local (and global) audience.

The literature plays a role in supporting/ subverting an argument

The People

After analysing the results of my research on the venue itself, I wanted to find out more about the people who attended Guanabara, and what the attraction of the venue was to them. From my initial observational visit to Guanabara, and the subsequent visits I made to the venue, I noticed that Guanabara appealed to, and accommodated a wide demographic of customers. I noticed a wide variety of different age groups – right from late teens to late 50s – with the majority of customers being in the late 20s to early 40s age bracket. I believe this could be down to the type of music played in this establishment. Salsa and samba music seems to draw a varied audience, because it does not alienate certain age groups in the way that Hip Hop, for example, would. As a musical genre, it is very well liked - in spite of having relatively little commercial success in the mainstream British music industry - which is arguably attributed to its infectious rhythms and up-tempo dancability. This, I believe has contributed to Guanabara's success within a large age demographic.

Ethnography consists of detailed descriptions of the people

During observations, I became aware of the eclectic racial mix of customers in Guanabara. Again, I believe this can be attributed to the type of music played in this establishment, as this musical genre appeals to a more ethnically diverse scene than more typical British 'indie' music venues. I also observed the sexuality of customers within the venue, and noted how this may affect Guanabara's demographic. Obviously, I was not able to ask customers about their sexuality, as this would have been inappropriate, however, I was able to make general observations within the venue. I noticed a sizeable quota of couples - both heterosexual and homosexual - attending gigs at Guanabara. Whilst attending the Paraiso Samba School gig on December 2007, I

Ethnographers seek to explain the data

Ethnographers are aware of ethical issues

Ethnographic data analysis consists of text analysis

Ethnographic reports use flexible structures

Ethnographers describe the experiences of participants without disguising their identity

The results of the ethnographic study are evaluated and interpreted

spoke to a couple, Katy, 33, and Matt, 28, both from North London, who had recently returned from travelling round South America. I asked them what it was they liked about Guanabara, and they said, "*we've been having withdrawal symptoms since coming back from South America, and needed a little Brazilian fix*". They both commented on how much they enjoyed the music in Guanabara, and how they particularly enjoyed the samba band playing that night. "*The music in here is exactly the same as the music we heard in Rio. Its so refreshing to hear this kind of music back home in London*". After talking to Katy and Matt, I drew the conclusion that they were trying to replicate the exotic experience of their travels.

My final area of observation in Guanabara was gender, to which I noticed there were notably more women than men on all of the occasions that I visited the venue. It is fairly easy for one to see how this venue is suited more towards women than men by making social assumptions about differences between the sexes. The substantial array of cocktails available at Guanabara is definitely geared more toward women, as this type of drink is generally more popular with women than with men. Also, Guanabara offers free salsa dancing lessons, which again, generally appeals more toward female customers. Some customers that were taking advantage of this offer were Anais, 38, Minoli, 33, & Sophie, 41, work colleagues from a nearby office. I asked them whether they enjoyed the salsa dance lessons, and they all agreed that it was "*good fun*", and "*a totally new experience*". I asked what made them come to Guanabara, and Anais replied, "*its somewhere that's different. There are so many of the same type of bars in London, and this one is unique*". Sophie added, "*There's a real party atmosphere, and the music just makes you want to get up and dance. Its like a little taste of Brazilian carnival in London. It's interesting to sample the Brazilian cocktails and food, and to hear this kind of music. It makes me feel like I'm on holiday!*" Taking these comments into account, I was led to the assumption that exoticism played a large part in Guanabara's appeal.

Conclusion

Exoticism can be defined as the depiction of one culture for consumption by another. In the case of Guanabara, one could argue that there are many truths to this statement. Guanabara is not a Brazilian bar, it is a representation of Brazilian culture in a geographical location outside of its indigenous cultural context. In this way, Guanabara is a good example of the impact of globalisation, as it is a mélange of Brazilian cultural identity and Western global domination,

which employs connotations of exoticness in order to sell its cultural product to a new local audience. As Philip Bohlman argues, "it is music's special capacity to represent something exotic that it has so frequently provided a symbolic system to convey the exotic and the other" (Born *et al* 2000:188-9). However, I believe that although Guanabara adheres to theories of globalisation, it is not exploitative, as it brings a variety of Brazilian music to new audiences, and the bands that play at the venue are well treated and undoubtedly paid well for their performances. I believe Guanabara offers an interesting cultural package, and a credible portrayal of Brazilian culture, even though it carries the burden of globalisation.

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Ethnographers take a biased and reflexive approach

The bibliography should include the authors' full name, e.g. surname, first name

Internet sources should indicate the date of when you accessed them

'Drop it like it's hot': Gender Representations in Rap and Hip Hop Clubs

By Morgan

It has been said that music is a reflection of the cultural and political environment from which it is born (Adams and Fuller, 2006, p939). This could not be truer then in relation to the rap and hip hop genre. Rap music emerged as an aesthetic cultural expression of urban African American youth in the Bronx, New York in the late 1970s (ibid). It materialized as an expressive cultural genre originating among lower and often marginalized working-class African American youth. It has grown in popularity world-wide and has often been characterised as promoting and glamorizing misogynistic and oppressive ideas about women. It has therefore become apparent that one must consider the potential shaping force that misogyny in rap may have on how young people may view themselves and the relations between the sexes.

This paper will explore how young men and women negotiate gender relations on the dance floor of rap and hip hop clubs. For this purpose, an ethnographic study was conducted within club Azure on Slater Street, Liverpool. As one of the few clubs in Liverpool that has an established rap and hip hop night and which houses a faithful regular clientele, it proved representative of the typical rap and hip hop club

Figure 1: A typical night club

scene. This research report draws primarily on the findings from participant-observations and two in-depth interviews carried out during ethnographic fieldwork. It will argue that through these findings, one can assert that the misogynistic ideology prevalent in rap is transferable to all aspects of rap and hip hop culture. The degradation of women can be seen as internalized through the gendered relations expressed through dance and dress in rap and hip hop clubs and such relations can be described as assisting the continuation of the identification of the female as object. With the genre growing in popularity amongst white and ethnic youths the

Ethnography starts by identifying a research problem that is broad and general

Literature review plays a minor role; instead literature is integrated throughout the text

The exploration and understanding of a specific music culture

Ethnography involves participant-observation and informal interviewing

world over, it has never been more prevalent to ask what effect such imagery has on the youths that consume it.

Visual Pleasure or Female Empowerment?

Azure holds a rap and hip hop night every Wednesday that is organised and promoted through a company called N-Tyce. The club venue is sleek and sophisticated and aims to attract a smart cultured clientele. To enter the club, one has to descend a flight of stairs that opens onto a below ground level bar and dance floor. A few tables are available as well as the option to be waited on, however the majority of club goers are concentrated on and around the dance floor. The dim lighting and low ceilings evoke the underground nature of the rap and hip hop genre compared to the dance and house music that is characteristic of the Liverpool night club scene.

Figure 2: Female dress style in a nightclub

After frequenting this particular night for a month, two themes emerged during the fieldwork conducted. Firstly, there was a noticeable difference between the manner in which the male and female clubbers where dressed. The majority of men wore the base ball caps, trainers and jewelry often associated with rap and hip hop culture, whereas the girls were comparatively different, dressed up in high heels and skirts (see Figure 2). The girls' manner of dress meant they were very much on show, short dresses and skirts seemed to emulate the images that are abundant within rap and hip hop videos. Secondly, there was a marked difference in the way in which the men and women danced. On entering the club, one can instantly see that the majority of men prefer not to dance, while the girls are in the middle of the dance floor competing in what one interviewee described as 'dance-offs' (see Figure 1). This is the participation of competitive dancing between two or more girls which is used in order to showcase individuals' dancing abilities. It is this dichotomy between the unwilling participation of the men compared to the enthusiastic dancing of the women, that warranted further examination.

Relevant literature is integral to the interpretation of data

Participants' voices play a pivotal role

Ethnographic interpretation situates findings within larger meanings

McRobbie (1993) has argued that dance is where girls were always found in subcultures and that it was their only entitlement (p25). Within rap and hip hop culture, the dance floor is most definitely the female's domain. As the men stand on the outside watching, the women are in the middle of the dance floor dancing provocatively. Dancing in hip hop clubs presents an opportunity for young men and young women to perform gender roles, sexual assertiveness and sexual appeal (Munoz-Laboy, 2007, p619). One of the interviewees, Emily, explains 'Girls go out to meet boys and boys go out to meet girls. It's just the way it is' (see appendix for full transcript). Interestingly, couples are not a regular occurrence in rap and hip hop clubs. Instead, large groups of men and women frequent this particular night, and women seem to equate dancing to hip hop to sexual performance and sexual appeal. One of the dance moves that proves most popular in rap and hip hop clubs is called 'wineing'. This is where a woman rolls her hips in a circular motion and can be seen as simulating the act of sex. This type of dancing is similar to that used in strip clubs and erotic dance clubs. Emily notes that most girls dance to get 'attention' from the boys. This captures the essence of the erotic value that showing sexual appeal on the dance floor has for these young women. In fact, the similarities between hip hop/rap clubs and strip clubs in regard to gendered differences is marked. The girls perform for the men with their seductive dress and their suggestive dancing. This set up can be equated to Freud's association with sexuality and scopophilia; the act of taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze (Mulvey, 1999, p318).

In her essay *Visual pleasures and narrative cinema,* Mulvey has equated the pleasure gained from the cinematic experience with that of patriarchal ideologies and scopophilia. In her analysis, she sees scopophilia as active and that in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female (Mulvey, 1999, p383). Thus, the female form is subjugated to the male gaze and the pleasures gained in the act of looking. The gendered differences in the act of dancing in rap and hip hop clubs work in much the same way. The female dancers are competing for male attention in order to prove their sexual prowess. The determining male gaze projects his fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly (ibid). Male interviewee Ryan concurred: 'girls look really sexy when they dance and the better they are at dancing the more attractive they look' (see appendix for full transcript). This enforces ideologies that place the women as object

and places them with the burden of male fantasy. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed. With their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact, they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness (Mulvey, 1999, p383).

It can, however, be argued that the mostly female occupation of the dance floor could signify their assertion of power within the rap and hip hop club scene. They set the boundaries that may allow men to watch, but does not include men - dancing is female territory. Through their dancing ability, girls can intimidate boys, thus are the ones placed with power. Ryan aptly points out that 'it demasculinates men if they can't dance'. If dance simulates the act of sex, then the exclusion of men signifies their lack of sexual power. However as active controllers of the look, men ultimately gain sexual pleasure and power over women.

Conclusion

The success of the gangsta-rap phenomenon can in part be attributed to the widespread press and television coverage the controversies about the genre command (Perkins, 1996, p19). It celebrates hustling, street crime, abuse of women, and the gun as social equalizer (Adams and Fuller, 2006, p19). Hooks (1981) has stated that within patriarchal society, men are conditioned to channel frustrated aggression in the direction of those without power – women and children (p15). Within the lyrics and imagery used on the music videos of rap and hip hop artists such as NWA and Snoop Dog the abuse and degradation of women is a predominant theme.

Hip hop dancing is intrinsically a gendered experience that reproduces gender power inequalities and unequal gender identities in systematic and predictable ways (Munoz-Laboy et al, 2007, p626). Young women rarely appear as anything other than objects of the male gaze in the hip hop club scene. It has been argued that as a result of the objectification of women in music and music videos in rap and hip hop, women are not only portrayed as sexual objects, but they grow to accept themselves and portray themselves as such (Munoz-Laboy et al, 2007, p626). Through this research on rap and hip hop club culture, it is clear there are strong correlations between the imagery in music videos and misogynistic lyrics in rap and hip hop, and gendered representations within the youth cultures that consume it. It is important to note that misogynistic ideas are not exclusively a rap and hip hop phenomenon. The music industry world has been saturated with misogynistic imagery – from country

Ethnography involves studying a small number of individuals or sites

Ethnography consists of text-based data

Ethnographic reports use flexible and emerging structures

Ethnographers take a reflexive and biased approach

musicians to rock-n-rollers - misogynistic convictions have always had a home within the music industry (Adams and Fuller, 2006, p940). Although the possible effects misogynistic music can have are numerous and questionable: music is a powerful art form that has the potential to be influential, particularly when it is supported by a structural system and cultural ideologies (Adams and Fuller, 2006, p952). As this research shows, the internalization and normalizations of oppressive ideas about women are evident, thus the patriarchal ideologies that govern the music industry are in serious need of academic reprise and rigor.

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Appendix [omitted here]

'A Game of Two Halves': Gender and Football

By Richard

The music culture that I have chosen to analyse is the traditionally male-dominated society of football spectatorship. Unlike studies into television or cinema audiences, football spectatorship can rarely be seen as a passive experience. During my two-match study I explored the fans' participation in the singing and chanting at football matches, as well as their appearance, mannerisms and general behaviour and how notions of gender and sexuality were presented within the music culture. The following essay also explores different ideas of the 'football fan' coined by various theorists and how they apply to the chosen case study.

Kick-Off: Where and When the Study was Held

I conducted the fieldwork for my research project in and around the ground of Tranmere Rovers Football Club, a team based in Birkenhead, Wirral and who play in the Coca Cola League One division. By observing the crowd before, during and after two separate league matches, as well as conducting an informal interview with a Tranmere season-ticket holder, I was able to draw up some interesting conclusions relating to how gender and sexuality are represented at football matches.

Figure 1: Fans at football game at Prenton Park

The two matches that I chose to attend, both being played at Tranmere's home ground Prenton Park, were against rivals Swansea City on November and Carlisle United on December 2007. I felt that my conclusions would be more comprehensive by attending two separate matches and comparing the two sets of results. For the game against Swansea City I sat in The Kop stand, where the majority of the more vocal supporters sit, and for the Carlisle match I sat in the Main

Ethnography consists of describing information and developing themes

Ethnographers seek to explain the meaning of the data

Literature supports the argumentation

Stand, a quieter section of the ground containing more female supporters, to observe any contrasting results.

First Half: Observations of Gender and Sexuality

As I approached the ground for the first of the two chosen matches, notions of a stereotypical male football fan dressed in his team colours was becoming apparent. I estimated that approximately 75-80% of the crowds attending both matches were male, their ages varying from small children to pensioners, and with around one third of them wearing either Tranmere shirts, scarves, hats or other club attire. Sandvoss (2003) claims that 'fandom' is a way for supporters to express their own identity and is a means of self-reflection through their allegiance to the club'. So, by dressing in certain clothing that is associated with a particular team, the fan is 'communicating essential coordinates of the self, including class and gender positions' (Sandvoss, 2003, p27). In contrast to the male appearance, female Tranmere supporters were less inclined to express their own identity through football attire as I estimated that only around one fifth of the female attendance was wearing Tranmere clothing. (Tranmere scarves were the most popular item worn by the female fans.)

An interpretation of these findings could suggest that male fans feel more inclined to wear Tranmere colours as it confirms their masculinity and status within a male-dominated society. This could also explain why female supporters are less enthusiastic in expressing their club allegiance as their appearance might be met with hostility by the dominant male order. An example of this is highlighted in an interview conducted by Sandvoss (2003) with a male German football fan who claims:

'If a woman or girl stands next to me and she shouts, but builds a completely different form of enthusiasm [...] I don't feel free at all then. I feel inhibited.' (2003, pp 25-6)

Sandvoss concludes from this study that gender still remains the most significant line of division and discrimination for football fans today, and this counts for supporters' appearance and participation on match day. Cultural theorist John Friske claims that typical football fans '...are excessive readers...being a fan involves active, enthusiastic, partisan, participatory engagement with the text'. (1989, p146). It could be argued that this statement reduces the term 'fan' to an ambiguous concept as a significant proportion of the Tranmere crowd did not conform to this description, yet I am sure that they all regard themselves as fans, and that their presence in the crowd is

sufficient evidence for their argument. Using the data collected from the Swansea City match, I noted that the supporter sitting directly in front of me, who was a female, aged roughly 40-45 years of age and of casual appearance, did not conform to this description argued by Friske. In contrast to a section of loud and volatile fans sitting behind me, the supporter in front did not seem overly enthusiastic and definitely not partisan towards the action that was taking place on the field. She would occasionally show her displeasure by complaining to her male partner, but she did not participate in the singing or chanting that was heard throughout the ground. I am sceptical, however, that this renders her a 'non-fan' simply because she is less active than others in her support for the team.

Indeed, when I attended the match against Carlisle United and sat in the Main Stand, the stand next to the Kop and where the support is less vocal, a greater proportion of the crowd, both male and female, would not conform to the ideas of the typical football fan set out by Fiske (1989). This was also evident during my interview with a season ticket holder who sat in the same section of the ground. Whereas he and his brother would sing and chant, his mother would appear considerably less active in her support for the team (see appendix 1). This may be attributed to the fact that there was a larger proportion of children and female supporters in this section of the ground, where male supporters may find it inappropriate to shout and swear, and female fans who feel less inhibited into singing along with the male-dominated Kop. Again, like the clothing that is worn, a female supporter who portrays aggressive male characteristics such as loud singing and swearing would challenge the male order and be treated with hostility from other male supporters.

Half Time: How Gender Shapes the Music

My rough estimation of the participation in the singing and chanting from the Tranmere crowd estimated that around 85% of the noise was created by male supporters. This would have an effect upon the pitch of the singing, which was in a low key, as would be expected from a predominantly male performance. A closer analysis of the lyrics also provided me with interesting results. The most popular and frequent song that the Tranmere fans would sing contains the lyrics, "Ronny Moore's Super White Army". (Ronny Moore is the manager of Tranmere.) This song gradually becomes quicker in tempo and louder, with a drum beat accompanying the vocals. It is the word "army", however, that interests me in these lyrics as the term connotes very masculine ideas of men going to war,

Ethnographers seek original contributions to knowledge

Ethnographic reports use flexible structures

Ethnography involves studying a small number of research sites

machinery and combat fighting. This, along with the suggestion that the whole club, or "army", belongs to one man, Ronny Moore, is an example of how football is still a very male-dominated society, and how the gender of the players, management and most of the fans, shape the music that is produced.

Second Half: The End of the Spectator?

Literature plays a role in supporting/ subverting the argumentation

Taylor (1992) suggests that the days of the supporter travelling to watch their team play could be numbered, with the increasing number of sports channels broadcasting live football coverage across the country (pp187-8). This claim seems doubtful as official figures for English League matches highlight that attendances have steadily risen for the past five seasons (see appendix 2). However, Taylor's statement that football fans watching their team on television may one day replace going to the stadium is also a theme raised by Sandvoss (2003) who claims that the greater availability of football matches in the home 'potentially erodes the boundaries of football as a male domain' (p25). The football ground is traditionally a male-dominated space where supporters can exercise their masculinity in the form of their clothing, singing, and expressing their opinions, whereas the space of the home contains a more even gender balance.

Full Time: To conclude…

Ethnographers seek to illuminate the 'obvious'

During my two-match ethnographic research study and interview with a Tranmere season ticket holder, it has become clear that the music culture produced in the stands of football matches is still very much a male-dominated society. Around 75% of the attendees at both Tranmere matches were male, with ages ranging from small child to old aged pensioner. This has a profound effect upon the music produced, with the pitch of the singing, which is conducted in a low key, and the lyrics of the songs they sing that contain masculine connotations.

Sandvoss (2003) claims that 'fandom', the act of being a fan, is a reflection of the self. My research suggests that the male supporters were more willing to share their own identity with others as a way of highlighting their masculinity and sexual domination in this space, in the same way that women supporters were more likely to appear passive as not to attract hostility from this male-dominated society.

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The bibliography should include a range of relevant sources

The bibliography should contain ten or more sources for a 2,000 word essay

CHAPTER II. APPROACHING ETHNOGRAPHY

This chapter introduces you to the qualitative research method of ethnography by defining it as a method for research and way of writing, and considering the implications of the time-limits imposed by formal university education upon the conduct of your own ethnographic project. The chapter moves on to discuss the ways in which you may plan and prepare an ethnographic research project by thinking about a suitable research base, site and people, and considering issues surrounding entry and consent. The chapter also considers the importance of health and safety during ethnographic fieldwork, and provides a brief overview of data collection methods. A subsequent section critically assesses the concept of validity and reliability in ethnography, followed by discussions on the notion of truth, as well as reflexivity and auto-ethnography. The chapter closes with the writing of a research proposal, and the preparation of an oral presentation. Throughout the chapter, students' voices and sample materials will illustrate ways of approaching an ethnographic research project in dance, drama and music.

What is ethnography?

Ethnography often refers to both *doing* ethnography, and *writing* ethnography. The term ethnography is thus often used interchangeably as both a method for research and way of writing. As a method, ethnography uses the researcher as the primary tool of data collection during *fieldwork,* as expressed by **Rebecca** here. This normally involves longitudinal, face-to-face interaction with people in the research community. Since ethnography is highly variable and locally specific, the ethnographer is dependent on changes within the field, which are obviously beyond the control of the researcher.

For my field research in Zambia, I brought just basically *me*; just my eyes and brain. (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

As a way of writing, ethnography involves an inductive and bottom-up process of data analysis and interpretation by building *local* theories. Thus one key aspect of ethnography involves the writing about the culture of groups of people, whereby the ethnographer generates or builds theories of cultures—explanations of how people think, believe and behave—that are situated in local time and space. The resultant ethnographic report is an interpretive story, reconstruction or narrative

It's a very unique way of doing research, instead of just reading up on what other people have done or looking at journals. It's a more exciting way of doing it. (Tim, 20/02/08)

I really enjoyed doing ethnography actually. When I look back now, I'm glad I did it because… when I was reading books the people writing about hip hop were speaking about it from an outside. They were all quite negative about it [misogyny etc]… and I don't think it's all how they're talking about it…. For me, to actually go in and speak to the people directly was a lot better…. I learnt that I could actually just hear someone else's opinion rather than a theory of an academic. Yeah. The opinion of someone else, someone else close to my age, somebody into the same things as me.
(Lianne, 20/02/08)

Ethnography is really valuable. Partaking in the actual culture is valuable because if you read something in books, it's not the same as being there and experiencing it. It gives you a better picture and you can understand a music culture better. (Claire, 27/02/08)

It is really interesting because… through conducting this research, I revealed something new, which… I didn't really expect. (Morgan, 7/03/08)

about a group of people (community), which can address the people's beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, emotions, verbal and nonverbal communication and other social behaviour.

Ethnography is particularly suitable when the characteristics of a culture, or the outcomes of a phenomenon are unclear, unknown or unexplored. Many students, including **Tim, Claire** and **Morgan**, found this more exciting than conducting library research. Aiming at *discovery* through observing, interpreting and conceptualising, students examined a culture in a naturalistic setting to investigate people's social and cultural interactions. The objective is to emphasise and build upon the perspectives of the people studied, which students achieved through gaining an 'insider' view (emic perspective) in addition to outsider (etic) perspectives. **Lianne**, for example, expressed the importance given to the insider's viewpoint, which enabled her to discover people's unique perceptions about the music culture studied.

An ethnographic research project will require you to collect and organise original documentation (fieldnotes, transcribed interviews, recordings, photos, videos, etc); to conduct original analysis and interpretation of data collected in the chosen music culture; to propose a thesis statement (theoretical issue) supported throughout the paper and leading to a clear conclusion; and to relate your results to relevant literature, including internet sources. The result is a written representation, description and interpretation of some aspect of your chosen performing arts culture. A major goal in your ethnography is to understand a performing arts culture (or some part of it) from an insider's point of view. This project is therefore quite different from the usual, library-based research paper. It will require you to study (as a witness) people involved in music making and/or consumption 'in the field', rather than learning about it only from a book.

Long-term versus short-term ethnography

Depending on your studies, it is important to note that undergraduate students will probably conduct an ethnographic research project that is based locally and in an urban environment, and to be completed within a relatively short timespan (e.g. one semester). This is very different to ethnographic approaches rooted in anthropology, which traditionally focused on remote, rural communities while seeking full-time immersion over a long period of time (at least one year) into the community or culture studied. **Rebecca**, for example, spent several months in Zambia living with a local family. Such long-term research often enables ethnographers to become much more involved in the culture as *insiders* ('emic' perspective), allowing to gain deeper insight and understanding than might be possible over shorter timespans.[6]

Many undergraduate students felt overwhelmed by examples of researchers going into foreign countries to become cultural insiders. However, after completing their locally-based, shorter ethnographies, they appreciated more fully that ethnographic research can be done 'at home' in a shorter timespan, and that it can still be useful and less daunting than perhaps first anticipated. Whilst as a short-term researcher you will probably remain more of an *outsider* (also termed 'etic' perspective) to the culture studied,[7] most students nonetheless enjoyed the fact that the project is an *original* contribution to knowledge, and that they discovered most of the primary information, as opposed to a report that paraphrases or simply restates what others have found out about a topic.

In approaching an ethnographic research project, many students voiced concern and anxiety, as none had ever heard about or done an ethnographic project before, such as **Sarah, Claire** and **Morgan**. Generally,

My field research was pretty much 24 hours a day.... I was always around. I lived with a family of Zambians. If I wasn't talking with the mum and dad, then I was looking after the children. If I wasn't doing that, I was probably with the choir.... Pretty involved; not much rest. (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

It was quite daunting because it sounded like it was a lot of work, very time-consuming and very, very difficult. I was a little nervous at the beginning. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

It was entirely new to me... so I felt a bit nervous and a bit daunted. But because it was different, it was more exciting. (Claire, 27/02/08)

I felt a bit scared really, a bit intimidated.... It is more time consuming, and it can cost as well. (Morgan, 7/03/08)

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[6] Yet ethnographic researchers who are cultural insiders also often comment on the difficulties of maintaining an outsider's stance ('etic' perspective) that would allow them to keep a certain critical distance to the culture studied.

[7] Ethnographers have frequently commented on the problems encountered by outsiders to the culture studied, including lack of trust by people; concerns about the truthfulness of information provided by informants; not understanding the language, accent or dialect; and so on.

the best way to learn ethnography is by doing it. Often regarded as some form of 'rite of passage', you can really never be fully prepared for fieldwork, as you will deal with and rely on people during your research. You should always bear in mind that your own experience of ethnography will be unique, so that every fieldwork project will be different. The following sections will provide detailed practical advice on designing your own distinctive ethnographic project.

Designing an ethnographic research project

Research design involves a detailed set of questions and procedures, as well as a plan of action for the conduct of an ethnographic research project (Figure II-1). In designing your own research project, you should think about a number of issues, including the research base and the broad questions you wish to address and seek answers for (what); the field of study (where); the group of people who you wish to study and understand (who); the timeframe for your research (when); and the methods for data collection and writing-up (how).

Figure II- 1: Research Design

What: The research base

In identifying the base for your own research project, a good starting point is to formulate a number of ideas and questions that are broad and descriptive. These may arise from topics raised by your tutor, including the task provided for the conduct of an original research project. Ideas and questions for your own project may also arise from your involvement in a specific activity (e.g. a local drama group) or your interest in the activities of a specific group/community of people (e.g. the local gospel choir; the local indie music scene). As **Sarah** reflects here, the focus is often ambiguous and can emerge out of personal interest and intuition. Remind yourself of the specific characteristics of qualitative research, whereby the identification of a research problem evolves from the desire to *explore* problems from the participants' perspectives, and that little may be known about that problem.

In choosing a research base, you may also think about the *family* as a group of people and/or music culture, whereby some students like **Richard** focused on the ways in which a family experiences football matches, and the music that accompanies these. Or, you may consider a particular *ethnic group* as a culture in which music, drama or dance plays a significant role, including Chinese, African, Greek, Arabic or other ethnic groups. Alternatively, think about your *circle of friends* or your student network at university; or a group of people that is bound by their *sexuality* (e.g. gay groups). Is there something interesting you notice about their participation in music, drama or dance? Or, think about a specific *musical genre* that you like and the context in which this music is made/played/consumed. Examples may include Irish folk music; world music; rock music; dance and house; or other styles.

Or, you may want to consider music, dance or drama in a *religious context* (e.g. Christian pop); or instead chose a particular culture rooted within *regionalism* (e.g. the Merseybeat). Have you noticed anything interesting that may be explored and discovered in this area? You may also consider *commercialism* in choosing a culture where dance, drama and music play an important role. For

I picked a Brazilian music venue in London... Why? Don't really know. I kind of walked passed it a few times... and it just sounded like it would be an interesting thing and quite applicable to what we had to focus our ethnography on... the effect of globalization on a local music culture (Sarah, 27/02/08)

I was watching the football and I just got the idea; I thought it could be quite different, quite interesting.... It came from my own past experiences of being in a football crowd and seeing it.... I am an Everton fan, but it was nearer and cheaper, and I actually thought if I went to an Everton match, I'd be concentrating on the football rather than the actual crowd. So I thought I'd just go to Tranmere and I wouldn't be as bothered by what's happening. (Richard, 22/02/08)

example, a recording studio (e.g. Liverpool Parr Street) may be an interesting site for studying people's interactions and experiences. Within this category, you may also choose a local band/musician, dance group, theatre company in their quest 'to make it' and research the ways in which commercialism impacts on their behaviours and strategies. Alternatively, think about whether the *life story* of an artist (dancer, musician, actor) may reveal an interesting ethnographic portrait of that person's concepts, beliefs, behaviours and experiences. Remember that the overall purpose of ethnographic research is quite open-ended. In your project, ask broad and general questions and seek to understand participants' experiences, beliefs and concepts.

Where and who: The research site and people

Where to conduct your explorations for research may instantaneously arise from the previous step, and identifying the people you wish to include in your research may be equally transparent at this point. Thus finding an accessible research site simultaneously involves identifying a group of people that can be found there and approached for inclusion in the research project. Many students chose a research site that they were already familiar with and felt comfortable with, as **Morgan**'s comment highlights. In selecting the participants for your study, you may think about certain criteria or characteristics that are of interest to you (do you have a similar musical taste as that group; or, do you have an interest in the activities of that group?).

However, many students also commented on the fact that researching a familiar culture made it difficult to discover new and original information, as they were already so close to the setting, people and events. You should therefore try to take a step back and observe with a curious and intriguing mind so as to note occurances that may otherwise be common-sense and normal to you. For this reason, some students, such as **Claire** quoted here, selected a music culture that they were less familiar with. Yet here, Claire found it more difficult to relate to the people and their music.

Whether you select a familiar research site or one that is outside of your own experiences will depend on your affinity and personality. As revealed in **Tim's**

> I was a bit scared about going too far out of my comfort zone.... I was a bit scared to go to a rock concert or so speaking to people I didn't really feel comfortable around. (Morgan, 7/03/08)

> The music they [cover bands] were playing [is] not my generation, like Pearl Jam and The Who, stuff way back. Although there was a Bon Jovi tribute I went to but I'm not a Jovi fan.... If I would have known the music better, maybe I could have understood the reaction of audience a bit better. Obviously I wasn't born then, so it was a bit odd to see 40-year old men pogoing to different punk songs, so I felt like 'What's going on?' I was never part of that culture, so I don't fully understand it, and don't fully understand what it means to them. (Claire, 27/02/08)

reflections, both choices have advantages and disadvantages, and you should critically weigh them up according to your own criteria and standards. **Dominique** too reflected on the difference between being an insider or an outsider to the culture studied, as either stance will have an impact on the success of your research.

The selection of an interesting research site is followed by the practicalities of actually locating the group of people. Here, you may look for easily identifiable places (e.g. a local theatre; a local music club). Many students commented that locating people is relatively simple, as they could search for contact details on the internet. Yet there may also be instances in which the people to be included in your study do not belong to a naturally bounded and geographically defined place (e.g. a virtual fan club; the rock music scene). Here, people are bound artificially through their shared concepts and beliefs that inform and reflect their shared identity (e.g. the hippie sub-culture; the Goth scene). Think about how to bind and operationally define the group of people, and how to locate some of this group's people for inclusion in your study. You could, for example, start by searching for specific societies and organisations, as well as discussion lists and forums.

In identifying the people for your research, you should also consider how many participants to include. Consider whether you want to study all members of the group (how big is the group, and is it too big to study in its entirety?), or whether a smaller number of key people would be sufficient for your study. Do you want to study representative members of the group, and if so, are the characteristics of the group known well enough to identify such members? While there is no general prescriptive rule for the number of people to be included in ethnographic research (studies can involve only one, but also hundreds of participants), you should consider *saturation*, that is, whether the number of participants included in your study is *sufficient* within the context of your specific project and for answering your research questions.

There are further logistical considerations in preparing for your research. You should critically assess how easy or difficult it is to gain access to the group of people by considering demographic differences (age, gender, religion, social

If you're already familiar, you're already going to have preconceptions of the place and people… so a lot of what I wrote up I already knew…. It didn't really excite me at all…. I wish I had gone somewhere different, completely different…. But it's quite difficult, because going without any knowledge of the place is quite useful, but then to go completely without previous knowledge is a little stupid too. I don't know. (Tim, 20/02/08)

I think it made them [the people studied] feel more comfortable in their responses because I wasn't like some reporter…. But in the same respect, because there was that ease of us knowing each other for three, four years, I think I could have missed some stuff, you know? (Dominique, 22/02/08)

You need money to do it. If people are doing gigs and stuff like that, you need money to get there and back, and if it's a night out, you need money... If I'm going out every night to do different gigs... it's expensive; it can get really expensive. And it is time-consuming. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

Doing the research was kind of tricky because it was back in London. I had to wait until I went home for reading week and Christmas... (Sarah, 27/02/08)

I wished I knew how time-consuming it can be, especially writing up notes and the transcript. I didn't think it would be that time-consuming because it took virtually a whole day to write up the transcript, and the fieldnotes as well, because I had to put them into some order.... I thought that it was going to be easier. (Richard, 22/02/08)

background). Consider whether you can find a group of people with the attributes that you are interested in, and whether you can gain permission to study the group. Will the people be willing to talk to you? Also, think about what expenses may occur from travelling to the research site as well as during your stays. As **Dominique** reminds us here, attending night clubs involves costs for admission, drinks and travel. If you decide to study virtual fan clubs, you need appropriate equipment. You should therefore assess beforehand whether you have the resources to do a study with your chosen group.

When: The timeframe for research

The timeframe in which you conduct your research is equally important when designing your ethnographic research project. As a student, your study will instantaneously be determined by the university's academic calendar and the particular semester(s) in which you should complete the project. However, students who have not done this type of research before often do not allow enough time to complete the project. Scheduling the data collection is quite different from a library research project. You should therefore avoid cramming the collection and organisation of documentation into a few days at the end of semester. Instead, you should critically assess whether the activities, events or situations you wish to focus on will actually happen within the timeframe of your study. Will you be able to meet the participants during the time of your study? Do you have sufficient time to implement the study? As **Sarah** noted about her project, data collection was confined to specific times, so that the success of the project depended heavily on Sarah's commitment during these short periods.

Most students were surprised by the amount of time needed for an ethnographic research project, as stated by **Richard** about his own project. *Effective* time management is thus crucial for the success of your study. Drawing a time line to lay out your plans for data collection, analysis and writing-up will help you in planning the individual steps necessary to conduct your own project (Figure II-2).

January

December

Edit writings for final
report

Re-visit all documentation

November

Continue collection
of data, yet focus on
refined questions

Generate overarching
concepts and ideas

October

Conduct interviews and
observations

Fieldnotes/interviews

Submit report

Gain entry

Write fieldnotes/ transcribe
Interviews

Begin writing-up
(analysis & interpretation)

September

Organise visits
and interviews

Begin recursive analysis

Re-visit research site,
interview data, fieldnotes, etc
and generate theoretical
conclusions

Submit research proposal
(What, Where, Who,
When, How)

Conduct initial
observations

Continue literature search

Refine questions

In-class presentation

Seek ethical approval

Start writing fieldnotes

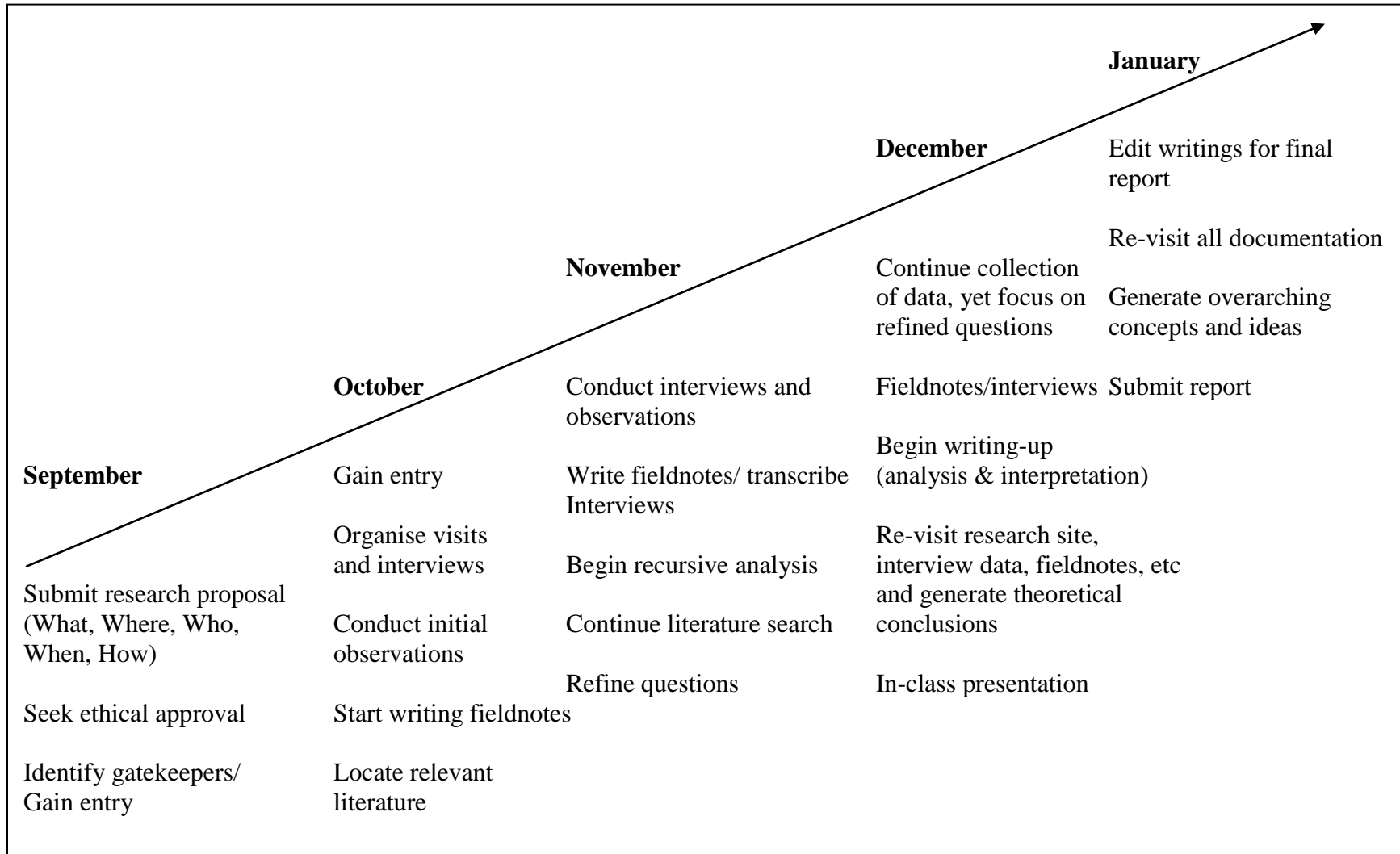Identify gatekeepers/
Gain entry

Locate relevant
literature

Figure II- 2: Example of Timeline for an Ethnographic Research Project

How: The collection of documentation

Ethnographic research projects involve the collection of a range of documentation, which typically include fieldnotes made during/after visits at the research site and interview transcripts. Thus the *most essential* data collection techniques in ethnographic research projects involve participant-observation and informal interviewing.

- *Participant-observation* aims at capturing performances, events or situations as they happen, and the meanings of these events to the people involved. During your participation in a chosen culture, you should capture the activities and their sequences; the physical settings and participation structures; the behaviours of individuals and groups of people; and the conversations and interactions between people. Use written or taped fieldnotes and records of informal interviews and conversations. You may also use video records, photographs, maps and observational checklists. Your documentation should depict the physical settings; acts and activities; interaction patterns; and peoples' meanings, beliefs and emotions during the event(s).

- *Informal interviewing* seeks to capture in-depth information on selected topics or personal histories by the people involved. Try to get a sense of peoples' cultural knowledge and beliefs, and ask them to describe cultural practices. Approach representative individuals and key informants/ topic experts for in-depth conversations, which may be unstructured or semi-structured (depending on how far you have focused your research topic). Ask open-ended questions and use open-ended prompts to elicit elaborate answers and responses from interviewees.

Complementing the above methods for data collection, you may also collect documents, maps, logs, artefacts, drawings and charts. You can also make use of audiovisual equipment so as to complement your documentation with photographs, and video- and audio-recordings of events, situations or performances. In some instances, it may also be useful to collect survey data by conducting headcounts of people, assessing their gender, age, professional background, and the like. Remember that the collection of data in qualitative research is particularly suitable for general, continuously emerging questions to permit the participants to generate responses. The main focus is on gathering text data and images from a small number of individuals and/or research sites. Note that the subsequent chapter will provide more detailed discussions on ethnographic data collection methods.

The role of literature

So far, it has been suggested that the literature review plays a minor role in your writings, yet that literature is important in guiding your ideas and focusing your research. Reading relevant literature will help you better to understand your own research scope and aims. At the same time, literature is useful in generating ideas about certain lines of thinking you may derive from your data. In reading relevant theories by other researchers you can explore how others have approached a similar topic and written about it in a meaningful way. To this end, literature is useful in four ways in ethnographic research:

- Literature is important in seeking ideas about and focusing your research project, as in **Samuel**'s example here.

- Reading relevant literature provides important background information. For example, reading in preparation to fieldwork and interviews will help you to be already aware of settings, events and people, which will enable you to ask more intelligent questions, rather than giving the impression of not knowing anything about the culture and people.

- Reading sample ethnographies, as **Tim**'s reflection exemplifies, may help shaping your own style of ethnographic writing and in developing writing skills that are appropriate and attractive for your discipline.

- In engaging with relevant literature, you will be able to juxtapose what other people have found out about your topic with your own results from ethnographic research. This will give you greater ownership of theoretical ideas through a process of integrating theory and research/practice.

> Literature is important in my research, reading books. They are providing the basis for my research. Like I saw photographs of people dancing at the moon festivals.... Seeing people dancing means that the music was really there.... So books provide the basis for my research. (Samuel, 2/02/08)

> I'll go and look at some previous stuff [literature] that's been written and see how they've written it up. (Tim, 20/02/08)

Thus engaging in relevant literature means that you will be able to undertake a better project if you are familiar with research on a similar topic, or with literature on research methods. Whilst you probably know how to approach literature searches in university libraries, you may also consider asking your research participants to recommend relevant books, articles and other materials written about your chosen culture.

You should begin with the reading of literature at the early stage of your research project. Continue the reviewing of literature throughout the writing-up of your ethnographic report, as literature will be important for conceptualising your

results. In reviewing the literature for your own research project, you should consider the following steps:

- *Locating the literature*: This initial step involves to limit the scope of literature by considering the breadth or depth needed for your own research project, and to clearly define its relevance (e.g. what?).

- *Searching within literature*: In this second step, you should engage in the scoping, defining, and articulating and structuring of the literature.

- *Managing the information overload*: This is a crucial element during your engagement with literature, which involves judging/sifting through the literature and keeping a record of what aspects or quotes in the literature you find useful for your own project. You should be aware that your judgment will be impacted on by a number of factors, including:

   o Title, abstract and type of literature

   o Credibility and status of publication or author

   o Impact

   o Relevance to your own research topic, research methods, etc

   o Date, year and place of publication

- *Appropriating the literature*: Whilst ethnographers are less concerned with writing a literature review at the beginning of an ethnographic report, the appropriation of literature is nonetheless a crucial aspect in ethnography. This requires your intellectual processing of the literature, involving you in *critical* reading (rather than description); reinforcing, challenging and subverting meanings and/or arguments in your writings; and identifying gaps and *new* directions, ideas, themes as a basis for your own research.

The following is an excerpt from **Lianne**'s ethnography on the hip hop culture in Liverpool, which exemplifies the ways in which she critically interrogates existing literature about this music culture, and juxtaposes what other people have found about hip hop culture with her own results from ethnographic research:

> I found this [ethnography] to be the most beneficial form of research because it allowed me to understand the perspective of actual hip hop listeners rather than people who tended to observe from the outside to comment on the music without any prior knowledge about the culture. I often found books about this music genre to be very biased and negative when discussing the music and its fans. They often imposed their ideologies on readers and influenced their opinions on hip hop…. An example of this preconceived stereotypical representation of hip hop culture is seen

in George's work where he declares 'Hip hop's typical narrator is a young, angry, horny male who is often disdainful of, or at least, uninterested in commitments of any kind' (George 1998:5). Through speaking to hip hop fans, however, I often found them to be... very defendant towards the music and its representation in the media. The key arguments expressed were that hip hop is a performance, and sex is what sells, therefore these rappers are simply presenting what is... already portrayed in other media forms such as films or other music genres.... This argument is reflected in Brackett's work, arguing that 'in this sense, the music is no more sexist than your fathers, brothers, husbands, friends and lovers, and, in many cases, more up front. As an unerringly precise reflection of the community, hip hop's sexist thinking will change when the community changes' (Brackett 2005:398).... Many hip hop fans were willing to participate in this research as they saw this as an opportunity to voice their opinions and protect the reputation of hip hop... (excerpt from Lianne's ethnography).

Preparing the project

Gaining entry and consent

The people who I contacted were quite easy and open about it. The guy... said he had spoken to students before and helped them out with different things. And he was very keen to talk about himself and what he'd done in the past... so he was quite forthcoming with information.... They were very willing to talk about themselves and the place. (Claire, 27/02/08)

I contacted the government to speak to them, but it is not easy actually.... If I don't prepare official letters, the Korean officer would not respond to me....They wanted to know why.... It's very difficult [because] they asked if it's necessary to have the interview with them.... They were afraid that they would provide confidential information about the cultural policy. It is a secret... They were really afraid [and] reluctant. (Hyunseok, 10/02/08)

Gaining entry is a crucial step prior to the collection of documentation. This involves making initial contact with your chosen group of people, culture or situation, and establishing contacts with experts (artists, organisers, audiences) who can provide first-hand information in the field. Whilst many students were initially anxious about approaching people whom they had never met before, they actually had, as in **Claire**'s example, overwhelmingly positive experiences, as the people whom they asked to participate in their study were often very willing to do so.

However, there were also some instances when students experienced difficulties in gaining entry to the research site and people. **Hyunseok**, for example, conducted research into the Korean mask drama, specifically the differences between performances in a traditional context and those instigated by the Korean government. To this end, Hyunseok approached Korean government officials, yet experienced some difficulties in establishing contacts with them, as exemplified in the quote.

In seeking entry to the research site, it is also vital to take into account *ethical considerations*. Codes of ethics protect the people studied against treatment that would be harmful—physically, financially, emotionally, or in terms of their reputation. Remember that the benefits of the study should outweigh its risks! You should always ask permission and consent from the people you approach, explaining to them what you are doing, what you wish to find out, and what you will do with the results. Get approval from people about your presence as researcher and ensure that they understand the risks (if any) that may arise from the research. Inform the people about the purpose and aims of the study, the use of results, and the likely social consequences of the study on their lives.

Allow the people to refuse and withdraw from participation, and always protect and guarantee peoples' rights to privacy, confidentiality or anonymity, particularly when research and personal relationship becomes blurred, as in **Rebecca**'s example here. Offer to share the final report with the people studied, thus giving participants the chance to check whether they have been represented accurately. Also, consider issues of reciprocity and reward, including acknowledgement in the final report.

> The women would be scared to say things about the men, so I had to do a lot of my research confidentially and really anonymous because if it got back to the pastor, or if it got back to their mum and dad or husband or whatever, they would get into a lot of trouble.
> (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

Prior to approaching the people for your study, you should apply for ethical approval to your university, and prepare a consent form together with a participant information sheet:[8]

- A *consent form*[9] is obligatory of good practice and should normally be presented for signatures by those who are involved in the consent process, e.g. the participant or informant, the researcher and a witness, thereby confirming that they have read and understand the information provided for the study; had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily; understand that participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect legal rights; understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential; and agree to take part in the study.

- A *participant information sheet*[10] should normally include information on the purpose of the study; what will happen to participants; any risks involved in participation; details of how confidentiality will be ensured; and a clear statement that participation is voluntary and that they are able to withdraw at any stage.

In preparing a consent form and participant information sheet, you should consider an appropriate design and word length. Depending on your project, you may design short forms, providing only relevant information for people to read, specifically when you assume that too complex or lengthy documentation might make people feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, a more detailed information sheet and consent form can make you appear professional. It may reflect that you

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[8] Information on the application process for ethical approval by students on undergraduate courses at LJMU can be found here http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93127.htm.

[9] You can download a sample consent form on the LJMU website http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/Consentformandguidancevs1March_2008.doc.

[10] You can download a sample participant information sheet on the LJMU website http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/ParticipantInformationSheetvs1March_2008.doc.

We brought them into the room, told them that they could leave the interview whenever they wanted to, because they didn't have to do it, it was voluntary and then just interviewed them from that. (Liz, Lauren, Lucy, 1/08/08)

care about the people about whom you will write, and they might like the documentation.

In less formal instances it may even be appropriate to gain permission and consent orally, for example when you know your participants well (e.g. friends, family), such as in the example presented by **Liz**, **Lauren** and **Lucy**. Verbal consent suffices when you are totally certain that people have understood your project and are willing to participate in your study.

Research with young people

Your ethnographic research may also focus on the experiences and perceptions of young people whose age is below eighteen. In this case, you have the responsibility to obtain ethical approval and health and safety approval from your university prior to the conduct of research. Since children are below the age of consent, written consent must be given by the child's parent or guardian. Consent must be given either on the university-approved forms or on a form which has been approved by the university's ethics committee. It is also important to remember that children may tell you about risky situations or occurrences that their parents have no knowledge about. In such instances, you should instantly consult the parents, or seek advice from your tutor and the research department at your university.

Considering health and safety during research

Being students... be prepared that you've got enough money, and you're not going to become [drunk]... because loads of them [male participants] were like 'do you want us to buy you a drink?', and we were tempted to say 'yes'.... So try not to be led away from what you're trying to do. (Lianne, 2/02/08).

Ethnographic research requires your actual presence in the research site during fieldwork. In practical work carried out in places which are not under university control, it is crucial to consider health and safety issues. Prior to embarking on research, you should think about and be aware of any hazards associated with fieldwork and should have a clear understanding of the purpose of your field trips. At the same time, you have a responsibility to adhere to sensible standards of behaviour and should be aware of the university standards expected of you. It is imperative that you co-operate and behave responsibly in order to reduce the risk of accidents. Remember, for the duration of your research, you are representing your university.

Fieldwork requires you to make your own way to places and venues, and to make arrangements to get home. You should always ensure that you travel safely. When returning home from visits in nightclubs, for example, you should have enough money for a taxi ride so as to avoid walking around the city at night. As **Lianne** cautioned here, you should be sensible in your consumption of alcohol so as to remain in control over risky situations. It is also recommended to refrain from approaching people who appear to be under the influence of other narcotic substances. **Morgan**, for example, focused predominantly on observations in the nightclub and only interviewed people whom she felt comfortable with and could trust. If your chosen music culture involves the consumption of illegal drugs, you should distance yourself from it. Involvement in illegal practices is not permitted, and research involving drugs will normally not be approved by the university. You should generally avoid any situations that may have

consequences for your personal health and safety, for example in **Christa**'s research conducted in a nightclub where there are frequent fights between female attendees.

If your research involves fieldwork in a remote culture, you should also consider health precautions in relation to rare illnesses, such as malaria. Obtain sufficient information about any potential health risks prior to embarking on fieldwork. Ensure to arrange relevant vaccination and take appropriate precautions. You should also bring medication, first aid kits, and other remedies to your fieldwork. Also make sure that you possess the correct travel documents (e.g. a valid passport and/or visa). Seek advice from the passport office and relevant embassy as to the necessary precautions for travel into your chosen country.

In adhering appropriately to health and safety issues, you should also attend all briefings and lectures related to your ethnographic research project. You should also familiarise yourself with the Codes of

Most of [my research] was watching because I was worried about approaching people on their nights out when they were drinking. I wanted to be careful.... So I thought dance was a good issue because you don't need to talk to people to see their bodily interactions, and then from that, I found a lot of literature... about dance and hip hop.... That backed up what I had seen myself.
(Morgan, 7/03/08)

I was thinking about safety quite a lot when I was there, because it is more associated with working class people... and people will just wear tracksuits.... So it can be quite rough. Like in Fudge, there's usually at least two fights of girls on the dance floor, so [LAUGHS] you just see the bouncers running over.
(Christa, 27/02/08)

I first went with my mum who came with me a couple of times. Then I went with two of my other friends.... It made it a bit more relaxed... because it would have been more daunting just going on my own. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

Practice for Health and Safety published by your university.[11] Furthermore, you should indicate any medical conditions or circumstances that may affect your ability to undertake the activity and carry any necessary medical cards (if applicable). Whilst carrying out individual fieldwork is essentially your responsibility, the university should be the first port of call if there are any problems, personal injury or illness prior to or during the research.

You should consider and adhere to the following key points during your project:

- Ensure minimum risk to you and your participants;

- Conduct your observations/interviews in a public space;

- Go to do the research with another person, e.g. another student, family members, friends, as in **Sarah**'s example here;

- Take a mobile phone;

- Make sure at least 2 people have your mobile phone number AND that they know where you have gone to do the research. Tell them beforehand approximately how long you will be;

- Conduct your observations/interviews on/with people that you know and/or trust.

Finally, at LJMU, we ask our students to carefully consider the health and safety advice and codes of practice, and to sign the below sheet.

Practical Research Project

In preparation to the research project, I have read and fully understood the 'Key considerations'; the Health and Safety Codes of Practice and the Ethical Codes of Practice laid out by Liverpool John Moores University (Appendices I, II and III).

I take responsibility to adhere to sensible standards of behaviour (including respectful behaviour towards the people included in my research). I am aware that I am representing the university.

I hereby confirm that I will comply with the considerations and codes of practice prior to and during the research project.

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Sign & print name   Date, Place

Figure II- 3: Student Signature Sheet

[11] At LJMU, the Codes of Practice for Health and Safety (Fieldwork) can be downloaded here http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/HSU/HSU_docs/SCP_14._Fieldwork.pdf.

Validity and reliability in ethnography

Some ethnographers (particularly those from the social sciences and other 'hardish' sciences) seek to increase the scientific rigor of their research through a process called *triangulation*, by which multiple sources of data serve as confirmation or corroboration for each other. Triangulation aims at creating redundancy by confirming and cross-checking the accuracy of data that has been obtained from one source with the data collected from other, different sources. Triangulation ultimately aims at increasing the credibility, that is, the validity and reliability of the research. These are parameters derived from and used in quantitative research approaches:

- *Validity* is concerned with the accuracy of findings and the degree to which research actually measures what it proposed to measure.

- *Reliability* is concerned with whether the results of a study can be duplicated or replicated.

A concern with validity and reliability is problematic in ethnography and qualitative research more generally. The view of many ethnographers is that validity and quality are important considerations, but that ethnography must be judged by criteria that are more appropriate to it.

For this reason, reliability (as defined above) plays a less important role in research in the performing arts, and in the soft sciences more generally. Here, there exists a general belief that it is impossible to make sweeping generalisations on individualised experience that is located and constructed within *specific* sociocultural contexts. Instead, it is believed that people's experiences, opinions, concepts and behaviours cannot be replicated, and that individual difference is regarded as more important than seeking explanations of similarities between people. At the same time, ethnography is a *human* process, a process of building relationships and trust, and the ability to interpret what people say. Humans are unpredictable; ethnographers thus always expect the unexpected; they never know what happens next. In ethnography in the performing arts, it is thus less common to seek reliability. The aim is not to represent an entire population, but instead to capture a snapshot in a particular time and place.

However, this is not to suggest that ethnography lacks validity. Validity—that is, the accuracy to which a culture in the performing arts is represented in ethnography—may be achieved by choosing a research design that is appropriate for the context of the study and questions. To this end, it is important that the people have the trust to reveal honest information. As in

I presented it [ethnography] to the two of them [Kof and Yaw]; I showed them the whole thing…. They'll use it because anything that's written up on them is archived… and it's good publicity for them as well…. So they were happy with it when I showed it to them… because they can use it to show people [as] evidence of what they do. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

Dominique's project, you may encourage feedback from the people studied so as to gain a further level of validity, as it is ultimately the people studied and written about who will be able to comment on the accuracy of your findings. More generally, the quality of ethnography can be assessed by three broad criteria:

- Your ethnographic project should demonstrate a sensitivity to the context in which your study is situated by considering relevant literature, people's responses, the relationship between researcher and participant, and the sociocultural context.

- Your ethnographic project should demonstrate your commitment during fieldwork; rigour and thoroughness; and transparency and coherence.

- Your ethnographic project should demonstrate its impact and importance both to the people studied and the academic community who will read your report.

Truth in ethnography

Within the context of validity and reliability, it is also important to briefly mention the notions of 'truth'. Until fairly recently, ethnographers have been concerned with the comparative study of cultures and societies that was based on work 'at home' while seeking objective knowledge about ethnic, exotic or marginal 'others'. Also referred to as 'armchair analysis' (Merriam 1964), the approach was quite *external* to the field experience, which resonates with the science paradigm of the modern era, a paradigm that has persisted to the twentieth century. In collecting data as objectively observable fact from marginal communities and societies in the field (both in the West and in non-Western cultures), ethnographers in the West sought to support Western ethnocentric views of cosmic order. The aim was to establish some kind of universal, objective truth about the world by tracing the evolutionary origins of music for example, or mapping global culture areas.

The coming of the postmodern era, however, has challenged the notion of 'absolute truth' by means of scientific objectivity and rational thought, and since the mid-twentieth century, ethnographers (now making up the so-called post-postmodern generation that include feminist theories, phenomenology, reflexive and dialogic ethnography, and others) began to adopt new models for ethnography that involve the fieldwork methodology of collecting data to support goals *internal* to the field experience. They typically challenge the superiority of Western ethnocentric worldviews and colonialist, exploitative nature of previous approaches to research. They reject the positivist science paradigm that conceives of human culture as objectively observable. Instead, ethnographers recognise the different—and equally valid—worldviews held by different societies, cultures and subcultures, and celebrate the existence of different kinds of truth as they are

constructed and made meaningful by its people. The goal of ethnography is to enter the subjective world of people, and to see the world from their point of view.

Reflexivity and auto-ethnography

Most postmodern ethnographers today also have a strong concern with self-reflexivity. Reflexive ethnographers wish to understand reflexively their positions in the culture studied, and to represent this position in their ethnographic report. They are aware of *experience* and the personal context in which people have experiences. Thus besides a concern with understanding other people, reflexive ethnography is also about the experience-based position of the ethnographer herself/himself. In approaching the ethnography of experience, reflexive ethnographers write themselves into their ethnographic reports, while taking a subjective and non-objectivist, biased stance to their encounters with people in the field. Ethnographers make themselves visible in the texts they write ('being a fly in the soup') and provide evidence upon which their interpretations are based so as to make public how they have come to know what they know.

The ethnographer's concern with one's own experience is taken to an extreme in auto-ethnography, characterised by self-inscriptions on the part of the ethnographer.[12] Here, ethnographers completely reject the writer's right to write about any experience other than her or his own, a concern that has grown out of ethical considerations and calls for democratisation of representation. In auto-ethnography, authors present accounts of events, interactions and relationships in which they are intimately involved. One's research participant is oneself. To this end, auto-ethnographers write about their own lived personal and emotional experience of events and social interactions. While such ethnographies have at times been criticised as 'author-saturated', they can convey an immediacy and intensity in the author's feelings and thoughts, which might not be conveyed through descriptions of behaviours about other people.

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[12] Derived from auto-ethnography is autobiography, which specifically focuses on the ethnographer's own life writing or life history.

Writing a research proposal

Initially, I put things like 'to test and prove my results'... but [I learnt] that that's not ethnography.... You're not trying to test a hypothesis; you find out a hypothesis, if that makes sense. (Tim, 20/02/08)

Prior to embarking on your ethnographic research, you should prepare a research proposal (e.g. 300 – 500 words for a 2,000 word report) taking into consideration the steps for research and pertinent issues discussed in the previous chapters. Think about a possible topic and prepare a rough plan for undertaking the proposed project. Remember that instead of aiming at measuring and proving a specific hypothesis, ethnographers seek to understand the perspectives and experiences of the people studied through *open-ended* exploration and discovery. The overall aim and specific objectives of your research project should thus be formulated in more general, broad and open-ended ways, instead of aiming to test and prove a prior hypothesis, as described here by **Tim**.

The research abstract or proposal should include the following (though you do not need to adhere to the order specified here):

- describe the overall aim of your ethnographic project (research base);

- identify literature *relevant* to your proposed research project, and assess the extent to which your proposed research may fill a gap in the literature or a need for the particular research (context);

- elaborate on the specific objectives of the project (what, where, who);

- specify the research methods you will use in order to achieve the objectives (how);

- consider codes of ethics in your proposed research project (ethics);

- indicate the timeframe in which you will conduct the project (when).

In preparing your proposal, remember that ethnography is quite a complex and multifaceted process that typically takes place in multilayered contexts. When conducting an ethnographic research project, you should focus on an individual person or a small group, which in turn should be understood within the context of the community or organisation to which the person belongs, and this in turn should be contextualised within the culture of the community more generally. Thus a problem or question is to be addressed in a localised population. Finally, remember that ethnography is a qualitative research method that typically adopts an *interpretive* paradigm so as to elicit meanings by formulating initial ideas into a formative or local theory.

Preparing a presentation

In the performing arts, both written and oral modes of presentation are essential. For this reason, and prior to completion of the ethnographic report, you might be asked to prepare and deliver a short presentation in class that reflects what you have been able to learn thus far about your chosen music culture. An oral presentation of your project will enable other students to provide constructive feedback and critique related to your research. You should use your data collection and other resources you have found so far, including academic literature, journalistic reviews, visits to clubs or concerts, interactions with fans, internet exploration, online chats, etc, and prepare a presentation on your findings. In talking about your fieldwork and data collection, you should show your thinking on how pivotal issues and themes have arisen in the make-up of the performers, audiences and other participants. You should also show your planned approach of writing up the collected data and documentation in a coherent report.

We did presentations... and I think that helps because it shows the teacher what you're going to do. It also *clarifies* what you are going to do, because in a presentation you have to be short and snappy. You have to know the different stages, and that really helps. I found that really, really helpful even though some people don't like doing it…. It just helped me to pull it together…. When I did my presentation for gender I got quite a high mark for it, so it's like a boost to actually go and finish it…. It gave me more clarity in what to do next. It was a reference point for me as well when writing the actual essay at the end. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

Whilst a formal presentation may be somewhat daunting, as **Dominique** reflects here, most students appreciated the opportunity to gain feedback from their peers and tutors, which can act as reassurance that they collect relevant and sufficient data and documentation, and can help clarifying the most suitable approach and best strategy for writing up. And, of course, a good presentation mark can also be an excellent motivator for finishing the project. The following criteria serve as a guideline when preparing and delivering a student presentation on your ethnographic research:

- Evidence of data collection, and clear summary of research methods, including fieldnotes from participant-observation; interview transcripts; audio/ video-recordings; any other material;

- Evidence of some analysis and interpretation, and logical sequencing of argument and content of study; e.g. What have you been able to learn about the music culture, including performers, audiences and other people involved? How did pertinent issues arise, and why? What will you write up?;

- Style of presentation, and structure of presentation, including vocal delivery; audience address; audiovisual aids; timing.

CHAPTER III. DOING ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is a peculiarly social endeavour, resulting from human interaction. This is the focus of this chapter, which considers the methodological foundations for the conduct of ethnographic research. Two central means of data collection are explored, namely participant-observation and informal interviewing. This is followed by introducing research approaches more *specific* to the performing arts, namely performance ethnography and ethnodrama.

The chapter also considers the impact of technology in the age of globalisation, and, with this, the characteristics of virtual ethnography. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the practicalities of capturing ethnographic data through fieldnotes and audiovisual techniques, which leads to a brief sub-section on visual ethnography and, more specifically, ethnographic film that has become an important subfield among some scholars in the performing arts.

The chapter concludes with pivotal discussions on being an ethical ethnographer. In ethnography, the researcher is the primary tool for collecting primary data. The success of the ethnographic project is thereby often determined by the researcher's personal characteristics whilst engaging with people in the field. Here, specific focus will be placed on how the ethnographer's personal, professional and philosophical characteristics may affect access to information, and what strategies the ethnographer may adapt in the field. The discussions thereby address the ethical responsibilities for which ethnographers must account for in ethnography. The chapter comes to a close with brief discussions on effective data management.

Ethnographic research methods

The previous chapter noted that the most *essential* data collection techniques in ethnographic research involve *participant-observation* in the culture studied and *informal interviewing* of people belonging to that culture, which are particularly suitable for *discovery* and *exploration* when little is known about a cultural phenomenon. In the performing arts, ethnographers also often complement such cultural participant-observation with more creative, performative participant-observation (performance ethnography) or applied ethnography (ethnodrama). You will now be introduced to these general and more specialised ethnographic research methods.

Participant-observation

Participant-observation is a process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day routine activities of the people studied. It enables the ethnographic researcher to identify and build relationships with the people over a longer period of time. Students, such as **Claire** and **Sarah**, often commented on the usefulness of their immersion in a music culture whilst observing and getting to know the setting and people, yet also noted that this requires plenty of time. Whilst time-consuming, participant-observation is nonetheless of significant value as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the social dynamics and physical boundaries, and to gain cultural experiences from the 'inside' (emic perspectives).

> You have to give yourself plenty of time... doing the actual fieldwork, so you can become more involved.... Going three times a week or so would be better to be familiar in there. (Claire, 27/02/08)
>
> I started with three observational visits, just going there looking at the bar itself and the kind of people who went there. I noted just any minute details that might end up being relevant. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

In general, the term participant-observation is an amalgamation of participation and observation:

- During *participation,* the researcher is present in and interacts with the people when an activity or event is occurring. The degree of participation often depends on the research setting and questions, as well as the researcher's characteristics. In some instances, you may find yourself nearly totally and completely immersed as a full-time resident or member (e.g. in your own family; in a group of students sharing the same flat). In other instances, by contrast, your active participation may be rather part-time (e.g. the local theatre group that meets once a week). Either form of participation is valid and important in ethnographic research.

- *Observation* refers to what is noted through the eyes of the ethnographer. It is important to acknowledge that your observations are always filtered through interpretive frames, and are never objective and neutral. What you observe may depend on theoretical frameworks (e.g. being framed by the assignment question). Your observations will also depend on your ability to pay scrupulous attention to detail, and your observation, documentation and interpretation skills. Equally, what you notice/omit will depend on your awareness of own biases, and (quite practically) on the opportunities for observation.

As indicated here, it is important to consider *what exactly* should be noted during participant-observations. Indeed, many ethnographers are uncertain as to their foci, and will thus document their observations accurately and in concrete detail without prematurely imposing any categories. More specifically, you should focus on three broad categories, namely the setting, the event(s) and the people:

- In terms of the setting, note down the location and physical layout, and observe any interesting aspects of the physical environment. Draw a map of the physical environment to record the context of the event.

- Document the event(s) in detail by noting for whom the event is held, the order of activities, where the event/activities is held, when and why the event occurred, etc.

- Focus on who is attending the event. Here, document people's appearance (clothing, hairstyle, jewellery), income (choice of car, residence), lifestyle (leisure activities), educational level (speech and language), type of employment, etc so as to gain a sense of socioeconomic differences between the participants. You may also conduct a head-count and take a census by listing and enumerating types of people, material items, locations, and the like.

Generally, your observations will depend on the stage you are at in your research. As in **Rebecca**'s example, in the early stages of your project you should focus and make notes on everything and anything as you will not know what aspects of it will be significant in your writing-up. As you get further into the project, you should become more selective because there may be an aspect you know you will focus on in your report. At the same time, your observations may change over time from being descriptive and anecdotal, becoming instead more analytical and conceptual as you engage in more critical reflections and ideas, and the connections between them.

Performance ethnography

Scholars in the humanities often wish to gain in-depth cultural understandings during participant-observations of events, situations and activities. The possibilities that ethnography affords to the researcher are even further extended in dance, drama and music. Here, ethnography may involve participation in actual performance as a privileged means of access to embodied knowledge and fellow feeling, which can also lead to performative outcomes. Performance can sensitise the

I'd note some obvious things, like what the building was like (i.e. was it a rich-looking building or poorer one), where about it was in town, what kind of people went there, what kinds of songs they were singing, was it in English or a tribal language.... After some time, I'd write down if somebody had spoken to me about something, what their concerns were, or issues and aspects that were interesting in a specific line of work. (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

Sometimes you go along and randomly see things, like a group of musicians on the back of a truck and think 'great' and take a picture.... Other times, spontaneously the kids would start singing and dancing.... That was how I learnt a lot of my songs just by watching the kids, and starting them off by saying 'let's sing a song'. Then they would start singing a banana song or something, and I would watch them, listen and record.... So you don't always have to talk to people to find out information. It is just as beneficial to just sit and watch what's going on. (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

> In joining in [the church choir] and helping I actually got to know the people. They are actually quite a bit more open to talk to you. When I led the choir, I actually learnt the differences between my understanding of music and theirs. I would say 'let's tune up', and they'll be like 'tune? What?'. I'd get the piano out and play a certain chord, and they'll just do it totally differently. Also, for example, we would sing a word, and they won't understand what I'm singing because I say it in a different way to them. Little things like that I probably wouldn't notice if I just sat and watched them. (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

performer-researcher to aspects directly or indirectly related to a creative work, and can precipitate a sense of the style and aesthetics of a piece of music, dance or drama (see further Turner 1986 who called for research that also participated in performance).

For example, ethnomusicologists often describe this research method as *musical* participant-observation, which can lead the ethnographer towards a kind of intrinsically musical and imaginative experiencing (Cooley 1997). They also talk about 'learning to perform as a research technique' (Baily 2001), as exemplified in **Rebecca**'s musical participation in Zambia quoted here. In the field of dance too, ethnochoreologists refer to 'dance in the field' (Buckland 1999a, 1999b) to describe the ethnographer's immersion in actual performance, which can provide potential insights into artistic structure, the methods and institutions for transmission and understanding, but also provide social advantages in the field.

Indeed, ethnomusicologists, ethnochoreologists and others often advocate that in order for performance to be useful and effective, it must be experienced by 'the people who have shared, or can share in some way, the cultural and individual experiences of its creators' (Blacking 1973:54). Performance participation therefore resembles more directly the point of learning a performing art. For example, John Baily (2001:86) suggests that 'only as a performer does one acquire a certain essential kind of knowledge about music', suggesting that a practical artistic experience leads to a more *direct* relationship to a performing art and the people who perform it.

Performance in dance, drama or music as a tool for research and means for the writing of ethnographic texts is often referred to as performance ethnography. Performance ethnography starts with your own immersion as a performer whilst observing in preparation for writing about human experience in dance, drama and music. The goal of performance ethnography is to experience a dance, drama or music culture directly and personally while immersing yourself in it as a performer. Here, understanding of the creative work becomes closely tied to cultural understanding through your own performance experiences.

Figure III- 1: Lipok as Musical Participant-Observer in the Fagan Pub

Performance ethnography means your direct participation in performance, which reflects ethnographers' concern with understanding people's rich and intertwined experiences through participating and observing, and experiencing for themselves people's engagement in dance, drama and music. Through performance and critical reflection, you will be able to describe how and why individuals and cultures value artistic products in often unique and differing ways. Performance ethnography enables you to learn about artistic form and art-as-culture, and thus the values, which people hold and express through dance, drama or music. Here, artistic understanding becomes closely tied to cultural understanding through the epistemological status of the ethnographer's own artistic experiences.

Applied Performance Ethnography: Ethnodrama

In discussions on performance ethnography, it is also important to mention briefly the specialist nature of ethnography and performance in drama. Also often referred to as *ethnodrama,* this approach differs significantly to the kind of performance ethnography in music and dance discussed in the previous section. Ethnodrama is not a means for research, but instead resembles *performed ethnographic research* most commonly found in the context of health (see further Mienczakowski 2001). More specifically, insights gained through ethnographic research with informants (health practitioners; nurses; patients) are used by theatre professionals in writing dramatic narratives, which are then performed by trainee nurses, health students or other participants so as to depict and simulate real-life health scenarios. In this way, ethnodramas resemble pre-professional educational and learning opportunities for nurses and students.

In ethnodrama, the outcome of ethnographic research is not the ethnographic report, but instead the performance of that research with the aim of promoting wider understandings for participants. Ethnodrama is thus a platform

for enhancing mutual understandings of health patients' and professionals' experiences through ethnographic research and its subsequent theatre performance. Aimed at the *performance of ethnography,* ethnodrama seeks mutual understanding through more accessible and clearer public explanations of research (in contrast to the academically rigorous explanations normally found in ethnographic texts, which may be less comprehensible for health practitioners). To this end, ethnodrama seeks social change and impact, rather than the artistic demands of aesthetics value, and may thus be termed 'applied' performance ethnography.

Informal interviewing

> The most important thing... is to get honest answers [as] people might feel a little embarrassed to say what they really think because it is very personal. People don't go into too much detail sometimes, and it would be nice to get real honest answers about what they really think. Especially if they know if we are musicians asking them about music, they might be more embarrassed about what their personal answers are because they might think we are snobby about it thinking that we know more than them, which is not true. (Liz, Lauren, Lucy,1/05/08)

Informal interviewing is another pivotal research method in ethnography, which is typically informal, open-ended and in-depth. The aim is to generate honest, truthful responses from participants, as exemplified by **Liz, Lauren** and **Lucy**. Informal interviewing may best be approached as a special kind of conversation that necessitates an equal, reciprocal relationship between the ethnographer and the people studied. Face-to-face interviews are especially effective in generating deep, high-quality, reflective answers. Both you and your participant can feel more relaxed, as it resembles a normal conversation, and you can also take into consideration facial expressions and bodily gestures. However, since in-depth interviewing is most effective with one participant (or a small number of people), it is time-intensive in setting up appointments, travel to the meeting place, preparing the setting, and conducting the actual interview.

Interviews should at first be conducted with key informants and cultural experts who are knowledgeable about the topic. You may also approach local experts whenever you require further clarification. In selecting the people for interviews, you should also consider factors that might shape people's responses (e.g. ethnicity, class and age). As it is crucial to maintain a positive researcher-respondent relationship throughout your research, beware of cultural etiquette and avoid judgements, expressed though surprise, disgust and strong opinions about the people studied. Where appropriate, you should accept or offer hospitality (e.g. a drink), and adapt to the emotional state of the person whom you talk to (e.g. sad, happy).

Prior to the interview, you may prepare yourself by revisiting the study questions and think of suitable probes. As in **Richard's** reflection, you should try to avoid researcher bias, and ask neutral, open-ended questions that are drawn from the overall research focus. The interview should encourage the people to think more deeply, clearly or broadly about an issue. You should avoid asking leading questions, and take care not to interrupt the narrative through verbal or non-verbal clues. Ensure that you bring an aware, intuitive, open and flexible attitude to the interview.

At the beginning of an interview, introduce yourself (including the institution at which you study) and your project. In terms of the latter, you should carefully assess how much and what kind of information you share with the people studied, as they may feel intimidated when presented with complex academic jargon, or alternatively not take the interview seriously if the project appears of little significance. As exemplified in **Maria**'s example here, the detail provided about the project can also determine the direction of the interview itself, as the interviewee may focus on issues that he/she assumes the researcher wants to hear.

Always ensure confidentiality and explain privacy. At this point, you should present the *participant information form* and ask the person to sign the *consent form* in your own and a witness's presence (see Chapter II). If you wish to record the interview, you should ask permission. Assess the interview surroundings and adapt as far as possible so as to make the people feel comfortable and at ease. You should start off with an easy question to make the interviewee feel comfortable. **Maria**, for instance, opened the conversation by asking her interviewee about his background, as exemplified in the quote here. If you have agreed a time limit prior to the interview, be sensitive to time constraints and the life situations of the people studied. Most importantly, always value and reassure the people that their views are of importance to you and your study.

> Try to go with an open mind. Maybe that's something I didn't do, looking back on it now. Go with an open mind, and try not to have many preconceived ideas because that could blur your thinking, narrow your thinking. (Richard, 22/02/08)

> In the beginning of the interview I said that my research is about the experience of groove and about bodily sensations in particular. And I wonder whether I should have removed the last bit to see if he'd start talking about bodily sensations without me saying that. You know, I just prompted him too early. (Maria, 24/02/08)

> The first ten minutes were about his background.... I thought that would be a good ice breaker to get him to feel comfortable. He just went off and talked about loads of stuff; his whole background was mentioned from when he was 5 to getting into music. (Maria, 24/02/08)

I jumped a lot in my interview…. Questions are definitely going to… happen naturally…. A structured interview is very strict; you have a question, you have a schedule…. While with open interviews, you just go on and talk about anything, which is open but harder to use later on. (Maria, 24/02/08)

We asked them things like 'what's the genre' and thought 'god, they probably don't know what that means', so we did have to speak to them more on their level…. The age range varied so much that we had to change the way we spoke to different people. (Lianne, 20/02/08)

There were questions he found really hard to answer, or he couldn't really get what it was that I was trying to ask him about. And then, I found it really difficult not to lead him. (Maria, 24/02/08)

During the conversation, you should explore any and all facets of a topic in detail without guiding or constraining people's responses. Avoid finishing sentences or stories for the person whom you talk to. Use open-ended prompts or questions so as to elicit people's open responses, and follow up on issues that seem important to the person. Ask for narratives of experience by means of storytelling, and invite the people to recount their own experiences of a particular event. This may seem unfocused, as again **Maria** reflects in the quote here, yet remember that ethnographers seek to study and understand a phenomenon from the perspectives of the people studied. Try to have an open and alert mind throughout the conversation.

In formulating your questions, you should consider the people whom you talk to, as **Lianne** reflects in the quote here. Try to ask simple questions and use simple probes, such as 'What happened next?', or 'What was most enjoyable?', as people may not understand very specific questions relating to your topic. Do not allow your own biases, preconceived ideas or hypotheses guide the conversation. However, there may be instances when you have to become more specific in your questions, as in **Maria**'s research interview, when her interviewee appeared to be confused or uncertain about the questions asked. After all, the answers may simply also emerge at a later stage in the interview in a different context. At the same time, if meanings of terms are unclear (e.g. the use of particular local terminology, or the word 'stuff' in substitution for words), you should probe for further elaborations and clarifications. Invite the interviewee to explain and describe certain aspects again by returning to unclear or incomplete information at a later stage.

Naturally, such conversational interviews can be long, so you have to maintain a focus on the topic and think logically. Focus on how the discussions relate to the topic you wish to explore. If the conversation diverges too far from the topic, try to refocus and ascertain whether this relates to the initial focus. If not, subtly and politely steer the conversation back to a more relevant topic. Interviewing thereby requires high-level communication skills and an excellent memory. You may

consider taking brief reminder notes during the interview. Note-taking during interviews is an inexpensive means to write down descriptions and interpretations of responses. However, note-taking can be distracting to the people studied; it is also quite difficult to write quickly without hampering the flow of the conversation.

Recording equipment (i.e. dictaphone; portable ipod or mp3 recording devices) may offer a more effective alternative that capture the interviews more accurately and with little disturbance. At the same time, recorded interviews provide an excellent means to reflect back on what you have done well or not so well. Ask yourself, for instance, whether you have dominated the conversation too much, or whether you have steered towards a new topic too quickly without having sufficiently explored the previous topic. Since the use of audiovisual equipment is quite important in ethnography, this will be discussed further in a later section.

Here is a sample of a fully-transcribed interview conducted by Richard for his ethnography entitled *'A Game of Two Halves': Gender and Football* (see sample ethnographies). Read the interview, and critically assess Richard's use of open-ended and closed questions. What is the effect of both forms of questioning?

Interview Transcript; Wednesday November 2007
Living Room Setting; 7minutes, 53seconds

A closed question is useful for opening a conversation, as it makes it easy for the other person to answer

Interviewer   So, Marc, you're a Tranmere fan. Is that correct?

Marc   Yes, I've got a season ticket in the Main Stand, and I try to go to a few away games during the season as well.

Interviewer   And who do you go to the games with then?

Marc   Well I go with my family actually. My mum, dad and my brother Jack.

A closed question can be answered with either a single word or a short phrase

Interviewer   So do you all get involved in the atmosphere that a football match can produce?

Marc   Well me and Jack do yeh. My dad tends to just watch the match and grumble to himself, yano, and then he'll suddenly stand up and start shoutin' abuse at the referee or players or sumthin'. But my mum's more laid back though, she doesn't really say too much. Well she sits the other side of my dad but I never hear her say much during the match.

Interviewer   Do you all participate in the singing then?

Marc   Well, again me and Jack do. We're probably the loudest ones in our section of the ground (laughter) but my mum and dad seem to be more restrained really and don't sing as much. Especially my mum.

Interviewer   Why do you think that is then?

Marc   Errrrmmm I'm not sure really. I have asked her before why she doesn't sing that much yano and she just says that she doesn't want to. She doesn't feel the need to.

Interviewer   OK then, so what do you think defines you as a fan?

Marc   Well, I've got a season ticket so I go to every home game, and some away ones as well, and I'm always thinking about Tranmere and talking about them to my mates. I love it when the transfer window opens and I'm always lookin' on Sky Sports News to see if we've signed any players. [long pause] I go on the website most days as well to see if there's any news about the team. I just love goin' to watch them play and the whole atmosphere of match day. You can't beat it!

Interviewer   OK, good, so how did you become a fan? How old were you?

Marc   I dunno, probably when I was really young. I can't really remember how old I was. I spose I've bin one all my life really cos' I can't remember ever not bein' a Tranmere fan. [pause] I spose my dad was the main reason why I became a fan. He was the one who took me to my first game, I think it was Oldham at home or somethin' and he used to tell me 'bout the players they had in the past and when they were in Division One. The good old days! (laughter)

Interviewer   So, you always gone to the matches together as a family, haven't you?

Marc   No not really. I've had my season ticket with my dad for about four seasons now. It used to be in the Kop just behind the goal. And Jack got one as well when he was old enough about two seasons ago. And then mum got a half-season ticket at the second half of last season and then got a proper one at the start of this season.

Interviewer   OK, So why did you change seats from the Kop to the Main Stand?

A closed question can be answered with either 'yes' or 'no' and thereby test the person's understanding.

An open question is useful to follow-on from a closed question to develop the conversation and open up someone who is rather quiet

An open question is likely to receive a long answer. It is useful to make people realise the extent of the problem (e.g. to define fanship)

An open question begins with what, why, how, describe

You can turn any opinion into a closed question by adding tag questions, such as "isn't it?", "don't you?"; or "can't they?" to a statement

An open question asks the person to think and reflect, and to provide opinions and feelings

An open question hands control of the conversation to the person

A closed question is useful for setting up a positive frame of mind in the person

An open question gets the person thinking and continuing to give you useful information about them

A closed question can be a great way to break into a long ramble

An open question deliberately seeks longer answers (and thus is the opposite of a closed question)

Marc   Well we couldn't get four seats together in the Kop, well we could, but it was near the back and mum didn't wanna be up that high so we just said we'd go in the Main Stand. I don't mind though 'cause it's still quite a good atmosphere, not as good as the Kop though, but its better for us four and families and that, and the view is probably even better now where we are.

Interviewer   So just run through what you would all wear on a typical match day.

Marc   Errrmmm [long pause] Well, I'd usually wear jeans, trainees (trainers) and a t-shirt and jumper, or my Tranmere shirt over my jumper or a jacket if it's cold. Jack would wear the same.

Interviewer   So pretty casual then?

Marc   Yeh. Maybe a hat if its cold, and mum and dad just wear normal clothes.

Interviewer   What's normal clothes then?

Marc Well, yano, just like pants, trainers or shoes, and a top and coat. They usually wear a scalf if its cold. 'cos it does get freezin' when you're sittin' there sometimes.

Interviewer   So do either of them wear Tranmere clothing?

Marc   Not really. Sometime they'll wear one of our Jack's Tranmere scarves, well my dad will and my mum has a few times, but that's it really. Dad has got an old shirt that I bought him a few years ago and he might wear that if its not too cold, but not often. Maybe once or twice a season maybe. I dunno. But he wore a shirt and scarf when we went to Wembley for the Carling Cup Final a few years ago. He looked a right muppet! (laughter)

Interviewer   So what would you usually do on a match day then Marc?

Marc Errrmmm well we'd get there. My dad drives us there and parks outside our auntie's house which is bout 10 minutes away from the ground 'cos the traffic's well bad around it so you can't get near. It's a bit of a ritual really 'cause we always do the same thing. We usually get to our seats bout half 2 and we know most of the people around us where we sit now so we might have a chat with them.

Interviewer   So it's the same people that you sit by for every game?

Marc Well I don't know all the people but a lot of them have got season tickets as well so we pretty much see them every time as well. We have quite a good laugh with them. It's a bit of a community really 'cause we all know each other and have a laugh.

Interviewer   So do you all join in with the banter then?

Marc Yeh pretty much. Dad knows one of the blokes behind 'cause he used to work with him or somethin' and he's really funny some of the stuff he comes out with during the match, like what he says at the players and the ref. And mum has started talking to these people next to her. A woman and her fella so it's a good atmosphere really.

Interviewer   So one final question then, how do you think gender roles, you know like how men and women act during the match, are played out and represented at Tranmere matches?

Marc   *Errrmmmm, well, [pauses] probably 'cause there's more men there than women that most of the singin' is done by them and they definitely shout and swear more. Like my mum and the woman next to her don't really sing that much and don't get involved that much. Whereas the men do around where we sit and in the Kop definitely. The Kop is the loudest and mostly men sit there. But its not just men who go the match, like, 'cause you do see quite a lot of women, like during half-time when me and Jack are getting a burger or somethin' there is quite a few in the stands. But they tend to get coffee and tea not burgers and hot dogs like us (laughter).*

Interviewer   So you're saying the men get involved with the whole match day experience more than the women then?

Marc   *Yeh definitely. It's always the men in the Tranmere shirts and singin' the songs yeh.*

A closed question seeks fact(s), is easy and quick to answer, and keeps control over the conversation

The first word sets up the dynamic of a closed question, signalling the easy answer ahead, e.g. do, would, are, will, if.

An open question is useful to elicit the person's opinions and perceptions

A closed question is useful for achieving closure of a persuasion (seeking 'yes' to the big question), and to summarise the conversation

Informal group interviews

In some instances, it may be useful to conduct interviews with a small group of people, whereby the number of people participating in a group interview depends on your project and the actual situation. Allowing for interactivity within the group, such interviews provide a safe platform for people to express their opinions and to dialogue casually with one another. Interactivity can reveal differences of opinions, perspective and beliefs, as well as conflict. It also enables an assessment of whether the people possess the knowledge relevant to your chosen research topic. In group discussions, people will use their natural language, which helps in gaining insights into idiomatic expressions, common terminology and communication patterns of that particular group of people.

The most insight may be sought from group interviews that occur *informally* and spontaneously, and in a naturalistic setting. The discussions take place in the normal course of conversation, activity or event, as in **Sarah**'s example. Depending on the context of your research, group interviews may also take on a more *formal* format, whereby the meeting is predetermined and scheduled, and specific, representative people of a group are invited to participate in the discussion. The logistics of organising a more formal group interview can be complicated, and if so, individual interviews may be more appropriate.

Your role in a group interview is that of a facilitator, and leading a group interview would most commonly occur in a group to which you already belong (e.g. your family; a group of students; a local dance group). As exemplified by **Dominique**'s reflection here, you should be flexible in finding ways to ask appropriate questions that generate debate and discussion on a topic relevant to your research questions. You should behave naturally, so that the people feel comfortable to express their opinion freely. Use humour!

You should also be aware that the quality and validity of the information may be influenced or hampered by the composition of the group and the interaction of the personalities within it. Nonetheless, group interviews can be useful in generating rich data on

I just kind of spoke to people as if I was just kind of chatting.... One of them was one of the bar staff and it was quite quiet at the time, so I just kind of made it chatty.... Some other people that I spoke to actually ended up sharing a table with us.... That was just a kind of chatty conversation about why they went there, and what made they choose that venue. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

I was talking with about ten boys... about the types of girls they like to see in videos, and this went on for about an hour.... And I just thought 'this is so irrelevant but interesting'.... So it's about letting people talk because sometimes you can get stuff out of them when they're just rabbiting on.... But then I'd also remind them about the question and say 'answer this one for me'. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

social norms, behaviours, opinions and attitudes, and the structure and cultural pattern of a group of people. Informal group interviews also generate considerable *quantity* of research data from a more broadly representative number of people in a relatively short time period.

Technology in the age of globalisation

Yeah, technology and globalisation is actually a plus for research. When I did my MA project…, I went through hell…. I had to be physically in Nigeria to actually get something. Then, the GSM… or mobile phone was not something very common. Today, I just pick up my mobile phone in Legos [Nigeria] and call somebody and talk…. Globalisation has made everything a little bit easier. I can even call home to Nigeria and speak for an hour to interview an artist and record it. I can go online—I go to YouTube—and I can watch videos. There are also online Nigerian radio stations, and I just listen to them in my room like I'm in Legos, like I'm in Nigeria…. It is a positive thing that is helping researchers. (Wally, 25/02/08)

In conducting an ethnographic research project, most students fully embraced the new technologies available to them, yet it is important to understand the impact of new communication and other technologies on ethnographic research. Clearly, the world in which we live has become a more compressed place. The speed of people's movement and the volume of messages and symbols in circulation around the world have now greatly accelerated. Geographical or physical space appears to shrink as travel and communicational time decreases. All of us now engage in instantaneous (tele)communication, so that social relations can be established and maintained over vast distances. New technologies have impacted on the ways in which we talk to each other, view news and documentaries, revisit history, and share the experiences of other social groups.

Technologies have reduced the effects of space and time not just in everyday life, but also in the conduct of ethnographic inquiry and research. The new technologies (information, communication and transportation technologies) impact on your ethnographic research in that time is becoming accelerated and non-sequential, which means that you can conduct your research in much shorter timespans, and in non-sequential order of events. For example, you may contact a key person via email prior to actually meeting him/her to ask for permission and consent. Equally, research is made possible over vast distances, enabling you to be based in the UK whilst conducting interviews with participants in a remote music culture, as in **Wally**'s research on African music. Also, you can use your mobile phone to access the internet; to have online chats with research participants via messenger; to capture photographs and videos; or simply to make fieldnotes.

Remember, however, that the use of new technologies for studying participants' perceptions and experiences produce certain kinds of information. Mobile phones, online chatrooms, email, discussion lists and blogs are less face-to-face, less personal methods for data collection, which is particularly useful for studying a large number of people, as exemplified by **Dominique** here. They are less suitable, however, for engaging in in-depth, intensive discussions with the people studied. This leads on to a brief consideration of virtual ethnography as a specific way of conducting e-fieldwork.

I went onto 'Black Chat', which is a chatroom set up for black people.... You get some interesting stuff, which you can use and say, well, 'such and such a person says this' and you can relate theories to it.... I found that really useful, really really useful. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

Virtual ethnography

So far, it has been suggested that ethnographic research in the 'real' world enables an emphasis on the perspectives, concepts and behaviours of the people whom the ethnographer studies and wishes to understand. Yet what happens when ethnography is conducted in virtual spaces? In virtual settings, participants of the community under study are spatially and temporally dislocated. Virtual ethnography (also often termed on-line ethnography; or cyber-ethnography) challenges the traditional notion of the field as a localised space, so that you only observe people and settings in ethereal terms. Virtual ethnography is disembodied and therefore moves ethnographic fieldwork towards physically distributed and technologically mediated interactions in virtual spaces.

To this end, virtual environments often utilise tools for mediated interaction, such as online discussion board facilities that enable synchronous and asynchronous, as well as written and audio discussions. Your research may thus focus on the social interactions between participants in virtual spaces. Virtual ethnographic fieldwork would thereby involve your extended and intense immersion into the online discussions. At the same time, you may focus on the ways in which the technology and content itself shapes participants' interactions and experiences.

Offline you couldn't really approach the people in the metal community when they are at gigs; you can't really talk to them there 'cause they are there to enjoy it. But online, they were really interested in discussing it and I was surprised really because they were really, really enthusiastic while talking about it.... When they weren't in a gig situation, they were much more enthusiastic talking about it. (Gareth, 7/03/08)

Gareth, for example, conducted ethnography into the musical genre of heavy metal that included participant-observations at metal concerts, which was complemented by virtual fieldwork. For this, Gareth visited the *Ultimate Metal Forum* (://www.ultimatemetal.com/forum) while seeking virtual interaction with metal fans online (see Figure III-

2). To Gareth, the online interactions were hugely beneficial due to the difficulties of interviewing people at live concerts. Here is a brief excerpt from Gareth's ethnographic essay that exemplifies his use of online postings:

> A recurring statement on the UMF website highlighted the general industry push for female-fronted metal bands. Panzerfaust666 commented that 'I think a large part of it is because of the female-fronted bands, such as Arch Enemy, Lacuna Coil, etc, which made more females confident' (online posting, 4/07/07). Billy10002 reiterates this statement (online posting, 4/12/07), whilst Unknown writes that 'there has been a push lately for female singers in metal (Arch Enemy, Nightwish, Lacuna Coil)' (online posting, 5/12/07). In the magazine Metal Hammer, I found that these bands featured in several stories, including in interviews and reviews. Yet it is only within the past ten years that these bands have become popular, and prior to this, there had been little or no prominent female musicians in the metal genre. This sentiment was generally shared on the UMF..... One could argue that the general misogynistic responses from several UMF users have emerged from this melding of metal styles. Some users called females 'whores', 'trannies' and 'conformist', although this should be taken with a pinch of salt, as the responses generally seemed quite light-hearted. For example, Cynical writes that 'many of the chicks at the shows tend to be whores looking for someone with a penis to bring home and have sex with, which paints female metal fans with a bad brush' (online posting, 5/12/07)..... An argument could be made that by facilitating a wider female audience, existing metal fans have come to feel bitter about the changes within the genre, noted by their resentment for the majority of mainstream metal. (excerpt from Gareth's ethnography)

Figure III- 2: Screen of Gareth's Forum on 'Gender in Metal'[13]

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[13] Source http://www.ultimatemetal.com/forum/general-metal-discussion/352977-gender-metal.html, accessed on 3 June 2008.

Whilst virtual ethnography is a valuable and increasingly accepted research method, you should also be aware of its shortcomings when conducting your own project. For example, the interactions encountered by **Gareth** were confined to written exchanges only, which may easily lead to misunderstandings in the meaning of the written text. Equally, mediated interaction in virtual spaces differs to people's behaviour in the physical world. Whilst you will have to rely on participants' text-based or spoken contributions, these are typically shaped by the 'typist problem', whereby the 'typist is the actual human being, the person at the keyboard, who … controls the character in a virtual community' (Jacobson 1998:133).

> One of the questions that I asked a lot of the people had real difficulty with…. And there was like a discussion going on how I should word that…. People really challenged the way that I asked questions online. (Gareth, 7/03/08)

People's online identity may thereby differ significantly to their physical appearance and social identity. People may use the anonymous nature of virtual spaces so as intentionally to disguise their 'real-life' identity, made possible through the (often complete) absence of the visual and/or audio dimension. Pseudonymity in virtual spaces may mean that the name, gender and other characteristics of a participant's digital persona may be completely unrelated to the individual's off-line identity. Virtual ethnography also does not permit a consideration of 'lurkers' who may follow the mediated interactions, yet refrain from actively participating in them.

Capturing ethnographic data

Participant-observations, performance ethnography, interviewing and virtual ethnography require capturing and documentation. The purpose of this is twofold: it is a means of generating text-based data to form the basis for your ethnographic report; it also serves as a memory aid for when you return to your data at a later stage. Documenting and capturing your observations, conversations and experiences during research can be achieved through ethnographic fieldnotes and audiovisual techniques. This section will discuss each in turn.

Ethnographic fieldnotes

The capturing of your experiences during research is achieved through the writing of ethnographic fieldnotes, which typically starts by making mental notes (inscription). At the early stage of your project, you will probably find yourself to be quite confused to know exactly *what* to note from your observations and interviews. Make mental notes of what is important to the people studied, and try to go beyond your own biased 'seeing' of the world. Engage continuously in the description of your observations, conversations and experiences during research by making scratch notes. Simply capture your inscriptions in writing by collecting jottings, diaries, logs and fieldnotes.

We just used to chat, and then, after they had left and we were watching the bands, I'd just scribble down notes. It is a little unusual because I sat in the pub, yeah, but it was quite dark so I could get away with it. (Claire, 27/02/08)

I brought a notebook with me but didn't take notes whilst I was actually observing or speaking to people. I just tried to remember what I could, and then every so often I'd go off and jot down what I remembered. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

Fieldnotes often serve a dual function: on the one hand, they capture mere descriptions of your participant-observations and conversations; on the other hand, fieldnotes can be used for emotional reflections and personal interpretations. Both should be recorded separately, so as to clearly differentiate between more objective description, and your own reflection and biases. Fieldnotes are usually handwritten while 'in the field', as in **Claire**'s example (NOTE: you will need notebooks and pens), but can also be made shortly after leaving the field, as in **Sarah**'s example here.

When and how you make fieldnotes will depend on your individual research project. Many students commented that they felt uncomfortable jotting down notes whilst being in a nightclub, pub or other 'public' venue. They felt it was important to remain discreet in such situations. **Lianne**, for example, whose ethnography focused on hip hop in local night clubs had negative experiences with people when turning up with her notebook, as exemplified in the quote here. Some students therefore used their mobile phone to

capture important information, including song titles or artist names, which they could then follow up on the internet. However, the amount of information you can input obviously depends on the model of your mobile and your typing speed.

The best and most useful fieldnotes record your observations on a regular basis, and describe activities in concrete detail and actual sequence, while placing them into their broader context. Good fieldnotes capture an accurate and detailed description of settings, events and people, including exact quotes by participants. The latter should be identified by name (unless you have agreed on anonymity) and accompanied by a reference to the place and date of the interview or conversation. At the same time, each fieldnote entry should contain the date, place and time of your research visit.

> When we got to the clubs, we just turned up and got a notebook out. Some people were a bit funny with us.... We got asked if we like coppers, or if we are from social services.... So I wish I had known a bit more about doing this. (Lianne, 20/02/08)

One very useful tool for capturing fieldnotes and reflections, together with photographs, videos and other visual materials in chronological order (that is, by date and month) is a blog ('web log'). A blog can be accessed at any time and from anywhere in the world, as long as you sit in front of a computer with internet connection. The posts can be viewed by others with the option to respond to the posts. If you conduct fieldwork in a remote culture, the blog can serve as a platform for interactions with your personal tutor or supervisor who can read your fieldwork experiences and comment on them. A blog can also lead to interactivity with prospective research participants who may respond to your reflections on research. (You can create a blog (free of charge) on eblogger ://www.blogger.com/start, but there are also other providers available. The user-friendly content management software allows people with little or no technical background to create and maintain a blog.)

In capturing fieldnotes, remember that your written descriptions will necessarily be a reflection of how *you* see the event, situation and people studied. It is a process by which you describe and translate in *your* own words the concepts, ideas, behaviours and words of a specific group of people. Since fieldnotes are always filtered through your own lenses and eyes, this subjectivity requires self-discipline and critical self-reflexivity.

Audiovisual techniques

Audiovisual methods are a useful *complementary* approach to obtain accurate audio- or visual records of performances, events or situations, and interviews. Remember that audiovisual techniques do *not* replace fieldnotes and should only be used to supplement written records.

Students frequently used *photography* so as to capture the physical environment and setting of the research site. Here it is important to remember not to disturb the event and situation that is being photographed. You should also seek permission from the people prior to taking their photograph, as in **Morgan**'s ethnography. Obviously, gaining permission will be difficult or impossible when large numbers of people are depicted on the photograph. You should only use photographs in your final report that are publicly available (e.g. on the web), or that depict individuals in such a way that they are not identifiable and recognisable (e.g. from behind; without their faces).

In using photography in your research, you should also be aware of its impact on the behaviour and attitudes of your participants. As exemplified in **Lianne**'s quote here, asking people for permission to take their photograph led towards rather 'silly' behaviour. At the same time, however, people's responses to Lianne's request would probably have been very different in a contrasting music culture. Thus people's specific responses in Lianne's chosen research site reveal interesting insights into their attitudes and perceptions more generally, which in turn may lead to a further level of analysis on the chosen topic. Photography is thus often vital for the collection of *rich* ethnographic data.

> I took photos of friends; I didn't want to take pictures of people I didn't know.... So I just took pictures of a group of guys and a group of girls just to show the differences [in dress] and... it was representative of how most people dressed in the club. (Morgan, 7/03/08)

> We brought a camera in and asked them 'do you mind taking your picture?'; 'Do you mind if your names are being used?' and stuff like that.... But having the camera affected how people spoke to us. Some people played up a bit more.... Like when we took the pictures, they said things like 'Shall we do a funny pose?' And they were aware that the camera was there. They weren't really natural. (Lianne, 20/02/08)

Audio- and video-taping is equally valuable to enhance your ethnographic data collection. This has the primary advantage of making a permanent and complete record of observations and dialogues, and for capturing a mental picture of an event or situation so as to place critical incidents into context at a later stage. You may also consider playing back audio- and videotapes to your participants so as to gain feedback for further analysis. Audio- and video-recording is also useful for illustrating the culture studied in an in-class presentation.

Prior to recording, you should consider exactly what, where, when, how long and whom you wish to record. *Audio-recording* is specifically advantageous when conducting interviews, as it provides an accurate and permanent account of spoken language and sound. However, as in **Lipok**'s example, recording devices may have an impact on the people's choice of words and behaviour. You should therefore carefully assess the situation, and whether it is appropriate to use a recorder.

By comparison, *video-recording* provides a broader array of behavioural data that includes nonverbal and verbal communication. Video-recordings of actual performances are particularly revealing as they capture the settings, performers and audiences, as in **Shu**'s research. However, video-recording is also more expensive, more difficult, more intrusive, less anonymous, more time-consuming (during transcription and/or analysis), and it requires practice.

In using audiovisual techniques in your research, you should aim to acquire high-quality and professional equipment designed for commercial use. Equally, obtain good quality microphones and tapes that meet your specific needs (e.g. for recording a musical event that you wish to analyse later). Consider the use of a good tripod so as to position the camera securely, although, as explained by **Shu**, this may not be practicable in some research situations.

You should also test and monitor your equipment regularly, and gain appropriate training for making recordings. Ensure to have enough battery life and spare tapes. During the recording, avoid background noise and check your running tape regularly. Depending on your specific research project, you may need to consider the risks of damage to your equipment, which may be caused by bad weather conditions (exposure to rain or high temperatures), but may also occur as a result of careless handling and usage. In some instances, students like **Shu** (see next page) even found that the specific behaviour of people included in her study caused damage to the equipment.

Using a recorder sometimes creates a formal atmosphere where people are not themselves. Some people... get so reserved sometimes, and they are very careful about choosing words 'cause obviously they know that they are being recorded. (Lipok, 30/01/08)

I use the digital video mainly for the performance, and later for the analysis of the performance. I videoed some festivals and gigs, because you have the whole event, how it is going, how the event is organised, what is going on. Also, I record the audience... and how they react to... the musicians and the stage....

Normally, I can't use the tripod because in the pub, there is no room. So normally I put it on the hand. It is very convenient because you can point it everywhere you want. If you put it on the tripod, it is fixed there and I don't like that. (Shu, 12/05/08)

Actually, I broke this one of mine [recorder] because I put it on the stage and every guy did 'poco', you know.... When they [the rock musicians] play, they just bump. It is like they are just fighting and everybody is very excited. So my equipment fell from the stage and it broke so I had to buy a new one.
(Shu, 12/05/08)

Visual ethnography

In discussions surrounding the use of audiovisual equipment, you may also consider visual ethnography, a specific kind of ethnography that makes use of a range of different visual methods and media, including ethnographic photography, film, art & drawing, and the new media/hypermedia. Visual ethnography is generally concerned with the visual and perceptual study of culture, material culture and forms of human behaviour in different communities and environments. Whilst ethnographers have long used audiovisual means in their research and writing, what is different in visual ethnography, which really only begun to develop fully in the 1990s, is the use of audiovisual media as an *ethnographic* recording method for research.[14]

Visual ethnographers focus on the study of human behavior through visual means. In this context, ethnography as an approach to experiencing, interpreting and representing culture and society means incorporating visual methods for data gathering and analysis in the work of ethnography. Captured images, such as digital photographs or film/video thereby represent people's actual experiences, which ethnographers try to achieve through their insider's perspectives into the culture or community studied.

Visual ethnography has emerged as a diverse specialism (see Figure III-3). Some visual ethnographers adapt the documentary ethnographic film tradition; others focus on analyses of *indigenous visual imagery,* or engage in *indigenous image production* so as to investigate people's 'ways of seeing' as manifested in what they captured/filmed, how they used the equipment and the meanings they assigned to their images. Some ethnographers also use photography in supporting the ethnographic text by displaying aspects of the culture; establishing the presence of the fieldworker; and in authenticating the text.

Of course, the use of visual ethnography requires a different set of ethical considerations with your participants. From the outset of your project, you should make clear that participants' anonymity is impossible, so that permission and consent are given for visual representations of participants.

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[14]   More information on visual ethnography can be found on http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/visualising_ethnography/; for visual anthropology, visit http://www.visualanthropology.net/index.php/.
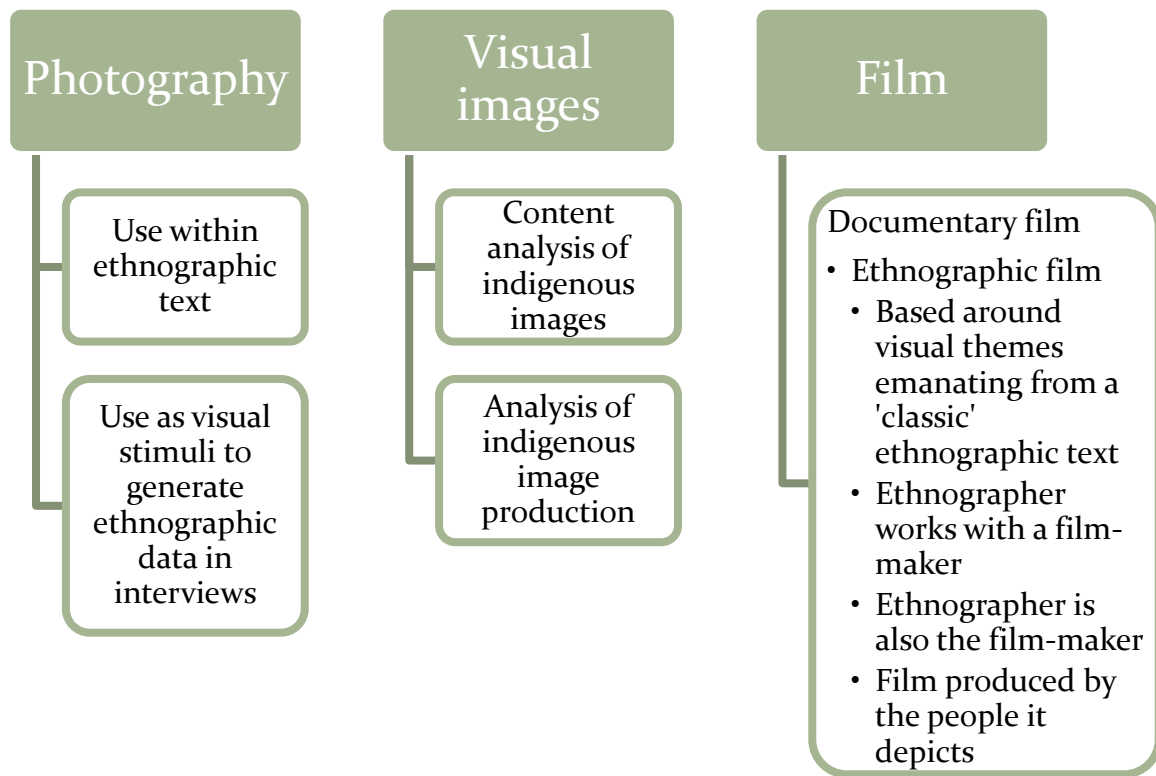
Photography

- Use within ethnographic text
- Use as visual stimuli to generate ethnographic data in interviews

Visual images

- Content analysis of indigenous images
- Analysis of indigenous image production

Film

Documentary film
- Ethnographic film
  - Based around visual themes emanating from a 'classic' ethnographic text
  - Ethnographer works with a film-maker
  - Ethnographer is also the film-maker
  - Film produced by the people it depicts

Figure III- 3: Some Ethnographic Uses of Photography, Imagery and Film

There currently exist discrepant emphases on different types of media across academic disciplines: for example, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have predominantly concentrated on the production and use of moving images (ethnographic film); visual sociologists have been more concerned with stills (photo-essays). Due to the focus on the performing arts, the following section will be mainly concerned with discussions of ethnographic film.

<u>Ethnographic film</u>

Ethnographic film has come to play a central role in visual anthropology and related disciplines like ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology. While early ethnographic films (early century) were aimed at large popular audiences (the first ethnographic film was made in 1901), film only started to be used as part of ethnographic research in the early 1940s (due to the increased quality of technology and miniaturisation of handheld cameras that could easily be taken into the field), and with it, started to reflect a strong documentary claim and heritage. As a result, ethnographic film is considered a subset of documentary film, and has since the 1950s become a means by which ethnographers endeavour to render their engagement and social encounter with different peoples, cultures and places in the world (participatory filmmaking). Since then, ethnographic films

have become increasingly fine-grained, while reaching for more detail and deeper depictions of social life and behaviour.

In ethnomusicology, more specifically, film has become an important means of exploring the interplay of the aesthetic and functional in musical performance. Ethnographic film is thereby based upon the framework of a written ethnographic report, whereby extracted themes serve as the basis for the film's storyline (see further Baily 1989; Baumann 1989). Film can also play a fieldwork role; it can be played back to stimulate feeling among locals, feedback which might then guide subsequent filming as well as provide reaction to the material itself.

In your studies, you should watch a complete ethnographic film and critically analyse its conventions in terms of purpose; depth of knowledge of the subject; techniques and strategies of expression; and accuracy and film truth.[15]

Watch an ethnographic film by John Baily entitled *A Kabul Music Diary* (2003) or *Amir* (1985), and consider the following questions:
1. What is the style of presentation?
2. How does the film differ to other films?
3. How does the film reflect ethical issues in ethnography?

Compare the ethnographic film with David Fanshawe's *A Musical Mariner – A Pacific Journey* (198?), specifically the section on his fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. What is the fundamental critique of Fanshawe's documentary?

In reflection on John Baily's *A Kabul Music Diary* (2003), some generalisations can be made in regards to the characteristics of ethnographic film:

- The ethnographic film is in documentary, non-fiction style, whereby the ethnographer uses a hand-held camera for sequence-shooting. The story unfolds in chronological order of the actual events, while long, continuous shots explore one-by-one different aspects of the scene. There is a clear emphasis on experience, that is, the viewer gets a sense of how the ethnographer experienced the visit in Kabul. There is also an emphasis on realism: signs are captured as they are with English translations added for comprehension; participants talk in their native language with added English subtitles. The film is made in a 'naturalistic' setting by avoiding any glamorisations or alterations, but instead depicting everyday reality: no artificial lighting is used; people are left to their normal behaviours (e.g. no-one stopped people when walking in front of the camera).

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[15] Ethnographic films can be hired and purchased from the Royal Anthropological Institute (see http://www.therai.org.uk/film/video_sales.html).

- The ethnographer clearly includes himself in the film to be noticeable to both the people and camera audience (John Baily often compared this to 'being a fly in the soup'). He is not invisible, yet non-intrusive by being the sole cameraman (no large film crew is involved in the filming); he is reflexively available in the film. As a result, the production process is made transparent to the viewer. The ethnographer narrates his personal experiences without dramatisation, interpretation or value judgements, yet the account is nonetheless personal and subjective. He tells a story of gradual discovery and exploration, further emphasising the sequential shooting of the film. He talks in the native language Pashtu in conversations with Afghans, which reflects a sense of his insider's status.

More generally, visual ethnography through art, photography, film and hypermedia is concerned with depictions of reality. The ultimate aim is documentation, rather than fiction, and thus reporting, not inventing, whatever is in the world. In engaging with documentary art, photography, film or hypermedia, you should thereby aim to exhibit the facts of a situation in the performing arts. Yet as it occurs in ethnographic texts, visual ethnography is also designed to encourage viewers to come to a particular conclusion about how the world is and the way it works.

The ethical ethnographer

So far, it has been suggested that ethnography requires your full immersion in the research setting both as a researcher and as a human being. As a researcher, you have to initiate, arrange and carry out ongoing data collection and analysis, and determine how the raw documentation makes sense as a whole to both yourself and the people studied. As a person, you must establish and maintain relationships with people, solve personal problems, and identify and avoid risky and dangerous situations. Indeed, the success of your ethnographic research project will depend on creating a 'good impression' and trustworthiness among the people studied.

Ethnography thus requires from students certain social qualities, such as flexibility, a non-dogmatic attitude, and being able to cope with ambiguity. You should be motivated to engage with people at perhaps inconvenient times, while showing enthusiasm and genuine inquisitiveness. Be intuitive and sensitive with people who may have different personalities. Listen, and try to abandon any preconceptions. Negotiate an optimum insider-outsider status, and aim to be self-sufficient and self-reflexive. Always ensure that you disturb the group of people as little as possible.

To begin with, you should always negotiate a field identity, as people will want to know who you are and why you are there. The most convincing introduction is that of a learner or student, which will permit you to practice a kind of naivety about the practices and beliefs of people, and legitimises your interest in participant-observation and interviewing. It also makes people feel more comfortable with you. You should avoid creating preconceptions or wrong impressions, and instead tell a plausible entry story that is simple and easy to understand, as in **Rebecca**'s example here.

> I usually introduced myself as 'I am a music student from the UK doing research into Christian music, and I'm also helping out with the charity here'. Because it [Zambia] is a Christian nation, you get more respect. That way, they were a lot more appreciative, and much more willing to talk to me as well. Some of them were actually really interested in the music as well, so we got on.
> (Rebecca, 28/02/08)

Avoid overtly academic jargon, which may lead people to act differently from their normal demeanour (e.g. by conforming to what they think you expect to hear from them). Going undercover is normally deemed inappropriate and unethical in ethnographic research, as it does not

Figure III- 4: Rebecca during Fieldwork in Zambia

allow people to give their consent to participate in your research, and is difficult to maintain when your relationships with the people become more personal.

You should practice *reciprocity* by contributing to people's financial income (if possible), or by sharing resources and responsibilities, helping out where needed or asked for, and/or involving your research participants in the final report. Many students were indeed concerned with the well-being of the people whom they studied, as exemplified by **Shu** here who aimed at promoting the Chinese rock musicians through her research.

It is also vital to consider how your personal, professional and philosophical characteristics may affect the success of your research project. As shown in **Hyunseok**'s example, his student status impacted on people's willingness to provide information. Be self-reflexive in understanding the impact you have on the research process! Self-reflection will enable you to take stock of how you are perceived by others in the field, enabling you to be cognisant of potential gaps, errors, or biases in the data collected.

For example, your age may determine whether the people can associate with you. Thus older people have status and knowledge, yet may be more distant to you, whilst among younger people you may better be able to 'go native'. Institutional affiliations too may impact on the progress of your research. For example, entry may be denied due to a prior researcher belonging to the same institution who may have left a negative impression among the people you wish to study. By contrast, many postgraduate students who conducted their research in a remote music culture found that being a doctoral student at a UK university gave them prestige and status in the eyes of the people whom they spoke to, as in **Samuel**'s fieldwork in Uganda who was able to gain information from elders who may otherwise be less forthcoming towards a younger person.

Class, ethnicity and gender too may determine whether the people you approach will be hostile or trusting, which is exemplified in **Yue**'s reflection on her research. This shows that if you are female, you may find it more difficult to gain

Because the rock musicians have very, I mean their living situation is very low, it's very poor, it's not very well. So I try to help some of my friends make money.... If I can do the research, then I can promote one or two of the bands in my thesis, and I can put them later on my website so that at least the audience can know them.(Shu, 12/05/08)

They thought of me as a student.... If I was a famous researcher, then they would have been very willing to answer my questions. (Hyunseok, 10/02/08)

There is some 'old' music I have collected, and I played it for the older and younger people. I will ask them about the music....
Then, because [I am] an educated person with an academic brain and he is a local person... [who is] 80 or 90 years old, yeah, he will talk to the younger one. (Samuel, 2/02/08)

I'm a women and a lot of producers are men... [which] is a problem. But it's o.k. when you say that you are a PhD student. They would say, 'ok, a PhD student, a doctor'. Then at least they won't look down on you. But then, I'm a native Chinese, and when I interview them, they may not want to answer. If somebody came from overseas, they might... really like to contact you. I think that is the Chinese people's concept about....race, maybe. I think that all Asian people are like this. They look at Western people who are friendly, they are rich, a European for example. So their attitude will be different. (Yue, 20/03/08)

I just want to live with them, go out with them, make friends, although at the beginning, I think they would not show their real side of themselves to you, but in the end.... I think in fieldwork... there is something about people's relations. I think it's about people's relations, just people's relations. (Yue, 20/03/08)

the trust of males. Equally, researchers perceived to be from a privileged background, such as a doctoral student, may be treated more favourably in obtaining information from people of another background. Also, being a Westerner provides instant status and prestige in non-Western cultures.

Your physical features and visual identity too can cause people to make judgements about you, including your clothing, accessories, styles of speaking, moving and interacting. Ethnographers may offend research participants by appearing to be elitist, snobbish or simply ignorant of the realities of local living conditions. In any case, be aware of people's local norms and expectations so as to not offend with your own appearance.

In some instances, particularly when you spend longer periods of time in the research site, you may form personal friendships with the people whom you study and wish to understand. Indeed, friendship provides a strong basis for mutual trust, as discussed by **Yue** here, so that people may share information with you that otherwise may not have been revealed. Indeed, friendship has become an important means in ethnographic fieldwork (see, for example, Cooley 2003). Yet care is to be taken when participants seek— through befriending—legitimisation or status in your company due to your institutional affiliation. You should therefore be aware of whom to approach to grant you access and help making initial contacts, as well as befriend many participants (if possible) in order to preserve future opportunities. On the other hand, friendship can help you gaining access to the research site and people, as explained by **LiJuan** (see next page), whose friend's status and prestige helped her to arrange interviews with key informants.

Your stance as an insider or outsider to the culture or community studied will equally impact on your research project, as exemplified in **Richard**'s reflection on the next page. Prior to, during and after your field experience you should engage in self-reflexive, disciplined subjectivity. This involves thinking about your own impact on the field, as well as how your preferences, prejudices and biases, hopes,

and concerns affect the course and outcomes of research. You can achieve this by maintaining personal logs and observations, diaries or journals, as well as recording personal and emotional thoughts.

Finally, you should think about how to leave the research site and relationships, whilst maintaining necessary contacts for follow-up research. If you have established strong relationships with the people studied, you may also be asked to serve as a spokesperson for or representative of the group of the people. This requires you to take responsibility, yet at the same time you should also make a judgement as to what is reasonable to be expected from you.

In general, you should bring politeness, sensitivity and proper demeanour, and maintain good interpersonal relationships with the people studied. Whilst your identity might have an impact on the success of your research, you should always be yourself. Try to find a style that works best for you in which you can be yourself and sincere, and at the same time handle the demands of the situation. The most effective approach is to have a genuine interest in your project and the people whom you encounter. Always respect the values and norms of the people studied, and maintain their confidentiality and trust. Also remember that you represent your university, so ensure its good reputation.

I asked a friend to introduce me for an interview to him… so he will take me more seriously and give me more information…. You know, China's culture, if you are this person's friend, then they will take me more seriously. (LiJuan, 28/05/08)

When I went alone to Tranmere, I literally sat there and watched. But when I went with him [friend] and his family, I became more immersed in the football culture sort of thing. When I went on my own, I was more like an outsider looking in, whereas when I went with him and his family, I was a bit more of an insider…. So got more close to the people around who they all knew because they're all season ticket holders as well. (Richard, 7/03/08)

Data management

Data management is crucial during your ethnographic research project. You can keep an overview of your vast documentation by developing a logical system by which you can easily find and access relevant data during the writing process. You should create a management system to store both your physical documentation and electronic files so as to put fieldnotes, interviews and all other materials in some order. The following are guidelines to help you organising your data collection:
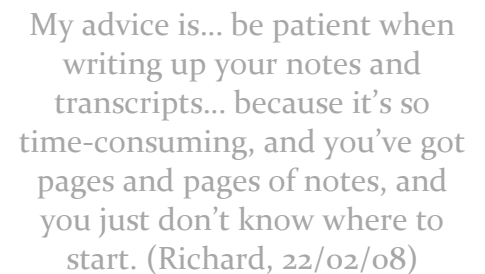
- Depending on the size of your data collection, you may find it useful to create a catalogue (including table of contents) of documents and artefacts, listing all interviews, settings, events and situations, and people while referring to the relevant pages in your data collection.

- You should get into the habit of making backup copies of all important materials, particularly recordings of interviews and conversations. Many students keyed in and saved collected data on the computer. This allowed them also to insert comments in their fieldnotes and transcriptions, and to quickly find relevant passages in the text by using the 'find'-option. They found this much more effective than flipping through stacks of handwritten, paper-based notes.

- You should also carefully label all your materials, especially recordings, USB sticks/ -pendrives, CD/DVDs, and the like. Here it is important that you invent an effective labelling method, as the new media are becoming increasingly smaller, allowing only limited information to be written on them. In such instances, you may create a list containing more detailed information on the recorded/ saved content.

- Store all materials in a safe and secure place, and keep originals and copies separately.

CHAPTER IV. WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic data collection often leads to the culmination of stacks of fieldnotes and interviews, piles of documents, maps, logs, artifacts, drawings, charts, together with a range of photographs and video- and audio-tapes. You may perhaps feel completely overwhelmed by the wealth and richness of your collected documentation and ask yourself how to write up all the materials. Don't panic! The experience of sheer 'overwhelmedness' is shared by many ethnographic researchers, even the most experienced ones.

This chapter introduces you to suitable methods to transform collected data into meaningful, theoretical discussions in order to make sense of a particular dance, drama or music culture. The writing-up process in ethnographic research can be made more manageable by sub-dividing it into four stages, namely reading; analysis; transformation; and interpretation (Figure IV-1). Starting with the reading and reviewing of data, the chapter discusses the practicalities of transcriptions, both of words and performance. This is followed by data analysis, and with it, the coding of data and deriving of themes. The next step introduced in the writing of ethnography is the transformation of raw data into retrospective descriptions, which is followed by discussions of the interpretation of data and the role of literature in the written ethnography.

In writing up your ethnography, the general aim is to go 'beyond' the results by making them meaningful to both insiders and outsiders. It is also important to understand that the writing-up of ethnographic research is always conducted recursively and continuously throughout the research process. You should continuously read and review your collected documentation, thereby checking for 'holes' in the data. At the same time, you should begin the writing process at an early stage in your ethnographic research project. This is to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the sheer amount of collected data so typical in ethnography. As indicated by **Richard** here, be patient when writing up your ethnography.

> My advice is... be patient when writing up your notes and transcripts... because it's so time-consuming, and you've got pages and pages of notes, and you just don't know where to start. (Richard, 22/02/08)

Each stage in the writing-up process is now considered in depth, starting with the reading of collected data. Also, remember the importance of literature in writing up your collected data and documentation, and specifically the significance of appropriating relevant literature in your ethnographic report (see chapter II).
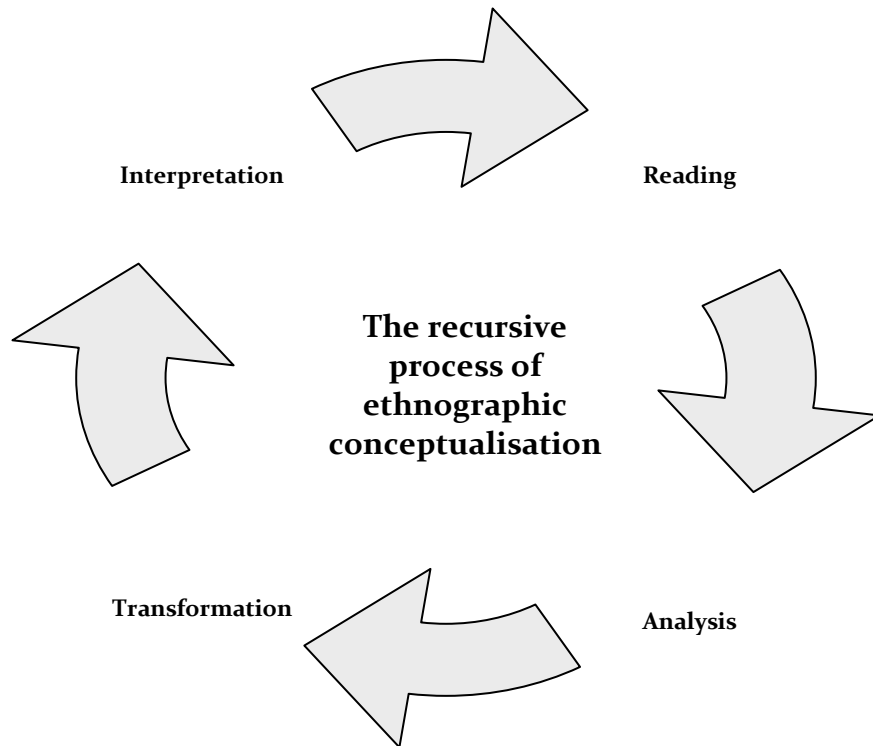
Figure IV- 1: Writing Ethnography

Reading ethnographic data

The key in writing ethnography is to capture how the people actually experienced, lived through and interpreted situations and events in the performing arts. The written report is thereby based on retrospective descriptions, for which the first actual step is to review the entire data collection, including transcriptions (both of words and performances) and fieldnotes. While previous sections already focused on the making of fieldnotes, the following section now considers the practicalities of transcription.

Transcription of words

Transcription of verbal commentary is the process of transforming audio- and video-recordings to written form by accurately writing up conversations and commentaries. It is recommended that you always transcribe interviews and conversations *fully* by writing down each spoken word. At regular intervals, you

should also note down the timing of the recording. While the process is very time- and labour-intensive (it takes around 4-5 hours to transcribe a 1-hour interview), as explained by **Maria**, the high level of detail achieved through full transcriptions is of immense advantage for regularly reviewing your documentation.

Alternatively, and depending on the situation during which you made the recording, you may decide to transcribe only segments of a conversation or a summary of *critical* incidents. This is particularly recommended for transcriptions of video-recordings, as these also include nonverbal behaviours (vocalisations, body language, facial expressions). In selecting the passages for transcription, you should sample the recordings, and purposefully select segments for transcription on the basis of your research question. You may also decide to transcribe segments that identify critical incidents and events that exemplify a particular code or theme. Below is a sample of the latter by Morgan for her ethnography entitled *'Drop it like it's hot': Gender Representations in Rap and Hip Hop Clubs* (see sample ethnographies). You should also revisit the interview transcript by Richard presented in the previous chapter.

Interview Transcript:

Interview took place on   November 2007 in a coffee shop with Emily, a 20 year old female who regularly frequents Azure on a Wednesday night.

Q: What do you think about gender representations within club Azure?
Em: What do you mean?
Q: Do you see a distinct difference between the men and the women who go to Azure?
Em: Oh, yeah, the girls dance and the boys don't.
Q: Can you expand?
Em: Well, if you go into the club all the girls will be in the middle of the dance floor, by the DJ booth and they will be trying to dance better than any other girl. Then you will have the guys who kind of make a circle around the girls and they watch them dance. The most they will do is bop their heads but apart from that they just drink and watch.
Q: How does this make you feel?

It took me one hour to transcribe these 10 minutes.... He says, you know, like a lot of ummms, ahhhs, and his sentences aren't whole. He stops mid-sentence and starts the next. It was very messy.... I'm going to have to edit it somehow.... It's almost comical because there are so many ummms and ahhhs, you know. It is probably important to keep it as literal as possible but I think with this guy, I'm going to have to do something because it's just too messy.... There are a lot of long pauses, and starting a new sentence in the middle of another sentence.... And every other word is "and like".... He would talk and talk and talk.... And then he would stop and say a long ahhhh or ummm. (Maria, 24/02/08)

Em: I have never really thought about it. Sometimes it gets on my nerves. Sometimes you want to go out with your mates, have a dance, have a laugh and not have everyone staring at you. Sometimes I will stand by the side of the bar so I am not in the middle of the dance floor so people can't watch me.

Q: You mentioned that the girls try do dance better than any other girl, what do you mean by this?

Em: All the girls compete. With certain songs there are certain dances and they all try to out dance each other. Sometimes they have dance offs in the middle of the dance floor. I don't do it, I don't feel the need, I just want to have fun with my friends.

Q: What is a dance off?

Em: It is when two girls battle through dance and everyone watches. Some girls are really good dancers but others shouldn't bother! Everyone claps and watches; I find it embarrassing.

 Q: Why do you find it embarrassing?

Em: Because most of the girls just do it to get attention from boys. I don't need to draw attention to myself. If a guy likes me he can come up and talk to me. I am not going to be in the middle of the dance floor screaming 'look at me, look at me' by doing a dance off, it's pathetic.

Q: So you think girls compete through dance for the attention of the men?

Em: Definitely! I don't know if you noticed but the club is full of groups of men and groups of women. You hardly ever see couples. People go there to hook up. I am not going to lie, me and my friends are single, we go because there are nice men. I just wouldn't go to those lengths to attract attention from men, it seems desperate.

Q: Is this the same in other clubs that play Hip hop, rap and R&B that you have been to?

Em: Yeah, they are all the same. Girls go out to meet boys and boys go out to meet girls. It's just the way it is.

Q: What about the music in relation to the girls and the boys?

Em: I know the guys that put on the night and they are all male club promoters and male DJ's. I don't know any female DJ's that play on a Wednesday night. I think that is true in most of the club, female DJ's are not very common. Oh and the DJ's put on music that makes the girls do particular dances that the guys like.

Q: What do you mean?

Em: There is a song called 'Dutty wine' by Tony Matterhorn that the DJ puts on every week. With the song the girls do a dance where they wind down to the floor and roll their heads. There is no dance for the boys they just watch.

Q: Can you explain what you mean by wind?

Em: It is where you roll your hips and your bum. The song is about a man who goes to the club and girls wind up on him, which is what happens with some girls. The guys stand behind them while they wind their bum up on them! Guys just don't dance.

Q: Thank you very much for your time.

Transcription of performance

The act of transcribing a recorded performance of dance, drama or music means the construction of a visual graphic map that captures and reflects the bodily, spoken or musical components of the performance. The transcription of performances is a suitable tool for internalising these components (and literally going 'inside' the performance), as well as to communicate your research findings to an audience. In approaching a transcription, ethnographers must first select suitable graphic devices or scores, and then engage in careful watching, listening and intellectual internalisation. Providing one example, the Sutton Movement Writing & Shorthand is a visual script that captures all forms of dance, mime, and sign language (see ://www.dancewriting.org/).
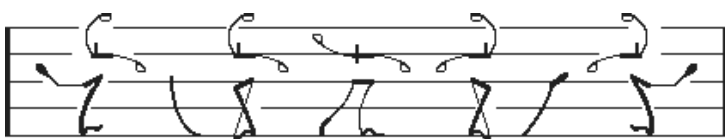

Figure III- 5: Sample Transcription of Dance

In drama, by comparison, you may wish to conduct transcriptions of spoken words so as to examine the stylistic features of the scripted text, the representation of spontaneous speech, or the specific features of the genre. You may also transcribe the visual characteristics so as to analyse the representation of different social groups (i.e. in terms of gender, race, power, etc). Overall, you should aim to capture both the process and product for continuous analysis and interpretation.

In transcribing a musical performance, you should focus on the capturing of musical sound in some graphic form, thereby representing the music's melody, rhythm, texture, instrumentation and other sonic characteristics, while reflecting the most important features of the particular musical genre. Transcription requires a good understanding of the conventions of the music, which students, such as **Lipok**, whose research focused on the preservation and transcription of orally transmitted folk

I recorded most of the songs, but in some instances, I would transcribe them on the spot. There are some songs, it would be best if you transcribe them on the spot because, even if I have the recording, the language that they used, several years back, was more poetic. There were certain words that you could not really understand, so sometimes you have to learn the song, instead of just recording it. After learning on the spot, and trying to understand it, then you can explain what it means. (Lipok, 29/05/08)

music in India, achieved through musical learning and participation, and thereby gaining an in-depth insight into the ways in which the people hear their own music.

Ethnomusicologists also often invent new ways of transcribing a musical performance, specifically of non-Western traditions and styles. Below is an excerpt of **Hyunseok**'s ethnography that integrates musical transcriptions so as to exemplify his musical analysis of Korean mask drama:

> The first task for notating music is to decide how to notate. Notation is an essential way of understanding music more specifically. Since ethnomusicologists began researching non-Western music - that is, when the history of ethnomusicology was first begun - Western European notation has been distinctively used by ethnomusicologists as the basic system. This is because most of these scholars have a Western musicological background, and because music represented in this staff notation is easy to read (Yi 2006: 9). However, Western European notation is not a sufficient system for sound representation of the relevant music. Charles Seeger pointed out the limits of this system, as follows: "The prescriptive method and use of music writing in the western European tradition does not tell us as much about how music sounds as how to make it sound." (Seeger 1977)
>
> For the music of the Mask Drama of Tongyeong, it is more necessary to attempt to represent the quality of sound and ways of making sound that Charles Seeger mentioned, because the musical features noted directly concern these items. Accordingly, in the next section, I intend to combine Western European notation with Korean traditional notation based on oral sound (quality) which imitates the sound made when the small hand-held gong instrument (from which such local features are easily grasped) is performed.
>
> *Oral Sound of the Small Hand-Held Gong*
>
> The oral sound of this small hand-held gong is broadly divided into six sounds: *gaen*, *gae-t*, *gaet*, *ji*, *gaereureureu*, *geuraeng*. The Korean name of this instrument, *ggwanggwari*, is interpreted as deriving from these oral sounds. Its oral sounds, symbols, and techniques are as follows.

Table 3.2 Notating sound from the small hand-held gong

Oral sound	Symbol	Technique
Gaeng	○	Striking, just after putting the fingers or palm of left hand on, and immediately removing them from the surface
Gae-t	◑	Putting the fingers or palm of left hand on, after striking the surface
Gaet	●	Striking, with the fingers or palm of the left hand gripping the gong
Ji	○	Striking lightly
Gaereureureu	○○○○	Trilling, having the striking mallet rebound
Geuraeng	○○	Striking twice sequentially within a single movement, making the first sound a grace note, and making the second a full one

Based on these notes from table 3.2, music performed on the small hand-held gong at the beginning of act one can be represented as follows (Example 3.1).

Example 3.1 Small hand-held gong part for the Mask Drama of Tongyeong

There exist numerous publications on how to approach the transcription of a performance of dance, drama or music.[16] Remember that the most effective method in approaching a transcription would involve your own participation in performance, during which you can learn and understand the intricacies and specific characteristics of an artistic tradition.

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[16] The following website, for example, provides useful tips and recommends software in approaching a musical transcription in Western staff notation http://www.seventhstring.com/resources/howtotranscribe.html.

Analysis of ethnographic data

Following on from the reading and reviewing of collected data is data analysis, which aims to reduce your collected documentation to a more manageable form so that you are able to tell a story about the people studied. This is achieved through coding and summarising the data in a meaningful way, and so clarifying implicit matters that move far beyond an initial 'reading' of the data. Ultimately, your aim is to discover meaning, and this starts with the coding of particular 'meaning units' in the data.

Coding data

The coding of data begins at a basic level so as to identify 'meaning units' in the data. To this end, you should compare and contrast your text-based data to look for units (snippets of text) that stand out because they occur often, are crucial to other units, or are rare and influential. Define each unit as relatively concrete, easily identifiable and differentiated (that is, having clear boundaries). As this process involves continuous refinement, there is no right way to derive the codes. In most ethnographic writings, *how* these codes emerge, and what *causes* them to emerge is often left unclear.

A good way to approach the coding of your data involves thinking of short names or words that can stand for a unit in the data. These are typically short, descriptive names that can later be sorted hierarchically. What to include/exclude is also often unclear. Be ruthless in your selection, as exemplified by **Sarah** here, and keep in mind your overall research question.

You should either develop your own coding scheme (especially when little is known about the phenomena), or select an existing one (from a similar research project), depending on the context of your own research. Developing a unique, new scheme for coding data is also called an inductive and grounded theory approach. Here, the coding categories originate and evolve from the raw data. The application of a pre-existing framework is called a deductive and top down analytical approach, which involves choosing a set of concepts first and then sorting the data accordingly. In practice, a blending of both inductive and deductive approaches is often acceptable. In approaching the coding of data, you may consider the use of computing software, such as NVIVO or N6. (Yet remember that computers do not analyse or code data! They can merely *assist* the work of the ethnographer that involves large bodies of text.)

> The writing up was the trickiest bit really…. I tried to organize my data by grouping things, and extracting the bits that would be useful and trying to form some kind of conclusions…. I just had to keep the actual question in mind, and be ruthless really about what actually went into my ethnography. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

<u>Looking for themes</u>

After the coding of data, you should begin with putting the jigsaw puzzle together, that is, to look for themes in the data, a process also explained here by **LiJuan**. Themes are more abstract concepts that link text-based units together in expressing a particular issue or a consistent set of behaviours. Look for passages in your text that relate to each other, and clump those data together that are similar, and separate those ones that are different from one another. Themes emerge from the *frequency* with which specific text-based units reoccur. *Omission* is another important indicator for themes, that is, when something is notably missing in your data. Equally, look out for *similarity* between and *co-occurrence* of units in your collected data. Another way of identifying themes emerges from *corroboration* in the data, that is, when one piece of data is confirmed by others. Furthermore, *sequence* (usually temporal) of events, situations and occurrences may lead towards an interesting theme in the data, as repeated practices often reflect culturally specific behaviours.

> For the first step, my idea is to gather all the information that I think are important and give key words in the blank [spaces]. Then I find... the relationship between the key words. Gradually, you'll find your idea, the relationship and begin to write. Then I will look at this information and sort it again. Every time you sort it, you will improve a little bit. I will find a better, more logical way and re-arrange it.... So if it is not totally clear... I will revise my writing many times.
> (LiJuan, 28/05/08)

Deriving themes will now enable you to begin sorting codes hierarchically. This involves the ordering of codes while organising them into a conceptual taxonomy, in which you can situate more concrete codes within more abstract themes. The general aim is to present a meaningful story through visual displays so as to facilitate your understanding of the data. The aim is to identify an underlying structure, an overall picture of the culture studied. Try to fine-tune your results by assembling, linking together or finding consistent relationships among your data patterns.

There are numerous kinds of display that you may adopt: diagrams or networks; self-stick notes on boards; tables; time lines; taxonomies or tree diagrams; pie charts and graphs. A tree diagram, for example, will allow you to identify and visually represent linkages and relationships between codes. This is the first step towards speculating and explaining these associations, thus to theorise in a systematic manner, and to discover more abstract categories and relationships. As always in ethnography, there is no right or wrong way to approach this step. Generally, try to think intuitively and systematically when organising your data into more abstract themes.

Below is an example of coding and looking for themes as applied to an interview conducted by Morgan for her ethnography *'Drop it like it's hot': Gender Representations in Rap and Hip Hop Clubs:*

Interview took place on November 2007 in the same coffee shop with Ryan, a 23 year old student who is also a regular at Azure on a Wednesday night.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	CODE	THEME
Q: Is there a difference between how the girls dance in Azure and how the boys dance in Azure?		
Ry: Yeah, the boys don't really dance.	Boys don't dance	
Q: Do you dance?		
Ry: No way!		
Q: Why not?		
Ry: Cos it's just not what you do. None of the boys dance. I would feel like an idiot getting on the dance floor in front of all my mates and dancing.	Dance is for idiots	Male=intellect
Q: Why is this?		
Ry: I don't know. I guess it is not very manly to dance. It is more of a girl thing to dance. I guess it starts from when you are a kid, my little sister goes to all kinds of dance classes that my mum would never enrol me on to. Cos that's what girls do, they dance and boys play football! Na I'm only playing, but I do think it is more natural to girls to dance.	Dance=girls Family Boys play football	Female=fun? Identity=social Male=sport
Q: So you think this is something that starts from childhood?		
Ry: Yeah. Dancing is quite important in my culture (Caribbean). When aunties and uncles come round they always get the youngest girl to get up and dance. My sister is always making up dances in the playground and showing us when she comes home. The boys are never expected to do that, not in my family any way.	Nationality Family Dance=girls=play	Identity=cultural Identity=social Female=fun!
Q: And you think this is carried through to the clubs?		
Ry: Yeah. The girls are all in the middle of the dance floor dancing the best they can and all the guys hang round and watch. Don't get me wrong, some guys do dance, but if they are bad dancers it is really shameful and they get the piss ripped out of them.	Boys watch girls Boys have to be good in front of peers	Male gaze Identity=social
Q: Does this happen often?		
Ry: Na, usually if a guy dances he is a really good dancer but mostly the men don't bother as they don't want to be ripped if they are bad.		
Q: What does it matter if you are a bad dancer?		
Ry: It matters big time! There is an idea that if you can't dance then you are no good at sex! It means you aint got rhythm which means you won't be good in bed. I suppose you could say it demasculinates men if they can't dance. Usually	Dance=sex	Male=sex

	girls are good dancers because they get lots of practice, but boys would rather not risk being made a fool of. It's safer to stand on the outside looking in.		
Q:	But do you enjoy watching the girls dance?	Boys have to be 'good in front of peers	Identity=social
Ry:	Don't get me wrong, some girls look really sexy when they dance and the better they are at dancing the more attractive they look.		
Q:	Do you go to the club to meet women then?	Female dancers looked at if 'sexy'	Male gaze
Ry:	Yeah, that's what everyone does. There are loads of boys and girls all on the look out to meet someone, that's why people go to Azure because you know your going to find someone good looking who likes the music you like.	Meet girl with similar musical taste	Taste=identity
Q:	Do you think the type of music played has something to do with the fact that women dance and men don't?		
Ry:	Some men do dance, just not many. I guess you could say that. Rap and hip hop videos always show the women dancing and the men watching. I guess you are used to seeing this and it just becomes natural. I think it is something that has been internalized within society.	Music videos shape perceptions about norm	Identity=taught
Q:	Thanks for your time.		

CLUSTERING OF CODES	CLUSTERING OF THEMES
Boys don't dance Boys play football Boys watch girls Boys have to be good in front of peers	Male=intellect Male=sport Male gaze Male=sex
Dance is for idiots Dance=girls Dance=girls=play Dance=sex Female dancers looked at if 'sexy'	Female=fun? Female=fun!
Nationality Family	Identity=social Identity=cultural Identity=taught Taste=identity
Meet girl with similar musical taste	
Music videos shape perceptions about norm	

Transformation of ethnographic data

The next step in writing up your data is the transformation or modification of original data. Practically speaking, transformation of data begins with the reading of raw data, such as interview transcripts, in order to derive a descriptive narrative, defining the origins of the data and what they represent. The general aim is synthesis, and you can approach this by using your clustered codes of similar meaning and generating *retrospective* descriptions about the data. Your writing at this stage will still largely be *descriptive* (rather than interpretative) and *subjective* (rather than objective). Also refer back to the discussions on reflexivity and the importance of writing yourself into your ethnographic portrait (chapter II). To this end, you can use 'I' and 'my' in your writings as long as you are critically reflexive.

I just started with what I had done and how I had done it, and then just basically wrote up what I had discovered, what I thought I would discover and what I actually discovered, and then tried to relate it to theories of globalization. (Claire, 27/02/08)

It's a matter of pouring it all out on the floor…. Then I wrote a summary of the things that were said. If I had theories and stuff that people said [quotes], I would use this as evidence to back that up…. There's a lot of information and it's a matter of sifting out what's useful and what's not. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

There are a range of practical strategies for generating your retrospective descriptive writings:

- One useful strategy in bringing together your collected data into a written structure is to engage in summative descriptions about the history and characteristics of the people you have studied. Describe the functions and organisational structure of the group by identifying the basic components in the culture and the operations of each and their interactions. You may also have collected important empirical facts, including vocabulary, taxonomy of behaviours or events, census about people and their demographics, which you can elaborate into a descriptive narrative.

- You should also engage in summative descriptions of the actual events you have observed and participated in, as discussed by **Claire**. Here, use standard narrative form by structuring your descriptions chronologically from the earliest to the most recent events. In other words, describe a series of critical events occurred during fieldwork and link these in chronological fashion.

- You should also create summaries of interview results, and generate collections of quotations, as exemplified by **Dominique** here, which, when placed together, often demonstrate patterns or structures. Our students were often reluctant (for whatever reason) to refer to what their participants had said during their research. However, you should include quotes by the people who you have interviewed in your report. You may use them within your own sentences, or

alternatively single them out from your writing (by indenting, etc) when using a larger chunk of quotation. Participants' quotes should be highlighted as such with apostrophes and referenced (i.e. pc,[17] date, place of interview).

- You may also present data as participants in the study interpret them, and then contrast this perspective to your own observations, an outsider's view or insights gained from literature. In other words, aim at presenting an emic interpretation (insider's perspective) in contrast to etic interpretations (outsider's perspective). Remember that ethnographers seek to explain a phenomenon from the perspectives of the people studied. As explained by **Lianne**, your writing up should be guided by what is important to your participants.

> I found that what some people were saying would lead me off onto something else, so even though I focused on sexuality and stuff, it was them who brought in the media and things like class. So I found that sometimes the topic would go off into something else, and that was pushed by them rather than me. (Lianne, 20/02/08)

- You may consider the use of vignettes, which are snapshots or short dramatic 'thick' descriptions of events or people. There are three kinds of vignettes, namely normative depictions, or *realist tales* that are usually written in third person; dramas, or *impressionist tales*, which dramatise a person, act, event or activity so as to catch the attention of the reader; and critical stories, or *confessional tales*, which summarise a biography, event or other phenomenon (VanMaanen 1988). The latter two types of vignettes are often biased, and should thus be used with caution. Also, vignettes and summaries are not the end product of ethnography; they merely enhance readers' insight and understanding of an event, situation or person. Nonetheless, vignettes are helpful in evoking the overall picture of a situation or person.

- Many ethnographers also deploy metaphors, which are imaginary descriptions that capture the sense or evoke the meaning of a situation, event or occurrence. However, a metaphor is not the phenomenon itself, so that it must be clear in your writings that a metaphor is being used.

Below is the same interview example by Morgan, this time showing the clustering of codes and one possible way of transforming the raw interview data into retrospective descriptions. The example demonstrates how to turn code categories into descriptive writings for the ethnographic report. Following the transformation of data is the interpretation of data, which requires you to explain the larger meaning of your findings. This final step in the writing of ethnography will be turned to in the following section.

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[17] 'pc' is an abbreviation of 'personal communication'.

CLUSTERING OF CODES	TRANSFORMATION
Boys don't dance Boys play football Boys watch girls Boys have to be good in front of peers	There clearly existed common perceptions about what is deemed appropriate behaviour for boys in the Azure night club. For example, boys did not engage in dancing on the dance floor, as they do not want to be made fun of by their peers and usually attended the nightclub to watch the girls dancing. Yet there was one exception, namely when a boy is deemed to be an excellent dancer in the eyes of his male peers, in which case he is also regarded as a good sexual partner. However, more appropriate male behaviour was seen to revolve around playing football.
Dance is for idiots Dance=girls Dance=girls=play Dance=sex Female dancers looked at if 'sexy'	My participant revealed that dance is for idiots, suggesting that it is not an intelligent activity for a male to engage in. Instead, he associated dance with being a typically female activity, which allows girls to have fun with their peers. At the same time, however, dance was also regarded by males as an expression of female sexuality, as boys like to watch the girls dancing in the night club while assessing the girls' ability to express themselves sexually.
Nationality Family	It is interesting to note that my participant's Caribbean nationality seemed to have shaped his perceptions about gender-typical behaviour in relation to dance. Within this context, family played an equally pivotal role in learning that dance is normally associated with girls or women.
Meet girl with similar musical taste	It seemed important to my participant to meet a girl who shares his likes for certain music.
Music videos shape perceptions about norm	Music videos played an important role in shaping my participant's perceptions of what is the gendered norm, namely that the boys watch the girls dancing.

Interpretation of ethnographic data

The final step in the writing of your ethnography involves the interpretation of data so as to make your data and documentation *meaningful* to various audiences. Interpretation typically requires you to spell out the significance of your findings and to convey the meaning of data results, to go beyond the results as well as to set the results into a broader context. Aim at making implicit meanings explicit, thus revealing meanings that are lived but not necessarily clearly articulated or in full awareness. Interpretation also requires you to generalise somewhat so that the analyses are not just situation-specific. You should thereby move from concrete lived experience as an example of something, and conceptualise what it is an example of.

Basically, I went back to what my aims and objectives were, what I actually wanted to find out because you can be misled into going some other direction.... That helps you to get rid of stuff, 'though it might be really interesting but has nothing to do with my aim.... I think if you have clear aims... your conclusion along with your research basically writes itself. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

The interpretation of data can be approached in various ways. Begin by thinking about the application of a theoretical framework, whereby you should identify a problem, question or topic as the central domain from which you can build your argumentation. Throughout the process, you should constantly review and repeatedly return to the research questions so as to draw the focus back to the most important questions, as exemplified by **Dominique**. Repeat the same analytic processes used to generate results by 'playing' with ideas and theorise with finished results. On a more practical level, begin by clustering themes into categories to synthesise and explain larger segments of data. However, only select the most significant themes to sift through large amounts of collected data. Interpret the themes in terms of their meaning potential, which is more conceptual than coding.

When you read a book, and this author writes it so good, you think wow. The author gave very good examples.... It will set the model for you. If I read books, I always want to learn how it is organised, what kind of perspective is given, not just read the content. I will analyse it and learn from it. (LiJuan, 28/05/08)

As pointed out throughout the guide, literature plays a crucial role in your writings. Literature is important for informing your interpretations of results and supporting your argumentation, as in **LiJuan**'s example. Literature will give you ideas about the possible meaning of your research results and to identify how your own study connects to existing bodies of research or knowledge. In reviewing relevant theories by other researchers you can explore how others have used similar theoretical viewpoints and written them up in a meaningful way. At the same time, literature is useful in

generating ideas about certain themes and lines of thinking you have derived from your data. To this end, literature is typically integrated in the ethnographic report wherever appropriate.

Below is the same interview sample by Morgan, this time demonstrating the clustering of themes and one possible way of interpreting the interview data. In doing so, the interpretations seek to explain their larger meaning by deriving theoretical concepts and finding relevant literature for meaningful explanations.

CLUSTERING OF THEMES	TRANSFORMATION
Male=intellect Male=sport Male gaze Male=sex	My participant's gendered perceptions clearly reflected stereotypical masculine representations in hip hop music culture through association of males with intelligence and reason, physicality and strength (Bannister 2006), whilst women were typically seen as objects of male sexual desire. Dance was regarded as a sexually charged activity, both among talented male dancers who (due to their rhythmic feel) are seen as good sexual partners, as well as among girls who are expected to dance with sexually inviting moves aimed at the male gaze. This may suggest an underlying concept of 'masculinity as *naturally* heterosexual' (Whiteley 2005:132), which is common in the otherwise homophobic and misogynistic hip hop music culture.
Female=fun? Female=fun!	The association of girls with fun somewhat points towards female-cultural experience and girl culture. Fun may thereby work here symbolically as counterpoint to masculine cultural norms, while at the same time reflecting female camaraderie and action.
Identity=social Identity=cultural Identity=taught Taste=identity	Some Caribbean musicians have been criticised for their homophobic lyrics, which may reflect a more widespread attitude among people in the Caribbean, further reflected in hip hop music that is generally known for its blatant misogyny and homophobia. The emphasis on nationality, family and peers in my participant's gendered perceptions may thereby mean that gender roles are not simply natural but socially (parents, peers) and culturally (school, media) constructed, whereby certain characteristics have become assigned to males or females that determine which characteristics are acceptable for each gender to cultivate (Holtzman 2000:58). Furthermore, wishing to meet a girl with similar music taste seems to enable my participant 'to give expression to the ways in which listeners identify themselves socially' (Leonard and Strachan 2003b:373). My participant's musical choices may thus work at a symbolic level in reflecting and representing his sociocultural identity, and with it, his learnt gendered norms and hegemonic position. This may suggest that he seeks a girl who 'culturally knows', and thus accepts the stereotypical norms and behaviours prevalent in his culture.

More generally, writing ethnography means turning raw data into descriptions of what happened in a study, and then making the results meaningful to other readers. Ethnography involves a series of stages in which a whole phenomenon is dissected, divided into its components and then reassembled in such a way to make the phenomenon understandable to others. In doing so, ethnography is about illuminating the *obvious.* The overall aim is to generate ethnographic theory, which is typically constructed recursively. This process often begins with a set of connected ideas that undergoes continuous redefinition until ideas are finalised and interpreted in the final report. Thinking about and analysing the data typically begins with your first encounters in the field, as well as continuously throughout your data collection. Ultimately, you should engage with your documentation numerous times, as every reading of your observations, conversations and experiences may reveal new and interesting insights. Ascertain what pattern or results your data reveal, and whether the data confirm a certain concept or research question. The patterns or results that emerge may serve as guides to observing and interviewing, but may also change continuously. Remember to remain flexible and open-minded for changes in your own understanding throughout your project.

A FINAL NOTE...

It's nice getting out there and researching society, you know, because it gives you another perspective.... You learn about someone else's culture, the way someone else lives their perspective... learn how people live in society.... It opens your eyes to new things, to the way that people do things differently. (Dominique, 22/02/08)

I think it's a good research method. I found it quite good, and I never had any experience of it, didn't even know what it was before. It's much better than just going out and reading a load of books. It was better to actually go out there and see it for yourself.... And it's a personal thing.... It's something that nobody else has written about. It's quite interesting that way. (Sarah, 27/02/08)

Most students agreed that one of the best ways to understand people and their engagement in dance, drama and music is through *exposure*, for which ethnography is a particularly suitable tool. Ethnography enables us to learn about the social, cultural and artistic life of communities of people. It helps us to understand human perspectives and behaviours, and the meanings given to the performing arts as they develop over longer periods of time. It requires us to be the primary tool for data collection, using methods of cultural and performative participant-observation and interviewing, while becoming cultural insiders among the people studied. It allows us to discover and explore people's lived experiences and realities, or parts thereof. Ethnography is thereby a highly individualistic and subjective process. It is an active and interpretative research method that clearly distinguishes it from other approaches, specifically quantitative methods. It is particularly suitable for *directly* experiencing a performing arts culture in the otherwise formal university environment.

The student guide presented here is hopefully a useful and meaningful resource for the conduct of your own ethnographic project in the performing arts. In four chapters, the student guide aimed at making the multiple, complex steps of ethnographic research and writing more accessible and understandable by outlining *practical* ways for conducting ethnographic research in university settings. At the same time, the integration of sample ethnographies in selected contexts in the performing arts as conducted by students at Liverpool John Moores University, together with the use of other illustrative materials by students at LJMU and the University of Sheffield will hopefully help the novice ethnographer to gain useful insights into other students' expectations, motivations and experiences during ethnographic research and writing.

To this end, the student guide is aimed at a predominantly novice readership, or those who have little actual experience of ethnography in the performing arts by

illustrating the special characteristics and applicability of ethnography as a method of research and style of writing. The student guide is specifically useful to students and educators wishing to gain insights into the differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches; how to approach an ethnographic research project; what to do during fieldwork; and how to write up an ethnographic report. It is important to note here that the guide does not claim to be comprehensive, or to be exhaustive in its conceptual treatment of the subject matter. With this in mind, the student guide hopefully presents much stimulating material that is of relevance to both students and educators in the performing arts. The bibliography that now follows contains a sub-section listing the titles of examples of ethnographies in dance, drama and music.

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